

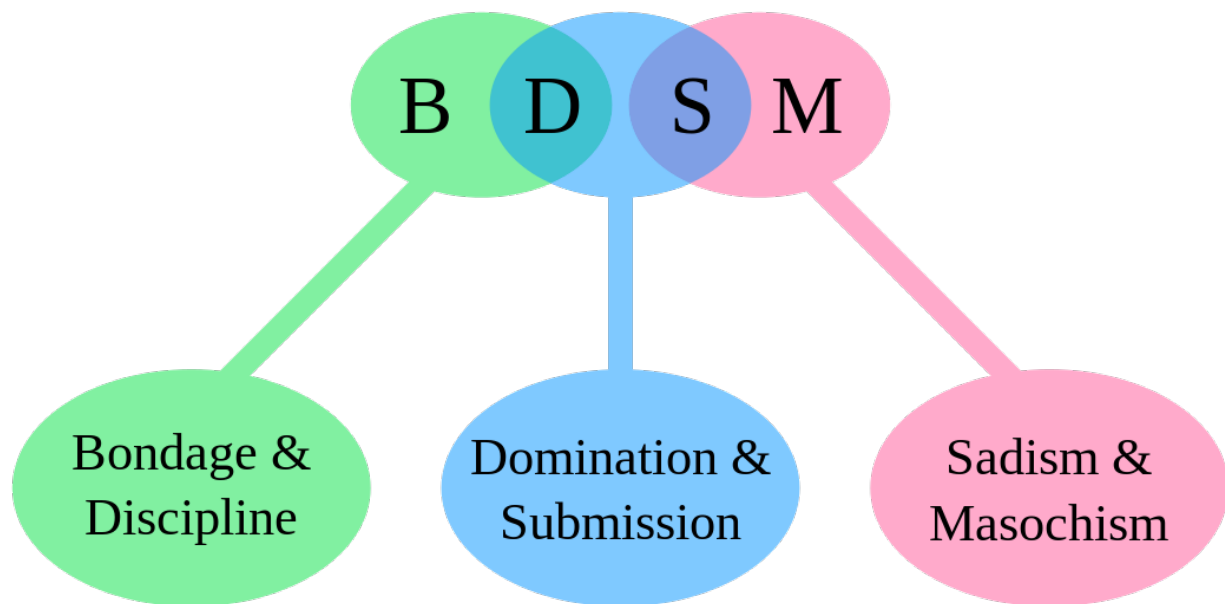
What are Alternative Lifestyles?

When we talk about alternative lifestyles we are talking about something different from sexual orientation and gender identity. Alt lifestyles include sexual, erotic, and emotional relationships that fall outside of the norms in society. Alternative **lifestyles** are diverse with respect to mainstream ones or generally perceived to be outside the cultural norm. They may include one or more of the following: Sex Positivity, BDSM, Kink, Polyamory, Ethical non-monogamy, Open relationships, Swinging, Lifestyle, etc...

What does Sex-Positive mean?

The sex-positive movement is a social movement that promotes and embraces sexuality with few limits beyond an emphasis on safe sex and the importance of boundaries and consent. Sex positivity is an attitude towards human sexuality that regards all consensual sexual activities as fundamentally healthy and pleasurable and encourages sexual pleasure and experimentation. The sex-positive movement is a social and philosophical movement that advocates these attitudes. The sex-positive movement advocates sex education and safer sex as part of its campaign. Part of its original use was in an effort to get rid of the frightening connotation that 'positive' had during the height of the AIDS epidemic. The movement generally makes no moral distinctions among types of sexual activities, regarding these choices as matters of personal preference for consenting adults.

What is BDSM?



BDSM is a variety of often erotic practices or roleplaying involving bondage, discipline, dominance and submission, sadomasochism, and other related interpersonal dynamics. Given the wide range of practices, some of which may be engaged in by people who do not consider themselves as practicing BDSM, inclusion in the BDSM community or subculture is usually dependent on self-identification and shared experience.

The term *BDSM* is interpreted as a combination of the abbreviations B/D (Bondage and Discipline), D/s (Dominance and submission), and S/M (Sadism and Masochism). *BDSM* is now

used as a catch-all phrase covering a wide range of activities, forms of interpersonal relationships, and distinct subcultures. BDSM communities generally welcome anyone with a non-normative streak who identifies with the community; this may include cross-dressers, body modification enthusiasts, animal roleplayers, rubber fetishists, and others.

Activities and relationships within a BDSM context are often characterized by the participants taking on complementary, but unequal roles; thus, the idea of informed consent of all participants becomes essential. The terms "submissive" and "dominant" are often used to distinguish these roles: the dominant partner ("Dom") takes psychological control over the submissive ("sub"). The terms "top" and "bottom" are also used: the top is the instigator of an action while the bottom is the receiver of the action. The two sets of terms are subtly different: for example, someone may choose to act as bottom to another person, for example, by being whipped, purely recreationally, without any implication of being psychologically dominated by them.

The abbreviations "sub" and "Dom" are frequently used instead of "submissive" and "dominant". Sometimes the female-specific term "Domme" is used to describe a dominant woman, instead of the gender-neutral term "Dom"; both terms are pronounced the same when spoken.

Individuals who can change between top/dominant and bottom/submissive roles—whether from relationship to relationship or within a given relationship—are known as *switches*. The precise definition of roles and self-identification is a common subject of debate within the community.

What is Power Exchange?

In BDSM, the term power exchange refers to a relationship or activity in which the submissive gives to the dominant partner power and authority over the submissive's body in exchange for the submissive's happiness and health. The details of the arrangement would be negotiated and may be set out in a formal contract and can be for any duration, according to the agreement of the participants, ranging from a single "scene" to a proscribed period of hours, days or weeks, to a 24 hour a day open-ended agreement with no termination date.

What is Kink?

In human sexuality, kinkiness is any unconventional sexual practices, concepts, or fantasies. The term derives from the idea of a "bend" in one's sexual behavior, to contrast such behavior with "straight" or "vanilla" sexual mores and proclivities. The term *kink* has been claimed by some who practice sexual fetishism as a term or synonym for their practices, indicating a range of sexual and sexualistic practices from playful to sexual objectification and certain fantasies. Kink sexual practices go beyond what are considered conventional sexual practices as a means of heightening intimacy and excitement between sexual partners. Some draw a distinction between kink and fetishism, defining the former as enhancing partner intimacy, and the latter as replacing it. Because of its relation to "normal" sexual boundaries, which themselves vary by time and place, the definition of what is and is not kink varies widely as well.

What is Polyamory?

Polyamory (from Greek *poly*, "many, several", and Latin *amor*, "love") is the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved. It is often described as consensual, ethical, or responsible nonmonogamy. The word is sometimes used in a broader sense to refer to sexual or romantic relationships that are not sexually exclusive, though there is disagreement on how broadly it applies; an emphasis on ethics, honesty, and transparency all around is widely regarded as the crucial defining characteristic.

While "open relationship" is sometimes used as a synonym for "polyamory" or "polyamorous relationship", the terms are not synonymous. The "open" in "open relationship" usually refers to

the sexual aspect of a nonclosed relationship, whereas "polyamory" refers to the extension of a relationship by allowing bonds to form (which may be sexual or otherwise) as additional long-term relationships.

Polyamorous arrangements are varied, reflecting the choices and philosophies of the individuals involved, but they tend to emphasize certain themes or values, such as love, intimacy, honesty, integrity, equality, communication, and commitment. People who identify as polyamorous typically reject the view that sexual and relational exclusivity is necessary for deep, committed, long-term loving relationships. Those who are open to, or emotionally suited for, polyamory may embark on a polyamorous relationship when single or already in a monogamous or open relationship.

What is Ethical Non-monogamy?

Consensual, ethical, and responsible non-monogamy mean any type of non-monogamous relationship practiced honestly, with the mutual consent of all parties -- where no one is deceived and everyone chooses to enter this type of relationship.

What does Open Marriage and Open Relationship mean?

Open marriage or open relationship typically refers to a relationship in which the partners agree that each may engage in outside sexual relationships, without this being regarded as infidelity. There are many different styles of open relationships (such as swinging, "don't ask, don't tell" and polyamory), each with the partners having varying levels of input on, and awareness of, their spouse's activities.

What is Swinging and "Lifestyle?"

Swinging, Lifestyle, is a form of open relationship in which the partners in a committed relationship engage in sexual activities with others at the same time. Swingers may regard the practice as a recreational or social activity that adds variety or excitement into their otherwise conventional sex lives or for curiosity. Swingers who engage in casual sex maintain that sex among swingers is often more frank and deliberative and therefore more honest than infidelity. Some couples see swinging as a healthy outlet and means to strengthen their relationship. Swinging can take place in various contexts, including spontaneous sexual activity involving partner swapping at an informal social gathering of friends, a formal swinger party or partner-swapping party, and a regular gathering in a sex club (or swinger club) or residence.