

Sexual Identity

88% of teens describe themselves as heterosexual

1-2% of teens describe themselves as homosexual or bisexual

10% of teens describe themselves as confused about their
Sexual orientation



While scientists do not know the exact cause of sexual orientation, they theorize that it is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences

The consensus of scientific research and clinical literature demonstrate that same-sex attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality.

There is now a large body of scientific evidence that indicates that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is compatible with normal mental health and social adjustment

American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from the DSM as a mental disorder in 1973

World Health Organization removed homosexuality from the ICD-10 in 1977

Is sexual orientation Nature or Nurture?

- There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation.
- Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular singular factor or factors.
- Many think that nature and nurture both play complex roles; most people experience little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation.

About 5% of the US population identify as having a non-heterosexual orientation

Animal kingdom?

- Various non-human animal species (over 1,500 species!) exhibit behavior that can be interpreted as homosexual or bisexual. This may include same-sex sexual activity, courtship, affection, pair bonding, and parenting among same-sex animal pairs
 - ↳ Various forms of this are found in every major geographic region and every major animal group.
 - Giraffes, Bisons – there is more same-gender activity than opposite-gender activity
 - Lions, dolphins, albatross, swans – homosexuality is common
 - Walrus – all bisexual until age 4, then heterosexual during breeding season and homosexual rest of year