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Figuring Out Your Sexual Orientation

Figuring out your sexual orientation can be complicated but you're the only person who can figure out what your orientation truly is. This resource provides some information about sexuality and sexual orientation that may be helpful if you have questions.

QUESTIONING YOUR SEXUALITY

Not everyone knows their sexual orientation or how to label themselves. For some people, understanding their sexual orientation can take years, or even a lifetime. Some people may try a label to see if it fits, and then change it to another one if it doesn't. You don't have to decide on one label, and it's okay if someday in the future you feel differently from how you feel now.

ATTRACTION

There are different forms of attraction. When it comes to sexual orientation, it usually refers to romantic attraction (who you desire a romantic relationship with) and sexual attraction (who you want to engage in sexual activity with).

Sometimes people are romantically and sexually attracted to the same groups of people. Sometimes they're not. For example, it's possible to want a romantic relationship with men but be sexually attracted to men, women, and nonbinary people. This sort of situation is called "mixed orientation" or "cross orientation."



EXPLORING YOUR FEELINGS

There's no "right" way to come to terms with your orientation. However, there are a few things you can do to explore your feelings and help figure things out. Above all else, let yourself feel your feelings. It's hard to understand your feelings if you ignore them.

There's a lot of shame and stigma around different sexual orientations in society. People who aren't straight are often made to feel like they should repress their feelings. Remember, your orientation is valid, and your feelings are valid.

Learn about the different terms for orientations. Find out what they mean, and consider whether any of them resonate with you. Consider doing further research by reading forums, joining LGBTQIA+ support groups, and learning about these communities online. This could help you understand the terms better.

CHANGES

If you start identifying with a certain orientation and later feel differently, that's okay. It's important to remember that your orientation may change over time. Sexuality is fluid. It's okay to say, "Hey, I was wrong about this, and now I actually feel more comfortable identifying as X." Orientation is fluid. Your orientation may change, but that doesn't make it any less valid over time, nor does it mean you're wrong or confused.



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