



An article on

# EXHIBITIONISM

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Exhibitionism is defined by the American Psychiatric Association in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV), as “the exposure of ones genitals to a stranger. Some times the individual masturbates while exposing himself (or while fantasizing about exposing himself). If the person acts on these urges, there is generally no attempt at further sexual activity with the stranger.” It goes on to explain that in some cases, this is done out of a desire to shock the observer, or the belief that the stranger may become sexually aroused by this behavior.

It is important to note that although the definition above designates that this behavior is only being employed towards strangers, it can be done to family members and acquaintances as well. It meets the criteria for the diagnosis if they are underage, unsuspecting or unaware. Another important one here is that the above definition is specifically looking at males. This is not a gender specific trait. Exhibitionism may include other parts

of the body including breasts, buttocks and sometimes photographs of the person.

A great deal of exhibitionistic behavior is now done over the Internet by sending nude picture of ones self or specific body parts. Cell phones are also a common way of engaging in the behavior. This is very common among junior high, high school, and college students. A student can send a picture of ones genitals to another person without showing his or her face. This allows them to experience the sexual thrill and preserve their identity and reduce their risk of getting caught.

Exhibitionism is often centered on the emotional theme of acceptance. The person often feels, even if it is unconscious, that they will be valued, loved, and accepted by others if they exhibit themselves to them. They often fantasize of a more significant relationship with the victim. This is the core of this sexually compulsive behavior and must be resolved if the behavior is to stop.