

Going Beyond LGBTQ 101: Examining the Intersections of Identity and Sexuality through a Trans Lens

Liam Gallagher

Agenda

- What is sexuality?
 - OBI Model
 - Cook & Pawlowski, 1991.
- Adding in the trans lens
 - Circles of Sexuality
 - Dr. Dennis Dailey, 1981.
 - Adapted by Eli Green, 2014.

Traditional Model



Sexual Orientation

Gender Identity

Sexual Orientations

The gender(s) you are attracted to physically and/or romantically

- Hetero
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- What else?

Sexual Orientations

All nice, neat and tidy labels!

Assumption: If you identify as gay, you only fantasize about, are attracted to and engage in sexual activity with men.

But is that *really* how sexuality works?

Reality -- much more complex!



Sexual Orientation



Sexual Identity



Sexual Behavior



Gender Identity*

What does all that mean?

Sexual identity does ***not*** equal
behavior or orientation.*

*And thinking so contributes to bi-erasure and bi-phobia

A More Holistic Approach

- OBI Model
 - Can't assume orientation or identity based on behavior
- Break sexuality down:
 - Orientation
 - Behavior
 - Identity

OBI Model

- **Orientation**
 - The gender(s) you are attracted to or fantasize about
 - Can be romantic and/or sexual
- **Behavior**
 - The gender(s) you engage in sexual behavior or activities with
- **Identity**
 - How a person describes/identifies/feels
 - The labels we choose to describe ourselves with

OBI Model

- Identity trumps orientation and behavior.
 - What you do sexually does not necessarily define your orientation or identity
 - No matter what other people say, your identity is valid
- Your partners do not define your identity, you do!
 - Identity is fluid and may change, but does not have to change based on your current partner(s)
 - Bi/pansexuality = sofa bed

What are their OBIs?

- A woman who experiences no sexual attraction but engages in sexual activity with her male partner, and is romantically attracted to all genders.
- A married man who also engages in same gender sexual activity with his bisexual identified wife, but identifies as heterosexual.
- A woman who is attracted to men and women, has only had any sexual activity with men, but identifies as a lesbian and chooses to only pursue relationships with women.

Adding in the Trans Lens

- The way we describe our sexual identity is often dependent on our gender identity.
 - What if you don't identify as a 'man' or 'woman'?
- What would be considered 'same' or 'opposite' gender?

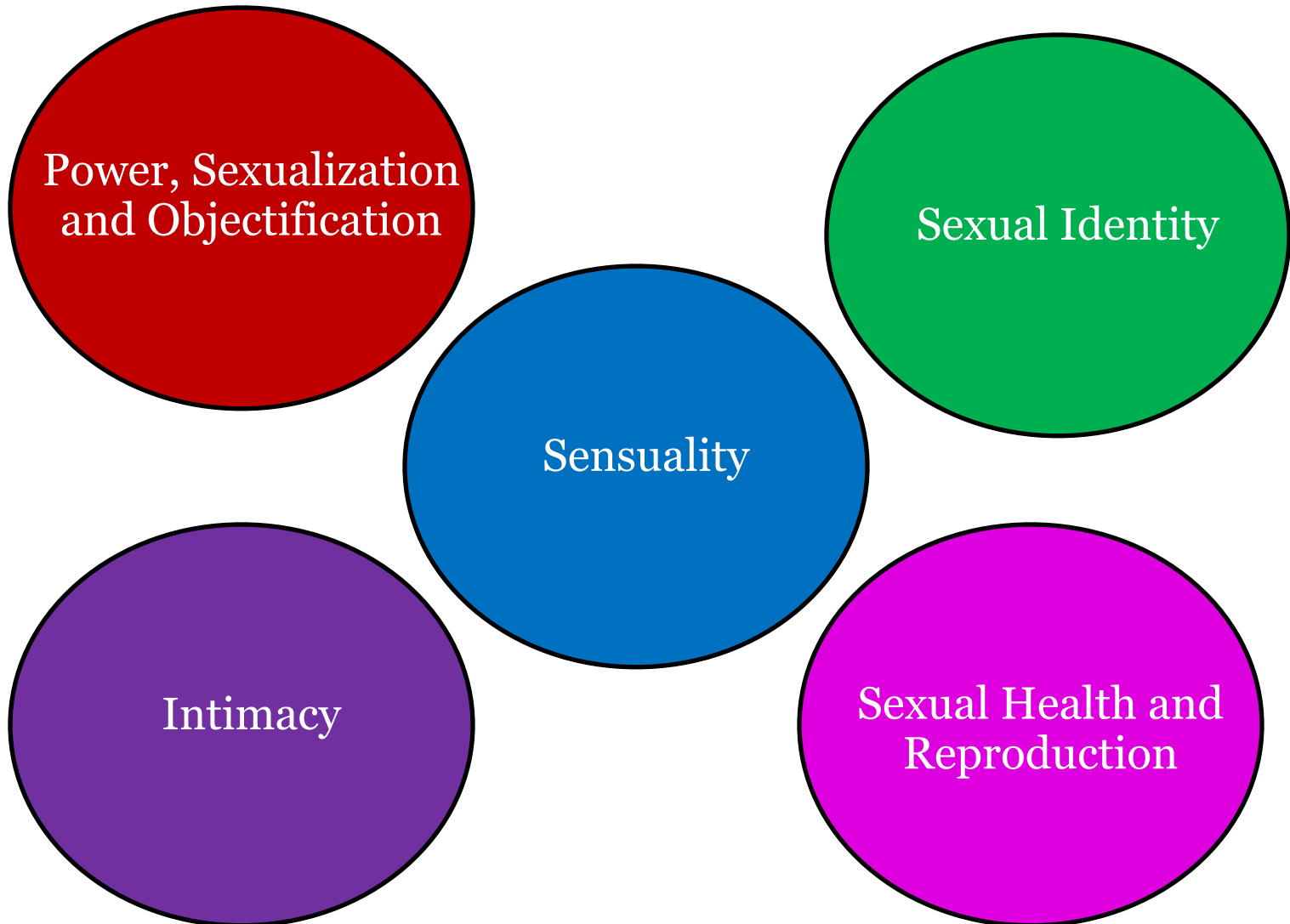
Adding in the Trans Lens

- How has your own OBI changed through your transition, if any?
 - Pre-transition/ self-acceptance
 - Once affirmed in identity
- What were the factors that played a part in your OBI development?
 - Physical or social affirmation, self-acceptance, body image?

Sexuality

- Already have broken into Orientation, Behavior and Identity
 - But...we are still missing a lot!
- Goes beyond *just* sexual attraction or activity
 - Includes feelings, thoughts and behaviors of being male or female
 - Feeling attractive or desirable
 - Intimacy and love
 - More!

Circles of sexuality





Sexual Identity

- Sex assigned at birth
 - Gender identity
 - Gender expression
 - Gender 'roles'
 - Sexual orientation
 - Sexual behavior
 - Sexual desires
-
- Who we are, how we identify and understand ourselves
 - How you experience your gender
 - Who you are attracted to
 - Gender roles/norms/expectations
 - Usually understood through self-discovery. Rarely taught in sex ed.



Sensuality

- Body Image
- Experiencing pleasure/eroticism
- Skin Hunger*
- Fantasy
- Sexual attraction
- Senses: touch/taste/smell/visual/aural

- The ways we experience pleasure
 - Awareness and feeling about your own body and the bodies of partners
- Relationship with body
 - Dysphoria -- how may it impact your sensuality?
- Skin hunger
 - How big is your tank?
- Also rarely taught about pleasure, and must discover this on our own.



Intimacy

- Liking/Loving
- Caring deeply
- Sharing/emotional risk taking
- Communication
- Trust
- Vulnerability

- The need to be emotionally close to someone
 - Sensuality was about the physical, intimacy is about the emotional
 - Intimacy does not mean sexual activity
 - Can be family, friends, partners
- Being open and honest to create a stronger bond
 - May be difficult to disclose personal information
- Rarely taught how to establish and maintain intimacy



Sexual Health and Reproduction

- Anatomy and physiology
- Puberty/physical changes
- Reproductive systems
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Pregnancy and Childbirth
- Contraception

- The ‘facts’ about our bodies
 - Traditional sex ed only covers this category
 - Often not medically accurate
- Large focus on puberty and the negative effects of sexual activity
 - Anatomy and physiology
 - Pregnancy, STIs
- *Very rarely* gender inclusive



Power, Sexualization and Objectification

- Flirting and seduction
- Giving and receiving pleasure
- Withholding sex
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault and rape
- Sexual abuse and incest
- Media and advertising

- The use of sex to control or manipulate others
 - Can be positive and negative
 - Positive: Flirting, seduction, pleasure -- between consenting partners
 - Negative: Occurs when a person does not (or cannot) gain consent, but engages in or uses sex as a tool to gain power over another
- Media plays a big role in our informal learning about sexuality
 - Uses power to alter our perceptions of sexuality
- Must learn on own through education or experience, rarely discussed.

Consider...

- What are some ways a trans identity may impact the circles?
 - Sexual identity \leftrightarrow sensuality
 - Sexual identity \leftrightarrow intimacy
 - Power and sexualization \leftrightarrow intimacy
 - Sexual identity \leftrightarrow power and sexualization
 - Sensuality \leftrightarrow sexual health and reproduction
 - Sexual identity \leftrightarrow sexual health and reproduction

Sexuality is complex

- It's ok if your identity changes, or if you aren't sure exactly where you fit in the LGBTQ+ community
 - Your identity is valid
- Holistic view:
 - Need to look at more than just 'who we are attracted to'
 - Past, present and future
- How else can we improve our understanding of sexuality?
 - Any big flaws you can see?

Thanks!

- Liam Gallagher
 - Lgallagher@stonewallcolumbus.org