



COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 7373/19975 Human Sexuality

TIME: Wednesdays, 6pm-9pm

FACULTY: Meryl Cohen, Med, LCSW

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I. Course

A. Catalog Description

[Credit 3 (3-0)]. Knowledge for integrating human sexuality in the practice of social work.

B. Purpose

This course explores the biopsychosocial and historical variables associated with human sexuality across the lifespan. The course integrates sexuality in the thinking and practice of social workers. Through examination of sexual expression and behavior from the social work perspective, the student will be better prepared to assume a significant role in helping clients address issues of human sexuality.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explore the biopsychosocial, historical, political, and cultural contexts of human sexuality;
2. Examine biases, range and diversity of attitudes and practices, interpersonal obstacles, beliefs, and values in the area of human sexuality;
3. Identify the differences between personal and professional values and ethics, and identify possible means of reconciliation pertaining to sexuality issues;
4. Describe the biological aspects of sexuality, including the sexual response cycle, anatomy and physiology, and development of sexually transmitted infections;
5. Develop a framework for understanding human sexuality across the lifespan and the need for intimacy and healthy relationships;
6. Explore sexual and gender diversity including orientation, gender identity, gender role, and biological sex;

7. Analyze the misuse of sexuality to influence, manipulate, and control others
8. Identify the role of social work in advocating for social justice and human rights and to addressing oppression in the arena of human sexuality

III. Course Structure

This class will utilize several methods of instruction including lectures, small group exercises, group discussion, guest lectures, video material, role-plays and/or case studies, self-reflection exercises and the use of individualized readings. Group and individual presentations and projects will be required.

IV. Course Requirements

Reading Assignments required text ***Sexuality Concepts for Social Workers and Human Service Professionals*** by Brent Satterly and Travis Ingersoll
Cognella Publishing

The course outline contains topics to be covered and reading assignments to be completed on a weekly basis. Class time will be designed to provide application for assigned readings. It is critical that students remain current with all reading assignments and fully participate in class.

Class Attendance & Participation (25%)

Class attendance and participation are critical factors for success in this course and will be evaluated based on regular and on-time full class attendance and participation in interactive discussions. Self-awareness of personal sexual learning, attitudes and values is an important component of this course. Though personal privacy will be respected, it is expected that through self-reflection exercises, students will actively assess their personal values and how these values will impact their professional work and how they can minimize conflict using Social Work Ethical Principles. A **critique of outside speakers** and periodic quizzes will be included in this 25%.

Assignments

Web analysis 24%

This assignment will offer an opportunity to review and analyze websites that provide sexual health information about topics that are not extensively covered in the textbook – anatomy and physiology, contraception and abortion. The web analysis will be due the day the topics are discussed. Write three 3-page papers that describe 2 sexual health websites for each topic you chose to use and review, provide an analysis of them, and state why you would or would not recommend them to students in this class or clients in the field.

The following are questions for you to answer in assessing the value of the websites:

- Who sponsors the site, and what is their mission? What are their political views? Values? Are they consistent with universal values?
- To what extent does the website emphasize the importance of making informed choices that are consistent with one's personal values?
- To what extent does the website distinguish between facts and opinions?
- To what extent does the website reinforce stereotypes or biases?
- To what extent does the website include adequate information to insure visitors' understanding of the topic?

Additional considerations:

- Design — clear, easy to use/navigate?
- Content – Reputable, accurate, current, interesting?

Sexual Health Paper 12%

This assignment will enable you to critically analyze the sexual health of a fictional character in popular culture – television, films or literature.

To complete this assignment, you will need to refer to the resource “Life Behaviors of a Sexually Healthy Adult” (at the end of this syllabus) and the checklist summary, “Sexual Health in Prime Time”. You may do this individually or in a group of 3. You will need to:

1. Select a fictional TV, movie, or literary character who will serve as a case study to analyze his or her sexual health, based on the criteria indicated on the handouts.
2. Complete the checklist “Sexual Health in Prime Time” for your character.
3. Write a 4-page paper, elaborating on the criteria in the handouts as it pertains to your character. Address at least one aspect of each of the six areas covered in the checklist.

Each student or group of three needs to submit only ONE paper, with all the names of the students who worked on that paper. The point of working together is for the team to discuss and analyze the character TOGETHER. Do not divide the work between you, but work collaboratively on the whole paper. **Remember to attach the completed checklist to your paper.**

Self Awareness Paper (3-page minimum) 12%

Write a 3 or 4-page sexual self-analysis, following the guidelines in the “Guide to Understanding Your Sexual Self” (in this syllabus.)

FIELD TRIP 12%

Write a 3-page paper describing and analyzing your reactions.

For this assignment, you should try something new related to understanding an aspect of sexuality.

For example, you might:

- Attend a lecture about sexuality
- Check out an art exhibit that has sexuality related art
- Visit an adult bookstore or boutique or attend an in-home sex toy party
- Interview your parents, grandparents, a religious leader, or someone else about their views on sexuality topics
- Visit a strip club
- Go to a drag show/a gay or lesbian club
- Watch a sexually explicit film alone, with friends, or with a partner
- Perform a vulvar self-examination or testicular self-examination
- Get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STI) and/or HIV (check out the local health department, Planned Parenthood, or the UH Health Center)
- Buy condoms

Final Project Assignment (15%)

Choose one of following options: (a paper plus a 10 minute oral presentation on your project will be presented to the class)

The final project is an opportunity for you to delve deeper into specific areas of human sexuality of interest to you and of relevance to social work.

Research Paper on opposing views in sexuality (5-page minimum)

Pick a controversial topic in sexuality from the list below. Then, locate at least three articles for each side of the issue. These can come from newspapers, magazines, websites, books, or from professional journals. You will have a total of 6 articles (3 pro and 3 con) for this paper.

- Write at least five main bullet points for each side that summarize the content of the articles on the first pages.
- Then discuss which side of the debate you favor *and why*.

Ideas:

Controversial topics for research paper:

- Comprehensive school sexuality education v. abstinence-only education
- Opposing views on legal prostitution
- Opposing views on censoring explicit erotic material
- Opposing views on sexual addiction
- Opposing views on sex offender registries
- Opposing views on legal abortion
- Opposing views on equal rights including marriage for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people

If you would like to discuss another controversial topic in sexuality, you may request permission from the instructor.

Or

Scholarly paper on a topic of your choice. The paper should be a minimum of 6 pages –does not have to be a debate topic

Or

Conduct a training and /or presentation on a relevant topic. Suggested venues for the project include field placement, place of employment, and a GCSW brown bag lunch. (Audio or videotape, outline, and/or Power Point must be turned in along with a reference list and participant sign in and evaluations). Do something creative/artistic (poster project, art project, campus radio or TV project, video or PSA project to post to social media or YouTube).

Or

Work on a policy advocacy or other community-based project of relevance to the course. A project summary reporting the work contributed to the project – signed by an organizational manager or movement leader working on that issue with you – you must turn in, along with a minimum 5 page paper which includes a personal response and critique that integrated your experience with the scholarly research.

V. Evaluation and Grading

a. Grades will be based on the following:

Attendance and participation	25%
Web Analysis	24%
Sexual Health Paper	12%
Field trip	12%
Self-Analysis	12%
Final project	15%

b. The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A = 96-100% of the points	C+ = 76-79.9%
A- = 92-95.9%	C = 72-75.9%
B+= 88-91.9%	C- = 68-71.9%
B = 84-87.9%	D = 64-67.9%
B- = 80-83.9%	F = Below 64%

c. Attendance and Class Participation:

Attendance and class participation are considered to be absolutely critical to successful learning in this course. Maximum participation as demonstrated by regular attendance of full class period, actively engaging

in class discussions, and ongoing involvement in class work and exercises is crucial to the class participation grade in this course. Both attendance and class participation will be observed and recorded.

d. Late Assignments:

Instructor will allow for submission of late assignments only if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments (granted permission for late submission) however will automatically result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

e. Pagers, Cell Phones, and Laptops:

Please show respect and consideration of colleagues and instructor by taking responsibility for keeping cell phone's turned off.

Laptop use will be allowed solely for note taking purposes and those students needing to do so must make formal written request to the Instructor at the beginning of the course.

f. Policy on Grades of Incomplete:

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for the university policy regarding a grade of Incomplete (I). Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy.

VI. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements.

Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course.

The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

VII. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

VIII. Consultation

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor regarding questions about the course content, assignments, or any other academic issues related to this course.

IX. Americans with Disabilities Statement

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

FOR THOSE QUESTIONS YOU DON'T WANT TO BRING UP IN CLASS, you may find these resources helpful:

www.goaskalice.columbia.edu and www.sexualhealth.com: Both websites provide excellent information and answers to questions about many aspects of

sexuality. “Go Ask Alice” is especially designed for college students. The websites www.sexetc.org and www.plannedparenthood.org/teen-talk also provide excellent information, although they were designed with a teen audience in mind.

X. COURSE OUTLINE, READINGS, and ASSIGNMENTS

Required Text *Sexuality Concepts for Social Workers and Human Service Professionals* by Brent Satterly and Travis Ingersoll Cognella Publishing

January 21 Sexuality – Holistic Model and Social Work Practice

January 28 Ethics and Values in Social Work Practice

Assignment due: chapters 1, 2, 3

February 4 Being Sex Positive

Assignment due: Chapter 12

February 11 The Biology of Sexual Health

Assignment due: Web analysis 1: Male and Female Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology

Assignment due: Web analysis 2: Contraception

February 18 Infertility, Unintended Pregnancy and Adoption

Assignments due: Chapter 4

February 25 Abortion and Options Counseling

Assignments due: Web analysis 3: Abortion

March 4 Intimacy and Relationships

Assignments due: Chapter 5 and Sexual Health Paper Due

March 11 Gender and Sexual Diversity

Assignments due: Chapter 6 and 7

March 25 Variety of Sexual Expression

Assignment due: Field Trip Paper

April 1 Through the Life Span

Assignments due: chapter 8 and 11 Self-Awareness Paper due

April 8 Through the Life Span

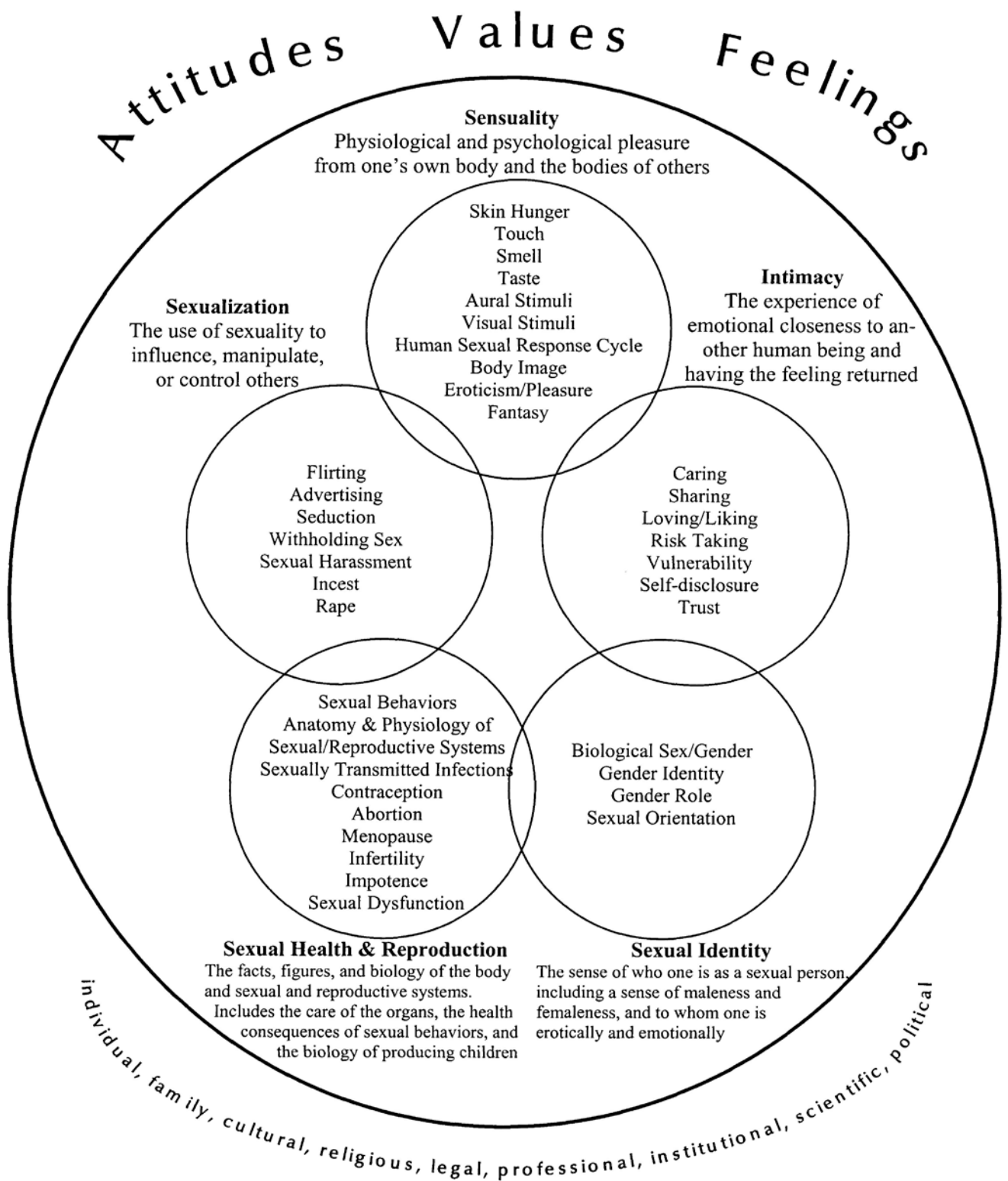
April 15 Power

Assignment due: chapter 9 and 10

April 22, 29 Final Reports

*****E-MAIL:*** *A valid, active e-mail address is required for this course. You may use a personal address, a university-assigned address, or you may create a web-based address just to use for this course. ***

Holistic Sexuality



GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR SEXUAL SELF

Writing your Sexual Self-Analysis is an unusual assignment that students in Human Sexuality courses have consistently rated the most helpful and important exercise they have ever done. This exercise gives you the opportunity to look at your growth as a sexual person from your childhood to the present. For most students, this is the first time that they have written about their lives from this standpoint. Although it is often difficult to begin, it is usually more difficult to stop once you have started writing! The important point about this paper is for you to **be as honest as you can with yourself** about your life, both past and present. Being honest with yourself is crucial to making the time you put into this exercise worthwhile. Remember, you are the one who will benefit from writing your self-analysis. Feel free to write whatever you think has affected the way you have developed as a sexual person.

This assignment is CONFIDENTIAL, read only by the professor.

TO BEGIN,

Think about specific things that you want to examine about yourself. You can choose from the list of questions below, or decide on your own questions. Be sure to include these questions, in bulleted form, in the beginning of your paper, and begin by talking about why you selected these questions.

It is ok if you go on to examine other questions, too, as you may find that thinking about one question triggers thoughts about another.

Be sure to **DESCRIBE** important events (what, when etc. **NO NAMES!**) and then **ANALYZE** these events – try to figure out why these experiences happened, what their meaning was for you then and is for you now, your emotional responses (why, and how you feel). Your **FEELINGS** are very personal; here is a place where you can explore those feelings without being judged by anyone. Your feelings are neither good nor bad in and of themselves. They are your feelings and that makes them valid and worth exploring.

The following questions may be helpful in getting you thinking about what topics you want to examine in your Sexual Self-Analysis. You can **pick and choose which questions** you want to deal with, and which questions will give you better insight into yourself. **Add your own questions** if you like. You may also use the “Life Skills of a Sexually Healthy Adult” handout to help you examine various aspects of your own sexuality. Remember to list the questions you want to begin exploring in the beginning of your analysis, and to begin by discussing why you selected these questions.

- Who and what were the most important childhood influences for your sexual development (include parents, brothers and sisters, peers, relatives, religion, etc.)?

- What were the most important sexual/relationship events that happened to you between ages 5 and 12, between 13 and 18, since you started college?
- How did/do your parent(s) relate to you and/or their sexual partner? What kind of image did they give of love, of sex?
- Was their marriage/relationship based on utility, practicality, routine, conflict, or real love?
- Was their relationship an equal partnership, or did one dominate the relationship?
- How did they settle quarrels? How does this affect the way you settle differences in your relationships?
- How did your parents settle their differences with you? How did your parents handle it when you rebelled?
- If your parents are divorced, how did this experience affect you?
- If you have a stepparent, how would you describe the new relationship?
- How did your parents treat you emotionally and physically?
- How was affection expressed in your family? How does this affect you now?
- What kind of relationship did/do you have with your brothers and sisters? As a child? As a teenager? Today?
- Has it made a difference because you were a girl, or boy, the oldest, middle or youngest? Has this brought any special rewards or strains?
- How did you learn about sex, about sexuality? From whom? How old were you? How accurate was the information? How did you feel about it at the time? Today?
- What were your early childhood experiences with sexuality (playing “doctor” or other games, rap sessions with peers, and experimentation)?
- What were your experiences, as an adolescent, with masturbation, with first menstruation, or first wet dreams? What kind of message, verbal and non-verbal, did you get from your family about these experiences?
- How was nudity treated in your family?
- What kind of sexual experiences did you have in high school, in college (masturbation, nudity, dating, sexual intimacy)? How have they affected you in the long term?
- How have your sexual relationships with others affected you?
- What have you learned from intimacy with others that has helped you understand your own sexuality better?
- Describe the sexual/relationship points of your life, from childhood memories to the present. How have these experiences contributed to your present frame of reference?
- Was there any sexually traumatic experience you’ve kept hidden and not discussed with anyone? Can you write about this now, knowing no one will see what you write unless you decide to share it with him or her? If you start writing about a traumatic experience, you may find it brings considerable relief just to see the words on paper. You may decide, after breaking the ice, that you want to work this event through so you can put it behind you.

- Do you consider yourself a sexual rebel, conformist, optimist, skeptic, liberal, conservative, or anything else?
- Do you think you understand your sexual self as well as you would like? Explain.
- Do you know sexual/relationship goals in life? Explain.
- Do you know sexual/relationship values? Strengths and shortcomings? Fears? Needs? Likes and dislikes? Explain.

You may want to conclude your Sexual Self-Analysis with a look ahead into your sexual/relationship hopes/plans for the future (marriage, family, relationship, intimacy). Ask yourself how realistic your hopes and expectations are, and what you might do to improve the chances of your success.

Writing a good Sexual Self-Analysis paper requires that you look honestly at yourself and the significant people in your life. Putting your experiences and feelings down on paper helps to give you a new understanding of them, especially when an experience has been traumatic and you have avoided dealing with it in the past. It can also help you line up your expectations and priorities, take advantage of your strengths and resources, and cope better with your limitations.

You may or may not care to share and discuss your Sexual Self-Analysis with someone close to you, a very good friend or your significant other.

When you get your Sexual Self-Analysis paper back, put it aside in a safe, secure place for a while. Come back to it a month or two later and reread it. Note any new insights or thoughts this rereading brings to the surface. Then put it away again and come back to it a year or two from now. In reviewing your Sexual Self-Analysis, you may be surprised at how your views change with time. But, then, this is part of living and growing, and recognizing how you have changed makes your life richer and fuller.

LIFE BEHAVIORS OF A SEXUALLY HEALTHY ADULT

A sexually healthy adult will:

In human development

- Appreciate his or her own body.
- Seek further information about reproduction as needed.
- Affirm that human development includes sexual development that may or may not include reproduction or genital sexual experience.
- Interact with both genders in respectful and appropriate ways.
- Affirm his or her own sexual orientation and respect the sexual orientation of others.

In relationships

- View family as a valuable source of support.
- Express love and intimacy in appropriate ways.
- Develop and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Avoid exploitative or manipulative relationships.
- Make informed choices about family options and relationships.
- Exhibit skills that enhance personal relationships.
- Understand how cultural heritage affects ideas about family, interpersonal relationships, and ethics.

In personal skills

- Identify and live according to his or her values.
- Take responsibility for her or her own behavior.
- Practice effective decision-making.
- Communicate effectively with family, peers, and partners.

In sexual behavior

- Enjoy and express his or her sexuality throughout life.
- Express his or her sexuality in ways that are congruent with his or her values.
- Enjoy sexual feelings without necessarily acting on them.
- Discriminate between life-enhancing sexual behaviors and those that are harmful to self and/or others.
- Express his or her sexuality while respecting the rights of others.
- Seek new information to enhance his or her sexuality.
- Engage in sexual relationships that are consensual, non-exploitative, honest, pleasurable, and protected against disease and unintended pregnancy.

In sexual health

- Use contraception effectively to avoid unintended pregnancy.
- Prevent sexual abuse.
- Act consistent with his or her own values in dealing with an unintended pregnancy.

- Seek early prenatal care.
- Avoid contracting or transmitting an STD, including HIV.
- Practice health-promoting behaviors, such as regular check-ups, breast and testicular self-exam, and early identification of potential problems.

In society and culture

- Demonstrate respect for people with different sexual values.
- Exercise democratic responsibility to influence legislation dealing with sexual issues.
- Assess the impact of family, cultural, religious, media, and societal messages on his or her thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors related to sexuality.
- Promote the rights of all people to accurate sexuality information.
- Avoid behaviors that exhibit prejudice and bigotry.
- Reject stereotypes about the sexuality of diverse populations.
- Educate others about sexuality.

Source: SIECUS (2005). Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Kindergarten -12th Grade, 3rd Ed. New York, NY: SIECUS.

SEXUAL HEALTH IN PRIME TIME

Directions: There are many characteristics that make a person sexually healthy or sexually unhealthy. Choose a **fictional** character to evaluate and check whether she or he meets each of the following sexual health characteristics. Give specific examples whenever you can.

Name of fictional character _____

	This character...	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	EXAMPLE
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	1. Appreciates her or his own body.				
	2. Can get information about reproduction if they need it.				
	3. Knows a person can choose not to have children or not to have intercourse.				
	4. Treats people of all genders with respect.				
	5. Understands their sexual orientation and respects others' sexual orientation.				
	6. Understands their gender identity and respects others' gender identities.				
RELATIONSHIPS	1. Shows love and intimacy in appropriate ways.				
	2. Builds meaningful relationships.				
	3. Avoids harmful relationships.				
	4. Decides with their partner about whether (or when) to become a parent.				
	5. Knows how to make their relationships better.				
PERSONAL SKILLS	1. Lives according to their values.				
	2. Takes responsibility for their own behavior.				
	3. Can make good decisions.				
	4. Can think critically.				
	5. Can communicate well with family, friends, and partners.				
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	1. Enjoys and expresses their sexuality throughout their life.				
	2. Holds true to their values when sexually expressing themselves.				
	3. Enjoys sexual feelings without necessarily acting on them.				
	4. Knows the difference between life-enhancing sexual behaviors and those that are harmful.				
	5. Respects the rights of others.				
	6. Gets new information to improve their sexuality.				

	This character...	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	EXAMPLE
	7. Has sexual relationships that are consensual, not harmful, honest, pleasurable, and protected against disease and unplanned pregnancy.				
SEXUAL HEALTH	1. Gets regular checkups and does breast or testicular self exams.				
	2. Uses contraception to avoid unplanned pregnancy.				
	3. Avoids getting (or giving someone) STIs, including HIV.				
	4. Acts in line with one's own values when dealing with an unintended pregnancy.				
	5. Gets prenatal care if needed.				
	6. Prevents sexual abuse.				
SOCIETY AND CULTURE	1. Respects people with different sexual values.				
	2. Advocates for sexual issues in government.				
	3. Thinks about how different sources of sexual information affect their sexual thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors.				
	4. Examines the world around them for biases based on gender, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, and race.				
	5. Stands up for the rights of all people to get accurate sexuality information.				
	6. Does not express prejudice or bigotry.				
	7. Rejects stereotypes about the sexuality of others.				
	8. Teaches others about sexuality.				

Adapted with permission from SIECUS (2005). *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Kindergarten -12th Grade, 3rd Edition*. New York, NY: SIECUS