

Sexual Behavior

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Relevance to Security

Sexual behavior can raise questions about an individual's reliability, trustworthiness, and ability to protect classified information when it: involves a criminal offense, indicates a personality or emotional disorder, reflects lack of judgment or discretion, or it causes an individual to be vulnerable to undue influence, exploitation, or duress. No adverse inference concerning the standards in this guideline may be made solely on the basis of the sexual orientation of the individual.

Most scientific research and past espionage cases show that the connection between sexual behavior and personnel security is far more complex than the simple notion that "normal" sex is acceptable and "nonconforming" sexual practices are a security risk.¹ Self-control, social maturity, strength of character, and overall psychological adjustment are more important security indicators than the specific sexual practices in which people engage. Sexual orientation or preference may not be used as a basis for disqualification in adjudicating eligibility for security clearance.

A common error in thinking about sexuality is to reason that "since I'm normal, most other normal people must think and behave more or less the way I do." Actually, "normal" human sexual behavior is far more diverse than most people realize, and many seemingly unusual behaviors have little or no relationship to security. What is considered normal in one realm of society may be distinctly abnormal in another.

Normality and abnormality, or deviance, are not appropriate criteria for determining the security relevance of sexual behavior. Many sexual fetishes may not be common, but they are harmless unless carried to an extreme. There is no "normal" amount of frequency of sexual activity. Celibacy is unusual but is not by itself a concern to security clearance adjudicators. On the other hand, "normal" heterosexual relations can be a security problem if pursued in a compulsive or irresponsible manner, and any sexual conduct may be cause for concern if it is part of a pattern of emotional maladjustment.

To protect employee rights to privacy and civil liberties, adjudication of sexual behavior needs to be based on demonstrable security concerns, not on commonly accepted myths or the personal moral values of individual adjudicators. Case-by-case judgment is more appropriate than automatic disqualification for any particular variety of sexual behavior.

Sexual Behavior as a CI Concern

The relationship between sex and spying has a long and colorful history. During the Cold War, communist intelligence services maintained a stable of attractive, female "swallows" used in efforts to seduce male Western officials

and visitors. There are many cases of Americans in Moscow and other Eastern European capitals being approached by local intelligence services as a result of sexual affairs or indiscretions. [2](#)

Some Americans were successfully recruited in this manner. For example, an Army Sergeant assigned to the American Embassy in Moscow had a one-night-stand with a Soviet woman. Several weeks later, he was told that she was pregnant and that, as the father of a Soviet national, he would not receive an exit permit to leave the country unless he cooperated. He did cooperate, and continued to cooperate after his return to the United States. [3](#)

The noteworthy point is that these individuals were engaging in normal rather than nonconforming or deviant sexual practices. Inability or unwillingness to control their sexual desires or emotional needs led to poor judgment (such as promiscuity in Moscow). Their sexual behavior exposed them to assessment and eventually pressure and recruitment by a hostile intelligence service.

Also during the Cold War, the East German Intelligence Service had a large and highly successful program of sending male agents to West Germany as "refugees" with a mission to seduce, assess, and when appropriate, recruit West German secretaries employed in sensitive positions. [4](#)

Such techniques certainly did not end with the Cold War. Americans living and traveling abroad are still frequent targets of the local security and intelligence services, and the exploitation of sexual attraction or sexual needs continues to be a favored *modus operandi*.

Any sexual relationship with a foreign national while traveling or stationed abroad in a country that conducts intelligence operations against the United States should be of interest to adjudicators. Foreign security and intelligence services have many resources available when working on their home turf. They can monitor and, to some extent, control the environment in which an American lives and works. Sexual interests are one of the things that many foreign intelligence and security services try to identify and exploit. An American is at a disadvantage, because he or she is in unfamiliar territory.

Any American government official, scientist, business traveler, or tourist with access to useful information can become the target of a foreign intelligence or security service at any time in many different countries. When an individual is being targeted, sexual lures are one of the standard tools of the trade, and they are very effective as the physical intimacy of sex may lead to personal intimacy. The bedroom is an ideal location to learn of an individual's longing to be rich, resentment of a boss, or other exploitable weaknesses.

The most common target is an American male, but women are not overlooked. For example, Sharon Scranage, a CIA secretary at the American

Embassy in Accra, Ghana, was recruited by Ghanaian Intelligence as a result of her amorous relationship with a Ghanaian national. [5](#)

Sex Tourism: Sex tourism is said to have become the third largest sector of illegal trade after drugs and arms trafficking, and it is easily exploited by foreign intelligence services for the identification and assessment of American targets. Information on "sex travel" is widely available on the Internet. Tours for men provide a variety of sexual companions or allow selection of a single companion to accompany one throughout the tour. Russia and the former Soviet states, the Far East and Latin America are favored destinations for such tours. Other tours provide partners for a specific type of sex. For example, pedophiles travel in organized groups to the Philippines, Thailand, India, Costa Rica and other countries where child trafficking rings provide minors for sex. Participation in a child sex tour is against U.S. law, and will, under nearly all circumstances, be disqualifying.

Mail-Order Brides: "Mail-order brides" from Russia, China and other countries provide a mechanism for those countries to place foreign agents in the United States. An Internet search for "mail-order bride" reveals numerous opportunities in this area. A number of American citizens who have been processed for security clearances or reinvestigated for a security clearance have obtained foreign wives in this manner. Because of the risk that a wife provided by a foreign marriage or "dating" service may be a foreign agent, marriage to one of these women from a higher-risk country is often disqualifying for a security clearance.

Potentially Disqualifying Conditions

Extract from the Guideline

(a) sexual behavior of a criminal nature, whether or not the individual has been prosecuted;

(b) a pattern of compulsive, self-destructive, or high risk sexual behavior that the person is unable to stop or that may be symptomatic of a personality disorder;

(c) sexual behavior that causes an individual to be vulnerable to coercion, exploitation, or duress;

(d) sexual behavior of a public nature and/or that reflects lack of discretion or judgment.

Adjudicators must take care to ensure that interpretation of these criteria is based on analysis of security risk and not on their personal approval or

disapproval of the conduct being adjudicated. Everyone involved in the security clearance process is obliged to keep personal values and prejudices out of the process as much as possible.

The first question to be asked about any report of sexual behavior is not "Is it true?" but "Is it relevant?" Sexual behavior is relevant only if the sexual behavior is [criminal](#), [compulsive](#), symptomatic of a [personality disorder](#), makes an individual [vulnerable to coercion](#), or shows a [lack of discretion or judgment](#) -- each of which is discussed in some detail below.

Personal codes of sexual morality are not an appropriate criterion for adjudicating sexual behavior. As noted by one judge when overturning the termination of a homosexual federal employee: "The notion that it could be an appropriate function of the federal bureaucracy to enforce the majority's conventional codes of conduct in the private lives of its employees is at war with elementary concepts of liberty, privacy, and diversity." [7](#)

The security significance of questionable sexual behavior depends in part on recency, frequency, intent to continue the conduct, and whether force, violence or intimidation are involved. For background information on specific sexual practices and discussion of their relevance or irrelevance to security concerns, see [Information About Specific Sexual Practices](#).

Criminal Behaviors

Some behaviors are almost universally condemned and prosecuted when sufficient evidence is available. These include [rape](#), [incest](#), sexual relations with children ([pedophilia](#)), [possession of child pornography](#), [voyeurism](#) (Peeping Tom), [exhibitionism](#), and making [obscene phone calls](#). [Sexual harassment](#) may also be illegal, depending upon seriousness. For further information, see discussion of these specific behaviors. These behaviors should be assessed under Criminal Conduct as well as Sexual Behavior. They may also be evaluated under Personal Conduct if they are part of a pattern of unreliability, dishonesty, or poor judgment.

Sex offenders seldom limit the activity to a single offense. The behavior is likely to be repeated. One study shows that sex offenders are four times more likely than nonsex offenders to be rearrested for their crimes. [8](#) Such offenses indicate mental health problems, and treatment is often ineffective.

It bears mentioning that some behaviors, such as adultery between consenting adults and oral or anal sex, are still on the books as crimes in some jurisdictions. However, these laws are seldom if ever enforced. Such behavior should be evaluated only if the subject is charged with a criminal offense.

For purposes of adjudicating security clearances, the precise legal interpretation of the behavior may be less important than what the behavior

shows about a person's judgment, reliability, and willingness or ability to follow rules.

Rape

Rape is defined by state statute, which means the definition of this crime differs from state to state. Many states now use the gender-neutral term "sexual assault," which covers sexual crimes against men as well as women. More importantly, state statutes are gradually changing to put greater emphasis on absence of consent rather than use of force as the defining characteristic of sexual assault, including rape. The crime is aggravated if force is used, but can occur without it.

A fairly typical legal definition of Criminal Sexual Assault is any genital, anal, or oral penetration, by a part of the accused's body or by an object, using force or without the victim's consent. Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault occurs when any of the following circumstances accompany the attack:

- Use or display of a weapon.
- The life of the victim or someone else's life is endangered or threatened.
- The victim is over age 60, physically handicapped, or profoundly mentally retarded.
- The perpetrator causes bodily harm to the victim.
- The attack occurs during the commission of another felony.
- Force is used, including either physical violence or threat of bodily harm.9

Judicial interpretations may differ from state to state, or be ambiguous, as to whether "consent" to sexual intercourse requires an affirmative yes or may be inferred from a failure to say no. Intercourse with a person whose mental function has been impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, or who is asleep or unconscious, will usually be interpreted as without consent, and, therefore, as rape.

When rape is defined by absence of consent, rather than use of force, it becomes more difficult to determine when rape has occurred, especially when it is alleged to have occurred between friends or acquaintances. Within the context of a complex male-female dating or social relationship, absence of consent is sometimes hard to define and difficult to prove.

Owing to the frequency of acquaintance rape and date rape, many colleges and universities have adopted codes of conduct dealing with sexual behavior. These are not legally binding, but they may be a basis for disciplinary action. Many of these codes of conduct do not define specifically what is meant by consent, but some do. One of the more complete definitions of consent is

provided in the student conduct code of the University of California, Berkeley. It states:

"Consent is defined as positive cooperation in act or attitude pursuant to an exercise of free will. The individuals consenting must act freely and voluntarily and have knowledge of the nature of the act or transaction involved. It is a defense to the allegation of nonconsent that a defendant held a reasonable and good faith belief that the complainant was consenting. A current or previous dating relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent. The determination regarding the presence or absence of consent should be based on the totality of circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred. The fact that an individual was intoxicated at the time may be considered in determining whether that person had consented to the act in question. Students should understand that consent may not be inferred from silence or passivity alone." [10](#)

Statutory rape generally refers to sexual intercourse or penetration, whether or not voluntary, with a person who is incapable of informed consent. That includes children under a specified age, with the age varying from 12 to 18 depending upon the state, and may also include mentally handicapped persons.

Most studies of persons convicted of forcible rape show that rapists do not lack available sexual partners. Forcible rape is a crime of violence, motivated by anger and the desire for power and control, not an act of sexual desire by an oversexed or sexually frustrated man. Researchers have consistently found that rapists tend to exhibit more sociopathic tendencies and more generalized lack of empathy than that found in the normal population. [11](#), [12](#)

As rape is a crime rather than a medical diagnosis, most convicted rapists are sent to prison and there is little attempt at treatment. Three quarters of convicted rapists become repeat offenders. Counseling of rape offenders often fails to quell the inner compulsion to rape. Depo-Provera, a drug that causes a marked drop in sex drive helps to deter rapists by eliminating their ability to have normal physical sexual responses, but it is effective only for as long as the drug is taken.[13](#) Also, the absence of a physical response does not mean a man is incapable of rape. Men have used objects to rape women, and there is debate as to whether penetration must occur for an assault to be classified as rape.

Incest

Incest generally refers to sexual activity between blood relatives, but there is no agreement on a universal and precise definition of the term. The degree of relationship that makes it a crime is defined by law in each state. If stepfathers are counted along with natural fathers, incest is more prevalent, as stepfathers are seven times more likely to abuse their daughters than natural fathers. [14](#)

Incest takes many forms ranging from fondling to intercourse, from a one-time event to continuing activity over many years, and from mutual consent (where adults are concerned, as a child cannot consent), to rape. It occurs in wealthy and well-educated families as often as in poorer families, as described in one book about incest, *The Best Kept Secret*. [15](#)

Two reviews of research on incest concluded that "current knowledge rests on a very insecure scientific basis," as there have been few empirical studies with large sample sizes, adequate comparison groups and objective measures. [15,16](#) One of the best empirical studies used a random household survey of 930 adult women in the San Francisco area who were interviewed by trained female interviewers. The study found that 16% of the women had experienced at least one incident of intrafamilial sexual abuse prior to age 18, and 12% had at least one such experience prior to age 14. Further analysis of the 16% figure revealed the percentage of incestuous relationships with various relatives: biological fathers (2.5%), stepfathers (2%), uncles (4.9%), cousins (3%), and brothers (2%). The 2% figure for stepfathers is noteworthy, as most daughters don't have stepfathers; of those who were reared by stepfathers, 16.7% were abused. [17](#)

Although these figures are dated, they are consistent with recent, although less scientific, survey results. A 1995 study of 420 randomly selected women in Toronto revealed that 17% had experienced unwanted sexual contact (narrowly defined as intercourse and/or other genital contact) by a relative prior to age 16. When other forms of sexual conduct were considered, 34% reported unwanted physical contact by a relative. [18](#)

There are conflicting reports on the significance of an incestuous brother-sister relationship. It is sometimes the result of mutual sexual exploration. One study reports that about half of the participants perceive it as relatively harmless. In another survey of 796 college students, 15% of females and 10% of males reported sibling incest experiences; one quarter of the experiences were categorized as exploitive. [19](#) A more recent but smaller study of 72 girls aged between 5 and 16 found that 90% of the victims of both fathers and brothers experienced clinically significant distress as a result of the relationship. [20](#) Mother-son incest is rare, but can have extremely detrimental psychological effects on its victims. [21](#)

Incest is often so traumatic that many children repress memory of it, while others are unable to admit incest because of feelings of shame. As a result, surveys of the prevalence of incest likely underreport its frequency. Nonetheless, as reported incidents of familial sexual abuse increase, the public is becoming more aware of its prevalence. This has led researchers to focus their interests on its perpetrators. Sibling incest usually occurs in two situations: (1) when one sibling is extremely nurturing, leading to a sexual relationship; and (2) when one sibling exerts his power over another sibling without fear of punishment. The latter is obviously a much bigger concern

because the perpetrator is using sex as power, much like that seen in cases of rape. [22](#)

More is understood about fathers who commit incest. Approximately one-quarter were themselves sexually abused as children.[23](#) Many of them say that they were sharing something special with the victim and claim that their behavior was considerate and fair, even though in almost all cases they refused to stop the behavior when the victim wanted them to. [24](#)

Incest is a serious security concern for the perpetrator, not just because it is illegal, but also because it usually indicates the perpetrator's sexual behavior is out of control.

Possession of Child Pornography

In the 1980s, enforcement of laws that criminalize the possession of child pornography forced it out of sex bookshops and into underground networks of collectors. The Internet has now made child pornography so readily available and profitable that it is increasingly attracting the interest of organized crime with its business and money-laundering skills.

Child-protection experts estimate that there are thousands of child-pornography web sites and that as many as 100 new ones pop up each month. The largest child-pornography investigation to date (2005) identified 40,000 Americans who downloaded child porn and led to more than 1,400 arrests world-wide including about 330 in the U.S.[6](#) Also see [Pedophilia](#).

Most large organizations have a policy against employees using the office Internet to view sexually explicit material on the Internet on their office network. This is covered under the [Use of Information Technology](#) adjudicative guideline and is usually a disciplinary issue. If this involves viewing child pornography, it is a crime that should be prosecuted. Conviction for possession of child pornography will, under most circumstances, be disqualifying.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is uninvited and unwanted sexual attention that creates an unpleasant or unproductive work atmosphere. Whether or not a specific behavior falls within this definition is not always clear. All conduct commonly referred to as sexual harassment does not necessarily meet the more narrow legal definition of that term as established by the courts. For more information on regulations and legal decisions defining sexual harassment, see [Legal Issues](#).

Sexual harassment is often a disciplinary issue best handled in a personnel management context. It becomes a security issue for the person responsible for the harassment if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It leads to criminal prosecution. The crime may serve as a basis for adverse action.
- It persists after due warning. This may indicate lack of judgment, gross immaturity, or inability to control one's sexual behavior. Each of these is a security concern.
- It is part of a broader pattern of unreliability, untrustworthiness, or poor judgment. In this case, it should be assessed under [Personal Conduct](#), *Pattern of Dishonest, Unreliable, or Rule-Breaking Behavior*.

Sexual Harassment - Legal Issues

Workplace discrimination was first made illegal by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Appellate court decisions in the late 1970s determined that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is, therefore, subject to legal sanction under the Civil Rights Act. [25](#)

Acting on a growing body of judicial decisions, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued guidelines in 1980, which continue in effect, that describe behavior and conditions that must be present for actions to constitute sexual harassment. According to the guidelines, unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is sexual harassment when:

- An individual's rejection of such contact -- or submission to it -- is used as a basis for employment decisions that affect the employee; or
- The unwelcome conduct interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. [26](#)

Conduct may also be considered sexual harassment even if it does no concrete economic or psychological harm to the victim. Specifically, the U.S. Government has identified six types of behavior that, when they are done repeatedly and are uninvited, are generally described as sexual harassment: [27](#)

- Sending letters, making telephone calls, or displaying materials of a sexual nature
- Deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching
- Making sexually suggestive looks or gestures
- Pressuring a person for sexual favors
- Pressuring a person for a date
- Teasing in a sexual way, making sexual jokes or remarks, or asking sexual questions

Supreme Court decisions in 1986 and 1993 [28](#) addressed what is meant by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. The 1986 decision determined that to be a cause of legal action, the harassment must be severe enough to alter the conditions of the victim's employment. This requires statements or actions that are pervasive as well as offensive.

The 1993 Supreme Court decision stated that whether conduct is legally actionable depends upon the circumstances, including how often the conduct occurs, how serious the conduct is, whether the behavior physically threatens the victim or stops at offensive comments, and whether the behavior unreasonably interferes with work performance.

Many lower courts have used a "reasonable person" standard in determining whether sexual conduct is offensive. That is, sexual conduct may be judged offensive if a reasonable person would have found the alleged harassing behavior to be offensive.

There is still no unambiguous standard for determining when vulgar, demeaning, or offensive behavior crosses the line to become illegal sexual harassment. The line is probably destined to remain ambiguous as long as human relationships remain complicated and human behavior continues to be interpreted in so many different ways.

For purposes of adjudicating security clearances, the key issue is not the legality of the behavior, but what the behavior shows about a person's judgment, reliability, and willingness or ability to follow rules.

***Sexual Harassment:
Prevalence in the Federal Workplace***

In a 1994 survey of almost 8,000 federal employees in 22 different federal departments or agencies, 44% of women and 19% of men reported they had experienced some form of unwanted sexual harassment during the preceding two years. The following table shows the different forms of sexual harassment as perceived by both men and women. This 1994 study of federal employees has not been updated. [25](#)

Forms of Sexual Harassment

Percentage of respondents who experienced these behaviors during preceding 2 years.

	Men	Women
Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks	14%	37%
Sexual looks, gestures	9%	29%
Deliberate touching, cornering, pinching	8%	24%

Pressure for dates	4%	13%
Suggestive letters, calls, materials	4%	10%
Stalking	2%	7%
Pressure for sexual favors	2%	7%
Actual/attempted rape, assault	2%	4%

Many of the behaviors perceived as sexual harassment by the victims do not meet the criteria for legal action under the Civil Rights Act. In addition to the ambiguity of the law, individual government employees also differ in their opinion as to whether certain behaviors represent sexual harassment or simply crude and thoughtless conduct. For example, 77% of women and 64% of men respondents considered uninvited sexual teasing, jokes, remarks or questions by a coworker as sexual harassment. Conversely, 23% of women and 36% of men either did not know or did not consider it sexual harassment.

Of those who experienced some form of perceived sexual harassment, 8% of the men and 13% of the women reported the behavior to a supervisor or other official. The others did nothing or handled the matter themselves. Of those who did not report the harassment, a large majority did not think the situation was serious enough to warrant such action or were successful in handling the situation themselves. On the other hand, 20% to 30% did not report it because they thought reporting it would make their work situation more unpleasant, nothing would be done, and/or the situation would not be kept confidential.

More recent studies of sexual harassment in the private sector suggest that the occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace has been declining since the early 1990s, possibly because awareness of harassing behaviors has grown. A DoD survey of the military services found a 22% decline in sexual harassment incidents from 1995 to 2002. This survey also found that 79% of male respondents and 79% of female respondents reported having received anti-sexual harassment training in the past year. [29](#)

If a person engages in sexual harassment despite this increased awareness and education, it amplifies the security concern. Although each situation must be carefully scrutinized to ensure any charges were not fraudulent or retaliatory, sexual harassment in today's workplace may be indicative of underlying emotional or mental instability, and should be taken seriously. At least one recent study shows that a proclivity for sexual harassment is strongly related to personal dishonesty. [30](#)

Sexual Behavior as Indicator of Emotional Disorder

"Sexual behavior is a barometer, and a highly sensitive barometer, of the whole-person. When things go awry, sexual behavior is one of the first places where we see it."³⁹ Therefore, problems with sexual behavior may be clues to the existence of other problems that are not as readily apparent. For example, inability to maintain a long-term emotional commitment (as indicated by a pattern of unsuccessful, short-term relationships) may indicate underlying emotional problems.

Unusual or problematic sexual behavior should be evaluated in a whole person context. In some cases, it may indicate a mental health problem. In other cases, the specific sexual practices in which a person engages may be less important than positive evidence of self-control, ability to make a long-standing loving commitment, strength of character, and overall psychological adjustment. Qualified medical expertise will be required when making these judgments.

For background information on a number of specific sexual behaviors, and discussion of their relevance or irrelevance to security concerns, see [Information About Specific Sexual Practices](#).

Compulsive or Addictive Sexual Behavior

The emotionally healthy individual is able to exercise some control over his or her sexual urges. One's sexual needs should be pursued at appropriate times and places and in a manner that does not create problems with employment, health, marriage, social relationships, or the law, or cause a significant lowering of self-esteem. Inability to do so suggests that sexual behavior is compulsive and out of control. This may result from a personality disorder or what is now described by many specialists as sexual addiction. ³¹

Compulsive or addictive sexual behavior is a security concern because it may indicate emotional problems, poor judgment, make one vulnerable to exploitation, manipulation, or extortion, and attract the attention of hostile intelligence or security services. Such behavior may take various forms, including what many regard as "normal" heterosexual behavior. It is not the type of sexual activity or even the frequency of sexual activity or number of partners that is indicative of addiction, but a pattern of self-destructive and high-risk behavior that is unfulfilling and that the individual is unable to stop.

The term "addiction" has become a popular metaphor to describe any form of excessive, self-destructive behavior. Scientists specializing in sexual behavior generally agree on what constitutes out-of-control sexual behavior, but they disagree over whether it is appropriately diagnosed as an addiction or as a

symptom of an underlying obsessive-compulsive disorder.[32](#) This discussion uses the terms "addiction" and "compulsion" interchangeably.

Many people ask how sex can be an addiction when it does not involve abuse of a psychoactive substance. The scientific argument for addiction is based, in part, on research in neurochemistry that shows we carry within us our own source of addictive chemicals. When pleasure centers in the human brain are stimulated, chemicals called endorphins are released into the blood stream. Experiments with male hamsters have shown that the level of endorphins in their blood increases dramatically after several ejaculations. Experimental rats habituated to endorphins will go through much pain in order to obtain more. In rats, the addiction to endorphins is even stronger than to morphine or heroin.

Humans have comparable reactions. Peptides released during sexual activity are similar in molecular construction to opiates such as morphine and heroin, but are many times more powerful and therefore produce extreme "highs" following sexual release.[33](#) Any chemical that causes mood changes can be addictive, with repeated exposure altering brain chemistry to the point that more of the chemical is "required" in order to feel "normal." [31](#), [34](#)

Diagnosis of Sexual Addiction

If sexual behavior repeatedly causes problems in the areas of employment, health, marriage, social relationships, finances, or the law, or if it causes a significant lowering of self-esteem, the diagnosis of sexual addiction or compulsion may be appropriate.

Indicators that sexual behavior may be out of control include: an obsession with sex that dominates one's life, including sexual fantasies that interfere with work performance; time devoted to planning sexual activity interferes with other activities; strong feelings of shame about one's sexual behavior; a feeling of powerlessness or inability to stop despite predictable adverse consequences; inability to make a commitment to a loving relationship; extreme dependence upon a relationship as a basis for feelings of self-worth; or little emotional satisfaction gained from the sex act.

Deviation from an assumed normal *frequency* of sexual activity is not an appropriate indicator of addiction. Some individuals have a naturally stronger sex drive than others, and the range of human sexual activity is so broad that it is difficult to define "normal" frequency of any sexual activity. The traditional disorders of exaggerated sexuality, nymphomania in the female and satyriasis in the male, are quite different from sexual addiction. They are believed to be caused by a disorder of the pituitary gland or irritation of the brain cortex by a tumor, arteriosclerosis, or epilepsy. These physical disorders are rare. [35](#), [36](#)

The first extensive empirical study of sexual addiction was published by Dr. Patrick Carnes in 1991.³¹ It was based on questionnaires filled out by 932 patients diagnosed as sex addicts, most of them admitted for treatment in the in-patient Sexual Dependency Unit of a hospital in Minnesota. Of the sex addicts in this survey, 63% were heterosexual, 18% homosexual, 11% bisexual, and 8% were unsure of their sexual preference.

Respondents to Dr. Carnes' questionnaire were typically unable to form close friendships. Their feelings of shame and unworthiness made them unable to accept real intimacy. They were certain they would be rejected if others knew what they were "really" like, so they found myriad obsessive ways to turn away a potential friend or loving partner. Despite a large number of superficial sexual contacts, they suffered from loneliness, and many developed a sense of leading two lives--one sexual, the other centered around their occupation or other "normal" activity.

In Dr. Carnes' survey, 97% responded that their sexual activity led to loss of self-esteem. Other reported emotional costs were strong feelings of guilt or shame, 96%; strong feelings of isolation and loneliness, 94%; feelings of extreme hopelessness or despair, 91%; acting against personal values and beliefs, 90%; feeling like two people, 88%; emotional exhaustion, 83%; strong fears about their own future, 82%; and emotional instability, 78%.

Out-of-control sexuality may have serious adverse consequences. In the Carnes survey of individuals in treatment, 38% of the men and 45% of the women contracted venereal diseases; 64% reported that they continued their sexual behavior despite the risk of disease or infection. Of the women, 70% routinely risked unwanted pregnancy by not using birth control, and 42% reported having unwanted pregnancies.

Many patients had pursued their sexual activities to the point of exhaustion (59%) or even physical injury requiring medical treatment (38%). Many (58%) pursued activities for which they felt they could be arrested, and 19% were arrested. Sleep disorders were reported by 65%; they usually resulted from stress or shame connected with the sexual activity.

Of the survey respondents, 56% experienced severe financial difficulty because of their sexual activity. Loss of job productivity was reported by 80%, and 11% were actually demoted as a result. Many of these problems are, of course, encountered by persons whose sexuality is not out of control, but the percentages are much lower. ³¹

Statistics on the prevalence of sexual addiction are difficult to obtain. Dr. Carnes estimates that three to six percent of the population may suffer from some form of sexual addiction. ³³

Concurrent presence of other addictions is also indicative. Carnes found that 42% of sex addicts in his sample had a problem with substance abuse and 38% had eating disorders.

Sexual Addiction and the Internet

The Internet has made access to sexually stimulating materials widely available. Pornographic pictures and movies, erotic literature, and one-on-one sexual conversation are available with little regulation. Sex addicts can access such materials at any time of the day or night from any computer connected to the World Wide Web.

Although many people regularly participate in online sexual activities with relatively little consequence, addiction to Internet-based sexual encounters, or cyber-sex, is becoming more common. The Internet does not cause cyber-sex addiction, but "it provides the opportunity for sexually acting out that can eventually lead to sexually addictive behaviors." [37](#)

The cyber-sex addict's life revolves around opportunities to log on for sex and in turn leads to many of the same negative consequences as "regular" sex addiction, with the exception of medical risks such as sexually transmitted disease. Cyber-sex addicts spend much of their time seeking out chances to secretly access the Internet for sexual stimulation. Like all sex addicts, they exert tremendous effort to hide the behaviors from colleagues, bosses, friends, and family. Although cyber-sex addiction may be "easier" because it can take place in one's own home, it may be harder to hide over time as one spends more and more time alone with the computer and away from family.

Recovery Programs for Sex Addiction

Increased recognition and understanding of sexual addiction has spawned the rapid growth of four nationwide organizations for individuals trying to recover from compulsive sexual behavior. They are Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, and Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. All are 12-step recovery programs patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous.

In 2003, Sexaholics Anonymous reported weekly meetings in every major city in every state as well as meetings in over 20 countries. At least 14 Internet sites host weekly meetings, while there are tens of thousands of newsgroups dedicated to recovery from sexual addiction. Additionally, in 2003, at least 30 sexual addiction recovery conferences were held in the United States. [38](#)

It is common for self-help recovery programs to have a disproportionate number of well-educated members. It appears that well-educated persons are more likely to seek out such groups. There is no evidence that well-

educated persons are either more or less likely than others to suffer from sexual problems.

Lack of Judgment or Discretion

Sexual behavior may indicate lack of judgment or discretion when it:

- occurs at an inappropriate time or place;
- is public or offensive to others or becomes notorious;
- involves high risk.

The security significance of poor judgment or indiscretion depends, in part, on the location of the subject's assignment, the nature and visibility of subject's position, and the openness of the behavior. Foreign intelligence and security services actively exploit and provoke sexual indiscretions as a means of assessing and recruiting Americans traveling or assigned abroad.

Sexual activity with a local national in a foreign country that conducts intelligence operations against the United States can be a counterintelligence concern, as it increases the chances of the person being targeted for recruitment. Any behavior that increases the chances of being targeted for recruitment shows poor judgment and is a security concern. For further information, see [Sexual Behavior as a CI Concern](#).

Sexual behavior is classified as notorious when it is sufficiently well known and noteworthy that it becomes the subject of talk among coworkers and/or social contacts. Notorious sexual behavior is a security concern because it may attract attention of an opposition security or intelligence service, terrorist group, or criminal element. It increases the risk that an individual will be targeted for recruitment or unwitting exploitation, and that increases the chances that any other vulnerabilities that exist will be discovered and exploited. The risk is greater for individuals whose job brings them into contact with foreign nationals who may be tasked to report on them to a foreign intelligence or security service.

In some cases, notorious sexual behavior may be a personnel issue as well as a security concern. The notoriety may reflect adversely on the U.S. Government or make it more difficult for an employee to accomplish his or her assigned tasks. For example, sexual harassment in the workplace and adultery with a consenting subordinate fall into this category.

Many foreign countries have laws and cultural standards regulating sexual behavior that differ from our own. Failure to recognize these different standards may bring one to the attention of local officials. A man who is accustomed to casual sexual relationships may encounter problems while working or traveling in a Muslim country. Similarly, a homosexual may have problems in a country where homosexuality is repressed and the overt

homosexual community is carefully monitored by the police. An American who violates local laws or customs while in a foreign country becomes vulnerable to pressure or coercion.

Lack of judgment or discretion that is not serious enough for adverse action under the Sexual Behavior guideline should also be assessed under the Personal Conduct guideline. When combined with information about criminal behavior, substance abuse, financial irresponsibility, or other derogatory information, it may be part of a broad pattern of unreliability, untrustworthiness, or poor judgment.

Vulnerability to Pressure or Coercion

Shame is one of the more powerful human emotions. People are sometimes ashamed of their sexual behavior if it deviates from their own or society's standards of what is normal or proper. Intense feelings of shame may make a person vulnerable to pressure or coercion. Also see the discussion of *Vulnerability to Coercion or Duress* in the [Personal Conduct](#) guideline.

If exposure of sexual behavior would cause acute embarrassment to the individual or severe problems with spouse, family, or employer, the individual may be vulnerable to pressure or coercion. This is a counterintelligence concern if the individual is serving in a position where he or she comes into contact with foreign nationals who might exploit such vulnerability if they became aware of it.

Vulnerability to coercion is difficult to assess, as it depends upon the circumstances, such as:

- how ashamed one is of the behavior;
- the lengths to which an individual has gone to keep the behavior secret;
- the magnitude of potential loss if the behavior were exposed -- for example, loss of job, financial loss, marital strain, or other serious personal problem;
- one's moral standards. (Note: People can be very ashamed of something they did, *because* they have high moral standards, but not capable of being coerced into committing a crime to cover up their source of embarrassment, also *because* they have high moral standards.

The adjudicator may take into account the subject's own assessment of his or her vulnerability to pressure. For example, subject's assurance that he or she would respond to attempted coercion by advising spouse and/or family of the behavior may be considered a mitigating condition.

Ironically, sanctions associated with the personnel security system may increase the vulnerability to pressure of those who engage in nonconforming sexual practices. If one believes that admission of homosexuality or transvestism, for example, would affect one's eligibility for a security clearance, one is more likely to conceal this information and thus, perhaps, be more susceptible to threats of disclosure.

For background information on a number of specific sexual behaviors, and discussion of their relevance or irrelevance to security concerns, see [Information About Specific Sexual Practices](#).

Mitigating Conditions

Extract from the Guideline

(a) the behavior occurred prior to or during adolescence and there is no evidence of subsequent conduct of a similar nature;

(b) the sexual behavior happened so long ago, so infrequently, or under such unusual circumstances, that it is unlikely to recur and does not cast doubt on the individual's current reliability, trustworthiness, or good judgment;

(c) the behavior no longer serves as a basis for coercion, exploitation, or duress.

(d) the sexual behavior is strictly private, consensual, and discreet.

Behavior During Adolescence: Past behavior may be mitigated if it occurred on an isolated basis during adolescence and there is a clear indication that subject has no intention of participating in such behavior in the future. Sexual experimentation or indiscretion is not uncommon during adolescence. If the unacceptable behavior happened only once, it is unlikely to be repeated and is not a concern. If there was a pattern of unacceptable behavior, the question is how certain one can be that it is no longer continuing. Some criminal behaviors such as pedophilia, voyeurism and exhibitionism start during adolescence, are difficult to stop, and are commonly denied.

Not Recent: Even if the unacceptable behavior occurred after adolescence, it might be mitigated if it was not recent and there is no evidence of subsequent conduct of a similar nature. The amount of time that must elapse depends upon the nature, frequency, and seriousness of the behavior, the circumstances under which it occurred, and how certain one can be that it has not continued.

No Longer Vulnerable to Pressure: Behavior that caused vulnerability to blackmail, coercion or pressure may be mitigated if subsequent developments have eliminated this vulnerability. This might happen, for example, if the information has already become public knowledge, subject has advised spouse or family or security personnel of the activity, or if subject has separated from spouse. A commitment to advise spouse or family of the behavior, or to advise the security office, in the event of attempted pressure or coercion may also be considered a mitigating factor.

Private, Consensual, and Discreet: Some unusual sexual behaviors, such as swinging, transvestism, and moderate fetishism, are not illegal and not necessarily associated with other serious emotional or behavioral problems. They might be mitigated if there is no other evidence of questionable judgment, irresponsibility, or emotional instability, and the nature of the subject's position and other circumstances are such that subject's sexual behavior is unlikely to attract the attention of others who might wish to exploit this behavior.

Successful Treatment: Successful completion of professional therapy may mitigate past behavior if the subject has been rehabilitated and diagnosed by competent medical authority as no longer likely to engage in the questionable behavior. The likelihood that treatment will be successful varies for different types of sexual behavior problems. When the ease or difficulty of treatment for a specific behavior is known, this is noted under [Information About Specific Sexual Practices](#).

Reference Materials

Information About Specific Sexual Practices

The purpose of this section is to provide greater understanding of the many diverse forms of sexual behavior as they relate to personnel security. This will facilitate adjudicative decisions based on demonstrable security concerns rather than commonly accepted myths or the personal moral values of individual adjudicators.

Promiscuity - General

Promiscuity is a potential concern to the extent that it is concealed or regarded as shameful, as it may create vulnerability to influence or coercion. Given the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, extreme promiscuity may indicate a propensity for high-risk behavior, poor judgment, or behavior that is out of control.

This section discusses heterosexual promiscuity under the following topics:

- [Group sex and swinging](#)
- [Use of prostitutes](#)
- [Premarital and extramarital relations](#)

Sexual addiction is discussed under [Compulsive or Addictive Sexual Behavior](#). Homosexual promiscuity is discussed briefly under [homosexuality](#).

Group Sex and Swinging

Group sex takes various forms including threesomes, orgies, partner-swapping or swinging, group marriages, and some communal arrangements. A common element is that sexual activity is pursued as recreation, rather than as an expression of emotional commitment to another person. One study estimated that 24% of single males and 7% of single females have engaged in some form of group sex, although most did this only once. [41](#).

Some research suggests that 2% of all married couples, mainly middle to upper class couples with children, have shared mates at least once during their marriage. The same source reported that in 1998 there were "about 3 million married, middle-aged, middle-class swingers," an increase of about 1 million since 1990.[42](#) In 2000, the president of the North American Swing Club Association (NASCA) reported that his group had increased from 150 to 310 affiliates in the previous five years.[43](#) NASCA reported in 2003 that there were about 400 swing clubs in the United States, most of which were open to couples only. As many as 4,000 have attended a popular, annual swingers convention and NASCA's mailing list consists of approximately 30,000 individuals and couples.[42,44](#) One possible explanation for the continuing increase is that the Internet has replaced swingers' magazines as the principal means of locating interested participants.

Swinging, or partner swapping, is an attempt to reconcile two seemingly conflicting desires--the desire for sexual variety and the wish to maintain a stable relationship. Generally, couples engage in swinging, although singles commonly participate. Recreational sex of this type may take place only in private with close friends (closed swinging) or with strangers at organized events held for that purpose (open swinging). [42](#)

Some couples have rigid agreements as to when, where, and what is permissible, while other couples mutually agree on complete sexual freedom. Swingers often refer to the three primary rules of swinging etiquette: 1) consideration for your spouse; 2) decency--meaning you don't touch another unless invited; and 3) politeness (i.e., using a condom if the partner requests).[42](#) For additional information, see [Research on Swinging](#).

Group sex may raise moral issues for many people. Whether or not it raises security concerns depends upon the type, frequency, recency, and circumstances of the activity.

Depending upon recency and frequency, participation in any form of group sex may contribute to a decision against security approval if it is part of a pattern of dissolute behavior (drinking, drugs, gambling), high-risk behavior, or emotional immaturity. It may not be a significant security concern if pursued discreetly, and if subject shows no other behavioral weaknesses and medical evaluation indicates no emotional instability.

Potential for influence or coercion may not be a significant security issue if the swinging is a consensual activity with one's spouse or primary partner. Swinging in private with a few close friends is of less concern than attending a swinger's club or having a number of anonymous contacts.

Swinging may become a security concern when behavior is in direct opposition to the subject's espoused beliefs and values (i.e., social, political or religious). Even when he or she rationalizes the behavior as being acceptable, a willingness to act out against one's personally stated beliefs and morals values of the organizations one publicly supports may indicate disloyalty as well as increased vulnerability to influence or coercion.

Research on Swinging

Valid research on psychological attributes of swingers is very limited and dated. Many swingers believe that so long as behavior is accordant with espoused beliefs, it can be healthy. What little research is available, combined with anecdotal evidence, suggests that swinging may be one of several unusual varieties of sexual preference that are not necessarily associated with emotional disorder. Nevertheless, psychological or psychiatric evaluation would be appropriate prior to denial or approval of any case in which group sex is an issue.

One serious problem with studies of swingers is that the sample is limited to currently active swingers; the unsuccessful swingers had dropped out. One study found that about three-quarters dropped the activity within one year.⁴⁶ Another found that many couples tended to expand gradually from swinging, in which the couple participated together, to individual sexual involvements and long-term intimate relationships with others.⁴⁷

In 1998, Dr. Richard Jenks reviewed fifteen studies of swinging conducted since 1970. He reports that most swingers are middle- to upper-middle class with above average educations, incomes, and organizational status (i.e., management and professional positions). Over 90% of swingers are white and nearly two-thirds are between age 28 and 45. Swingers tend to be politically conservative.

Across these studies Jenks found no major personality differences between swingers and nonswingers. In one study, swingers were slightly more irritable and had less self-restraint than nonswingers. Another study reviewed by Jenks, and conducted by Brian Gilmartin in 1978, compared 100

swingers in suburban Los Angeles with a matched control group of 100 nonswingers. [48](#)

A strong finding of the Gilmartin study was that, as adolescents, swingers experienced all forms of erotic and romantic behavior at an earlier age than nonswingers. This generally correlates with a life-long, stronger-than-average sex drive. Swingers were far more likely to have experienced divorce; many married young and divorced soon thereafter. Swingers were as happy as or happier with their current relationships as the nonswingers. Swingers considered themselves monogamous from the standpoint of emotional and psychological commitment to their spouses, and they had intercourse with their spouses a great deal more frequently than the nonswingers.

Gilmartin also found that many swingers (38%) first met their spouses at swinging singles gatherings; in other words, the swinging preceded the marriage. Almost as many swingers as nonswingers had children, and most swingers said they would be pleased if their children adopted the same lifestyle; in many cases the parents had already facilitated their children's introduction to swinging.

Jenks found that the most pressing problem associated with swinging was that of sexually transmitted diseases. At least one study showed that 33% of husbands and 10% of wives feared contracting a venereal disease. About 58% expressed some fear of AIDS and 22% knew someone with the virus. Many, 62%, had become "safer" swingers because of AIDS and 7% had quit swinging altogether. [42](#)

Two problems addressed by Jenks have direct implications for personnel security. First, Jenks notes that fear of exposure is a common concern among swingers. Such fear makes subjects vulnerable to influence or coercion. Next, Jenks notes that swinging may be a precursor to sexual addiction if the time devoted to swinging comes to dominate the swinger's life. For more information see [Compulsive or Addictive Sexual Behavior](#).

Use of Prostitutes

Use of prostitutes by a married man may reflect poor judgment, a propensity for irresponsible or high-risk behavior, adjustment problems, or that sexual behavior is out of control. For many men who use prostitutes, this is a secret activity with substantial penalties. These penalties include public embarrassment and marital problems. There may be a financial drain as well as call girls can charge as much as \$2,000 per encounter.

Paying for sex while traveling abroad on official business is a security concern, as it may attract attention from the local security service. Even within the United States, there is potential for arrest and embarrassment as police in many areas mount periodic crackdowns on prostitution.

There have been few systematic studies of men who patronize prostitutes. Demographics from a 2001 study of 140 men arrested for soliciting sex from a prostitute found them to have an average age of 34 years, with ages ranging from 19 to 66. Most had at least some college education, 43% were married, 42% were single, 15% were divorced, separated, or widowed, and 63% reported having no children. Seventeen percent had sought professional help for their use of prostitutes, 17% reported that other people had expressed concern over their use of prostitutes, and over half had tried to stop using prostitutes. Older men were more likely to report enjoying sex with a prostitute. [49](#)

In a 1990-1991 Los Angeles County study using a probability sample of 638 street prostitutes, blood tests found that 33.7% had been infected with syphilis at some point in their lives, 15.2% were probably infected at the time of the study, 32.6% were infected with Hepatitis-B, and 2.5% were infected with the AIDS virus. The percentage of prostitutes with AIDS is believed to be much higher in other areas; the low percentage in Los Angeles reflects the unusually low percentage of HIV virus among heterosexual drug users in that area.[59](#) In Miami, for example, where 91% of female sex workers were also crack-cocaine users, a study of 300 prostitutes has found that 17% were infected with HIV, 51% tested positive for Hepatitis B, and 41% were positive for Hepatitis C. [50](#)

Premarital and Extramarital Relations

Premarital sex, by itself, is not a security concern. It could become of interest if it falls into another category of concern, such as sexual addiction or a pattern of notorious behavior that shows poor judgment.

Cohabitation of unmarried persons is relevant to security only because the partner must also be investigated.

Adultery or marital infidelity is voluntary sexual intercourse with a person who is not the lawful spouse. This may be a security concern only if it creates vulnerability to blackmail, financial pressures, or is sufficiently notorious to indicate poor judgment.

Most surveys of marital infidelity have used a group of volunteers rather than a scientifically selected sample, a methodological flaw that raises serious questions about the validity of the findings. Such studies typically report infidelity rates that are considerably higher than scientifically conducted surveys. One study in 2002 that did use a scientifically selected sample of 2,765 respondents found that 24% of married men and 16% of married women had had at least one sexual partner other than their spouse at some time during their marriage. Additionally, 90% of men and 94% of women felt it was "always wrong" or "almost always wrong" to have sex outside of marriage. [51](#)

When one or both partners give permission to the other to engage in extramarital sexual relations, this is sometimes referred to as an open marriage. One study of 4,246 persons over age 50 found that about 5% had the spouse's approval for extramarital relations.⁵² Reasons for such agreements may include incompatible sexual needs, one partner has a sexual dysfunction, the marriage is continued for practical reasons without emotional commitment, or there is mutual consent to separate sex from emotional commitment.

Gender Identity or Role Transpositions

The term "gender transposition" signifies that one or more components of masculine or feminine identity is transposed so as to be opposite from the anatomical gender. Scientific understanding of gender transpositions is still limited, but there is a growing conviction among researchers that these conditions are, to a substantial degree, influenced prior to birth.

This section deals with:

- [Homosexuality](#)
- [Bisexuality](#)
- [Transsexualism](#)
- [Transvestism](#)

All fetuses start their development as females. If the male Y chromosome is present, it normally triggers the release of male sex hormones and neurohormonal chemicals which cause development of male organs during the first to fifth month of pregnancy.

Release of some hormones may be insufficient to clearly establish one or more aspects of the male identity. Based on experimental studies with animals, there is reason to suspect that an anomaly in prenatal hormone function may influence sexual pathways in the central nervous system to remain sexually undifferentiated or potentially bisexual. If so, individuals affected by this would respond easily to postnatal influences that tip sexual orientation in one direction or the other. ⁵³

During gestation, complex chemical processes occur in the brain and throughout the body of the fetus. Because these processes operate over time, one or more of them may not continue to completion, which can cause either obvious or subtle and hidden results. Transpositions may take different forms and vary in degree of severity. The following transpositions may occur:

- Sexual anatomy may be incompletely formed, as in hermaphroditism and other physical anomalies.

- Sexual orientation, or the preference for sexual partners of one gender or another, may differ from what is commonly associated with the anatomical sex, as in homosexuality.
- Gender identity, or one's internal understanding of oneself as a man or woman, may differ from either anatomical sex or sexual orientation, as in transsexualism and perhaps, to a lesser degree, transvestism.
- Secondary sex characteristics such as voice, body hair, body type, and mannerisms may differ from anatomical sex, as in the effeminate male or the masculine female.

Sexual transpositions occur naturally in other mammals as well as in humans. Transpositions have also been induced in experiments with pregnant laboratory animals which then gave birth to homosexual offspring. For example, male offspring of female rats subjected to severe emotional stress during the last trimester of pregnancy are likely to be homosexual. This happens because stress reduces the level of testosterone in the mother's blood, which in turn affects development of the fetus. [54](#)

Researchers differ on whether prenatal developments only predispose to a given sexual orientation or rather firmly determine that orientation. Both could be true under different circumstances. According to Masters et al., "There may be different types of homosexuality, each of which originates in a different way." [55](#)

John Money, a leading researcher on the psychobiology of sex, writes that "with respect to orientation as homosexual or bisexual in the human species, there is no evidence that prenatal hormonalization alone, independently of postnatal history, inexorably preordains either orientation." He explains that prenatal developments will facilitate subsequent development of a homosexual or bisexual orientation, but only if the postnatal determinants are also present. Money believes that one's "lovemap" is formed during late infancy and childhood prior to puberty, and that developments during puberty and adolescence play little role. [56](#)

On the other hand, Lee Ellis and Ashley Ames, after reviewing more than 300 research reports on this subject, conclude that "...complex combinations of genetic, hormonal, neurological, and environmental factors operating prior to birth largely determine what an individual's sexual orientation will be, although the orientation itself awaits the onset of puberty to be activated, and may not entirely stabilize until early adulthood." [54](#)

Ellis and Ames believe one's early sexual experiences and other environmental factors also contribute to a homosexual or heterosexual orientation, but that these experiences after birth may only influence how, when, and where one expresses the basic sexual orientation formed in the womb.

Although scientists disagree on the extent to which biological versus environmental factors influence the development of sexual orientation, it is commonly held that both are important factors in the manifestation of homosexual orientation. However, after years of empirical research, the distinct causes of homosexuality are still unknown. As Drescher stated in 1998: "The origins of human sexual attraction still remain an unsolved mystery." [57](#)

Homosexuality

Sexual orientation alone is not an appropriate basis for security concern, but it may be a suitability issue for employment in some occupations. The circumstances of each case should be evaluated in the context of specific security risks and job suitability requirements.

Individual homosexuals, like heterosexuals, sometimes encounter emotional problems adjusting to their sexuality, and this may be considered under the [Psychological Conditions](#) guideline. As a group, however, homosexuals do not differ from heterosexuals in their emotional stability or psychological adjustment. Homosexuality is not a mental or emotional disorder. For further information, see [Homosexuality and Emotional Stability](#).

There is no evidence to support the belief that being homosexual predisposes one to unreliability, disloyalty, or untrustworthiness. Large individual differences in honesty and morality are found among heterosexuals as well as homosexuals. [58](#)

Homosexual lifestyles are as varied as heterosexual lifestyles. Some lifestyles raise security concerns while others do not. For example, the regular "cruising" associated with some homosexual lifestyles does involve a degree of promiscuity and sexual indiscretion that is difficult to reconcile with some security requirements, especially if the individual may travel or be assigned abroad. For further information, see [Homosexual Lifestyles](#) and [Prevalence of Homosexuality](#).

Concealment of homosexuality may cause a person to be vulnerable to threats of exposure, but not necessarily more so than any other person who conceals an embarrassing personal secret. Increased openness and public acceptance of homosexuality have reduced the risk of blackmail, but the possibility remains and is strongest for individuals in positions where exposure of homosexuality may result in job or other personal losses. For more information, see [Homosexual Vulnerability to Coercion](#).

Homosexuality and Emotional Stability

Many studies have applied well-known psychological tests to both homosexuals and heterosexuals to determine if the two groups differed in emotional stability or psychological adjustment. This is an important issue for

security policy. If homosexuality were pathological or indicated maladjustment, there would be security concerns to evaluate.

Two independent literature reviews concluded that mental health and social adjustment are unrelated to sexual orientation. "Homosexuals as a group are not more psychologically disturbed on account of their homosexuality."[61](#), [62](#) For over 30 years, the American Psychological Association has declared that "homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability or general social or vocational capabilities."[63](#) This is the prevailing view among sex researchers, psychiatrists and psychologists, and it is the rationale that underlies court decisions dealing with the hiring and firing of homosexual personnel. [64](#)

Although research has repeatedly shown there to be no significant differences in the emotional and mental stability of homosexuals and heterosexuals, scientists continue to report that homosexuals are subject to significant amounts of stress as a direct result of their sexual orientation.[65](#) Homosexuals report extensive stress stemming from both latent and expressed desires to conceal their sexual identity.[65](#), [66](#), [67](#), [68](#) Unrealistic attempts to conceal sexual identity may leave an individual emotionally vulnerable and open to exploitation. For more specific information see [Homosexual Vulnerability to Coercion](#).

The stress experienced by homosexuals should be examined in light of how it is handled by each individual. If stress is acknowledged and dealt with appropriately and does not lead to further emotional or mental problems, it may indicate that the individual is very well adjusted within his or her homosexual lifestyle, and that he or she will be able to adjust well to other stressors and life pressures.

Scientific findings on the origin of gender identity and role transpositions have contributed to significant changes in public perception of homosexuals. Attitudes toward homosexuals are considerably more positive among people who believe that homosexuals are "born that way" than among those who believe homosexuality is a conscious choice of lifestyle or an unnatural act. [69](#)

Prevalence of Homosexuality

Statistics on the prevalence of homosexuality are not cited here as they are so difficult to evaluate. Findings vary widely depending upon how homosexuality is defined. It is easy to define a single homosexual act, but not so easy to define a homosexual person. Are individuals categorized on the basis of their sexual acts, their emotional feelings, or their self-identification as either heterosexual or homosexual? If categorized on the basis of sexual acts, how much homosexual activity is required before classifying a person as homosexual rather than heterosexual? How should one categorize persons whose sexual preference has changed over time?

Some researchers believe bisexuals represent a distinct category often miscounted as homosexual.

Findings on prevalence of homosexuality may also be influenced by how the data are collected, as it is not possible to obtain a random sample of persons willing to talk honestly about sexual behavior that is nonconforming to societal norms.

Classifying Homosexual Lifestyles

There is as much diversity among homosexuals as there is among heterosexuals. Statistical analysis of data collected in interviews of almost 1,000 male and female homosexuals in San Francisco suggested that homosexuals can be grouped into five categories: Close-Coupled, Open-Coupled, Functional, Dysfunctional, and Asexual.⁷³ These categories are useful when assessing the security risk that may or may not be associated with a homosexual's behavior. This study pre-dates the AIDS epidemic which encouraged coupling and discouraged cruising among homosexuals.

The following descriptions of the categories are from the above-referenced study. The comments on relevance to security are our own.

Close-Coupled: These homosexuals were similar to happily married heterosexuals. They were living together with a sexual partner in a quasi-marriage, and they looked to each other, rather than to outsiders, for sexual and interpersonal satisfaction. They were able to integrate their emotional and their sexual needs. They tended to be better adjusted, have fewer sexual problems, have less regret about their homosexuality, and be more sexually active than the typical homosexual.

The Close-Coupled homosexual may be more trustworthy and less vulnerable to blackmail than the heterosexual who carefully conceals an illicit extramarital relationship.

Open-Coupled: Those in this group were also living with a special sexual partner but were not entirely happy and tended to seek sexual satisfaction with others as well. This group scored higher than average on number of sexual partners, number of sexual problems, and amount of cruising. This was the most common group for male homosexuals. Lesbians were found most frequently in the Close-Coupled category. Open-Coupled males were about average in their psychological and social adjustment, but Open-Coupled females tended to have difficulties. The Open-Coupled females were comparable to the Dysfunctional category on measures of happiness, self-acceptance, paranoia, tension, and depression. The infidelity associated with the Open-Coupled relationship appears to be symptomatic of emotional problems for many females but not for males.

For the Open-Coupled male homosexual, frequency of cruising may be a relevant security consideration; in the San Francisco study, 28% of the males cruised at least once a week. Some lesbians in this category may need to be evaluated for emotional stability.

Functionals: These homosexual men and women organized their lives around their sexual experiences. The closest heterosexual counterpart would be the "swinging single." This group reported more sexual activity, a greater number of partners, more cruising, and less regret at being homosexual than any other group. They were not interested in finding a special partner to settle down with. They tended to be younger, exuberant, very involved with their many friends, more open in their homosexual activity, and involved in the homosexual community. They are also the most likely to have been arrested for a homosexual offense. This group was better adjusted than average, although not quite as well adjusted as the Close-Coupled group.

Although rather well-adjusted emotionally, the Functional homosexual's promiscuity, cruising, and frequent lack of discretion in sexual activity may be a security concern. Of the Functional male homosexuals in the San Francisco study, 76% were cruising at least once a week. Cruising of homosexual bars was characteristic of 65%, while 40% cruised on the street. The study found that every one of the male Functional homosexuals had at least 20 different sexual partners during the previous year. Many had far more than that. For an employee assigned or traveling overseas, this type of activity is likely to attract the attention of a local security or intelligence service. On the other hand, Functional homosexuals tend to be somewhat more open about their homosexuality and, therefore, less vulnerable to blackmail. Female homosexuals are far less likely than males to be promiscuous or to engage in anonymous sexual contacts. Cruising was unusual among Functional lesbians, and only 10% of them had more than 20 different sexual partners during the previous year.

Dysfunctionals: This group resembled the stereotype of the tormented homosexual. They were not coupled, but scored high on level of sexual activity and number of partners. They were troubled people whose lives offered little gratification. They showed a poor adjustment sexually, socially, and psychologically. They were much more likely to regret their homosexuality. Among the men, they were the most likely to report robbery, assault, extortion, or job difficulties as a result of their homosexuality. They were a bit less likely than the open-coupled males to have been arrested for a homosexual offense, but more likely to have been arrested for some other offense. The women were more likely than other homosexual types to have needed long-term professional help for an emotional problem. About 20% of the homosexuals clearly fell into this Dysfunctional category.

About 66% of the Dysfunctional male homosexuals cruised at least once a week, 90% had at least 20 sexual partners during the previous year, 80% reported difficulty finding suitable sexual partners, about half reported

problems of psychological adjustment, and 43% reported that their homosexuality had harmed their career.

Individuals of this type may be vulnerable to exploitation by others, including hostile security or intelligence services. Psychological evaluation of emotional problems may be appropriate.

Asexuals: The most prominent characteristic of this group was a low sex drive and relative lack of involvement with other people. They were not coupled but differed from the Dysfunctionals by scoring low on level of sexual interest and number of partners. They had more sexual problems than other homosexuals and often complained of difficulty in finding a partner. They expressed more regret over their homosexuality, were less exclusively homosexual and more covert in their homosexual activity than other respondents. Female asexuals were more likely to rate themselves as bisexual and to have sought professional help concerning their sexual orientation.

Cruising was rare among the Asexual males, and none had more than 20 sexual partners during the previous year. On the other hand, Asexuals were more likely to conceal their homosexuality and, therefore, may be more vulnerable to blackmail. Almost half of this group reported problems of psychological adjustment. About 75% reported difficulty finding a suitable sexual partner, which may make an individual vulnerable to exploitation.

This vulnerability may be quite significant for an individual who travels or works in foreign countries. As with the Dysfunctionals, psychological evaluation of emotional problems may be appropriate.

Although the statistics regarding cruising presented in this section have likely changed since AIDS awareness programs have been implemented, the distinct categorizations described here can still be used to classify patterns of homosexual lifestyle and adjustment. Homosexuals who are accepting and unashamed of their sexual orientation are less vulnerable to coercion or threats to reveal their sexual identity than those who make a concerted effort to conceal their homosexuality. On the other hand, promiscuous sexual behavior of any kind, homosexual or heterosexual, may leave an individual vulnerable to exploitation by foreign or hostile intelligence operatives.

Homosexual Vulnerability to Coercion

A Security Practices Board of Review convened by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1992 concluded that "the evidence indicates that homosexuals, 'in or out of the closet,' are no more vulnerable to coercion or blackmail than heterosexuals." [71](#) Most people have personal secrets they would prefer to keep private. A heterosexual adulterer may be just as vulnerable to coercion as a concealed homosexual.

Relevant considerations for assessing the vulnerability of both homosexuals and heterosexuals are:

- Whether they are ashamed of their behavior, and if so, to what extent.
- The lengths to which they have gone to keep the behavior secret.
- The magnitude of potential loss if the behavior were exposed -- for example, loss of job, financial loss, marital strain, or other serious personal problem.

Adjudicators may also consider whether an individual has character strengths or weaknesses that might influence how that person responds to coercion.

On the other hand, recent studies have suggested that homosexuals are subject to considerable stress as a direct result of their sexual orientation, and this could leave some of them vulnerable to outside pressures or coercion. A 2000 study of over 1600 college students from fourteen colleges and universities nationwide found that 51% of homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgendered persons concealed their sexual orientation to avoid intimidation, while almost three-quarters of those who were "out" reported being harassed because of their sexual orientation. Of these, 20% feared for their physical safety. [66](#)

A study of 146 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons at the University of Oregon found that 60% were open with their sexual orientation: 23% were "out" to "everyone" and another 37% were "out" to the majority of people. Thirty-one percent of lesbians and 27% of gays reported concealing their sexual orientation from the general population. Five percent of the sample had been threatened with exposure and about 20% had experienced pressure to hide their sexual orientation. [67](#)

In a 2003 study of 887 openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered high school students from 48 states and the District of Columbia, 84% reported being verbally harassed because of their sexual identity, 39% were physically harassed (pushed, shoved, etc.), 58% reported having personal property stolen or damaged while at school, and 64% felt they were not safe at school. Students reporting harassment also had lower GPAs. These percentages of high school students who experience harassment have increased since 1999, indicating less tolerance for homosexuality in younger age cohorts. [68](#) This is important to consider when granting security clearances to young men and women who may not have come to terms with their sexual identity. Younger homosexuals may experience more pressure to conceal their sexual identity, may suffer more in terms of performance and productivity because of this pressure, and may therefore be more vulnerable to influence or coercion.

As these studies show, homosexuals face a variety of stresses that may leave them vulnerable to undue pressure or coercion. Those who are open about

their sexual orientation often experience harassment or are pressured to conceal their homosexuality. Additionally, 40-50% of homosexuals on college campuses actively conceal their sexual orientation from the majority of people, which may make them vulnerable should their lifestyle be discovered. These statistics are significant because college campuses are known to be more accepting of homosexual lifestyles than many other settings. If a large percentage of homosexuals experience pressures to conceal their sexual identity in a relatively "open" college atmosphere, these pressures may be even greater in more conservative surroundings, such as the military or in the workplace.

Although these studies provide ample evidence that homosexuals, particularly young homosexuals, are likely to experience pressure to conceal their sexual identity, they provide no details on the types of pressure or vulnerability. In previous studies of blackmail of homosexuals, the extortion was almost always an amateur effort by a lover, friend, acquaintance, relative, coworker, or neighbor of the homosexual. "The image of the gay person being blackmailed by professional extortionists seems rather mythical," according to one study. [75](#)

Sexual entrapment followed by threats of arrest or blackmail is one of the standard recruitment techniques used by foreign intelligence and security services. This occurs principally in hostile or potentially hostile countries that conduct aggressive intelligence operations against the United States. It is important to note, however, that experience in the Soviet Union and other communist countries indicates that heterosexuals engaging in sexual relations with local nationals have been just as vulnerable to recruitment as homosexuals.

Bisexuality

Research on bisexuality has increased considerably in recent years, and many scientists and researchers have begun to identify bisexuality as a distinct sexual orientation. Others maintain it is not a distinct sexual orientation comparable to heterosexuality or homosexuality. There are three alternative interpretations: [76](#)

- There are no clearly defined sexual categories. Exclusive heterosexuality and exclusive homosexuality are polar extremes on a continuum with no sharp distinctions or categories in between.
- There are two distinct categories -- heterosexual and homosexual. Bisexual preference is only a "way-station" that one passes through when evolving from one to the other. When homosexuality appears in an otherwise heterosexual person, it tends gradually to replace heterosexuality.

- Bisexuality is a distinct sexual orientation that may be defined on the basis of sexual behavior, desire, or one's self-identification as bisexual.

Extensive interviews of persons who identified themselves as bisexuals have found that sexual behavior and lifestyle associated with those claims varies widely.[77](#), [78](#) Many are basically homosexual but married. Others grew up conforming to heterosexual social norms but later experienced homosexual desires as a reaction to stress or emotional conflict. Some are hedonists who "swing" both ways but have a clear understanding of their sexual identity as heterosexual or homosexual. [79](#)

At least thirteen different types of bisexuality have been proposed, ranging from traditional bisexuals who have loving, sexual relationships with persons of both sexes to conditional homosexuals, who are heterosexual but will have sex with same-sex partners when there is no access to other-sex partners (such as in jail or the military).[80](#) Several types of bisexuality and their relationship to security are discussed here.

- Concurrent Relationship Bisexuals have a committed relationship with one gender, but seek out casual relationships with persons of the other gender. Such behavior may indicate promiscuity or may be indicative of inability to maintain loyalty and commitment and should be further evaluated.
- Conditional Bisexuals are strictly homosexual or heterosexual, but will engage in sex with the other gender for financial gain or to achieve a specific purpose. For example, young straight males may become gay prostitutes for financial reasons or a lesbian might marry a man and have children in order to gain family acceptance. The reasons behind conditional bisexuality must be examined carefully in light of personnel security. Bisexuals who must work very hard to conceal their "other" lifestyle from friends, family, and colleagues may be vulnerable to outside influence or coercion if threatened with exposure.
- Integrated Bisexuals have at least two primary relationships, one with a man and one with a woman. This is generally not a security concern if both partners are aware of the other relationship or if the individual would be willing to admit to both relationships if pressured. If the bisexual is concealing one or both relationships from a partner, however, it is important to evaluate how far they are willing to go to keep their "other" lifestyle a secret.
- Hedonistic Bisexuals are either gay or straight, but have sexual relationships with another gender purely for sexual satisfaction. The main concern with this type of bisexual is the high likelihood of promiscuous behavior. Promiscuity may expose an individual to situations that create vulnerability to extortion and exploitation.

- Recreational Bisexuals are either gay or straight, but only participate in bisexual behavior when under the influence of alcohol and drugs. When alcohol or drug intoxication leads a person to behave very differently than he or she would under normal situations, the extent of their alcohol and/or drug consumption should be evaluated.
- Isolated Bisexuals are either gay or straight but have had a bisexual experience in the past. This is usually not a concern if they are not "haunted" by the act and do not worry about it "catching up with them."
- Latent Bisexuals are either gay or straight, have a strong desire to have sexual relationships with someone of the other gender, but have never acted on it. Latent bisexuals pose little security risk because they have no behavior that can be held against them for either blackmail or extortion purposes.
- Motivational Bisexuals are straight women who have sex with other women because their male partner insists they do so for his sexual gratification. Such situations may indicate a security concern if the woman is considerably ashamed of her behavior or worries that it will be discovered by friends and loved ones. Additional concern should be noted if the female's behaviors outside the bedroom appear to be regimented or controlled by the male.

Unfortunately, those who do categorize themselves as bisexual may face greater pressure to conceal their sexual orientation than homosexuals. In a University of Oregon study, bisexuals were more likely than both gays and lesbians to conceal their sexual orientation.⁶⁷ Many bisexuals report that they don't fit in and feel "left out" by both heterosexual and homosexual groups; they report not having a "place" in society. Therefore, they often try to conceal their bisexuality, either claiming they are 100% gay or 100% straight, in order to maintain social standing. That said, bisexuals may be more vulnerable than homosexuals to outside influence and coercion as a result of their sexual identity.

Patterns of sexual behavior are so diverse that it seems inadvisable to think in terms of neat categories like heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual. The scientific debate over whether there is such a thing as bisexuality, or how to define it, is not relevant to personnel security decisions. What name one ascribes to those who fit between the extremes of exclusive heterosexuality or exclusive homosexuality is far less important than recognition of the immense variety of human sexual behavior, and the ability to deal with individuals as individuals rather than as members of any category.

Transsexualism

Transsexualism, literally, means going from one sex to another. A transsexual experiences strong discomfort with his or her biological sex. There is a conviction that, mentally, one is a man trapped in a woman's

body, or a woman trapped in a man's body. As with other gender and sexual anomalies, this occurs with varying degrees of severity.

The wish to be a member of the opposite sex commonly dates back to one's earliest childhood memory. The young child may make very emotional assertions that he or she *is* the other sex. Cross-dressing normally begins early in life, as does play that is more typical of the opposite gender and choice of playmates exclusively of the opposite gender. Although transsexuals almost invariably report having these gender identity problems in childhood, most children who have these problems do not grow up to be transsexuals.

The transsexual tends to be asexual and may be so aversive to the genitals, for example, that there is a reluctance to touch them to masturbate. Attempted self-mutilation is not uncommon. One of the most common myths about transsexualism is that transsexuals are homosexual. Although transsexuals are usually attracted sexually to members of the same biological gender, they perceive themselves as heterosexual as they are themselves in the wrong body. [81](#), [82](#)

Transsexuals may suffer from moderate to severe personality disturbance due to the stress caused by their inability to live in the role of the desired sex. They frequently report anxiety or depression, although some studies have found that they yield more "normal" personality test scores when replying as their desired sex versus their anatomical sex.[83](#) Any associated personality or adjustment problems would be a security concern.

In extreme cases, transsexualism may result in a request for a sex-change operation, which is usually granted only after the person has spent at least one year living as a member of the preferred sex.[84](#) In the United States, several thousand people undergo surgery each year to change (insofar as possible) their external genitalia to that of the opposite sex. As the technology involved in sex reassignment surgery evolves and as sex reassignment becomes more publicized, doctors and psychologists expect this number to increase. [86](#)

Prevalence of transsexualism is traditionally estimated to be one per 30,000 for males and one per 100,000 for females.[85](#) More recent studies, however, suggest that the rate of transsexualism in the United States is actually much higher. A 2002 investigative report states that the prevalence of transsexualism is as high as one for every 2,500 males between the ages of 18 and 60 years. This estimate is based on male to female sex reassignment surgeries on U.S. residents since the 1960s. Since then, 30,000 to 40,000 surgeries have been conducted. Using a low estimate of 32,000 surgeries, at least one in every 2,500 males in the United States is transsexual. Because many or most transsexuals are either unaware of or cannot afford such surgical treatments, the actual number of transsexual males may be three to five times that number. [86](#)

One might expect the U.S. military would be a very unlikely place to find transsexuals. Actually, there are circumstances when young transsexuals are attracted to military service as a means of demonstrating their masculinity. For further information, see below.

Transsexuals in the Military

Young male transsexuals in the throes of adjusting to their situation appear to go through a hypermasculine phase. They try to purge the feminine side of their personality and prove their masculinity both to themselves and others. Transsexuals pass through this hypermasculine stage during late adolescence and early adult years, which coincides with the time when men consider military service.

An Air Force psychiatrist assigned to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base reported evaluating 11 male transsexuals during his three-year tour. Eight were current or former active duty military personnel, while three were civilians. Of the eight who had had extensive military service, seven had joined the service voluntarily at a time when no draft existed or other options were readily available. All were requesting either female hormones or sex change surgery. [87](#)

Typical quotes from taped interviews with military transsexuals include: "I tried to do things to make me feel more masculine, like joining the Navy and getting married." "I thought it would make a man out of me." "I joined the Navy hoping maybe the problem would go away." "I joined the Air Force as a cover. In uniform, my masculinity would not be questioned."

A civilian doctor advised one young man who had come to him for treatment of feminine feelings to "join the Army, go to boot camp, and learn how to run over trees with a tank." These military transsexuals tend to seek out the more macho military specialties. One who had been assigned as a lab technician volunteered for combat helicopter training during the peak of the Vietnam war; his hobbies were mountain climbing and race car driving. Another became a Green Beret.

These are natural choices for the young transsexual in the hypermasculine phase making a last ditch effort to adjust to what society expects from a male. This effort eventually fails in many cases, however, and transsexual urges return, although transsexuals have had successful military careers of 20 years or more. [88](#)

Transvestism

Transvestism is cross-dressing. The transvestite is almost always a male, and usually a heterosexual male, who has an obsession for wearing women's clothes, usually as a means of reducing psychic stress or tension. To the extent that sexual arousal is a principal motive for wearing female garments,

this is a type of fetish and is mentioned under [fetishism](#); it is sometimes called transvestic fetishism. Cross-dressing by homosexuals is the exception rather than the rule. [89](#)

Transvestism takes a number of forms. It may involve occasional cross-dressing while alone in private, usually accompanied by masturbation; relaxing in women's attire while at home in the evening with a spouse; cross-dressing as an erotic turn-on during intercourse with a partner; wearing on a daily basis a single item of women's attire such as underwear or stockings under one's masculine clothes; dressing up in full women's regalia with wig and makeup for the excitement of venturing out in public alone as a woman; or participating in the subculture of transvestite support groups or transvestite bars.

The transvestite should be distinguished from the drag queen and the female impersonator. A drag queen is a male homosexual who dresses as a woman, often for the purpose of sexually stimulating other males. The female impersonator is an entertainer. He, too, may also be a transvestite, although in many cases he is not. The drag queen and female impersonator may have no psychological dependence on wearing feminine clothing as a form of tension release, nor do they necessarily gain sexual stimulation from the clothing.

The transvestite should also be differentiated from the male transsexual who seeks to change his gender identity. As discussed under transsexualism, the transsexual male feels like a woman trapped in a man's body, wishes to live as a woman, and experiences an insistent urge to change his anatomical sex. Although some cross-dressers evolve into transsexuals as young adults or in early middle age, most are quite happy with their gender and feel no urge to change it. [90](#) There is also an intermediate condition called gynemimesis in males and andromimesis in females, where the person dresses and lives continuously as a person of the opposite sex but does not wish for any change in the anatomy.

Gynemimesis might be more common in the United States if there were not such strong societal constraints against its expression. Males who live as women are accepted and have well-defined and in some cases highly respected roles in a variety of cultures, including India, Burma, Oman, Polynesia, and among North American Indian tribes. In one small town in Oman where they were studied, the xanith, as they are known there, comprised 2% of the 3,000 adult males. [58](#)

Many transvestites (about 60%) are married and masculine in appearance. [90](#) Most assume a female name and personality while they are cross-dressed. Cross-dressing often starts in childhood or early adolescence. The causes are not known, but some prenatal biological influence may be involved as well as later experiences during early childhood.

Cross-dressers are not dangerous. That is, they generally are not child molesters, voyeurs, exhibitionists or rapists. The practice does not generally interfere with work performance. If cross-dressers have difficulties with the law, it is generally because of society's inability to accept persons who do not behave in the "normal" way.⁹¹ One of the most complete books on transvestism written by one of the field's principal scholars argues that gender impersonation (including cross-dressing) should not be classified as a mental illness or a pathology unless it becomes a compulsive behavior. Under those circumstances, it should be considered the same as any other compulsive behavior. ⁸⁹

Owing to lack of public acceptance, cross-dressers normally conceal their feelings and their secret life, and this creates a potential for extortion in exchange for keeping their secret. A study by Docter & Prince found that only 14% of cross-dressers frequently went out in public in female attire. Many cross-dressers report trying to "purge" their feminine attire at some point in their lives due to intense feelings of guilt and shame about their behavior.⁹⁰ On the other hand, secret cross-dressing tends to be a solitary activity. Unlike homosexuality or adultery, it does not require a partner, so the risk of discovery and blackmail may be considerably less.

Transvestism is similar to homosexuality in that it is not illegal, and there is no empirical evidence that transvestites are, by nature, less trustworthy or loyal than other persons. Cross-dressing, by itself, does not necessarily indicate poor judgment, unreliability, irresponsibility or emotional instability, although these disqualifying characteristics will be present in some cases. For additional information, see [Research on Transvestism](#).

There is evidence that many cross-dressers lead successful lives with a high degree of personal and professional achievement. Each individual should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate medical authorities should determine whether there are other associated emotional problems or evidence of a progression toward other sexual disorders such as fetishism or transsexualism.

The adjudicative criteria that may apply to some cases of transvestism are the public nature of the behavior and susceptibility to blackmail or coercion. Going out in public dressed as a woman may indicate lack of discretion and would be an aggravating circumstance that may justify disqualification. Concealment of current cross-dressing behavior may indicate susceptibility to pressure. Admission of cross-dressing during a security interview may eliminate some of this susceptibility but is discouraged by the sanctions associated with current personnel security policies.

Research on Transvestism

The Society for the Second Self is a support and social organization for heterosexual cross-dressers. In 2003 the group reported over 30 organized

chapters nationwide. Other similar organizations also exist. The "second self" is the woman that the society believes "is buried within every man." The group's purpose is to create a safe environment for the heterosexual male membership "to express without fear, to speak without shame, and to act out without guilt the femininity that is within them." Members generally limit their cross-dressing to the privacy of their homes or cover of night and socialize "en femme" only at chapter meetings with their close confidants. [92](#)

R. Docter and V. Prince, one of the founders of the Society for the Second Self, conducted a survey of transvestites in the late 1990s. They received survey responses from 1,032 self-defined cross-dressers who attended transvestite club meetings or subscribed to club newsletters and magazines.

The findings reported here are from the Docter & Prince survey. In response to a question about how they see themselves, 17% said they felt like a woman trapped in a male body; in other words, they may be transsexuals rather than transvestites. Another 9% reported they were a man with just a sexual fetish for feminine attire, which suggests they should be classified as transvestic fetishists. The classical transvestite response, that they feel themselves to be a man who has a feminine side seeking expression, was given by 74%. Only 29% reported ever having any homosexual experience, which is less than the number reported by some other studies for the male population as a whole. [90](#)

Most (60%) respondents were currently married, with another 23% being either separated, divorced, or widowed. About three-quarters of the married members described their wives as either cooperative or understanding, while 17% of the wives were completely unaware of their husbands' interests. Most (65%) were well educated with a degree beyond a bachelor's degree. This figure reflects the fact that people who join any type of support group tend to be well educated.

A separate study of 51 members of the Society for the Second Self found that many were high achievers, driven to seek personal success in order to gain a sense of self-worth and positive recognition. Many sought out particularly masculine occupations as a means of compensation, that is, to prove their masculinity both to themselves and to others despite their enjoyment of feminine things. [93](#)

Paraphilia (Sexual Perversion) - General

Paraphilia is the medical term applied to many sexual behaviors commonly referred to as "kinky," bizarre, or perverted. A paraphilia is a recurrent and intense sexual urge or sexually arousing fantasy that generally involves either (1) nonhuman objects as in fetishism or bestiality, (2) the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner as in sadism or masochism), or (3) children or other nonconsenting persons as in pedophilia, exhibitionism,

voyeurism, or obscene phone calls. This section discusses paraphilias in general. The following specific paraphilias are then discussed separately:

- [Fetishism](#)
- [Sexual Sadism and Masochism](#)
- [Pedophilia](#)
- [Voyeurism \(peeping Tom\)](#)
- [Exhibitionism](#)
- [Obscene Phone Calls](#)
- [Bestiality](#)
- [Other Paraphilias](#)

Paraphiliacs are fixated on a narrow range of sexual objects or situations that are not usually sexually arousing to others. Paraphilias exist with various degrees of severity, and the personnel security adjudicator dealing with a case of paraphilia must determine whether it is severe enough to affect reliability, trustworthiness, or job performance. Assessment by a mental health professional experienced in dealing with paraphilias may be needed to make this judgment.

Paraphilias are classified as mental illnesses in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)*. However, whether any specific behavior qualifies as a mental illness depends upon its severity. A severe paraphilia causes an individual to act compulsively, so behavior is out of control. The consequences of any compulsive behavior for professional performance are unpredictable. Some paraphilias such as pedophilia, exhibitionism, making obscene phone calls, voyeurism and [frotteurism](#) involve criminal offenses and should also be evaluated under Criminal Conduct.

Some paraphilias often exist in less severe forms that are not dysfunctional in any way, do not harm the individual or others, and do not entail criminal offenses. They may be limited to fantasy during masturbation or copulation. If acted out, they may be done in private and either alone or in a playful manner with a willing partner. They may be practiced occasionally by choice, rather than constantly by compulsion.⁹⁴ Although unusual, such mild paraphilias generally do not cause an individual to be less reliable or trustworthy, nor do they indicate emotional disturbance or make a person more vulnerable to blackmail than many other types of personal secrets. Many fetishes, in particular, fall into this category.

"Imagining unusual sexual situations or behaviors to enhance stimulation or arousal is not uncommon."⁹⁵ Some individuals become concerned when they have such fantasies and seek counseling for fear that they are "abnormal." However, sexual fantasies are generally not a problem as long as they are not acted out. The fantasies themselves are beyond conscious

control; the failure to act on them indicates that behavior is under control. Fantasies may be a problem, however, if they are vivid and frequent and the individual feels threatened by them. This may be a concern, for example, if an individual has frequent fantasies of raping another person. In such cases, the fantasy may be symptomatic of an emotional problem that requires medical evaluation.

Clinical psychologists and psychiatrists find that when an individual has one paraphilia, other paraphilias are often also be present. A childhood trauma that may cause the paraphilia may also have other residual effects on psychological adjustment.⁹⁶ Personality disturbances frequently accompany paraphilia. Symptoms of depression may develop and be accompanied by an increase in the frequency and intensity of the paraphilic behavior.⁹⁷ Another concern is that paraphilias are not stable. They tend to become worse over time, or during periods of stress when sound judgment is most important. Many paraphilias are thought to be "virtually ineradicable" once established.⁹⁹

When an individual is arrested for paraphilic behavior, the known behavior may be only a small part of the full story, as many sex offenders either cannot or will not cooperate fully even during a clinical interview when immunity from prosecution is guaranteed. This was demonstrated when male sex offenders in an outpatient program were fitted with a device to measure their level of sexual arousal while shown movies or tapes of various sexual behaviors. When confronted with data that contradicted what they had reported during previous clinical interviews, 62% of the patients admitted to having previously concealed sexual interests and behaviors. As a consequence, it was learned that these patients had committed more different kinds of sex offenses, and far more offenses, than had previously been thought. ⁹⁸

This study of sex offenders showed that most offenders had developed deviant sexual interests and fantasies by age 12 or 13. The age of onset is relevant, as it is generally believed that the earlier deviant behavior begins, the more difficult it is to treat. For half or more of the offenders, the age at which the offenses began was before age 15 for voyeurism, before age 16 for sex with younger children, before age 17 for frotteurism, and before age 18 for exhibitionism.⁹⁸ A different study of sex offenders showed that about 90% have a history of more than one paraphilia at some point in their lives. Pedophiles might also engage in exhibitionism, sadism, or fetishism, for example. Engaging in one deviant behavior may break down the barriers to others. ⁹⁵

No hard data are available on the prevalence of paraphilias in the general population. People with these disorders tend not to regard themselves as ill, and usually come to the attention of mental health professionals only when their behavior has brought them into conflict with sexual partners or the law. Judging from both the large commercial market in paraphilic pornography

and paraphernalia and the abundance of web sites and online chat rooms devoted to such, the prevalence in the community is believed to be far higher than that indicated by statistics from clinical facilities.

Males are far more prone to paraphilias than females. For cases in which sexual masochism has developed to the point of paraphilia, for example, the sex ratio is estimated to be 20 males for each female. Many other paraphilias are rarely diagnosed in females.⁹⁷ There appears to be no difference in the prevalence of paraphilias among homosexuals and heterosexuals. ¹⁰⁰

There is no cure for paraphilia in the sense of complete eradication or reversal of its cause. It can be treated to ameliorate its consequences, but relapse and/or recidivism is high. In serious cases, it may be controlled effectively with a variety of drugs, including the drug trade-named Depo-Provera. These medications reduce the sex drive by drastically reducing the level of male hormone in the bloodstream and by acting directly on the pleasure centers of the brain which govern mating behavior. ¹⁰¹

Fetishism

In fetishism, sexual arousal occurs in response to some inanimate object or to a body part that is not primarily sexual in nature. The person with the fetish generally masturbates while holding, rubbing or smelling the fetish object, or asks the sexual partner to wear the object. Common fetish objects are women's clothing such as panties, brassieres, slippers, stockings, shoes, or gloves. Other fetishists depend upon objects made of specific fetish materials, such as leather, rubber, silk or fur, or they are aroused by body parts such as hair, feet, legs, or buttocks.

Fetishism usually begins by adolescence, most commonly around age 16, although it may have its origin in some sexual experience in early childhood.¹⁰¹ Fetishists often collect the objects that turn them on and may go to great lengths to add just the right item to their collection. An example is cited of a man who had a fetish for women's high-heeled shoes. He gradually accumulated more than a thousand pairs which he catalogued and concealed from his wife in his attic. ¹⁰²

In severe cases, the fetishist can be sexually aroused and reach orgasm only when the fetish is being used. In moderate cases, the fetish adds to the excitement but is not required. The man who is turned on by a woman in black, lacy lingerie is not a fetishist unless this is the primary focus of his sexual arousal.

As a general rule, the person with a fetish poses no danger to others and pursues the fetish in private. Fetishism may be a security concern in severe cases when the fetish prompts behavior that is illegal, compulsive or lacking in discretion. When fetishism is reported, the possible coexistence of other sexual or emotional problems should be evaluated.

Sexual Sadism and Masochism

Sadism involves intense sexual urges or fantasies that involve inflicting pain or humiliation on others. The counterpart of sadism is masochism, the sexual pleasure or gratification of having pain or suffering inflicted upon oneself, often consisting of sexual fantasies or urges for being beaten, humiliated, bound, tortured, or otherwise made to suffer, either as an enhancement to or a substitute for sexual pleasure. Sadomasochism is when the two go together, with one person inflicting pain on the other, and both parties gaining sexual pleasure from the interaction.

Humiliation may involve being required to crawl and bark like a dog, being kept in a cage, verbal abuse, or being urinated or defecated upon. Pain might be inflicted by tying a person down with rope or chains, or by whipping, pinching, biting, spanking, burning, electrical shocks, rape, strangulation, torture, mutilation, or lust-murder. All of these behaviors emphasize the transfer of power from a submissive to a dominant partner. The varied roles may be master/slave, guardian/child, employer/servant, or owner/owned, etc. Practitioners of sadomasochism "often report it is this consensual exchange of power that is erotic to them and the pain is just a method of achieving this power exchange." [103](#)

Sadomasochism encompasses a wide range of activities from the benign to the bizarre and occasionally fatal. Arousal may come only from fantasy, without any need to act out the behavior. It may be limited to gentle and playful biting and spanking, or it may be a carefully controlled symbolic ritual with a trusted partner. At the other extreme, it may involve self-strangulation (which causes one or two accidental deaths per million persons per year) as a means of gaining sexual arousal through oxygen deprivation. [104](#) Some engage in sadomasochistic behavior in all their sexual interactions, while others do it only occasionally. Masochism may be self-inflicted or inflicted by a cooperative partner. Sadism may be acted out with a willing partner or imposed by violence on an unwilling subject.

Sadomasochism has been reported in many different cultures and in many time periods. It is pictured in an ancient Indian marriage manual from 450 AD, for example. [106](#) It is also found in other mammals. There are at least 24 different mammalian species that sometimes bite during intercourse, so some association between sex and pain probably must be considered biologically normal. [107](#)

Although some sadomasochists engage in violence on unwilling partners, most do not. The psychology of the rapist is generally quite different from the sadist. [105](#) Most sadomasochists seek willing partners, and for many the partner search is facilitated by joining a club for sadomasochists or frequenting a bar which caters to such persons. The clubs stress and teach safety, so serious injury is rare. [103](#) Masters et al. report that "sadomasochistic fantasies are very common, but most people who find such

fantasies arousing have no desire to have the real-life experience." When these fantasies are acted out, it is generally mild or even symbolic behavior, with no real physical pain or violence involved. [108](#)

The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)* defines sadism and masochism as mental disorders only if "the person has acted on these urges with a nonconsenting person, or is markedly distressed by them."[104](#) Persons beginning to explore sadomasochistic desires often worry that their desire will escalate and lead them to cause serious injury or commit sex crimes. Actually, serious injury or crime caused by sadomasochism is rare, although the urge does escalate in some cases. Masters et al. report their impression that only rarely is sadomasochism a full-fledged paraphilia in the sense that it is the predominant or exclusive means of attaining sexual excitement. They also find that sadism and masochism occur as paraphilias mainly in men.[109](#) Sadomasochists are found among homosexuals and bisexuals as well as heterosexuals. [103](#)

Useful statistics on the more hard-core forms of sadomasochism are not available, but its prevalence is indicated by an entire industry which has evolved to support the practice through equipment supply catalogues (whips, chains, etc.), specialized magazines with picture spreads and how-to articles, bars, and "private" clubs.

The causes and psychological significance of sadomasochism are unclear. Noting that many masochists are men who occupy positions of high status and authority (such as executives, politicians, judges, and bankers), some experts theorize that private acts of submissiveness and degradation provide the masochists with an escape valve from their rigidly controlled public lives. Seeking sexual pain or humiliation may also be a way of atoning for sexual pleasure for a person who was raised to believe that sex is sinful and evil.

Conversely, sadists either may be seeking a means to bolster their self-esteem (by "proving" how powerful and dominant they are) or may be venting an internal hostility that they cannot discharge in other ways.[111](#) Other theories hold that sadomasochism is a mechanism for dealing with the memories of childhood abuse or trauma. [112](#)

From a security viewpoint, sadism and masochism raise several concerns. One is vulnerability to blackmail. This depends upon risk of exposure and the consequences if the specific behavior were exposed. Clearly, the senior officer who frequents a sadomasochism club to pick up partners who will chain and whip him, make him crawl and bark like a dog, or swaddle him in diapers presents an attractive blackmail target. On the other hand, the individual who engages in some symbolic sadomasochistic ritual with a willing spouse in private is not a security concern.

Emotional stability is another concern. Several limited attempts to use psychological testing to see if a sample of sadomasochists differs from a control group have shown no significant differences, but empirical research on this is still sketchy.[114](#), [116](#) At least one study has suggested sadomasochistic behaviors may be related to emotional and personality disorders. [103](#)

Many sadomasochists are unable to sustain a long-term sexual relationship. Clearly, the regular practitioner of sadomasochism has at least one unusual personality quirk. Any individual who has one mental/emotional problem is at greater risk than the general population for having other mental/emotional problems as well. When sadomasochistic tendencies are present, it is necessary to determine whether the individual has other emotional problems that might impact on security or job performance. Of particular concern is the judgment that sadism and masochism, like all compulsive behaviors, tend to get worse under stress when high performance is most important. [104](#)

Pedophilia

Pedophilia is a criminal activity with a high rate of recidivism, and treatment is often ineffective. It is, therefore, a serious security concern.

From a narrow psychiatric perspective, pedophilia is defined as recurrent, intense sexual urges and fantasies involving sexual activity with children prior to puberty, which generally means age 13 or younger.[117](#) This includes only a small part of the group commonly known as child molesters, however. Other child molesters sometimes described as pedophiles focus on pubescent children, or engage in sexual acts with children only occasionally in response to opportunity or when sexual outlets with adults are blocked for some reason. The following paragraphs apply to pedophilia as a narrowly defined psychiatric disorder.

Given the stigma attached to pedophilia and ambiguities in definition, researchers have been unable to assemble valid statistics on its prevalence in the population as a whole.[115](#) National statistics on arrests for sex offenses are not broken down by type of offense. Additionally, active pedophiles are unlikely to pursue treatment, and many more pedophiles simply resist their urges to touch a child or else do so in a manner so discreet that they are never detected.[118](#) Based on the large Internet market for child pornography and pedophilia-related materials, pedophilia may be more prevalent than previously believed. This is discussed further under [Pedophiles and the Internet](#).

Pedophilia is most common in males, although it does occasionally occur in women.[119](#) Many pedophiles are attracted to children of a specific age, such as girls aged eight to ten. Those attracted to boys usually prefer slightly older children. Attraction to girls is more common than to boys, although

some pedophiles are sexually aroused by both young boys and young girls. [117](#)

The type of activity engaged in by pedophiles varies greatly. It may be limited to undressing and observing the child, or it may include fondling the child, exposing themselves or masturbating in the presence of the child, fellatio, cunnilingus, or intercourse. The activity is often rationalized as having "educational value" for the child, or as being part of a caring and loving relationship with the child.

Pedophiles are most commonly found in three distinct age groups: adolescents, mid-to-late thirties, and over age fifty. Many pedophiles have a history of being sexually abused as children. Estimates of the percentage who were abused themselves as children range widely from 28% to 80%. [108](#)

Pedophiles may have marginal personality disorders that set them apart from the normal population. Although one study found them to have no distinct psychopathology, others in treatment showed a high incidence of mood and anxiety disorders. A study of incarcerated pedophiles found that they were slightly more neurotic and slightly more psychotic, higher in trait anxiety and anger, and lower in self-esteem than nonsex-offenders. Although some psychological differences are evident in pedophiles, not enough is known to develop a simple personality profile that would differentiate pedophiles from the general population. [120](#)

The popular stereotype of a child molester as a stranger who lurks around schools and playgrounds with a bag of candy is only partially correct. In 2000, 93% of children who were molested knew their abuser: 34% were family members and 59% were acquaintances. [121](#) In only about 10% of the cases was the sexual act an impulsive action with a stranger as the victim. In the most common form of pedophilia, the pedophile exploits a child already known to him, the action is not impulsive, and it often begins with a form of courtship in which the pedophile befriends the child with stories, games, and disarming companionship.

In some cases, the sexual contact is a form of incest. This type of pedophile generally treats his victims very well, as he must gain their confidence and ensure they do not tell others. This type of pedophile often claims that his behavior is based on a mutual, loving relationship with the child, yet refuses to stop the sexual behavior at the request of the child. Another type of pedophile, and the least common type, has a history of antisocial behavior and may feel a strong hostility toward women. This type may assault his victim and cause severe physical harm. [108](#)

Many pedophiles victimize a great many children before they are caught. One study found a ratio of only one arrest per 30 acts of child molestation, and that child molesters often engage in a variety of deviant behaviors. Many

who molest young girls also molest young boys. Many who molest children outside their family also engage in incest within their family.¹²² It is common practice for pedophiles to claim that they were drunk as an excuse to reduce the stigma and lessen the chances of punishment. They may convince others that instead of needing punishment or psychiatric treatment they simply need to stop drinking. ¹²³

In 2000, 89% of sex offense cases tried in U.S. district courts resulted in conviction, with 85% entering a "guilty" plea. Although statistics do not delineate child sex offenses from adult sex offenses, we expect the disposition of cases to be similar. This high rate of guilty pleas may indicate significant plea bargaining, meaning that the cases that actually make it to court have ample evidence for conviction and that a jury trial would only result in a guilty verdict with a harsher penalty. Unfortunately, it appears that the majority of arrests for sex offenses do not result in prosecution. ¹²⁴

Pedophiles and the Internet

As the Internet has become increasingly accessible since the mid-1990s, so has child pornography and "hidden" access to child victims. The Internet allows pedophiles instant access to both children and to other pedophiles worldwide. Such access has led to web sites devoted to open discussion of adult-child sexual interaction and allows pedophiles to congregate online for the sole purpose of rationalizing and motivating their predatory inclinations.¹²⁵ Also see [Possession of Child Pornography](#).

The Internet also provides hidden avenues for luring children into relationships via chat rooms and open forums. Some web sites have been developed to tell children that it is "OK," or even proper, to have sexual relationships with adults, while others post information about specific children for pedophiles to view. ¹²⁵

Since the late 1990s, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies have stepped up efforts to lure pedophiles online, trap them, and arrest them. The Children's Internet Protection Act of 2001 was approved with a goal of ensuring that all children are provided Internet access free from the threat of pedophiles and that parents, teachers, guardians, and mentors constantly monitor their children's online interactions in order to deter adult-child online sexual interaction.

Voyeurism (Peeping Tom)

The voyeur has repeated, intense sexual urges to observe unsuspecting people who are either naked, in the process of undressing, or engaging in sexual activity. The secretive, illegal nature of the peeping is an essential element of the sexual excitement. As a result, voyeurs, or peeping Toms as

they are often called, are not particularly attracted to nudist camps, burlesque shows, or nude beaches where nudity is accepted.

There are a number of parallels between voyeurism and exhibitionism. Like the exhibitionist, the voyeur is not seeking sexual activity with the person observed. Orgasm is often produced by masturbation during the peeping, or later in response to the memory of what was observed. Voyeurism is found mainly among young men and diminishes greatly toward middle age. Many voyeurs have trouble forming normal heterosexual relationships, so voyeurism becomes the preferred or exclusive means of sexual arousal.

Video voyeurism, using still or video cameras, has become more popular in recent years as technology has allowed cameras that can be hidden virtually anywhere. In most cases that have been prosecuted, cameras were planted in an apartment or bathroom so that the voyeur could observe the victim dressing and undressing, carrying out natural functions, or having sex.¹²⁶ One such case involved a restaurant owner who was found guilty of hiding a video camera in the women's restroom of his business to observe his patrons in various states of dress as they used the restroom. ¹²⁷

Little is known about the prevalence of voyeurism. In one study, only 2.4% of college women in the U.S. reported being the victim of a voyeur in the late 1990s. It is, of course, unknown how many women were watched or filmed without being aware of it.¹²⁸ What is known about voyeurism suggests either: (1) that voyeurism is not a common means of sexual fulfillment, or (2) that the majority of voyeurs are very good at remaining hidden.

Voyeurism is an illegal activity with risk of arrest. Arrested voyeurs are often dealt with more harshly than exhibitionists as they trespass on others' property, are close to victims' windows, etc. Although most voyeurs are harmless, some have been known to commit rape, burglary, or arson. ¹²⁹, ¹³⁰

Exhibitionism

Exhibitionism is the repeated, intense, sexual urge to expose one's genitals to a stranger. This is, of course, illegal, and many exhibitionists have long arrest records before they are eventually referred for mandatory treatment. For exhibitionists and voyeurs, the ratio of arrests to commission of such acts is estimated at 1 to 150. ¹²² As with the other paraphilias, valid data on prevalence in the population are not available, although exhibitionism is believed to account for one-third to two-thirds of sex offenses in England, Wales, Canada, and the United States.¹³¹ Additionally, 4.8% of college women across the United States have reported being the victim of exhibitionists. ¹²⁸

As a general rule, the exhibitionist makes no attempt to form a relationship with the stranger or to engage the stranger in any sexual activity, so there is

no physical danger to the victim. In many cases, sexual pleasure is derived from seeing the victim's shock or fear, and there is little pleasure when the victim shows no visible reaction. There are several exceptional cases of an exhibitionist being angered to the point of attacking the victim because the victim *ignored* the exhibitionist.[122](#) Very rarely, exhibitionism may be combined with psychological problems that lead to sexual assault. [131](#)

Exhibitionism is found almost exclusively in males, although female cases have been reported. Most exhibitionists are inhibited or even impotent in other forms of sexual activity. The disorder usually starts before age 18 and is most common among men in their twenties. Frequency diminishes during the thirties and is much less common after age 40.

One study found that the typical exhibitionist is married, has above average intelligence, is satisfactorily employed, and shows no other evidence of serious emotional problems.[132](#) The absence of other emotional problems has been a consistent finding in a number of studies. [130](#)

Historically, the typical exhibitionist has made little effort to evade apprehension, often "performing" repeatedly on the same street corner or in a parked car which is easily identifiable. The risk of being caught may be an important part of the sexual excitement, leading some exhibitionists into behavior almost guaranteed to result in arrest. Police catch more exhibitionists than any other category of sex offender. [129](#)

The exhibitionist engages in high-risk, illegal behavior that is out of control. This is a definite security concern. Even if arrested only once, there is a strong likelihood that he has done it many more times without being reported or arrested. One study reported that as many as 91% of exhibitionists repeat their offense within four years if left untreated.[131](#) Effective treatment is possible, however. In the case of one of the best treatment programs in the country, recidivism after treatment is rare. [133](#)

Mooning is a form of exhibitionism generally classified as a juvenile prank. It probably has no security significance unless it is part of a pattern of socially immature behavior that continues beyond the college years.

Obscene Telephone Callers

Obscene telephone calling is less common today than it was in past decades. Two studies of female undergraduates in 1967 and 1968 determined that from 50% to 75% had been the recipients of unwanted obscene calls. In 2000, this number had decreased to less than 25%. [128](#)

This marked decline in obscene phone calls can likely be attributed to better call-tracing technology and one specific new home phone technology: CallerID. Although there are ways to circumvent CallerID technology, it is no

longer possible to pick up the telephone and place a call without a high likelihood of being identified by the recipient.

Each obscene phone caller generally has many victims, as numbers are commonly chosen at random from the phone book or by chance dialing. The attraction of the obscene phone call to the caller, who is almost always male, is that he can impose himself without exposing himself. The telephone connection offers intimacy and proximity while preserving anonymity, and little energy is lost in searching for a victim. If one phone call fails to elicit the desired response (often only shock), it is easy to just dial another number.

From the little that is known, the motivations and personality make-up of obscene phone callers appear to be similar to exhibitionists, and possibly voyeurs. The action is an expression of aggression and hostility toward women in general but, like the exhibitionist, the obscene phone caller is generally not considered dangerous. Both have difficulty in forming interpersonal relationships with the opposite sex. [131](#), [133](#)

Today, it is possible to make sexually explicit calls legally to phone numbers advertised on late night television and in many magazines. One New York City number attracted 500,000 calls per day during 1983. Current statistics on these types of calls are unavailable. United States phone company regulations since the 1980s have made phone sex calls somewhat more difficult to make. Many international organizations, however, have recognized the market for such call services and have picked up where American companies left off, some offering better prices and more sexually explicit conversation.[134](#) The mentality of those who make obscene calls to strangers is different from those who call "dial-a-porn" numbers. It is not known whether the availability of these legal commercial lines has reduced the frequency of illegal and unwanted obscene calls to strangers. [135](#)

Bestiality

Sexual contact with animals is called bestiality. Sexual contact with an animal may be pursued as a convenient substitute for heterosexual relations when the animal is more readily accessible than a human partner. It may also be the result of curiosity or a desire for novelty. As such, bestiality, though unconventional, is not necessarily a paraphilia. It becomes a paraphilia, known as zoophilia, only if it develops into the preferred means of sexual arousal.

As a general rule, sexual contact with an animal is a passing phase in a person's sexual history. It is replaced by intercourse with a human partner as soon as that is available. If the bestiality occurs during youth and infrequently, it does not indicate personality disturbance. In rare cases, however, the animal experience has been so extensive that one becomes conditioned to it as the principal source of arousal. In those cases, it may

preclude formation of a normal sexual relationship, and the diagnosis of zoophilia is warranted.

Zoophilia leads to a lifestyle of sexual interaction with animals. A 2003 study by C. Williams and M. Weinberg is the most comprehensive study of zoophilia to date. Williams and Weinberg studied the sexual behaviors of 114 self-defined zoophiles through extensive surveys and interviews. The study was not intended to judge the psychological stability of participants, but to study their sexual identities, interpersonal interactions, sexual behavior, and to see if they understood the sociocultural contexts in which this behavior occurs.

[136](#)

Participants who volunteered for the study understood they would be meeting face-to-face with the researchers. All participants were white males, aged 18-70 with a median age of 27. Sixty-four percent were single and had never married and 83% had at least some college education. Forty-five percent were computer technicians, 77% had a religious background, although 69% said they were "not at all" religious. Thirty-six percent lived in a large city, 34% in a rural community, and 30% in small to medium sized towns or cities.

Most zoophiles in this study stated that they had mutual and loving relationships with their animal partners, and that they preferred animals to humans because animals are always "friendly and nonjudgmental" and do not try to "manipulate and control" relationships. Half came in contact with other zoophiles through the Internet, which apparently was a major source for helping them find their sexual identity and for meeting other zoophiles who provided moral and other types of support.

Two-thirds of the men in this study reported that their first sexual contact with an animal occurred prior to age 17, and about 50% reported "strong" sexual interests in humans. Another 17% had never had sex with another human.

All zoophiles in this study reported that they hid their behavior from the public and only shared their interest in animals with other zoophiles. Many reported an actual fear of discovery, which is a very important security concern. Zoophiles have a very hidden lifestyle, known only to those with the same interests, which makes them distinctly vulnerable to threats of coercion and outside influence should their "hidden" lifestyle be discovered.

Other Paraphilias

One leading researcher has identified over 40 different forms of paraphilia. [137](#) Frotteurism is sexual arousal from rubbing one's body, often the genitals, against the body of a fully clothed stranger or fondling breasts in a crowded area such as an elevator or subway. Necrophilia is arousal from viewing or having sexual contact with a corpse. Coprophilia and urophilia

refer to sexual excitement derived from contact with feces and urine. In klismaphilia, the preferred or exclusive means of sexual excitement is enemas. Other sexual addictions may involve diapers or insects crawling over the body.

Sources of Additional Information

Readers interested in researching a specific subject in greater depth may wish to start by ordering a bibliography on the subject from the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, Information Service, 313 Morrison Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, telephone (812) 855-7686.

General information on sexuality and sexual health may be obtained by contacting the following:

National Sexuality Resource Center
2017 Mission Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone (415) 437-5121/Fax (415) 621-3783
e-mail: nsrcinfo@sfsu.edu
Web site: <http://nsrc.sfsu.edu>

Society for Human Sexuality
PMB 1276
1122 East Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98122-3934
Web site: <http://www.sexuality.org/>

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