Brianna Muleski

February 24, 2015

The Psychology of Human Sexuality

Learning Activity: Gender Issues

I think that the most influence on my gender role development was from my family. Growing up, I idolized my older brother and my older cousins. I spent almost every day with them the first 4 years of my life, and consequently I tried to be like them. I also think that my parents and grandmothers had influence over my gender role development. My family was a positive influence because they taught me that I could be a girl but still like to do things that were viewed as more masculine. The institutions that influenced my gender role development include school and media. I had changed myself drastically when I transitioned from elementary school to middle school because I told I was weird and different because I dressed in boy’s clothes most of the time. I was teased for many years and finally caved in and decided to conform. I feel that this was a very negative influence in my life. After coming to terms with who I am and how I wanted to portray myself, I decided to wear what I felt comfortable in. I think media was a positive role because it taught me that there are other people that felt the same way as me. Seeing other “tomboys” and females that did not conform to the stereotypical gender roles showed me that there was nothing wrong with me.

I think that androgyny (integrating both stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics) is good. Everyone doesn’t necessarily have to be androgynous, but to have it be in society and accepted as a norm is very good. I don’t believe that it would “dilute” one’s gender identity. In fact, I believe it would help reinforce one’s gender identity because they would not have to look at those stereotypical characteristics that one has and try to determine their gender identity. Instead, they can determine it by how they feel and who they think they are. I think society should work toward eliminating the gender differences. I believe it would have the same benefit as described above, only it would be more helpful in determining one’s gender identity. I also think that it would open people’s minds to other gender identities such as genderqueer and agender. People would not have to make decisions in their lives, such as showing one’s emotions or deciding on a career, based on whether or not this is a gender norm or if they would be looked at differently and ridiculed because of their decision.

Performing “corrective surgery” for intersex people is controversial. One reason for this is because the gender that is chosen to be represented by surgery might not be the gender that the individual will identify as. This leads to gender identity issues. I do not believe that performing this surgery on an infant or child without their consent is ethical. If I had a child that was born intersex I would wait until the child was old enough to decide on their own what gender they identify as and if they wanted to the surgery to portray that identity. Sometimes the wrong gender is chosen with surgery and during puberty the child will go through the changes that are associated with the other gender, causing issues.

I think a transgender person might encounter several issues or concerns in their day-to-day lives. The major one is deciding when/if they want to transition and get surgery. Then there are the concerns with telling loved ones and coworkers how they identify and how they should referred (him/her/they), which can go badly. Other issues could include the reactions of those that see them and are not sure how to address them or they may think of them as “wrong”, and maybe using a restroom before transitioning and deciding if they want to use the restroom for the gender their body portrays them as or the one they identify as.