

# Central features of paraphilias-an outline essay sample

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The central features of all paraphilias, according to the DSM-IV, are:

Sexual urges or sexual fantasies with non-human objects and/or sexual behaviors with non-human objects

Sexual behaviors involving humiliation or suffering of oneself or another person

Adult sexual behavior that involves children or nonconsenting adults

There are two types of preferences for nonhuman objects: fetishism and transvestism. A fetish exists when a nonliving object sexually arouses a person. It is relatively harmless if the action is taken playfully and is acceptable to the person's partner. Focus on certain parts of the body (feet, hair, ears, etc) or certain objects (woman's panties) aside from those part of the pleasurable foreplay, can become fetishistic in its grip on the individual. A more extreme form of fetishism is when a nonliving object completely substitutes for a human partner and orgasm is achieved when the person is alone, fondling the object.

Transvestism exists when the person achieves sexual excitement by cross-dressing. This is very rarely found in females, so I will use the male side of this paraphilia as the example. Two different purposes seem to be associated with this act in different individuals. In one aspect, the person seeks to intensify sexual excitement in intercourse with a partner by only partially dressing as a woman. In the other form, the male completely dresses as a woman, which suggests some type of gender identity problem, but not necessarily homosexuality.

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Sadism and Masochism are examples of preferences for situations causing suffering or humiliation. The term 'sadist' is derived from the reported violent sexual exploits of the Marquis de Sade. Sadist is applied to those who obtain sexual excitement from the pain of others. The term masochist was derived from the writing of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose characters sought out women who would beat them. "Masochist" is applied to those who derive sexual excitement through their own pain. Sadists and masochists go hand in hand, one depending on the need of the other. The danger of these needs is that each may need successively more brutal treatment to satisfy their sexual needs.

There are three types of categories involved in the preference for nonconsenting partners. They are exhibitionism, voyeurism, and pedophilia. All three are considered crimes. Exhibitionism is the exposure of one's genitals in a public place. It makes up one third of all sexual crimes and are almost always male crimes. There are three characteristic features of the exhibition. First, it is always performed for unknown women; second, it always takes place where sexual intercourse is impossible, for example in a crowded shopping mall; and third, it must be shocking for the unknown woman or it seems to lose its power to produce sexual arousal in the individual. Exhibitionists are not assaultive, have satisfactory relationships with other adult women, and are considered more of a nuisance than an actual danger.

Looking at sexually arousing pictures or situation is a relatively common, apparently normal activity. The difference between that and voyeurism is

that in normal watching, the viewing is a prelude to normal sexual activity. In the voyeur, the experience replaces normal sexual activity. Voyeurism may exist in a person who also engages in normal heterosexual activity. The voyeur will obsessively think about peeping, and will show a high degree of compulsive behavior to do so. They may have a completely mapped out area for his or her voyeuristic pleasures. Some may literally have a map of all their victims' locations, when the victims are home, when they are likely to be changing, etc.

Adult sexual behavior that involves children, Pedophilia, is the act of deriving sexual excitement through the physical contact of children. This paraphilia is radically different from exhibitionism and voyeurism in its severely damaging impact on the nonconsenting partner- a child. Ordinarily, the pedophile is someone who has ready access to the child. The child or parent would have no reason to suspect that the individual has a pedophilic orientation.

An example of adult sexual behavior that involves nonconsenting adults is frotteurism. It involves intense, recurrent fantasies of, and/or actual touching and rubbing the genitalia against a non-consenting person, for sexual arousal. The behavior usually occurs in crowded places, and the person usually fantasizes an exclusive, caring relationship with the victim. However, the person generally tries to escape detection after touching the victim.

An article on the web site, [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com), page 6, by Rosenberg & Associates regarding paraphilias, states that some paraphiliac interests are socially acceptable (just look the back pages of any pornographic magazine,

or surf the net), such as sadism, fetish objects, or masochism. The web hosts a large number of pornographic businesses that would like to satisfy the needs of many people by offering a variety of sexual pictures or movies that are geared to feed some paraphilias, such as “barely legal teens”, bestiality, and S&M, to name just a few. The author states, “Each year that I add to my experience working with sexual deviancy, I am exposed to new and different paraphilic interest from my clients. People are sexual with animals of all sorts, non-living objects, “pocket vaginas”, blow up dolls, magazines, children, and much more.”

The features of paraphilia are not isolated; usually people who exhibit one form of paraphilia also exhibit others. Paraphilia often results in a variety of associated problems; such as guilt, depression, shame, isolation, and impairment with the ability to have normal social and sexual relationships.