Sexual and Reproductive Health Terms

Understanding Sex, Gender, Orientation and Expression: The Genderbread Person

It is helpful to think of sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender expression on different continuums. The diagram in the slide is called the “genderbread person.”

**Gender Identity** (the brain in this image) is how a person thinks about themselves. This may be as a man, as a woman, as a non-gendered person, or as some other term.

**Gender Expression** (the outside of the body in this image) is the ways a person presents their gender, through actions, dress, demeanor, etc.

**Biological Sex** (the groin area in this image) refers to the physical sex characteristics that a person is born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc. This is generally understood in terms of female, male, and intersex.

**Attraction** (the heart) is also sometimes called sexual orientation. This refers to who a person is attracted to, and may be based on their sex/gender. This diagram makes a distinction between sexual attraction and romantic attraction. Often, we understand attraction in terms of heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual (though there are many words that individuals use to describe their own orientation).