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## A Study of emotional relationships among deaf adolescents

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### Abstract

Understanding emotional words is an issue of special interest in the field of issues pertaining to deaf people. Concepts such as kindness, love, falling in love, hatred and vengeance are among the concepts that are not understood by deaf people in the same way as they are understood by hearing people. This difference in understanding puts forward the question whether deaf people really know what is meant by non-deaf people when they use such concepts as kindness, love, falling in love, or sexual feelings. Are they able to understand each other when they interact with non-deaf people? Are they ready to accept these (sometimes unknown) feelings? Or are they confused by these new feelings and concepts which are not known or acceptable for them? This paper presents the findings about emotional relationships and understanding of sexual feelings among deaf adolescents. The sample consists of 63 deaf adolescents who have been interviewed in Tehran, Isfahan, and Mashhad (three big cities in Iran), using the grounded theory methodology. The main objective of this select group, a pilot study was a questionnaire that was made for a PhD in psychology about sexuality and disability. The results show that female deaf adolescents have a different understanding of sexual feeling compared to non-deaf adolescents and prefer to have emotional relationships with non-deaf adolescents than deaf adolescents.

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### 1. Introduction

The period of adolescence is one of the great periods of youth development with significant changes in their interpersonal relationships. The relations among adolescents have grown beyond families and their encounter in broader areas and new social situations as friends, parties, public places, etc. Teens meet other young people, (Steinberg, 2010) known and unknown in all these situations and through social media which is not specifically the focus of this research (Patti M. Valkenburg, and al, 2006; Jane D. Brown, Jeanne R. Steele, 2008).

In general, in favor of independence, these meetings are accompanied by their relations with friends (Bradford Brown, Candice Feiring 1999; Maysel, Hai Wiseman, 1998) and advance to romantic relationships (C. E. Kaestle,; C. Tucker; H, Bracken, 2005; Hansen, Nangle et Meyer 1998).

Relationships with friends (same age) have much influence on social skills, adjustment in life, perception of love, emotional relationship and socialization (Braconnier, Marcelli 1998; Albaret, M,C ,1995, Steinberg, 2010).

This context is argued to hold truth for adolescents across the geographic boundaries regardless of their ethnicity, religious and physical capabilities (Virole B, 2009, ESCAMEZ E, 2003) because these are the elements

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that will ensure the process of being adults and the process of identity (Marguerite A. Peeters,2012). An added factor is that, adolescence is the time that is associated with high-risk behaviors such as, sexual abuse and unprotected sex which is again associated with finding ones identity and trying got connect with the social context around them (Virole B, 2009, Marguerite A. Peeters,2012).

This research specifically explored this phenomenon with deaf adolescents. Since being able to converse and listen to the other person is a major part of someone communication, this research was sat to explore the impact that lack of this ability could impose on an adolescent. The target group was female adolescents merely for the fact that there is more report on abusive behavior towards this group of deaf adolescents. The main objective of this research, a pilot study was a questionnaire that was made for a PhD in psychology about sexuality and disability.

### **Methodology**

This study is an exploratory study prepared with non-statistical data about emotions among deaf female teenagers in Iran. In this study, a qualitative research method called the "grounded theory" has been used. With this method, the results have been discovered and confirmed experimentally. In this study, the behavioral aspects of deaf teenagers about attitudes and feelings as far as relationships and sex are concerned, have been studied both directly and indirectly. The survey has been pursued with many different people until theoretical situation was reached. L'interrogatoire s'est poursuivi avec des personnes différentes jusqu'à atteindre la saturation théorique. In this method, data collection will continue until the new response to new data, which do not change the concepts and categories that have already been achieved. To achieve this goal, heterogeneous samples were selected to be include all diversities. The sample consists of 63 deaf adolescents who were interviewed in Tehran, Isfahan, Mashhad (three big cities of Iran). The age of the sample was between 15 and 19 years.

### **The results**

Deaf adolescents explained their understanding of different experiences puberty, menstruation, love and sex.

#### 1- Puberty:

The period of puberty is one of the most complicated processes of life for teenagers but also for deaf adolescents.

Sexual desire, tendency to makeup, identification etc. This process appears as a very difficult one due to non - understanding

This period is less obscure for hearing teenagers, and may be - they more ready to experience their puberty, but deaf girls are not as well prepared and these changes are source of, confusion, stress, anxiety and worry.

They named these feelings as: mental disorders, dizziness, confusion, anxiety, heat, emotions which are not reasonable.

Deaf teenagers suffer from a delay in their psychological processes , and so instead of falling in love or experiencing "platonic love" which is common among adolescents, they choose to internalize their emotions, to reject their feelings and refuse them without sharing their questions with other people.

This ambivalence becomes a problem in the way of "self-esteem" (according to the theory of Erikson) and this will influence their married life.

#### 2- Connection with the hearing, Opportunity or Threat?

In Iran, relation with the opposite sex is still a taboo subject, so teenagers have friends in secret. But it takes a particular form among deaf adolescents.

Some deaf girls discovering their emotional and sexual desires prefer to focus this trend towards hearing boys and avoid having an emotional relationship or sexual relationship with a young deaf.

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