Psychology Of Sexuality Essay, Research Paper

This article relates to chapter one because the Science of Psychology is

definitely prevalent in understanding one’s sexual orientation. The purpose of

the author is to inform the public about the lifestyle of gay men and lesbians.

Sexual orientation is the attraction one feels to a particular gender. Sexuality

is made up of three components: biological sex, gender identity and social sex

role. Three sexual orientations are commonly known as heterosexual, bisexual and

homosexual. Heterosexuality, attraction to individuals of the other gender, is

the cultural normality for the behavior of males and females. Bisexuality,

attraction to members of either gender, as well and homosexuality, attraction to

members of the same gender, are not completely understood by scientists.

Scientists have pondered the theory for many years that sexual preference is a

learned behavior that is developed during early childhood. There are many

theories regarding how a particular sexual orientation develops. Some scientists

share the view that sexual orientation is shaped at an early age through

interactions of biological, psychological and social factors. Other

psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health professionals agree that

homosexuality may be genetically predetermined. Research over the past

thirty-five years has determined that homosexuality is not an illesss, mental

disorder or emotional problem. Other objective research shows that homosexual

orientation is not associated with emotional or social problems. Because sexual

orientation develops in early adolescence, without any prior sexual experience,

it is believed that it is not chosen. It has been reported that some people try

diligently to change their sexual preference from homosexual to heterosexual

with no success. For this reason, psychologists do not consider sexual

orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed. An untrue

stereotype about homosexuals is the belief that gay men have more of a tendency

than heterosexual men to sexually molest children. There is no evidence of this.

Instead, recent studies have shown that homosexual parents are quite capable of

rearing developmentally secure children who are intelligent, as well as being

psychologically well adjusted. There is no evidence that homosexual parents are

less capable of parenting than heterosexual parents. Because therapy cannot

change sexual orientation, it is important for society to become better educated

about homosexuality, thus diminishing anti-gay prejudice. Accurate information

for young people struggling with their own sexual identity is especially

important. The belief that such information–when given to young people–will

affect one’s sexual orientation is not valid. The people who have the most

positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians are those who say they know one

or more gay persons well. For this reason, psychiatrists believe that

discrimination against homosexuality is based on his or her lack of knowledge

concerning gay people. Therefore, educating all people about sexual orientation

and homosexuality is likely to diminish anti-gay prejudice. CRITIQUE

Homosexuality was once believed to be a mental illness, due to the unfortunate

fact that mental health professionals furnished society with incorrect

information. Most studies about homosexuals only involved gay men and lesbians

who were in therapy. They were seeking help for their problems, just as straight

men and women do. These studies, and the misunderstanding of homosexuality,

seriously damaged the acceptance of gay men and lesbians. The theories of

homosexuals by psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health

professionals, painted an untrue portrait of gay men and lesbians. This unfair

portrayal directly attributed to the unacceptance of homosexuals. In 1973, the

American Psychiatric Association confirmed that homosexuals were not mentally

ill, and it was not until two years later in 1975, that the American

Psychological Association passed a resolution supporting this confirmation. Both

associations urged all mental health professionals to help dispel the stigma of

mental illness that had been associated with homosexual orientation. Since this

original declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder, this decision

has been reaffirmed by additional research findings and by both associations.

However, when one is reared to believe a certain way, it is not easy to change

his or her opinion. Psychiatrists, psychologists and the Lord above could urge

one to rethink a learned fact; however, to dispute a theory learned early in

life is sometimes impossible. This unfair discrimination against homosexuals is

an obstacle to their leading a normal, happy and productive life, which is the

desire of gay men and lesbians, just as it is the desire of straight men and

women. Research has shown a high rate of violence, as well as discrimination,

against homosexuals. Just as it is with straight men, the more positive the gay

male identity, the better one’s mental health will become and the higher one’s

self-esteem will be. To accomplish this, the acceptance of gay men and lesbians

as productive citizens, without prejudice, is necessary. Protection against

violence and discrimination would not be necessary if one understood that gay

men and lesbians are just like you and me; the only difference is their sexual

preference.

The American Psychological Association. Answers to Your Questions About

Sexual Otientation and Homosexuality. No date:18 pars. Online. Internet. 28

January 2000. Available