

III. UCF Discussion Post

While there are many factors to consider when planning a career in sex research, perhaps the most important starting point would be to understand the terms surrounding sexology. There are many terms/ideas discussed in this area of study, and it would be beneficial to familiarize yourself with them ahead of time. For example, 'sex' may be talking about gender, or it may be talking about sexual activity.

Another area to dive into would be knowing the leading sex researchers and their contributions to the study. Alfred Kinsey, for example, is the most well-known sex researcher, famous for his studies that included the use of surveys. He gave American people a shock in the mid-twentieth century when his published works talked of illegal sexual acts that were commonplace.

Margaret Sanger did extensive research on contraceptives, which are highly prevalent today. She later founded what we know of as Planned Parenthood.

To add to a foundation of knowledge going into a career of sex research, you should understand the drastic changes over time regarding how sex was viewed, how sex took place, and the effects of sexual acts. While most recently our society has celebrated sex and has been open-minded as to what sex looks like, society has not always been so accepting. Many religions used to look down upon homosexual sex, masturbation, and pre-marital sex. Today, in the Christian church for example, many denominations have been open and accepting to these 'non-traditional' practices. The idea of sex being solely for reproductive purposes has changed dramatically, as well. It has been proven now that sex fulfills other desires besides procreation, such as emotional and physical desires.

There is more to sex research than simply the study of sex itself. Sexology requires an understanding in multiple topics, such as: anthropology, biology, psychology, and sociology. The most obvious of these being biology and psychology, however, anthropology is needed to understand cultural diversities regarding sex; sociology is needed to understand how sex relates to a person's life conditions, for example.

When planning a career in sex research, it is imperative to have an open mind. There should be no bias of 'rights' and 'wrongs' going into it, but an attitude of 'what can I learn'? There are many differences in people, attraction, and behaviors; while you may know what you like, other people may enjoy a significantly different scenario. The career of sex research is all about research, which leads off with no bias. You may learn about yourself over the course of your studies or find help in your own relationships along the way. Sex research is an important topic, and one that will continue to grow as our society tolerates and celebrates differences.