

Katriina Bildjuschkin & Susanna Ruuhilahti

CLEARED UP!

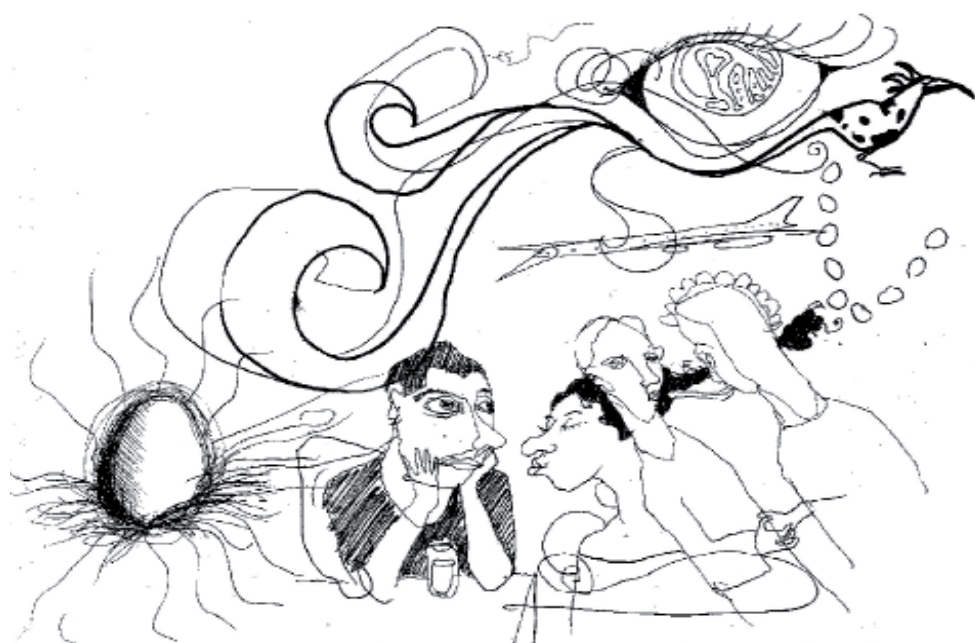


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Illustrations: Jussi Karppanen
©Water Lily Model: Susanna Ruuhilahti, Katriina Bildjuschkin,
Illustration Anu Tuomainen
Layout: Tuija Lindroos, Nektaria ry
Translator: Riitta Pulkkinen
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Introduction

This book has been written to support the supplementary training of the adults who have participated in the Clearing Up! project. The book aims to contribute to promoting sexuality education from the perspective of students studying at vocational institutes, i.e. future professionals in providing guidance and instruction. The book aims to bring up matters that are particularly important to pay attention to and think about before starting sexuality education. The foundations for sexuality education are created when educators take the time to reflect on themselves and their thoughts about sexuality at personal and professional levels. This makes it easier to build a framework and lessons for sexuality education and the educators are able to utilise existing information about sexuality education research without forgetting young people's individuality.

As sexuality education requires a strong basis and foundations, it is discussed from several perspectives. The book includes views and themes that are easily forgotten in the everyday life of sexuality education despite their importance for human sexual health and well-being. The expert articles in the book aim to provide the readers with the latest information and to arouse thoughts about sexuality, gender, and sexuality education. Some of the texts are reflective and some are based on research findings. The writers of the articles take the responsibility for their own texts and their contents.

The book first introduces the project, its aims, values, and working principles. In the second section, the purpose is to awaken the reader's interest in reflecting on sexuality both as a social phenomenon and as a personal experience. This section gives information also on the Water Lily Model and general information on matters related to sexuality in Finnish society. The section draws attention to the importance of sexuality in experiences of health and well-being. The section provides the readers with tools for reflecting on their own sexuality and explores sexuality as a comprehensive, diverse, and multilayered matter.

The core of the sexuality educators' professional skills is to take the time again and again to reflect on their own sexuality. Unless we are aware of our own thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and experiences, it is difficult to make sure that those who we are educating have opportunities to reflect, wonder, and find their own answers. Without reflecting on and examining our own thoughts, sexuality education may change to a form of distributing information. In that case the thought is forgotten that, in sexuality education, young people should be treated as individuals in their everyday lives.

The sexuality education section deals with education and acting as educators. It provides information from various studies and sexuality education programmes. The text links research findings to the experiences that the writers of this section have gained in the field of sexuality education and in their work with clients for several years.

To fend off possible misunderstandings, there is a glossary at the end of the book, in which some concepts are discussed in the way the writers understand them. The glossary also challenges the readers to reflect on the adequacy of the concepts currently used.



CLEARING UP

Enhancing the sexual well-being of young people studying at vocational institutes

- Further education for professionals on sexuality and gender questions

FOCUS ON THE GROWING PERSON

- tailor-made process education, i.e. study days 5 x 4 h + job counselling
- sex education, 10 cr, at summer university
- virtual studies, 10 cr
- SAR studies, 4 cr

- Enhancing the sexual well-being of students at vocational institutes

FOCUS ON THE GROWING PERSON, THE PROCESS

- campaigns of sexual wellbeing (for example "For Better Lovers" event)
- mapping students' wishes and needs and taking them into account in course planning
- developing favourable indicators for sexual well-being
- experimenting with different course plans, modelling

- Supporting the contents of sexual health education as part of health education in vocational institutes, making sexuality appear as a positive thing
- Introducing sexual health and the need to bring it up to vocational training and as an integral part of qualifications in human-related fields.

FOCUS ON THE CONTENTS

- Clearing up! handbook for sex education
- Just Like This! game, questions, and reflections on sexuality
- 5 video clips in You Tube on the subjects Good Sex, Love, May I Be True, Porn, Media Body
- study materials: exercises, slides, suggestions for course plans
- contacts aimed at changing curricula

- Promoting bringing up sexuality in human-related fields, during education

FOCUS ON THE PROCESS, CONTENTS, OUTCOMES

- various background studies, studies on educators' wishes and needs concerning further education, taking students' wishes and needs into account
- job counselling as part of studies
- assessment of implications for practice, modelling
- development and research of indicators for sexual well-being in secondary education
- exerting influence on curricula

- Exerting influence on society, changing curriculum to take sexuality and gender better into account

FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT, CONTENTS, OUTCOMES

- newspaper articles, publications
- Clearing up! seminars
- social media
- collaboration networks
- attempts to exert influence on curricula
- international conferences
- Love Ambassador reward

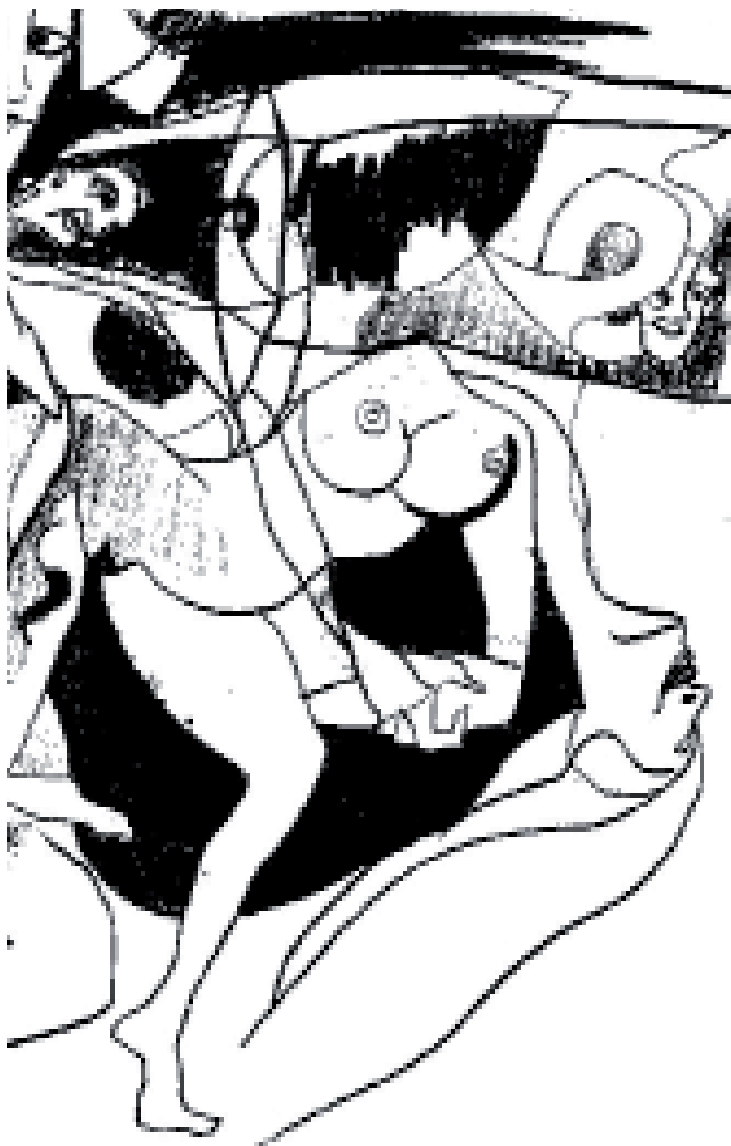
SEXUALITY IN ME AND THE WORLD

The Aims of the Sexuality Education Studies
in the Clearing Up! project

This section deals with the foundations of sexuality
and sexual growth and thoughts about them.

It brings up some matters related to the essence
and importance of sexuality education.

Sexuality education is delivered in all interaction
consciously and subconsciously.



Sexuality Education - briefly

Courage, willingness, and skills are required of sexuality educators in the reflection on sexuality, gender, and the matters related to them also on the personal level. What kind of thoughts, emotions, experiences, assumptions, and attitudes are aroused in the educators themselves on the personal level and from the professional perspective? It is important to take the time to reflect on the human concept that the work is based on and the motives of doing the work.

We offer the Water Lily Model to be used as a tool for this reflection. In the Water Lily Model, sexuality means humans' own experiences of their humanity and the relationship between masculinity and femininity related to it. Sexual desire, motivation, and creativity make erotic experiences possible in the mind and body with oneself and others. At their best, these experiences are fused so that the place and time lose their meaning. The courage to surrender to sexual desire produces pleasure and enjoyment. The core of sexuality, its centre, is humans' experience of existence as an integral part of the cosmic beingness. (Bildjuschkin, Ruuhilahti.)

Hamachek (1999) writes that teachers teach consciously what they know but subconsciously they teach who they are. "In addition to this, for example teachers' images of their students are shaped through many general normative and cultural filters that are linked to the educational goals set by the school and the teachers' own values, personal history, and earlier experiences of the students in certain situations. The interaction of different people creates a situation in which everyone's own values and identity are subconsciously compared with others' values and identities. Then these people's own uncertainty and the need to protect their self-competence may cause defence reactions. Simple explanations are sought when interaction situations are experienced as difficult." (Talib, 2008.)

For these reasons reflection skills are an important tool for both the educator and those who are being educated. With the help of reflection skills both educators and learners can change their ideas, behaviour as well as the quality of action. Reflectivity means paying conscious attention to one's own associations, thoughts, and emotions in connection with various events. Reflection skills increase self-knowledge and improve acting as educators. Those who know themselves and accept their thoughts and emotions face also their contradictions squarely.



WATER LILY MODEL



Empowering Sexual Growth in Sexuality Education, Counselling and Therapy

PRISM OF SEXUALITY - QUESTIONS BASIS OF SEXUALITY

DIMENSIONS OF SEXUALITY

Body, mind, spirit, culture

How and in what parts of your body do you feel sexual pleasure?

What kind of feelings does sexuality stir up in you?

What is sexual creativity?

SEXIO

Centre of Sexuality

What is the meaning of your sexuality?

ELEMENTS OF SUPPORTING SEXUALITY

Love, virtues, personality traits, upbringing

Were you loved and were you allowed to love?

What do virtues mean to your sexuality?

How does your temperament impact on your sexuality?

What kind of sex education will be needed - shall I promote or prevent?

PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Psychosexual crises in the life cycle

What kind of memories, thoughts, feelings do you have from different life stages?

How did you succeed in the developmental tasks?

How has your sexuality changed?

LIFE CYCLE CHANGE

Past, present time, future

What have you had a change to learn about sexuality during your life history?

Are you living here and now?

What do you want out of your sexuality in the future?

What would you like to change in your sexuality?

BASIS OF SEXUALITY

Health, gender, interaction

How are the dimensions of health manifested in you?

How do you feel about your gender?

Do you feel safe and loved?

FOUNDATIONS OF HUMANITY, SEXUALITY

Human concept, values

Where does your family come from?

WATER LILY MODEL

Empowering sexual growth and sex education
Finland, Nektaria ry
Susanna Ruuhilähti
Katriina Bildjuschkin



Becoming Sexually Empowered – the Water Lily Model

The aim of the Water Lily Model is to explore human sexuality and the factors influencing it as a whole. In the model, a water lily floating on water is used as a metaphor of sexuality, its development, and the matters related to it.

The metaphor draws attention to sexuality as an opportunity, a positive force of life, and a beautiful part of the human when its diversity and variety are taken into consideration. The Water Lily Model can be applied to the reflection and understanding of the sexuality of people living in different cultures, healthy and sick people, and people of different ages.

The model brings up the thought that sexuality educators' own sexuality and their reflections on it are the key factors in delivering quality sexuality education. Adults who know themselves are able to keep their own norms separate from the general norms in discussions. At the same time, those who they are educating are given more space to contemplate, marvel, wonder, and make their own informed choices instead of doing what the educators say or what they think other people consider appropriate.

In the model, sexuality is described as a growing water lily – in the way the creators of the model understand sexuality and the matters integrally related to it at the moment. Everyday experiences, increasing knowledge, and the tacit knowledge that develops with understanding make it possible that the model changes and is reshaped. In other people's hands the model is born again to become a different and unique water lily and that is what we aim at. We have been the midwives of this model and we hope that the model will grow and encourage growth.

The Water Lily Model emphasises human's unity with all the parts. Without one there is not the other either and, in unity, humans are more than the sum of the parts. When everything is present, there is humanity in which sexuality opens up in the way it deserves – being present in everything. The humans of the Water Lily Model seek their

connection to the source of life and other humans, and they want to experience the meaningfulness of their lives and their sexuality. The Water Lily Model explores thus sexuality and what sexuality encompasses, not sex.

Sexuality educators need a lot of current and theory-based knowledge. They also have to reflect on their human concept, world view, and values in relation to the world view, human concept, and values. Sexuality educators have to respect also the thoughts of those who they are educating. In addition to this knowledge, they need tacit knowledge (intuition, wisdom of the heart), which is gained every moment through experiences.

Human life and thoughts about sexuality are built on the foundations of the human concept and values. Human concepts and values change and vary with life events and life stages – humans develop and grow throughout their lives.

Human sexuality is good enough when the relationship with oneself is mindful and genuine. Sexuality begins when life begins, and it changes, grows, and develops in the course of life finding new dimensions and perspectives. Sexuality is renewed and reproduced – at each moment life opens up as a unique opportunity and so does sexuality.

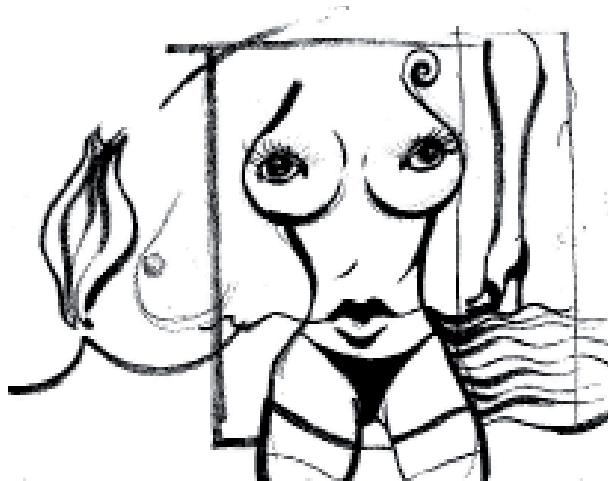
Our language moulds our understanding of sexuality making something new possible and, on the other hand, telling what kind of ideas and thoughts we have, while reproducing stereotypical thoughts, assessments, and norms in our words. Language is not able to describe sexuality either, as part of sexuality always remains mysterious, beyond our understanding, as everyone's sexuality is unique. The sexual dimensions are built around the human's uniqueness, described by the petals of the water lily in the model.

The sexual dimensions and their meaning vary and are emphasised individually. At least our life situation, earlier experiences, historical time period, culture, our own interpretations of sexuality, and the matters related to it influence sexuality and the values related to it. It is useful to take the time and reflect on what we see our sexuality to be like through the different dimensions and, on the other hand, what kind of meanings we give to human sexuality. Do illnesses, religion, sexual orientation, gender or cultural background influence these meanings and valuations? Sexuality educators have to think about what can be required of those who they are educating. Does sexuality education

allow them to make their own genuine choices and are they treated as equal individuals, without requiring everyone to be similar? Despite the classifications into basic types, people are, however, very different and they react in very different ways. It may be difficult to tolerate some people's choices, but sexuality educators cannot make decisions on behalf of others; they can only guide in the right direction.

In the model, water represents the course of life, as if humans were floated by life. In the challenges of life, in stormy water, the stem of the water lily is flexible giving the flower space to move. Even in the middle of a storm it is calm on the bottom and humans should have a connection to the bottom – the human concept and own values – as the result of which the situation can calm down.

On the other hand, calm water reflects the flower beautifully onto the surface, to be seen at least by the flower itself. The change of seasons and passing of time are seen in water. In the course of time water may occupy more space covering the ground under it – life expands and finds new routes to move on and to provide living space for new water lilies. Sometimes water becomes cloudy or is dried up because of pollution or other matters that put a strain on the water. Also human life may be burdened and, even when the flower may still look beautiful and the surface of the water may be calm, there may already be a crisis developing beneath the surface.





Sexuality – The Human Concept and Values

Sexuality begins when human life begins and ends when the human dies. Sexuality is not the human's choice but a dimension belonging to human life that influences health and well-being. Sexuality includes also the way of experiencing oneself as a man, woman, inter- or transsexual or as a human who cannot identify with any of these groups.

The foundations of sexuality are formed by the human concept and values. In addition to humanity, the human concept determines what sexuality is seen to be like and what kind of matters are related to sexuality. If the human concept is for example mechanistic, it can be thought that sexuality means reproduction or action brought about by instincts, drives, and hormones. Then humans' emotions and experiences are not necessary or essential and neither is the fact that humans could choose how they act in situations and what choices they make. If the human is seen as a physical-psychosocial-spiritual entity, sexuality must be present in every dimension. This kind of human concept emphasises humans' opportunities to choose freedom and the responsibility accompanied by it. The human concept that brings up the spiritual dimension emphasises the importance of ethicality, human's uniqueness, and meaningfulness of life. Every life has a meaning and the meaning is often found in the connection with others. Human life is living according to the values. Values may be shared with the community and they may be individual, cultural, or workplace-oriented. Values are at the background of choices and they influence everything.



Sexuality is a big and enchanting topic. It can be seen in many different ways and all people can see it in their own ways; there is no single right view. Sexuality is an opportunity and it should not be a cause of anxiety or a limiting factor in life.





For all people, sexuality is part of humanity that is characteristic of them, and it is not possible to determine other people's sexuality on behalf of them. Sexuality is an experiential matter. Human sexuality does not ever become ready and neither is it awakened at any certain age. It changes and develops from the birth to the moment of death. At least the genotype, environment, and culture impact on what it becomes like. Humans also transfer what they have found and experienced to the next generations. Therefore the sexual development of the community or every family member influences also other people around them.

Sexuality may be linked to sex but not necessarily. Sex may be linked to sexual intercourse, but intercourse is not necessary or possible for all people when having sex. It is sad if sexuality is understood in the narrow sense of sex, which is nowadays so often understood to refer to sexual intercourse.



1. Think about three important matters that you would like to teach to yourself about sexuality. Give reasons for your choice.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What do think a human, for example a young person, is like in the light of the matters that you chose?

2. Think about your values and their meaning in your everyday life for a moment. Which of them originate from your childhood home? Which ones have you adopted in the course of your life? Is it possible to tell the difference?



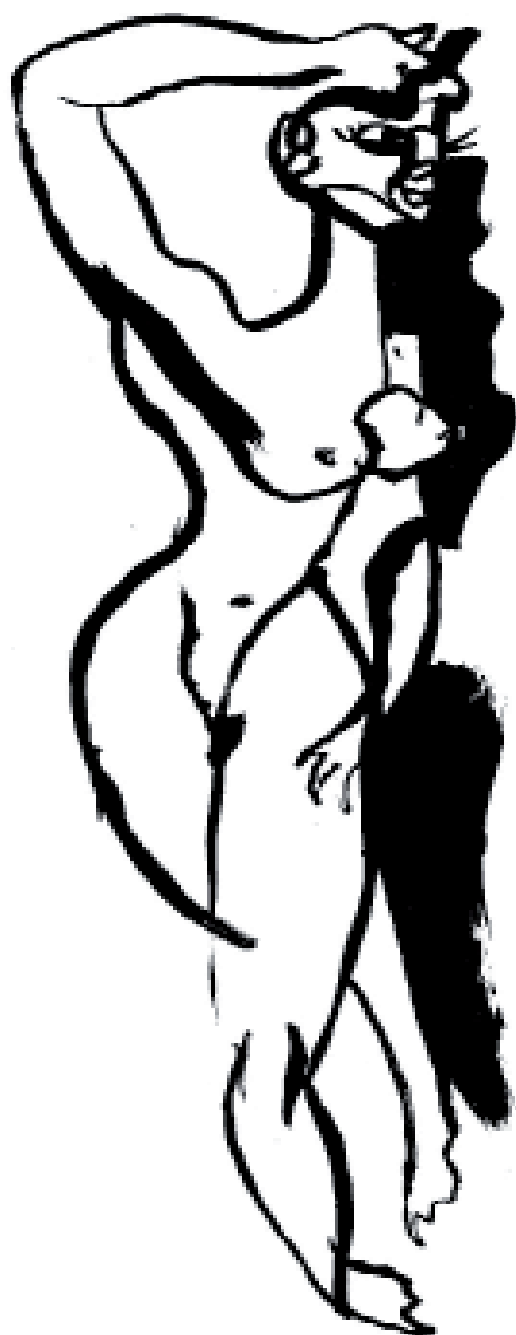
Sexuality is a positive opportunity, one of the dimensions of health.

Everyone is sexual and unique.

Sexuality changes throughout human life.

Sexuality is a very sensitive, vulnerable, and intimate area of the human.





The Body and Its Sensations

Our notions of ourselves, our own humanity, are born in complex interaction patterns with other people. In order to find ourselves, our own bodily dimension and sexuality as members of our communities, it is necessary to assess ourselves in relation to other people, general norms, and our own notions of both ourselves and the world. The self-image, self-esteem, and identity are constructed both internally and externally to a great extent through the bodily dimension. Everything that is said and written and every action originate in the body. A quick glance can make us jump to conclusions about other people's thoughts and emotions. Postures, gestures, expressions, and the way we move convey culture-oriented information. We are likely to become more emphatic if we experience closeness and good touching in childhood as well as in adulthood. Almost a quarter of our time is estimated to be spent on social relationships, contacts with other people. We long for touching, being visible. We seek for our own connection between ourselves and our bodies throughout our lives.

We need touching in order to feel good, develop, and perceive our own bodies. We also understand and learn the boundaries of the body through touching. Instead of adhering to strict stereotypes, versatility in expressing the bodily dimension provides an opportunity to seek for ourselves and our own bodily expressions as we grow older, gain more experiences, and face various challenges brought by life, such as pregnancy, illness, or injury.

Bodies that are detached from ourselves are vulnerable to abuse and infringement of boundaries. Bodies that are empty and shattered, belonging to no one must be made alive even if the only way is through self-destruction, such as cutting, risk-seeking behaviour, or use of intoxicants. Pain ensures existence, and it is easier to tolerate pain than the emptiness inside. Emptiness and experience of lack of love makes possible also the infringement of others' bodily boundaries. Through sexual satisfaction, or submission, it is possible to experience some kind of connection with oneself, own emotions, for a moment. An ego that

is detached from one's own body may seem to be big but, at the same time, the person's internal experience of it is extremely fragile.

People who see flaws in their appearance make comparisons with other people. People who cannot appreciate themselves or consider their own bodies valuable are not able to require bodily integrity of other people either and cannot see themselves in a merciful light. People who feel inferior may experience loneliness and, in risk situations, easily become victims of abusers when there is someone who touches and admires close to those who feel worthless, although the price would be a sexual act that infringes bodily integrity. People, children in particular, show their emotional states, anxiety, and shyness and are then also vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Ever since our childhood, we have learned in our families, educational institutions, and workplaces much about interaction skills and respect between people – what kind of attitudes we take to different people, how women, men, and people of the same gender as we are respected, how other people are treated, and how gender, age, and skin colour affect the treatment. Children learn very early if the same gender automatically brings benefits or restrictions, and if something is more appropriate for girls than boys and if they should be ashamed of or respect themselves and their own gender.

As we grow older, we learn to trust people and experience security or, in the opposite case, learn to live in a climate of fear and mistrust. Fear and mistrust take over if children have to experience being bullied, for example in the form of name calling, nasty looks, being left outside groups, or physical bullying, either by peers or people older than they. Even professional educators may bully. Also seeing violence between parents or other adults at home prevents from experiencing security and trust, which is always a traumatic experience to children. Children always become traumatised in a violent environment even though they would not see actual violence at home.

The ill-being, which bullying, chaotic home life, and other corresponding situations causes, may be seen in children or young people in the form of picking a quarrel or being violent towards others. When someone is suddenly overtaken by a certain emotion, violence may also be an attempt to solve an inner conflict. Violence is not always directed outwards but may directed inwards. The visible forms of violence are already discussed to some extent, but the atmosphere of fear, frowning without speaking, and distressing atmosphere may also be violent situations, although it is much more difficult to show that these have happened than for example a kick or a blow. In any case, violence always affects people and their development negatively.



1. Who were you last touched by?

How did it feel to be touched?

Where and how would you like to be touched right now?

Who would you like to touch you?



The Pillars of Sexuality

The skeleton of sexuality (the stem of water lily) is formed by early interaction, interaction in general, health, and gender. When a child is conceived, also parenthood starts to develop. When the child is born, also the parents are born in their individual ways. Early interaction consists of giving and receiving. In most cases the baby and the parents are ready for a reciprocating interactive relationship from the moment of birth. We learn in early interaction if we are important and worth loving. Early interaction creates also the foundations for adult relationships.

The gender is inextricably linked to our bodies, and it is one of the most central concepts that are used for defining humans (Charpanties, 2001). The normative expectations that are related to the gender cover the diversity of gender. “The diversity of gender includes the idea that people can experience, express, and define their gender in many ways: male, female, or both male and female, sometimes male and sometimes female or not actually either of them. In the same way as sexuality, also the versatility of gender is a phenomenon that is relevant to all humans. The versatility of gender is made particularly visible by the women, men, and other people who defy the classification into two groups in terms of the gender. They are intersexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, and transgender people.” (Lehtonen 2006.)

The Family Is Very Important for Sexual Growth

The foundations of well-being and harmonious sexuality are created before the human even exists. The family values and sexual culture are determined at the very beginning of the couple relationship before children are even talked or dreamt about. According to the Family Barometer(The Family Federation), a couple wants to make their relationship official because they want security and stability – also for their future children – as well as economic stability. Research findings

show that equality is put to a severe test, when a child is born to the relationship. The stereotypical gender roles emerge then and may cause friction. Quarrels in couple relationships are mostly related to household work, financial matters, children's upbringing, integrating work and family life, and the ways holidays are spent.

Both partners also bring something from their childhood homes to the relationship, accepting something and rejecting something else. The new family's rituals, traditions, and important matters are formed gradually. It is important that both of the partners can feel that they have space for their own opinions and that the decisions on the family's everyday life are made by taking both partners' needs into consideration, not on one partner's conditions or under pressure. Although there is a lot of talk that nowadays parents no longer think about anyone else than themselves, this is a myth. According to a Swedish study, today's parents spend their spare time with their families. The family is seen as an important part of life. The hectic pace of everyday life does not, however, create good conditions for spending time in peace and quiet and for spending time just with the family and especially with children.

When we talk about families, we must remember that there are many kinds of homes and parents. Children and young people live in new families, with parents of the same gender, in core families, and with one parent. At the same time, their ideas of their own families may be more versatile than their caregivers think. A child's or a young person's family may consist of people who live in different places, and even the most important family member may live in another place than the child (Ritala-Koskinen, 2001). All this is important also for the child's sexual growth and, on the other hand, it poses challenges to sexuality education.

When adults hope that their taking care of the children and their upbringing would succeed in the way they wish, the adults should talk about one matter. In a two-parent family there are always at least two family backgrounds and two opinions – their own parents' upbringing model and their own new thoughts. It is not possible to find out the other parent's thoughts without asking him or her. Reflecting on one's own thoughts and values is important also in one-parent families. In the everyday life of new families, there may be several ways and traditions of upbringing. It is important that the families' parents agree on common values in upbringing.

• • •
*Parenthood and adulthood mean also adults’
growing up with the children.
It means tolerating also the imperfection of oneself and own child.
Be good enough. Trust yourself!*
• • •

Interaction Enhances Emotional Skills

The ability of the child’s mother or father to empathise and recognise their small child’s different emotional states and the ability to name them with common words of the culture creates the foundations for the child’s consciousness of their organs, emotional states, and thus of themselves (Stern, 1985). The parents’ ability to recognise their child’s emotional states is not, however, always good. Then an emotional state experienced by the child may be named “wrong”. A life-long conflict between the conscious and subconscious self has started then. An emotional state of the body that has remained subconscious represents the genuine self while the linguistically inexact name that has been given to the emotional state represents the conscious but still false self. (Lacan, 1966/1977.)

We can also think that, as sexuality educators, teachers or counsellors can provide guidance in recognising emotional states. In fact this should be seen as an especially important task. In order to be able to guide those who they are educating to face and recognise emotions in themselves, the educators must recognise what kind of emotions are aroused in each situation and whose emotions are directing in the guidance situations and the educators’ own thoughts and valuations.

Parents’ inability and difficulties in tolerating different emotional states affects strongly their children’s emotional life skills. All children learn to feel shame for their natural emotional states and expressions of emotions - for their crying, angeriness, being easily frightened, sexual curiosity or pleasure. Feelings of shame may also be related children’s own bodies, ways of being and living, and feeling own dignity, if the children have learned that in their early childhood (Huttunen, 1997).

People who recognise their own emotions and are connected to their selves are usually emphatic. This kind of people feel valuable and visible, loved. Their empathy skills grow and develop throughout their lives. The experiences of being loved, lovable, and appreciated are born in the small moments of everyday life. In educational institutions as well as in homes, it is particularly important to pay attention to emotions and making everyone visible. Adults who feel good about themselves and their sexuality are good adult role models. They are adults whose attitude to children and young people is warm and they recognise the importance of emotions. Pedagogic love and caregivers' skills and willingness to communicate with those who they are caring for emphasise everyone's authenticity and uniqueness. This authenticity is not built on performances and overcritical expectations of a certain kind of being (Skinnari, 2004).



1. List the emotions that occur to you. Reflect on when was the last time you experienced these emotions. What kind of situations were they attached to? Choose one of these emotions that you feel especially difficult or unpleasant. Think about how you could move on from this emotion

2. List the emotions that occur to you. Reflect on when was the last time you experienced these emotions. What kind of situations were they attached to? Choose one of these emotions that you feel especially difficult or unpleasant. Think about how you could move on from this emotion



Of it has been presented that those who have just recently fallen in love look each other much more often in the eye than the couples who have been together for a long time. It is believed that the facial contact maintains the feeling of love and keeps the spark alive also in couple relationships.



Interaction with Our Own Emotions and Thoughts

Reflect for a moment on what is the most important thing in your life. Frequently the most important elements are feeling secure and the meaningful people who are close to you. Security and trust are built in relation to other people and our experiences of being free to realise ourselves. In all human relationships – a love relationship, child-parent relationship or relationship with friends - we are able to be close to another person only if we are allowed and we dare to show all emotions without being afraid of becoming rejected. We should be given permission to feel and express especially negative emotions. Why shouldn't we be allowed to mourn in public and why is it so challenging to ask for help in situations which we are not able to cope with? Why are we afraid of being weak and tired?

Anger is a difficult emotion because it is bound to arouse some kind of irritability in our fellow citizens. Do you remember when was the last time when you got angry when someone threw a tantrum or when your partner's snapping at you made smoke rise from your head? "A secure and deepening friendship or couple relationship is not possible if the partners take a rejecting or disapproving attitude to each other's experiences or expressions of different emotional states. Without an ability to accept different and especially negative emotional states of the people close to us, it is not possible to feel genuine and respectful closeness. However, achieving this kind of human relationship dream is often as difficult as finding a needle in a hay stack." (Huttunen, 1997.)



1. What kind of sex do you enjoy?
What is important in sex?
What is good sex made of?
How do you talk about sex and
your hopes for the relationship with your partner?
How is sexuality shown in your everyday life?
Is it shown in a suitable way or do you hope for changes?

The Media and Sexuality

Even 8-year-old children are aware of what is expected of them. According to a Nordic study, 53% of Finnish adolescents experienced that they have problems with their appearance while only 16% of Swedish children thought so. According to Atte Oksanen, problems with appearance were related to sorrow, pessimism, failing, appetite, feeling unloved, headache, feeling ill, lack of friends, self hatred, wish to die, and feeling inferior. Especially girls had experiences of the ideal female body being too demanding, which produces appearance anxiety.

Images produced by the media have contributed to messages that the body reflects sexuality. The body acts as a statute that has been put on display and it is built and treated in the way required. A body disassociated from self is not considered valuable. It can be punished, it can be built, and much can be required of it. This kind of body acts to please other people and to present the owner's moral characteristics, for example the degree of self-discipline. Conclusions are often drawn that fat people are inefficient and asexual people who lack self-discipline. In reality they may be happy, efficient, and sexually active people who have come to terms with their own sexuality. In our culture, sexuality is linked to a young and slender body. Does slenderness make sexuality easier?

Television and perhaps also the Internet have already become a kind of family members in our society as they are integral parts of our everyday lives. Viewers can escape the grey everyday life and loneliness can be alleviated by turning on a television programme that can provide the experience of belonging and help to dispel sorrow and fear. The sexual thoughts emphasising the importance of the body that are conveyed by films and the other media have become part of our culture. They are not imported but a description of the present time and our culture with its focus on renewing and reproducing. Through detailed and continuously similar images, human diversity is easily narrowed down to just one norm that is to be adhered to strictly.

Sexy pictures in advertising could perhaps be used to make the notions of sexuality, gender, diversity, and body more comprehensive, if the illustrations were made from the perspective of diversity. Most of the adverts in which sex is now used for selling purposes advocate the heteronorm and emphasise gender differences. Children, young peop-

le, and adults need instructions and guidance in the use of the media, but also in creating a critical attitude to the messages conveyed by the media.

The new media is part of all people's everyday life and reality. Most of the children and young people are able to take a different attitude to the media than adults think. For them, the utilisation of the media is a natural and important part of everyday life. Advertising influences also adults. Porn illustrations are available to everyone and it is possible to see them for example on the Internet even unintentionally. Young people long for open discussion on the topic. It is possible to have an effect on the products that are offered for sale and the illustrations used in advertising by taking a stand and making deliberate choices in purchasing decisions.



1. Think about your childhood and adolescence. Do you remember moments when someone hurt you or sexually harassed you or some other person who is important to you?


Write down the memory. What kind of emotions does the memory arouse now? What kind of emotions did you feel then? How did you cope with the situation? Did you get support from adults? How do you think your parents or your teachers should have acted in the situation?

2. Have you sometimes bullied or hurt someone? What kind of emotions does that memory arouse? Why did you do so? Did the hurting of the other person somehow help you?


Health, the Highest of the Values?

Health is a comprehensive concept that cannot be easily defined exactly. People can have the experience of being healthy even though they may have a chronic disease as long as the disease is under control. On the other hand, people can feel very ill for example if they are suffering from flu. There is no trace of health then. Actually many people come to think about their health only when health is threatened. Health has many dimensions, all of which should be paid attention to, when the aim is to enhance health. The dimensions of health encompass cultural, social, psychological, spiritual, physical, and sexual health as well as environmental factors. Difficulties in one dimension are often reflected into other dimensions. As sexuality is one of the dimensions of human health, the experiences of sexuality and how sexuality is viewed influences people's self-image, health, and well-being as well as their experiences of themselves.

From the perspective of health, sexuality is very important. For example happiness in couple relationship enhances health. On the other hand, experienced violence is often reflected into other dimensions endangering holistic health and well-being.



*"Love is the core of education, humanity, and life skills.
Love is about integrity.
" (Skinnari, 2004.)*



In the Clearing up! project, the notion of health has been adapted and modified from several definitions of health (for example Pirttilä 1999; Ewicks & Simmet 1995; Grory 2005):

| Dimension of Health | What belongs to it |
|-----------------------|---|
| Physical | functional capacity of the organs of the body, physiological and biological phenomena, genetics, anatomy |
| Psychological | functional psychological capacity, ability to think clearly and coherently, cognitions, memories |
| Emotional | skills of expressing and reading feelings, ability to express feelings appropriately, ability to interpret and understand one's own and others' emotional states |
| Social | ability to create and maintain human relationships, interaction between the individual and society, and how people's lives and behaviour are regulated and enhanced through legislation and support (e.g. availability of health services, free basic education and school lunch, laws pertaining to working hours, social benefits and allowances) |
| Sexual | accepting one's own sexuality and experiencing it as a positive part of oneself, ability to achieve an empowering form of sexual expression, realisation of sexual rights, sex education and counselling |
| Spiritual | understanding the meaningfulness of one's life, experiencing life meaningful, ethicality, ability for self-distancing, freedom of choice, responsibility, peace of mind, religiousness may be part of the spiritual dimension but not necessarily |
| Environmental factors | living conditions, place of living, safety and security, peace, clean water, nutrition, temperature and climate, housing, sewage etc. |



Developmental Tasks Belong to Sexual Growth

Human life encompasses many events and changes. It is thought that life includes negotiating various developmental tasks. For example the crisis theory of Erik H. Erikson's psychosocial development can well be applied to sexuality education as it makes the developmental challenges of childhood and adolescence particularly visible. The starting point of the theory is that, in their development, humans face various challenges whose purpose is to enhance personal growth. According to Erikson, a well negotiated developmental task makes the negotiation of the next task possible. For example, if children have the experience of being important and capable in their early childhood, it makes it possible to gain experiences of independence. On the other hand, bad experiences may make children doubt their skills and feel ashamed of themselves and their actions. These experiences have an effect on the success of the negotiation of the following tasks and they also colour people's experiences of themselves and how they think other people to see them.

Big Changes in Adolescence

Becoming independent and finding one's own adult style belong to adolescence. Young people begin to form opinions of their own. Their bodies undergo considerable changes in a short period of time and the changes in the body force also the mind to change. Young people need strong adults to support them in order to grow to become adults themselves. Almost everything changes in young people's lives: body measurements and functions, mind and thinking, and the way of processing information; and young people must cope with all this without life experience. Also sexuality is in turmoil: young people's drives are strengthened and they must find their own sexuality and aggressiveness. Fantasies are important for young people in coming to terms with their own life and sexuality. Young people start renegotiating tasks that they have not completely dealt with in childhood. They want to believe in

their own capabilities in the world of adults, and adults' task is to be present and interested in them.

Young people can cope with the turmoil by using various defences. For example, they may see things black or white; matters are either really good or really bad, there is nothing in between. Parents may be thought to destroy nature or torment animals when they use products that these young people still used themselves a while ago. Young people's way of acting may be the only right one, and the parents' way to be and live is always wrong. Young people may also dramatise, and a larger than life discussion may start even about the smallest things, for example about eating with the family. By challenging their parents to debate and give reasons for everything possible, young people may strive for intellectualising. Some young people choose asceticism or abstinence for their method of coping. (Aalberg & Simes, 2007). Young people become more balanced in their emotional life at the age of about 18 – 25.

It is useful to provide also young people's parents opportunities to discuss sexuality. Parents have the right to know about the contents of sexuality education and the timing of the teaching of their minor children at least. The information given makes it possible to continue the discussion at home. Teachers' discussions with parents and the material meant for parents strengthen adults' knowledge of the development of young people's sexuality and also support parents' own parenthood and their coming to terms with their own sexuality. The material should provide comprehensive information on the developmental tasks related to young people's age with its crisis and on the ways of reacting and acting correctly.

Parents should also receive information on so-called normal young people's behaviour and what may be a symptom of feeling bad, problems, or an experienced trauma, for instance. Parents need information on how they can work also on their own sexuality while they are supporting the young people's growth. This kind of information and support is available for example from various associations and the health care system of the municipalities (for example Seta – LGBT Rights in Finland, Finnish Aids Council, Tukinainen ry, contraception clinics, family welfare clinics, sexual health clinics or therapy), child protection, the police, school health care, crisis points for young people, youth services, help lines.



1. If you were a parent, how would you feel if your child was heterosexual? How and why would you react to the situation? How would your child feel about your way of reacting? How would you feel if your child was homosexual? How would your child feel about your way of reacting?
2. If you were a parent, at what age would you allow your child's dating partner to come to your house to stay overnight? Why? How would you agree on the matter with your child?
3. At what age do you think your child should be allowed to start having sex, or when a child who is close to you should be allowed to do that? Why? How do you set boundaries to the child in this matter? What do you do, if the child does not follow the rules you have set?
4. Imagine the physical changes in young person's body at the age of 10 – 18. Write down the changes and note when that change happened to you. When did you experience your first ejaculation or had your first period? What kind of emotions did the changes arouse in you?
5. Is it easy to discuss matters related to sexuality with young people? What kind of matters do you find uncomfortable? Why? What do you think young people think if you bring up matters related to sexuality? How do you expect them to react? What kind of emotions do they arouse in you or in young people? How do you cope with these emotions?
6. What is your attitude to violence? What do you think is violence? Who should be allowed to discipline and who? Think about the world of young people of your children's age: what kind of bullying could your child face and from whom? Is violence more allowed to men than to women? Who should intervene in violent situations? Do bullying, violence, name calling, and hitting refer to different things? Does disciplining mean keeping order or is it punitive violence? What kind of violence is considered serious?



Elements Supporting Sexuality

The elements that support sexuality include for example the pearls of goodness, education and love. The pearls of goodness include wisdom, justice, humanity, and courage. These virtues are assumed to be universal virtues that people in different cultures try to follow in their lives. Sexual well-being seems to correlate strongly with these matters. It may be that people who know themselves and appreciate themselves regard their sexuality as a good thing. Thus the pearls of goodness enhance health and realistic self-esteem and support self-esteem also with regard to sexuality.

In psychology, personality refers to people's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Personality traits are characteristic of each person and fairly permanent regardless of the situation and time. Personality affects also sexuality. The five psychological personality traits – the Big Five – are emotional imbalance, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. Conscientiousness in life together with reasonableness seems to be a factor that protects from sexual risk-behaviour and sexual ill-being. Although the personality traits are supposed to be at least partly genetic, it is possible to develop these traits and work on the ways or reacting if the people are prepared for it.

Personality traits make also people's boundaries in life visible. Genetically inherited differences in temperament are factors that contribute to our differences. We interpret situations in very different ways; the same situation may appear different in different people's eyes and arouse different thoughts, emotions, and even traumas. Also sexuality and sexual experiences appear to be very different. We cannot use personality traits as an excuse for not taking responsibility but they can enhance our understanding other people's way of reacting. Personality traits build language and understanding between people if we can achieve the understanding of another person's way of being in the world and perceiving the world.

In order to flourish, human sexuality needs support, permission, and protection. Sexuality education can provide all of these. Sexuality education can be classified into teaching, guidance, counselling, and giving information and, in addition to these, also pedagogical love is important. With the help of pedagogic love we dare and want to communicate with another person as an equal partner, dialogically. Pedagogic love brings up the fact that it is possible for sexuality educators to convey warmth and caring, which enables those who they are educating to have the important experience of dignity. In pedagogic love, interaction means working together and discussing. It makes also sexuality educators grow if they have the courage to open themselves up for growth in the situation.

The Right to Knowledge and Education

In societies in which there is a lot of touching that is considered good, there is less violence than in those in which touching is a taboo. Societies which do not have strict gender role and ideal beauty stereotypes are more equal, not only from the perspective of gender but all people. The important sexual right is also realised then: the right to sexual self-determination, sexual non-classification, and physical safety of the body.

From day care centres to schools, vocational institutes, and universities, adults working with children and young people should join forces to promote interaction and pre-emptive action and work on supporting children's and young people's sexual growth. Although children's parents are their primary caregivers, parents need also other adults for their support in this work. It is important to dare to discuss the need for support and the conveying of a similar educational message together with professional educators.

Sometimes a parent's or professional educator's own sexual history or life situation prevents sexuality education, as sexuality and the matters related to it are too uncomfortable or painful to the educator. Then the significance of other secure adults' support is particularly important. Parents and professional educators need good and well-functioning social networks so that discussion with peers on young people's growth and sexual development becomes possible. This kind of network makes it possible to reflect on their ideology in relation to their peers' ideology and thoughts.



1. How would you like your partner (hoped for or real) to show you his/her love? How has your partner shown you his /her love? Has the expression of love been realised in the way you hoped for?

2. Think about how love is expressed by a person who is kinaesthetic (the world perceived through movement and touch), visual (the world perceived through seeing), auditive (the world perceived through hearing). How do you perceive the world? What about your partner, children, or close friends? What kind of challenges does this pose on the interaction in your family or with friends?



*Sexual security starts from self that is felt good
and is supplemented by quality sexuality education*






The Dimensions of Sexuality

Sexuality is part of the whole human being and it cannot be distinguished as a separate section from the other aspects related to humanity. Sexuality affects everything in the human and therefore it is good to take the time to explore sexuality in all its dimensions. These dimensions include at least:


- physical, anatomic, bodily, and biological dimension
- psychological dimension
- spiritual dimension
- cultural/social dimension.

Sexuality is always linked to the historical period of time and place, human genetics, experiences, emotions as well as personal interpretations and knowledge through which people perceive the events of their world from their own perspective and in relation to other people. Every dimension is all the time inextricably intertwined with the other dimensions.

In the core of sexuality, there is humanity to which the dimensions of sexuality are linked and which the centre of sexuality describes both to the people themselves and to others. The centre is the human's deepest, most mystical and perhaps the most unreachable area. Hjalmar Söderberg (2006, /1905/) describes the connection between humanity and sexuality in his book *Doctor Glass*. The following citation emphasises the importance of sexuality education.



*“Humans want to be loved and, in the lack of it, admired or,
in the lack of it, feared or, in the lack of it, detested and despised.
Humans want to arouse some sort of feeling in other people.
The soul is afraid of a vacuum and seeks connection at any price.”*



Humans want and need to be seen and heard. The need and ability to love and receive love are an important part of everyone's life. Söderberg's text sheds light also on the personal choices and solutions related to sexuality. Healthy self-esteem begins to grow at birth when humans in their early interaction learn if they are valuable and important to the humans close to them. Professional educators have a central role in supporting self-esteem. Research findings show that a child born in a difficult family situation copes well and is likely to develop good interaction skills and have experiences of being worth loving if there is a network of 5-7 secure adults around the child in childhood (under 18 years).

The Course of Life

All people have their past, present, and future. The past influences people's thoughts and experiences of themselves, others, and the world. There may be both pleasant and unpleasant experiences in the past. These matters provide opportunities to make different choices in the future. We can look at our past and realise that we don't want to experience again something that there was in the past. At the present moment we can make a choice that changes the course of events. On the other hand, in spite of the desire people may choose in the same way as before and, consequently, have to experience everything again unless they happen to avoid it through a coincidence. Every moment becomes unique and at every moment we make choices.

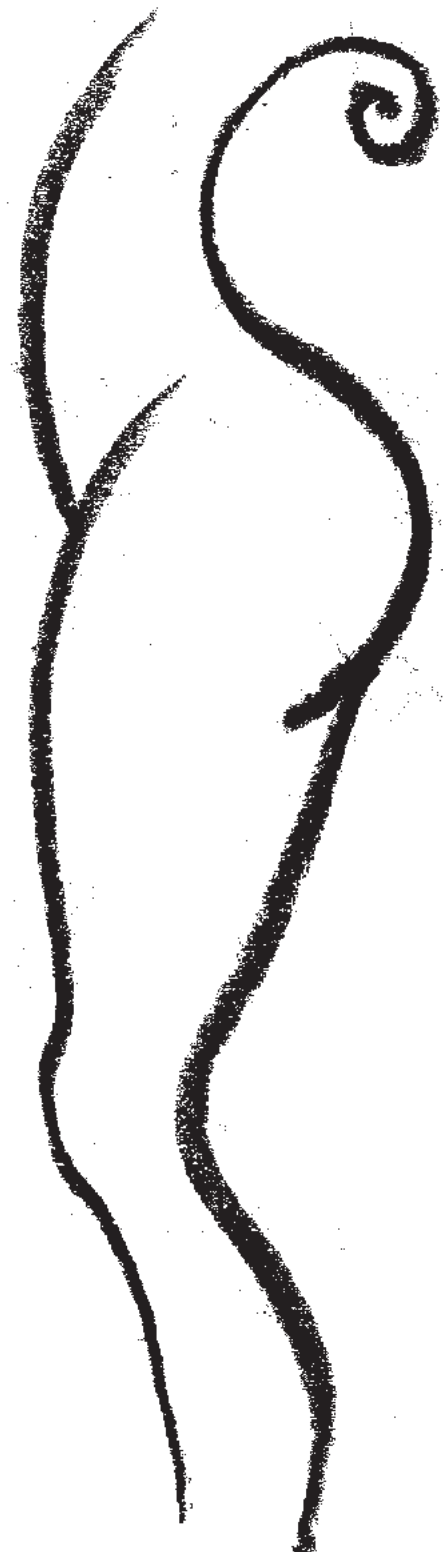
It is important for humans to be present in the moment. There is no need to be obsessed by the future. The future comes to us just like the rain drops in the Water Lily Model – in the form of nourishing rain, questions and challenges posed by life that affect also human sexuality.



1. Draw a curve of your own sexuality. Think about your life in periods of seven years starting from the years mentioned below and reflect on your life through sexuality. Write, draw, paint or imagine and mark the milestones on the red line in the places you want.

Think about the following:

Birth – What have you been told about it, what do you know about your being an infant? Look at photos, ask your parents, if you haven't done that yet. What was your family like then, who belonged to it? Who do you see in the photos and who are not in the photos?



Small child (under 7 years) - How was sexuality shown in your everyday life? How did your parents show tenderness to you or to each other? Who did you take a fancy to or who did you admire? Do you remember masturbating or telling pee/shit/fanny/willy stories? Did you like to be naked? What were you thought to be like when you were a small child, do you remember?

School child (7 – 12 years) – What kind of changes happened during these years? Were you talked about the changes? Who told? How did you feel about the changes? How did your body feel compared with your age-mates' bodies? Did you look forward to changes or were you afraid of them? Did you experience ejaculations or sudden erections at night? Did your periods start? Were you looked at differently than before? How did these matters feel? Were you in love? Was your heart broken? Did you date or secretly admire from afar? How did your parents or other adults in your family show tenderness to each other, or what kind of tenderness did your single parent get? Did you speak about matters related to sexuality with your friends? Did you watch porn or porn magazines? How did it feel?

Adolescent (13 – 19 years) – How did your body change? How did your mind change? Did your friends become more important than before? Did you dress differently than before? What kind of thoughts did you have about sexuality? Did you fall in love? Did you pine? Did you feel sad? Did you smoke cigarettes or did you use alcohol or other intoxicants? Did you have sex alone or with someone? Did you think about your sexual orientation? Were you satisfied with your life? What kind of matter did you keep secret from others? What kind of dreams did you have about adulthood, your life for example after 10 years? Did you feel uncertainty, loneliness or were you indecisive in some situations? What kind of support would you have liked to have then? Did you become pregnant or did your partner become pregnant? Did you have to go through abortion? Did you experience sexual violence, harassment or abuse? Did you go to STD check-ups?

Think about your life onwards from this in cycles of 7 years. Think about the above questions or make a list of the moments that are meaningful to you: pregnancy, giving birth, new partners, contraception counselling...

Write down and think about happy and sad moments in your sexual life. Try to remember incidents in your own life and what it was like at the age of your own child/children. Time makes memories golden. Therefore try to recall your memories with the child's eyes that you were then. Perhaps life wasn't so wonderful and easy every moment. What kind of support would you have liked to have?



SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This section deals with the aims and themes of sexuality education.

What kind of sexuality education is needed and why?

What kind of skills and knowledge does a sexuality educator need?

Can any adult deliver sexuality education?



Sexuality Educators' Own Sexuality, the Roles of Teachers and Counsellors

Before starting to teach sexuality educators should take the time to reflect on sexuality education as a whole, their own values and human concept, and what kind of image of sexuality they will be building with their listeners. (Koskinen, 2010). Sexuality educators should have a good knowledge about sexual health, but above all, they should feel good in the sexuality educator's role.

Sexuality educators learn the knowledge they need in multi-disciplined materials, but they learn at least as much in sexuality education situations, especially in the situations in which everything did not work out as planned. Learning from mistakes is painful, even embarrassing. However, it is always very fruitful if the educators dare to reflect on their own action. We can hope that, at least to some extent, sexuality educators would also be pursuing their calling in this work. At its best, sexuality educators work on and accomplish great things that are most important for their students' lives.

To be able to choose topics which students can learn from and which they find to be of current interest, sexuality educators must know about humans and the developmental stages in the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. Also knowledge of cultures and current knowledge may be at least as important as the knowledge of human growth and development. Although different cultures take very different attitudes to sexuality, the progress of human development and growth is to a great extent universal. Everywhere in the world children become young adults through adolescence and puberty, then adults, and late adults.

Sexuality Educators Work with Those Who They Are Educating in Many Ways

In the teaching of sexual health knowledge and skills ethical issues tend to come to the foreground. Instead of the transmission of knowledge, moral reflections often lead to a better result at least then when the teaching is based on transformation. Emotions, experiences, and motivation are strongly present when sexual health knowledge and skills are learned. Open dialogue, in which adults are aware of what can be talked about and how the realisation of sexual rights is respected and strengthened, supports young people's sexual self-confidence and the development of self-image. Action learning methods may be a good way to deal with value-laden topics in sexuality education. When action learning methods are used, students can be guided to choose the learning style that suits them best. Activities can also provide experiences of success to different learners and performers. In addition, activities can facilitate the collaboration of learners with different temperaments. There are opportunities for many kinds of activities in the group and the learners also have a possibility to guide each other in tolerating diversity.

Young people are taught many important things in sexuality education. However, study findings continuously show that human relationships and coping with them, emotions, use of condoms, helping organisations with their contact information, and sexually transmitted diseases should be discussed in more detail. Very seldom are non-heterosexually-oriented young people's needs taken into consideration in the educational themes.

Sexuality Educators Inspire and Encourage Reflection

One of the most important duties of sexuality educators like teachers in general is to make their students think. In a good sexuality education lesson, it is possible to express opinions and there is enough time for assessment and reflection. Adults challenge to think and promote critical discussion. At its best, sexuality education is delivered by discovering and learning together. Sexuality educators provide learners

with different perspectives. Self-evident facts are shaken and alternatives are sought. Sexuality educators have to decide on if they want to speak about sexuality with focus on contraception or promotion. Only after that is it time to think about what is taught, where it is taught, who are taught, and why sexuality education should be taught in general at schools. Sexuality educators convey their own ideas of sexuality through their attitudes. Substance knowledge alone is not enough although it is necessary, too. In addition, there are two special features in sexuality education that are worth noting: the language used must be understandable and appropriate for all those who are concerned and it is also important to remember that sexuality education takes place all the time, not only during lessons.

Knowledge-oriented and fact-based sexuality education may not appeal to those who direct their action emotionally. Emotionally-oriented young people need self-confirmation, emotional support, and responsibility training that appeal to them also on the emotional level. When dialogue is emphasised in sexuality education, it enables young people to reflect on their own thoughts, emotions, and experiences in relation to the information given and others' thoughts or emotions. This kind of dialogues can be achieved only in a secure, caring, and positive atmosphere that is respectful of everyone's own choices (Kontula, Suvisuo, Tossavainen 2009).

According to a study published by Meriläinen and Kontula (2007), girls' knowledge about sexual health seems to be better than boys'. In general both girls and boys needed more information about sexually transmitted diseases and sex-related interaction. Young people also had little knowledge about the structure of sex organs and their names. It was very common that young people made the mistake that the bringing up of sexuality and interest in sexuality were due to an increase in hormone production. We can ask if one reason for this was the timing of sexuality education and the linking of changes caused by puberty to the awakening of interest in sexuality. When sexuality then shrinks to mean penis-in-vagina sex, it contributes to supporting the thought that the increase in sexuality in young people's lives is caused by hormone production. This may make us think that sex belongs to young people and it is especially "normal" and even presumable between a girl and a

boy. This happens although, according to sexuality education materials, much energy is spent on giving warnings and practising abstinence skills.

The research questions in many studies and reports on young people's sexuality provide interesting information on the mindset of those who have posed these questions: how they see young people and what young people's lives possibly include in their research designs. The questions often exclude many themes and, therefore, a lot of important information remains concealed. For example the research design and the questions posed may provide norms for sexuality that quite often leads to a sex-oriented and particularly heterosexual perspective. The questions are important in the respondents' world. Also inquiries, quizzes, lessons, textbooks, and other corresponding texts contribute to renewing and changing the thought about what should be known about sexuality, what belongs to sexuality, and what should be taught and learned in sexuality education. This should be done even though the themes excluded and the choices made would be discussed in the preface. It would be interesting to know if the respondents in these studies obtain information on what themes are not dealt with and the reasons for it. Different kind of questions could perhaps lead to different results. What is actually important and desirable in sexuality? What should sexuality education teach to young people?

Sexuality Education Requires Acting as a Responsible Educator

Sexuality education should be delivered in accordance with the educators' influence and the learners' abilities, interests, and needs. Therefore quality sexuality education cannot be based on an expert-subordinate relationship while acting as bystanders or merely providing and gaining experiences. The sexuality educator's role means acting as a responsible educator who dares and wants to influence the direction of growth (cf. Värri, 2000). At the same time, educators could become a kind of role models who show in their own lives how they are living up to their values and instructions. According to Viktor Frankl, values cannot be taught but they must be lived out by example. Then the role model idea works at its best as an important educational element. On the other hand, we should not forget that poor role models teach, too.

In education and growing, there are always issues that cannot be presented only in terms of facts. From a wide perspective, education is about what the educators and those who they are educating become in the joint project. This process is to a great extent internal, and all of it is not conscious action. The process is not realised only on the rational level; it requires wisdom, logic of the heart, intuition, and tacit knowledge brought by experience. Tacit knowledge is influenced by situational cues and the educator's own knowledge structures.

Sexuality is tied to the historical period of time and place, at least partly culture-oriented knowledge and experience. Therefore it can be important that sexuality educators should examine the historical mirror of society. It is then possible to understand why the reality is what it is at the moment and how the present is intertwined with the past. Also the present time of young people's lives can be linked to the past by making them recall matters related to their lives. This can start a dialogue that supports growing. When we are constructing our stories, we determine what we were like in the past and, on the other hand, we also come to think about what we would like to be in the future. According to Hakkarainen and Paavola (2008), remembering means examining the past but also directing our attention to the future. It is important for sexuality educators to deal with their own history – who they are, what has happened in the family before their own birth, and in what kind of times people have lived. Even though there would not be many changes in the people during the years the culture in which we live has changed.

We are outcomes of our era. When we think about young people and the educator's role, it is useful to examine the world in which young people live. Our world is different from the world of young people today. The world requires now different things and different kind of reading skills of situations than before. On the other hand, the fundamental questions have remained the same throughout centuries: Am I important? Am I worth loving? Does anyone love me? Who am I? What is normal/abnormal, permitted/not-permitted, right/wrong?

Nowadays young people surf in the media world and see it differently than the former generation. We interpret situations and phenomena from the perspective of our own history and therefore the current cultures and ways of doing may seem to be different and even harmful.

Despite this, can we say what is unambiguously good or bad? When we examine the phenomena from the perspectives of different eras, we may find issues for reflection from the past and, on the other hand, we may also find acceptance for some of the current phenomena: few phenomena have been born in the 2000s but their roots can be traced at least to the 1900s.

Language and an Interactive Approach

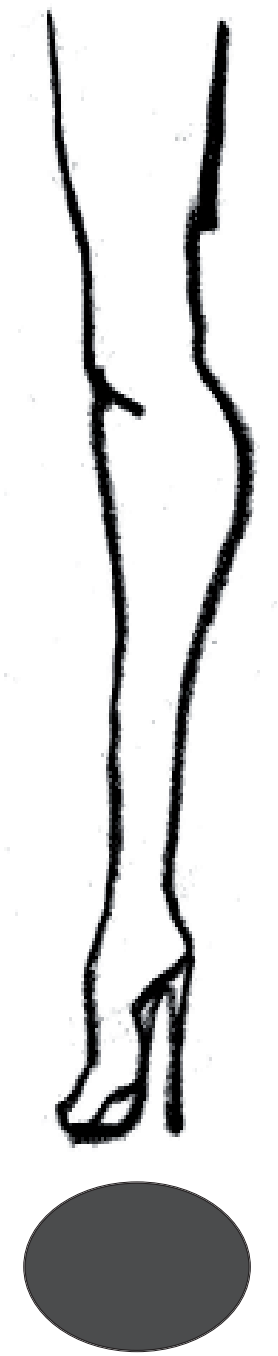
The language we use is important in sexuality education. Language renews and reproduces our experiences and notions. Active thinking and reflection make it possible to discharge distressing emotions and break myths. Language is not just words, but also facial expressions, gestures, and interaction by means of movement, painting, or for example arts. When emotionally charged issues are concerned, silence easily increases uncertainty and reflecting alone. This may lead to repressing emotions and the consequences may be desperate and violent deeds at their worst. In their article (2008), Hakkarainen and Paavola draw a parallel between silence in emotionally charged issues and the consequences of limiting the freedom of speech. In the same article they bring up also the important fact that people who participated in the same event had interpreted the situation in different ways. People's conceptions of the past may be shared, complementary, or conflicting.

Sexuality education can also provide good suggestions for improving health and give information on enhancing sexual health. It encourages young people to reflect on the meaning of life, values, identity, and gender and it also teaches interaction skills. This can contribute to young people's experiences of the meaningfulness of their own lives, trust, coping skills, and meaningfulness of life in general and also decrease the experiences of chaos and fear of losing life control. At its best, sexuality education is transformative learning and interaction based on open dialogue in which the educator learns together with the learner while they are moving in the same direction. It is not necessary to come to a single right outcome in the discussion. The most important thing is that the young people learn to take responsibility for their choices.

The educator has the opportunity to bring up what has been found useful and the young people must have the freedom to make their own choices.

Sexuality education should also teach that life is not necessarily easy and does not always meet people's wishes. Disappointments, suffering, and distress belong to all people's lives, and we have to learn to cope with them. In sexuality education situations, it is possible to practise the recognition, feeling, and controlling of these emotional states and change action in a health-enhancing direction. At the same time, this makes it possible to learn empathy skills, listening, becoming heard, and making informed decisions in difficult situations.

According to Bernhard Keller (2007), for instance, children must trust their teachers in order to succeed in their studies. Correspondingly, teachers and parents could be one another's allies. When teachers draw parents' attention to positive features of their children, it creates a hopeful and encouraging atmosphere for both learning and living at home. Sexuality education can contribute to building trust when sexuality educators take the time to reflect on their values, attitudes, and human concept in the matters related to sexuality together with their peers. This makes it possible also for parents to be seen and heard. Then the parents also have opportunities to reflect together with others on what the matters related to sexuality mean to them. The reflection helps the adults either to strengthen their attitudes and values or to find new perspectives. Adults who know and trust themselves and their own roles as educators are good adult role models for young people. They are able to understand young people's diversity and variety of thoughts and emotions about sexuality without the fear of experiencing them as threats to themselves or the environment. It would be important to provide opportunities for parents to reflect on themes emerging from young people's sexuality and their own lives. At the same time, it would be necessary to provide information and opportunities for discussion with their peers.



What Kind of Sexuality Education Is needed and Why?

Sexuality education has an important task in our culture in which young people are constantly bombarded with contradictory messages concerning sexuality and gender. Sexuality is involved in many matters, as part of everyday life. The mass media, social media, family traditions, and educational norms affect young people's notions of sexuality and gender. In young people's world of experience, various situations, illustrations, and messages are interpreted very differently. Some young people are more vulnerable than others, and they need special support in the sexual dimensions in order to be empowered and have their self and identity strengthened in the growth towards the demands of adult life. In young people's socialising process of becoming fully-fledged members of their community, many young people are caused stress by the norms according to which they should behave in order to fulfil the so called unspoken requirements of a suitable kind of gender, sexuality, and humanity. The WHO stated in 2002 that, everywhere in the world, puberty is for boys a gateway to opportunities, mobility and increased freedom.

As for Finnish society, it certainly is so. At the same time we can, however, think about it if these opportunities cause boys also pressure to cope on their own without resorting to others' support. Do they perhaps direct boys to the culture of silence, which may be destructive to human growth and development? On the other hand, boys' freedom is not real. Boys' gender role is still very narrow and strictly regulated by social norms.

According to the WHO, puberty poses different challenges to girls: it may signal an end to schooling and decreased mobility, and entry into the adults' world with marriage and childbearing as expect possibilities in the near future. This kind of guidance may give girls apparent security also in Finnish society. Life goes on and there is no need to think about alternatives. This situation may make girls vulnerable to hopelessness and resignation. Girls' road may be very lonely and then also girls may be steamrollered by the culture of silence.

Young people's answers to the Fizzing Inquiry in the Clearing Up! -project. The inquiry was carried out in the schools where teachers were provided supplementary training in the project in autumn 2010.

In a school where 60 students answered the inquiry, three of the most desired themes in the order of priority were the following:

- sexually transmitted diseases
- equality
- sex and intoxicants

In another school in the same city, the following were the most popular themes of 55 respondents:

- pregnancy
- sex and intoxicants
- sex.

In the third school, 66 respondents' three most important themes related to sexuality were:

- love
- dating
- Am I OK?

We can conclude from this information that even in the same city the need for information is different in different schools and, therefore, it is important to ask students what their wishes are.

During the School Health Days in the autumn 2010, data was gathered in the Clearing Up! project from the participants (teachers, support team members) on the topics that they considered the most important to be discussed with young people studying at vocational institutes.

The three most popular themes were the following:

- sexuality
- matters related to dating
- sexual violence, harassment, and abuse

Successful Sexuality Education Programmes Develop Young People's Cognitive Skills

Successful sexuality education enables young people to increase their knowledge and improve their skills when they are provided opportunities to find their own personal values and reflect on them. It is then possible for young people to think about their attitudes and other people's attitudes to various matters and situations related to sexuality and gender. Quality sexuality education increases the feeling of competency and improves interaction skills.

According to the Unesco report "International Guidelines on Sexuality Education" (2009), sexuality is always intertwined with questions related to gender and cultural differences.

According to the Unesco report, the backbone of a quality sexuality education programme should be research findings and good practices. The foundations of sexuality education with its goals should be a planned integrated programme which is implemented, updated, and evaluated at regular intervals. Sexuality education pays attention to matters with a gender-intensive approach and brings the sexual rights, diversity, and dimensions of sexuality to the centre of education. A successful integrated sexuality education programme understands young people's everyday lives. It pays attention to young people's age and developmental levels and, at the same time, is culture intensive, without forgetting to draw attention to young people's wishes and needs. Sexuality education should make young people reflect on their values and practice various matters by using action learning methods.

The Unesco report dealt with the effectiveness of sexuality education programmes. Effective programmes were successful in correcting young people's misinformation, breaking myths and harmful beliefs, and clarifying and strengthening positive values and attitudes. Equality increased and discrimination decreased. At the same time, non-violent behaviour was strengthened. In the projects, young people's relationships with the adults close to them improved and the participants experienced that it was easier both for parents and young people and for teachers and young people to discuss with each other. Young people decreased their risk-seeking behaviour and practiced emotional life skills.

Sexuality educators' training is required in order for sexuality education to be good and systematic. Sexuality education cannot be on the shoulders of only one person. Successful sexuality education can be delivered by a multi-professional team whose members are committed to a joint plan. Also parents' contribution is required in successful sexuality education. Parents need support and information on sexuality as well as opportunities to discuss with other parents. This promotes continuing the discussion on the topics in homes.

Sexuality is not a topic that is dealt with only in health education or on special theme days. Sexuality education should be integrated with all subjects and educationally relevant situations should be utilised in addition to explicit instruction. For example while learning programming, it would be possible to introduce themes to open a discussion channel between teachers and students also for non-formal situations.



According to international research findings, the goal of sexuality education should be young people's growing to the kind of sexual identity they are happy with. At the same time young people should be able to build a natural relationship with sexuality and matters related to it. In addition, sexuality education should aim at an increase in knowledge, skills, responsibility, and ability to make informed choices in sexual and human relationships as well as a decrease in health risks and risk behaviour.



Sexuality education and sexual health knowledge are also an extensive and essential part of health education instruction throughout the school years. Big changes in young people's lives and the negotiation of developmental tasks require support and guidance. This can be offered in a natural way in health education lessons and while dealing with topics included in the health education curriculum. Sexuality is a topic that may not be dealt with enough because of the discomfort, cultural reasons, and lack of traditions related to it.

Themes for promoting sexual health have been brought up also in the national curriculum as well as in community- and school-based plans. In addition to health education, topics related to sexual health can be dealt with also in many other classes. Sexuality education di-

dactics could encompass also the mastering of skills in communicating with students by means of open dialogue in everyday life in addition to the actual didactic skills.

The number of themes selected for the contents of sexuality education depends on many things. In sexuality education classes, teachers' own and traditional Finnish sexual culture are transmitted. Students' all-round education is also increased in classes and, thus, sustainable choices are made possible also with regard to maintaining and enhancing sexual health. In sexuality education instruction, young people are guided towards independent adulthood while they are being empowered to live in the adults' world, making adults' choices.

It is necessary to reflect on the didactic teaching methods used in sexual health education without forgetting that sexuality is a sensitive topic that people in general find uncomfortable to talk about. How important a part of health and well-being do we want students to consider sexuality? Do we want that sexual well-being and pleasure are considered important in Finnish comprehensive schools and worth striving for in Finnish society? What kind of topics, themes, and programmes are selected to the curriculum? What are the core topics of sexual health that are critical for finishing comprehensive school, vocational institute or upper secondary school? What sexual health themes are essential for Finnish culture, what messages do we want to have conveyed to the next generation?

Well-being from Sexuality Education

The goal of sexuality education is to enhance students' well-being. In sexuality education studies, the school staff is provided with opportunities to develop their expertise in delivering sexuality education in comprehensive schools and secondary education. The more knowledge teachers have of sexuality education, the easier it is for them to acquire additional knowledge to support their teaching. Increased expertise deepens also the understanding of additional information. Sexuality educators are involved in changing sexual culture and hopefully also contributing to increasing knowledge and equality.

Even in the same society, sexual cultures in different families may be very different. When designing a framework for sexuality educa-

tion, it is useful to bear in mind the differences in the ways in which children and young people have adopted their attitudes to sexuality in their own families. Teachers can never have a uniform group to be taught. If they think that sexuality is a human dimension that is mainly based on biology and physical human development, teachers' belief in the uniformity of the group may be too decisive for the contents of sexuality education. Although young people often make progress in their physical development in very similar ways, families' differences in sexual culture are so great that the wide variety should be taken into consideration in the planning of instruction. Every family also thinks that their own model of upbringing children and their attitudes to sexuality are good and they hope that the family values are respected in sexuality education classes at the school.

Knowledge Basis

In the selection of the contents of sexuality education teachers have even too great a wealth of topics. There are an enormous number of matters that appear to be important and even absolutely necessary. Fortunately there are research findings to support the selection. The teachers can reflect on if the selection of the contents should be based on avoiding risks – the ethos of contraception – or enhancing well-being – the ethos of promoting.

The contents can be divided into three levels in the instruction:

- The core material (must know) consists of the knowledge that is crucial and essential for implementing the study plan and achieving the goals. The core material helps many young people to face challenging situations and cope with them well enough. The core material is the minimum that is to be learned during the course.

- Supplementary material (should know) is knowledge in which the knowledge of the core material is extended. It is useful for young people but it is not, however, absolutely necessary. On the other hand, understanding and using the core material may be facilitated when the supplementary material is mastered.
- Special knowledge (nice to know) gives support to an even greater understanding and application. It provides a basis for reflection and inquiry-based learning.

Teachers have to restrict the contents to be taught in classes because in vocational institutes there is only one compulsory credit unit (about 1.5 credits). At least the core material should be included in those classes. Complementary knowledge and special knowledge could be included in the contents of optional subjects. The challenge faced then is avoiding repetition and coping with difficulties in the real deepening of learning.

Multiple Sources of Knowledge

Measor showed in the study published in 2004 that, at least for British 15-year-old adolescents, important sources of information were friends and, for girls, also family members in addition to friends. Much of the sexuality education that reaches boys (giving information, guidance, counselling, teaching) comes from outside home and school – the Internet, magazines, and videos. Porn acts as a most important educator for boys. According to Measor, boys told that they got concrete information from porn on how sex – sexual intercourse – is practised and what happens in sexual intercourse. Many boys feel anxious and fearful in their first sexual intercourse. Although boys don't have an idea of the course of the sexual act, they assume that they have to take the responsibility for its success while girls, on the other hand, are anxious and nervous about the pain related to sexual intercourse and also afraid that their bodies are good enough for the partners. In sexuality education these questions are often brought up in many different ways.

Boys may talk about masculinity and the expressions of the imagined assumptions related to it. When these are discussed, it is easy to start discussion on honour, i.e. the fear of losing reputation.

Educators must think about and examine society, sexuality, and gender first on their own and/or with their peers. What kind of assumptions and norms can be seen in the environment and what kind of assumptions do the educators have themselves? It is important to recognise the assumptions and it is not possible to get rid of the assumptions. It is even more important that the educators are aware of these assumptions and strive to open discussions on these themes with young people or at least make the assumptions visible as assumptions and not as real facts. There is no objective sexuality education as education is always intertwined at least with the educator's human concept, values, theoretical knowledge, and own person.

A concrete example might be focusing on the prevention of pregnancy. Hormonal contraception may make boys experience that it is none of their business or that in a way pregnancy would not be their concern. In our society this thought is confirmed by discussion on teenage parenthood. The discussion sometimes takes a moral stand on teenage mothers and their problems. Very seldom does the discussion start from the fact that what those young people especially need is a network of adults, support, and strengthening for their pregnancy and parenthood in the middle of the developmental tasks of adolescence. Experiences of dignity and respect are born and strengthened partly also on the basis of how their "own group" is spoken and written about in the media and what attitudes are taken to young people in official and unofficial interaction in the small moments of everyday life. Quite seldom is the focus on the boys and young men who are participants in the situations that require abortion and who should take responsibility and participate in parenthood. Men disappear from these situations altogether although it would be important to bring up the matter. This silence maintains gender-based responsibilities related to sexuality and makes it even possible to alienate people from society.

The success of sexuality education is often measured by the number of abortions and sexually transmitted diseases. However, studies show that the use of contraception correlates with self-esteem. It can be very important also for young people's sexual well-being what matters are researched. On the other hand, it is important to note that effective

quality education should include many themes and methods of working on matters related to sexuality if we want the intensifying effect to be seen also in evaluation. As far as contraception is concerned, sexuality education does not often correspond to non-heterosexually oriented young people's contraception needs as it by-passes them. If this happens, we can think that sexuality education contributes to the culture of silence and making invisible, which does not confirm or produce the experience of acceptance of one's sexuality but may even contribute to experiences of shame and being abnormal. Studies related to sexual intercourse and the use of contraception or not using it tend to focus on girls. There are quite few studies on boys' attitudes and thoughts about sexuality, sex, gender, and human relationships. One exception is Minna Nikula's doctoral dissertation, which was published in 2009, in which Finnish boys' sexual health is compared with Estonian boys' sexual health.

Sexuality education alone is not sufficient in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and non-desirable pregnancies. These are always influenced by various situational and socioeconomic factors as well as for example the availability of health services and the taboos related to touching. The values and notions of sexuality of the culture of a certain community and its sub-cultures create the foundations of young people's sexuality and life situation. For example according to Grundseit's and Kippax's study, it could already be seen in the late 1900s that, in the countries in which sexuality and sex were dealt with openly and in multiple ways in the media and the population's general attitude to sexual questions was open, it could be predicted that the abortion figures were lower and the number of sexually transmitted diseases smaller.

According to the study made by Grundseit and Kippax at the end of the 1990s, 15-year-old girls considered it more necessary to avoid pregnancy than sexually transmitted diseases.

The Sexual Rights Are a Central Part of Sexuality Education

In 2002, the WHO published the list of sexual rights. According to the WHO, all people are entitled to the sexual rights. This means that also sexuality education should make possible and promote the realisation of sexual rights in all respects.

- The right to the best possible sexual health and the right to have health services related to sexuality and reproduction
- The right to seeking, receiving, and spreading information on sexuality
- The right to sex counselling
- The right to bodily integrity
- The right to choose a partner (or not to choose)
- The right to decide on being sexually active or not to be
- The right to voluntary and equal sexual relationships
- The right to decide on getting married (when and how, also registered couple relationship)
- The right to decide on getting children or not getting children
- The right to aim at a satisfying, secure, and enjoyable sexual life

Based on these rights, in sexuality education, educating to responsibility could mean making informed choices and taking responsibility for the choices, living up to one's own values. Then responsibility would include also respecting people and their choices.

Interaction Skills and Values

In the reflection on interaction skills, personal values, and perspectives of matters related to sexuality, the learners are provided with opportunities to practise situations for the future. In a secure and trustful atmosphere, the learner's self-knowledge, and experience of dignity can be strengthened. According to an article written by Suvisuo, Tossavainen and Kontula (2009), the use of condoms was neglected in sexual intercourse by those whose experience of competency was weak or unstable. Neglecting to use contraception was linked to the

partner's wishes, and situational factors were given as reasons for not using contraception. Contraception was not used, although the young people knew about the risks of sexual intercourse without contraception. According to the study, neglecting contraception correlated also with having several partners and the frequency of sexual intercourse. Condoms were frequently used by the female participants in the study who manifested competency and who had a possibility to discuss sex and contraception with their partners. They were able to determine and negotiate the matters related to the timing of the sexual intercourse and the use of contraception as well as to set limits to sexual interaction.

As for contraception and practising sex, meaningful factors seem to be also the partner, quality of the relationship, communication skills with the partner, and background factors related to the social situation such as gender roles, beliefs about couple relationships, intoxicants, passion, and sexual desire. When the partner is relied on and loved, risk calculation stops and the partner can easily be seen considered risk-free.

The Educator's Role Is Important

Kontula's and Meriläinen's research findings (2007) show that 24% of the girls participating in the study and 16% of the boys had had non-desirable sexual experiences. The researchers found also a strong correlation with the non-desirable experiences, lack of information on sexual health, and little enjoyment at school. In terms of sexual health, risk factors seem to accumulate strongly to the same persons. This means that the common denominator in the risk factors could be considered these young people's experience of unworthiness and the fact that they do not experience their lives as meaningful.

As for the teacher, the most meaningful in the process of increasing information on sexuality education was that the teacher's motivation and willingness to act as a sexuality educator. Then the atmosphere in the classes fostered a natural attitude to sexuality and emphasised the significance of toleration. This shows the success of effective knowledge-based education in the study.

It was also essential that there was one person in charge of sexuality education in the school. It is a challenge for the future to get responsible persons as well as a team to make a concrete plan for sexuality education at their own schools.

Characteristics of effective programmes (Unesco report)

- The programme reaches large numbers of people.
- The implemented programme consists of a sequential slow process including at least twelve 50-minute sessions and the education is extended from early education to adulthood.
- The programme covers topics in a logical sequence.
- The programme actively involves participants and makes reflection possible on the personal level.
- The programme is based on young people's reality.
- The programme offers "boosters", for example in the form of poster campaigns.
- The programme includes homework and the themes are discussed also at homes.
- Parents are included in the programme and they are provided with relevant information and opportunities for sexuality education in groups, for instance.
- The programme addresses gender issues, pays attention to culture, laws of the community, and human rights.
- The educators are qualified and competent sexuality educators and they are motivated and willing to deliver sexuality education.
- The programme provides quality training to sexuality educators.
- The programme includes evaluation of the quality and developmental challenges which are worked on so that the content would still improve. The programme is pilot-tested and new methods are developed to support sexuality education.
- The programme involves multiple people with expertise in several fields.
- Young people participate in the planning of the programme: young people's wishes and needs are listened to and taken into consideration.
- The programme includes getting acquainted with the helping organisations in the area.
- Efforts are made to integrate sexuality education into other action and instruction.

On the Ethos of Education and Teaching – how to promote positive attitudes, healthy self-confidence, and interaction skills

Among the important factors in health behaviour, Kontula and Meriläinen (2007) bring up positive attitudes, adopted positive social norms, high self-esteem, strong goal-orientation, and interaction skills such as communication and negotiation skills and self-confidence. In his works, philosopher Immanuel Kant emphasises that every human should be treated as a personal human being while bearing in mind that no one is exactly similar to others. All humans have their own strengths and weaknesses in their own unique and non-recurring life situations.

In her study in 1987, Hannele Niemi showed that school children expect that the meaning of life and other existential questions should be reflected on together with others at school. According to the study, also upper secondary school students thought that these matters were important. Educational philosopher Bernard Curtis describes human growth as a slow process of self-consciousness and development of responsibility, which includes improving communication skills and ability to act with others. Seen in this light, the person acting as an educator should support the learner's self-consciousness, increasing self-understanding, and growing in responsibility.

Sexuality Education that Inspires, Gives Information, and Supports Mental Health

Lasse Kunnas describes in his works that health education should be inspiring, give information, and support mental health. For example, reflections on what health means to the world, family and friends, and oneself and what health includes could be inspiring. We can think that the requirement of inspiration could include also encouragement to taking responsibility, increasing self-consciousness, and reflection of one's values and human concept. Work on promoting change builds meanings between health knowledge and skills in relation to the learner's own life situation and its uniqueness. The information giving approach can build the learner a story with the help of which the past is linked to the present moment. When the development of matters can

be seen and linked to become part of the learner's own life as well as the community's life. The task of giving information urges educators to focus also on the wisdom of the heart and the habits sustaining life in addition to factual data. Health education that supports mental health enhances the learner's experience of healthy self-esteem and the understanding of everyone's dignity. The mental health can be supported when the learner is encouraged to recognise and feel emotions and take responsibility for the resulting action. The learner also needs to become aware of different opportunities for action in the situation.

Successful sexuality education contributes to young people becoming wiser when they learn to reflect, slow down, and discuss many things together with others while gaining experiences of dignity. According to Peavy (2004), wisdom includes a number of ideas that are better than the average of how to live and solve problems in life. The concept includes also John Shotter's levels of knowledge: theoretical and factual knowledge, practical knowledge, and unique knowledge emerging from social situations. Situational knowledge – with or without words – is described as a way of taking an attitude to situations and changing conditions and as an ability to cope with these matters. It is difficult to conceptualise situational knowledge. It is anticipatory, participatory, and practical in nature. According to Auli Toom (2008), Polanney claims that we know more than we are able to tell. Tacit knowledge is activated for example when we recognise someone who we know in a crowd of people. How does this happen?

When we act in some way, our rationale is tied to our personal intentions and our estimate of the situation. Our action is linked to the skills, methods, and resources that are required for performing the task and that are at the background of our intentions. Dialogic sexuality education makes it possible for the learners to find rationales for their own behaviour and choices from their internal point of view. It is possible to utilise other people's thoughts as a mirror for our own thoughts while, at the same time, thinking about what kind of role our past experiences and the ways we have learned to react play in the choices.

Changing beliefs that are harmful to sexual health and breaking myths is relatively easy at least compared with changing people's experience-based ways of acting. All of us have such ways of acting and reac-

ting in certain situations which we are not even conscious of. Changing these ways of acting is a profound and slow process that requires great efforts. In this process, we have to face many different and often challenging emotions. During this change process, we do not only learn but also grow and develop. Transformative learning enables learners to extend their perspectives as the learners' attitudes to matters change. This changes the learners' way of thinking and makes it possible to get rid of risk behaviour, for instance. The changed perspective to matters changes interpretations of the situations which has an impact also on the resulting way of acting. This kind of change is possible only in genuine interaction in which the pace and atmosphere make it possible for the learners to open up and trust both themselves and those who are present.

In the everyday school life, there should be more time for reflecting on the meaningfulness of life and the importance of oneself. One of the most important tasks of schools should perhaps be the fact that students can see options in different matters and that they are educated to make positive choices both as private persons and in their future professional roles. Then they accept themselves as well as other people who are different from them. They can accept other people in a positive way, as they have no objective reason for refusing to accept them. This kind of attitude to life and other people challenges us to experience appreciation and acceptance as the persons who we are. People with healthy self-respect are able to make their own genuine choices and decisions. (Pykäläinen, 2004.)

At Its Best, Sexuality Education May Have Long-term Influences

Sexuality education can influence many areas of life that are important for the learners. At its best, sexuality education supports the growth and development of identity as well as personal reflection on sexuality and gender. Sexuality education can also support people in making health enhancing choices and draw attention to the information and skills that are needed in making personally well-informed choices.

Quality sexuality education provides tools for living in general, not only thoughts about a certain part of the human on a theoretical level. At its best, sexuality education provides young people opportunities to decide what is essential at the moment and what is not. Education can also give guidance in reflecting on what action or deeds are value-laden and what are not.

It is important to understand that people's perspectives of matters and situations and the resulting meanings and ideas have a profound impact on our behaviour, action, and the way we experience our relationship in the world and, on the other hand, to the world. In every situation, there are many alternatives and options to choose from, in which young people should learn to make choices that are positive for them. Making this kind of choices requires trustful relationships between the educators and the young people, freedom from fear, ability to accept critique, and independence. For example, the fear of what others think of me if I am like this disappears with trust. Through self-reflection, it is possible to grow towards one's own kind of identity, which is not directed by external pressures. External directedness is one factor that is believed to make young people feel meaningless. It is possible to see choices when people can feel secure and trustful. Then it is possible to talk about own worries, fears, wishes, dreams, and questions without being worried about belittlement or not being heard.

We can think that sexuality education that regards self-reflection as a resource extends its influence to our whole lives. We can enhance our well-being by reflecting on ourselves, our situations and relationships with other people. Young people need adults, professional educators, and parents around them in order to be able to learn and start reflecting on different kinds of being and living, as it is not possible to educate to a higher level than the educators have reached themselves. Community spirit becomes a means of realising oneself in reflection with others. According to Schleifer (1996), this kind of education could promote children's independence and emotional strength.

The core of sexuality education is dialogue and pedagogic love. Hannu L.T. Heikkinen and Raimo Huttunen (2008) describe dialogue

as follows: “Dialogue is discussion in which something new is created – when people are discussing together, they build meaning, purpose, or understanding, search for rationale and interpretation for their lives and their world. Understanding is born in dialogue through people and it is no one’s own. Logos changes, flows, and moves in discussion without ever becoming ready.”

Dialogue is movement, a game that is not mastered by the players, or a mirror. No one can decide on its flow. The dialogic approach is Martin Buber’s You-I relationship, in which dialogue is built in the space between I and You. In this relationship the other one is a goal and not a means. In dialogue, both partners surrender to be carried forward by the stream towards new landscapes of the mind.

Long-term goals could be for example the following:

- Sexuality education creates preconditions for experiences of a happy life. (Self-knowledge, empathy skills, discussion skills, appreciation of aesthetics.)
- Ability to commit oneself to a couple relationship improves and the practising of couple relationship skills promotes successful couple relationships. (Communication skills, discussion skills, seeing sexuality and sex as positive matters, closeness, touch, experience of one’s own body, caring, equality, conflict resolution skills.)
- Happiness tends to accumulate. (A satisfying couple relationship as a buffer between stress and negative psychological and physical health effects, the degree of appropriate physical closeness and touching, easiness of discussing matters related to sex.)
- Sexuality education strengthens seeing sexuality and sex as a secure and positive matter that enhances well-being.



The Levels of Equality between Sexuality Educators and Learners

In their work, sexuality educators can think about the levels of equality in the relation to the learners. We are guided by the existential level – everyone is unique and valuable. We all need experiences of being accepted as humans and cared for. According to Honneth, people fight in many ways in order to get this kind of recognition from other people. One of the relationships between sexuality educators and those who they are educating is the expertise of each partner in different fields in their own positions and their own lives. Both partners' expertise is needed so that the matters related to sexuality could become part of the learners' everyday lives and enhance their well-being. The educators are not then better, but their knowledge and skills bring their competency to the situation, the purpose of which is to support and promote the learners' growth towards the kind of self that they consider good for themselves.

It is worth noting on the levels of equality that in most situations one of the two has to take the legal-ethical responsibility, and taking this responsibility requires careful recognition of one's own professional ethics, human concept, and values. It is this level that makes people working in interaction with other people professional and professionally working people. Educators whose attitude to other people is genuine and warm find out where the learners are in their own lives and start education from there. When the education work is started, it is necessary to find out what the learners understand, know, and are able to do, and what kind of shortcomings there are in their actions or knowledge. The educators have to strive to find meaningfulness from the perspective of the learners' life situations, after which the educators' work can start while they are growing together with those who they are educating.

Lauri Pykäläinen writes in his doctoral dissertation (2004) that, according to Viktor Frankl, one important element of education is humour. Guttman (1998) writes that people learn more easily and more willingly and are happier when the material is offered to them in a humorous way. In this context, humour means many things that cont-

tribute to warming up in the educational situation, strengthening caring and warmth in the group, or enhance learning and growing by means of laughter. It is known that laughter has also physiological effects, which may also foster learning. The influence of touching as an educational factor enhancing motivation and taking a positive attitude is seldom discussed. The right kind of touching relaxes and produces opportunities also for linguistic development, building one's own boundaries, and perceiving one's own body. Touching is known to increase self-appreciation, learning, and ability to concentrate, reduce stress, and promote non-violent behaviour.

Eva Maria Waibel (1998) has made a list of the preconditions that a value-oriented teachers should meet:

- Teachers should be real and genuine. They accept their emotions, and therefore they need not transfer them to their students.
- Teachers search also for their own values.
- Teachers must understand and accept the students as they are. Teachers must be able to identify with the students' emotions, such as fear, aggression, and disappointment. The students must be taken seriously.
- Teachers can and they must trust the students' own development and its power.
- Teachers must provide the students with study materials that contribute to an open learning process. When the framework of the topics is comprehensive and open, the themes are likely to become more essential and relevant for the students, as they deal with their interests in many ways.
- Teachers help their students to gain experiences of freedom, give responsibility and, within reasonable limits, possibilities to make their own decisions. This supports also the toleration of difficult situations.

When the goals of socio-dynamic guidance are applied, the goals of sexuality education could be the following:

- Helping people to recognise their achievements, opportunities, and strengths (supporting and encouraging self-appreciation, encouraging responsibility and value-orientation, improving reflection skills, ability for self-distancing)
- Providing people support and help with their needs and wishes as the starting point (knowledge, support and skills taking the learners' wishes into consideration, without forgetting age and level appropriate guidance)
- Describing meanings and experiences (matching the past, present, and future, building people's stories to make it possible for them to identify themselves as part of the community)
- Constructing realities together with the educator and those who are being educated (realistic idea of the matters that cover topics in a logical sequence and at a suitable pace accepting people's rights to their own choices. This can enhance people's freedom in their own lives.
- Interacting genuinely, warmly, and respectfully with the learners.



GLOSSARY

Explanations of terms in accordance with the understanding of the authors (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti)

Centre of sexuality (seksio) describes an emotion and experience of where sexuality comes from when it emerges to be described by means of concepts. Sexuality is in fact so deeply embedded in the human that it may not be possible to describe it by words. There is something that may remain tacit knowledge, perhaps to the subconscious level. Everyone's centre of sexuality makes the continuity of human life, creativity, and culture possible. To some extent, the centre of sexuality becomes visible and conceptualised in human sexuality and experiences of gender, humanity. The centre of sexuality is part of humanity and humans' everyday lives. It requires the acceptance of the kind of human concept that includes the spiritual dimension in addition to the physical, psychological, and social dimensions. The Water Lily Model attempts to make the centre of sexuality visible in the way it was understood by the creators of the model at that moment.

Gender can be determined in many different ways. It may refer for example to a person's biological, anatomical, hormonal, social, or legal status. There are also other genders than male or female. The gender is a multiple phenomenon. Humans may be sometimes more male or more female, both male and female or of neither gender.

Heteronormativity describes the model of thinking according to which all humans are either female or male and automatically heterosexual. Gender groups are seen as internally similar but, when they are compared, opposed to each other, and in the ranking order men and masculinity have traditionally been seen as more valuable than women and femininity. The thought about the body being only biological contributes to the building of the norm. Heteronormativity influences everything and it restricts opportunities for action. Boys are expected to behave in a certain way and girls in another way. Some matters are permitted to girls, but not to boys. Gendernormativity and thus also sexualnormativity are intertwined with heteronormativity.

Human concept tells us what we think humans are basically like. It directs our thoughts, actions, habits, and ways of living. Our human concept influences how we assess each other and, for example, what can be spoken to students and what cannot. The human concept directs our work even though we would not think about it. Also the fact of what sexuality encompasses is tied to the human concept. In this book the human is seen as a physical-psychological-social-spiritual entity.

Love is the central force that supports and influences human life. It is a personal experience, expression of commitment and joining as well as a manifestation of affection for another person, a group of people, or an issue or cause etc. Many people long for love at least at some stage of their lives. People also need the experience of being accepted from birth to death. They gain this kind of experience when they feel that they are loved and valuable. Loving requires skills and competence as well as devotion and concentration. We practise learning this skill for a long time, perhaps as long as we live.

Love is often linked to sexuality, gender morals, and sexual behaviour. However, love has many forms, and love as an emotion or as a phenomenon on the psychological and spiritual levels may often be ignored. The forms of love include among other things so called romantic or erotic love, but love belongs also to caring, teaching, and education. Love and sexuality are not synonyms and sex is not necessarily dependent on love or vice versa.

Porn includes speaking, writing, pictures, photos, images, and films, in which erotic behaviour is described with the aim of arousing adult viewers, readers or listeners sexually. The definition of porn is linked to humans on the personal level, but on the general level it is linked to history and culture. The presenting and spreading of porn are regulated by legislation. To its consumers, porn may bring many good things but also many disadvantages. The effects may be linked to humans' experiences and understanding of themselves and their sexuality. They should form quite a harmonious whole so that porn could provide positive experiences of sexual arousal enriching imagination.

Reproductive health refers to sexuality, reproduction (e.g. pregnancies and acquiring children) and phenomena related to the reproduction system of the human body which have a health dimension (National Public Health Institute 2004). There is a high degree of over-

lap between reproductive health and sexual health. Reproductive health is included in sexual health.

Sex. Having sex is action in thoughts, words, or body. It refers to experiencing pleasure and enjoyment through arousal and all senses. As for the Finnish verb describing sexual activity, the authors suggest the verb “seksiä” (practising sex). According to the authors of the book, naming an event, action, situation, or experience sex and ‘seksiminen’ requires equality and voluntariness of the partners (although it is possible to have sex also alone). Sex is based on everyone’s own interests and it respects bodily integrity and the right to self-determination.

Humans have the ability and potential to have enjoyable sex – to gain pleasure from sex. The introduction of the potential is tied to the possibility to open up to one’s own sexuality, become conscious and understand one’s own centre of sexuality. Having sex with a partner is at least to some extent tied to the collaboration of the partners.

Sexuality education is professional activity which is delivered by means of guidance, counselling, teaching, or giving information to people about matters related to sexuality and gender. Sexuality education is planned and goal-oriented activity and its impact is evaluated and developed when necessary.

Sexual culture encompasses beliefs, habits, and values related to sexuality, which have developed during the course of time as the result of interaction between people in certain communities. All the cultures of the world take a stand on humans’ sexual habits, rights, and restrictions.

Sexual desire is longing for activity that produces sexual satisfaction. Hormones influence sexual desire, but also the general life situation, lack of couple relationship or quality of the couple relationship, earlier sexual experiences (desirable and not-desirable) as well as experiences of one’s own dignity or lack of dignity influence the level of sexual desire.

Sexual desire causes reactions and many kinds of emotions in the body. Based on human values, the emotions and reactions can be desirable, good, or challenging. Sexual desire changes and varies in accordance with the human’s life stage and situation. Sexual desire may never die out completely but it may disappear or almost disappear for various reasons.

Sexual disorder is a temporary or permanent change in sexual reactions and activities which causes worry or trouble to the human. Sexual disorders may appear in arousal, desire, or ability to function. They may be physiological, for example caused by weakening flow of blood to the cavernous body, but they may often be also psychological. Humans may have experiences of guilt or shame for their own sexual behaviour. Fear of one's own inability or inadequacy may cause for example arousal difficulties. One way to determine sexual disorders is to divide them into generalised and situational disorders.

The generalised disorders appear irrespective of the situation. In situational disorders the problem appears only in certain kind of situations or with a certain partner. Many disorders can be treated with medicines or therapies.

Sexual diversity expresses that, in sexuality, humans may be directed to men, women, both men and women, more to men or women, or visa versa, or to neither gender. The diversity is increased by the fact that sexual orientation may vary. For example sexual emotions and fantasies, sexual behaviour, love and couple relationships as well as humans' own conceptions may be versatile. Humans can have simultaneously for example non-heterosexual emotions and heterosexual behaviour. The concepts are not mutually exclusive, neither do they cover everything. The diversity of sexuality concerns all of us, and it is not only a question of sexual orientation as it is intertwined for example with socioeconomic factors, living environment, religion, and factors related to health and illness that determine humans' experiences of themselves as sexual human beings.

Sexual health. "Sexual health means the possibility of humans (men or women) to enjoy and express their sexuality without risks of sexually transmitted diseases and undesirable pregnancy, free of coercion, violence, and discrimination. In order to achieve sexual health, humans must have a possibility to have knowledge-based enjoyable sex that is built on self-respect, positive interpretation of human sexuality and mutual respect." (Kontula & Lottes, 2000.)

The WHO defines sexual health as follows: Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.

Sexual health services are an integral part of the treatment of sexual health. Sexual health services include the possibility to take care of the physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health. The most common sexual health services are for example contraception and sexuality counselling.

Sexual intercourse refers to the touching of sexual organs naked in an intimate way. Humans can have intercourse irrespective of the gender. No sexual orientation excludes the possibility of intercourse. In sexual intercourse humans reveal their bodies and sex organs to be caressed by others.

Sexuality belongs to humanity: humans are sexual in their own ways from the beginning of their lives until the end. Sexuality becomes visible through its different dimensions. Sexuality may be an important and essential part of the self to one person and it can mean sexual intercourse or avoiding diseases to some other persons. We can think that sexuality is an innate potential that can be a source of satisfaction. We are not necessarily aware of the potential, but become conscious of it at some point of our lives (cf. centre of sexuality). Sexuality encompasses also the consciousness of our own gender and the understanding of what makes it possible to express sexuality so that it can produce pleasure, enjoyment, and an experience of good enough humanity, an experience of being a whole human being. (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2010; Kontula, 2010.)

Sexual orientation describes humans' ability and willingness to direct their erotic and/or loving feelings to a person of the same gender (homosexual) just as well as to a person of the opposite gender (bisexual) or to a person of the opposite gender (heterosexual). Sexual orientation may vary during the life time. All people have sexual orientation. It is not possible to decide on other humans' sexual orientation on their behalf.

Sexual pleasure, enjoyment, is born from positive emotions and physiological reactions when humans are allowed to realise their own sexuality in a way that is appropriate and good for them. Thus humans' positive emotions in realising sexuality, i.e. human potential, become visible. It depends on the human what kind of matters – for example what characteristics – in another human attract and arouse sexual desire. Often these sense perceptions are feelings of pleasure and enjoyment.

Sexual rights have been defined by both WAS and IPPF. Sexual rights are part of human rights and they require for example humans' right to bodily integrity. See www.was.org and www.ippf.org.

Sexual violence means pressing or coercing another person into sexual acts or situations. In sexual violence it is not question about sex but violence and abuse, a need to submit another person to one's own power. The authors of the book suggest that in addition to the term sexual violence there should be also the term "action that infringes sexuality".

Values express what we consider good, worth striving for, and important. As for sexuality, the choices are very strongly value-laden. When we appreciate something we often regard it as the right solution, even as the only right solution.

Variety of gender concerns all humans. The variety of gender is made especially visible by the women, men, and other people who challenge the traditional thinking about gender. These people include intersexual, transsexual, and transgender people as well as transvestites.



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