

Sexual, Gender Identity, and Substance-Related Disorder

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson is going to cover several disorders that have received a lot of study in recent years:

1. Sexual Disorders and Gender Dysphoria
2. Substance-Related Disorders

1. Sexual Disorders and Gender Dysphoria

Sexual disorders involve psychological issues related to sexual adjustment and impaired sexual functions. When discussing mental disorders, it is important to remember that they are maladaptive. This means that they impair a person's day-to-day life and their ability to adjust to different kinds of situations.



DID YOU KNOW

This is a contested area of psychological disorders. The DSM originally identified homosexuality as a mental disorder within the DSM-III, and it wasn't removed until the 1970s. Many of these disorders might be contested within different areas of society. Some of these behaviors are not necessarily considered abnormal or dysfunctional by those that have them.

There are many different kinds of sexual and gender identity disorders, including:

- Paraphilia, which is when a person becomes sexually aroused by things that don't normally stimulate people, like non-human objects.
- Dendrophilia, a psychological disorder where a person is sexually aroused by trees.
- Pedophilia, which is being sexually aroused by children.

A person may even be sexually aroused by non-consenting people, in the case of the following disorders:

- Exhibitionism, where a person enjoys having sexual encounters out in public places.
- Voyeurism, when a person likes to watch another person, generally without their consent or when they're unaware of being watched.

Another category of sexual disorders is sexual dysfunction. This is when a person has psychological problems

specifically related to their sexual desire and arousal. They are unable to become sexually aroused in normal sorts of ways. This is not necessarily the same as biological impotence, which is specifically something within the body that impairs function, but rather any mental issue that results in sexual dysfunction.

Gender dysphoria refers to when a person's sexual identity within their mind, or psychologically, doesn't match their physical sexual identity. This can result in transsexualism, which is when a person has feelings of being a different sex or gender than what they are biologically. People with this gender dysphoria may try to surgically change themselves to match their psychological identity.



TERMS TO KNOW

Sexual Disorders

Psychological issues related to sexual adjustment and impaired sexual functioning.

Gender Dysphoria

When a person's sexual identity within their mind, or psychologically, doesn't match their physical sexual identity.

2. Substance-Related Disorders

Another category of mental disorders comprises **substance-related disorders**. This refers to the abuse of or dependence on different kinds of substances that affect a person's brain and mental state.

Any drug that affects the brain is referred to as a psychoactive drug. The most common of these are ones that you're probably familiar with, like alcohol or caffeine, which are the most widely used psychoactive drugs. The term also includes nicotine and THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, as well as other kinds of drugs like opiates, morphine, or cocaine. It includes amphetamines, like methamphetamine, and hallucinogens, like LSD.

These drugs need to be considered because they have major effects on our brains and mental states. It is important to note that substance-related disorders can often result in physical dependence. This means that if a person stops using the substance after a prolonged period, they might suffer withdrawals. Withdrawal symptoms can include shaking, vomiting, sweating, headaches, and sometimes even death.

Now, there can also be psychological dependence on a substance. A person might experience a strong feeling of need or an intense craving for the substance, so much so that they can't control themselves and must use that substance. This is one of the hallmarks of a substance-related disorder.

Recent studies show that a lot of substance-related disorders, and what is called addiction, may actually have a strong biological component.



EXAMPLE For example, people within families with a history of alcoholism may be more likely to actually develop alcoholism themselves. The knowledge that someone may be biologically predisposed for addiction can help to treat them in the future.



TERM TO KNOW

Substance-Related Disorder

Abuse of or dependence on substances that affect the brain and mental states



SUMMARY

Sexual and gender identity disorders are psychological issues related to sexual identity, sexual adjustment, and impaired sexual functions. As with other mental disorders, sexual and gender identity disorders are maladaptive, meaning that they impair a person's day-to-day life and their ability to adjust to different kinds of situations. Example of these types of disorders include exhibitionism and pedophilia. Gender identity disorders can result in conditions like transsexualism, which is when a person has feelings of being a different sex or gender than what they are biologically.

Substance-related disorders involve the abuse or dependence on different kind of psychoactive drugs, which are drugs that affect the brain. These disorders can lead to physical or psychological dependence. Recent studies have shown that a person may be genetically predisposed to certain substance-related disorders (addiction).

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Gender Dysphoria

When a person's sexual identity within their mind, or psychologically, doesn't match their physical sexual identity.

Sexual Disorders

Psychological issues related to sexual adjustment and impaired sexual functioning.

Substance-Related Disorder

Abuse of or dependence on substances that affect the brain and mental states.