As part of its 35th Anniversary celebration, SIECUS asked professionals in the fields of sexual health and sexuality education to submit the names of books that have influenced them in the past 35 years.

The result is this SIECUS Annotated Bibliography of “35 Books That Have Influenced Our Understanding of Sexuality.”

Thousands of books of human sexuality have been published during the past 35 years. The 35 listed below represent books that have changed our understanding of sexuality by offering new perspectives, new insights, or new research. By definition, this is a highly selected list. Readers are encouraged to send their suggestions for future updates of this bibliography.

SIECUS does not sell or distribute the books listed in its bibliographies. Most are available for use, however, in the Mary S. Calderone Library. For those interested in purchasing any of the books, they will find the most current publication date, contact information, and price for each annotation.

This bibliography is available free of charge on the SIECUS Web site or for $2 per copy by writing to the SIECUS Publications Department.

SIECUS is located at 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350, New York, NY 10036-7802; Phone: 212/819-9770; Fax: 212/819-9776; E-mail: siecus@siecus.org; Web site: www.siecus.org.

This bibliography was compiled by Amy Levine, M.A., SIECUS librarian, and Lissette Marrero, SIECUS information assistant.
Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century

John Boswell

Published in 1980, this book was the first to establish a history of same-gender sexual relationships dating to the First Century. 1995; $19.95; ISBN: 0-226-06711-4; The University of Chicago Press, 11303 South Langley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628; Phone: 773/702-7700; Fax: 800/621-8476; Web site: www.press.uchicago.edu.

Confronting AIDS: Directions for Public Health, Health Care, and Research

Institute of Medicine National Academy of Sciences

This was the first report by the National Academy of Sciences on AIDS. It provided a foundation for future policy and program development.


Constructing the Sexual Crucible: An Integration of Sexual and Marital Therapy

David Schnarch

This book offered a new approach to sexual and marital therapy. It concentrated on treating the marital relationship, not treating sexual dysfunctions.


Contraceptive Technology: Seventeenth Revised Edition

Robert A. Hatcher, M.D., M.P.H., et al

This book began in the late 1960s as a stapled set of mimeographed pages for medical students. It was first published in 1971 as a booklet. Currently in its seventeenth edition, this book provides detailed and comprehensive information on each contraceptive method.

1998; $39.95; ISBN 0-9664902-0-7; Ardent Media, Inc., Box 286, Cooper Station P. O., New York, NY 10276-0286; Phone: 319/218-1533; Fax: 212/861-0998.

Disorders of Sexual Desire and Other New Concepts and Techniques in Sex Therapy

Helen Singer Kaplan, M.D., Ph.D.

This book introduced the concept of sexual desire disorders and extended the work of Masters and Johnson. It included case studies on the treatment of sexual dysfunctions that focused on problems of desire from the perspective of the comprehensive, integrated psychosexual therapy.


The Feminine Mystique

Betty Friedan

Published in 1963, this book helped launch the women's movement in the United States. It addressed the distorted image of femininity that had pervaded society and that limited women from realizing their full potential.


For Yourself: The Fulfillment of Female Sexuality

Lonnie Barbach

Published in 1975, this book was a breakthrough in providing honest instruction on achieving orgasm. Through group discussion, exercises, and homework, Barbach helped many women in the group become attuned and comfortable with their bodies.


Gay, Straight, and In-Between: the Sexology of Erotic Orientation

John Money

Originally published in 1988, this book was one of the first to look at what is known about sexual orientation. It included case studies that looked at historical, cultural, and psychological factors relating to sexual orientation.


The History of Sexuality, Volume 1

Michel Foucault

Translated into English in 1978, this book explored the relationship between power and our society's perceptions of, and involvement with, sexuality. It radically changed the way people thought about sexuality by placing sexuality in an historical context and taking it out of the realm of simple biology.


Human Sexual Inadequacy

William H. Masters, M.D., and Virginia E. Johnson

This was the first book on sexual dysfunction that was widely read by the general public. As a result, it introduced a new era in the treatment of sexual dysfunction. It discussed the concept and format of Masters and Johnson’s therapy program and also addressed specific sexual dysfunctions.


Human Sexual Response

William H. Masters, M.D., and Virginia E. Johnson

This book was the first to introduce the stages of human sexual response—excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution. It was based on laboratory research that studied
developed into a publishing phenomenon, it represented a major breakthrough in knowledge about human sexuality. Published in 1970, this book was one of the first comprehensive look at male sexuality. It discussed the sexual development, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of men—from young adulthood through old age. It includes information on male sexuality, relationships, and resolutions to sexual problems. 1997; $225, three-volume set; ISBN: 0-8264-0841-9; Continuum Publishing Company, P.O. Box 605 Herndon, VA 20172; Phone: 800/561-7704; Fax: 703/661-1501; Web site: www.contiuum-books.com.

Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America, 2nd Edition
John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman
Published in 1988, this book provides a history of sexuality in America since the Pilgrims. Its journey started with “the family-centered, reproductive sexual system in the colonial era,” went through “the romantic, intimate and conflicted sexuality of the nineteenth-century marriage,” and concludes with “the commercialized sexuality of today.”

Alex Comfort, M.B., D.Sc.
Published in 1972 as The Joy of Sex: A Condon Bleu Guide to Lovemaking, this book was a breakthrough in the popular literature of marriage guides. With its uninhibited combination of words and illustrations, it developed into a publishing phenomenon, and continues to be one of the best-selling books on sexuality for adult readers.

The New Male Sexuality
Bernie Zilbergeld, Ph.D.
Printed in 1984, this self-help book was the first comprehensive look at male sexuality. It discussed the sexual development, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of men—from young adulthood through old age. It includes information on male sexuality, relationships, and resolutions to sexual problems.

The New Sex Therapy: Active Treatment of Sexual Dysfunctions
Helen Singer Kaplan, M.D., Ph.D.
This was the first comprehensive handbook for professionals on sex therapy. It describes treatment methods for sexual disorders and clarifies the theories of psychopathology and psychiatric treatment.

Our Bodies, Our Selves for the New Century: A Book by and for Women
The Boston’s Women’s Health Book Collective
Published in 1970, this book was one of the first to empower women to become more informed about their own health, including their sexual and reproductive health. It was revised and updated in 1998 to reflect the health concerns of women of diverse ages, ethnic and racial backgrounds, and sexual orientations.

The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality
Robert T. Francoeur, Editor
This three-volume encyclopedia is the most comprehensive crosscultural collection of information on sexuality ever published. It provides information from 30 countries on sexual attitudes and behavior patterns.

Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation
Carter Heyward
This book is a collection of essays, sermons, lectures, and liturgical poetry that reflected the feminist theological perspective of the author on sexuality, class, race, and social justice.
1994; $16.95; ISBN 0-8298-0705-5; Pilgrim Press, P.O. Box 901867, Cleveland, OH 44190; Phone: 800/654-5129; Fax: 216/736-3713; Web site: www.apk.net/ca.

Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality
Carole S. Vance, Editor
Published in 1984, this book emerged from a groundbreaking conference, “Towards a Politics of Sexuality,” held at Barnard College in 1982. It was the first public dialogue to affirm sexual pleasure for women as well as addressing the dangers.

Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbearing
Cheryl D. Hayes, Editor
This report presented the findings of the Panel of Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing, which was convened by the National Research Council from 1984 to 1986. It offered recommendations for policies and programs that guided program development for the next decade.
Science in the Bedroom: A History of Sex Research

Vern L. Bullough

This book provided an overview of sex research from the fourteenth-century B.C. to the present. It explained the development of sex research to help a wider audience understand the field of sexology as well as how changes in public attitude occurred.


The Sex Atlas: An Illustrated Guide

Erwin J. Haeberle

This book was one of the first illustrated guides to use explicit photographs to educate professionals and the public about human sexuality.


Sexuality and the Curriculum: The Politics and Practices of Sexuality Education

James T. Sears, Editor

This book urges educators to consider the “hidden sexuality education curricula” in schools: messages students receive from the behaviors of teachers and administrators, the locker room, the cafeteria, and peers.

1992; $22.95; ISBN 0-8077-3153-6; Teachers College Press, P. O. Box 20, Willison, VT 05495; Phone: 800/575-6566; Fax: 802/864-7626; Web site: www.tc.columbia.edu/~tcpress.

The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices of Sexuality

Edward O. Laumann, et al

This report is the most comprehensive survey on sexual behavior of the general population to date. The survey was designed to determine the incidence and prevalence of sexual practices and to place them in their social contexts.


Surgeon General’s Report to the American Public on HIV Infection and AIDS

U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institutes of Health

Published in 1986, this booklet from Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was sent to every household in America. It addressed AIDS transmission, risk, prevention and its implications in the late 1980s. Dr. Koop said: “Education concerning AIDS must start at the lowest grade possible as part of any health and hygiene program.”

1993; CDC National Prevention Information Network (CDCNPIN), P. O. Box 6003; Rockville, MD 20849-6003; Phone: 1-800-458-5231; Fax: 888/282-7681; Web site: www.cdcnpin.org.

Taking Chances: Abortion and the Decision Not to Contracept

Kristin Luker

This book presented a new model for understanding how women make rational decisions about contraception and risk taking.


Teaching About Sexuality and HIV: Principles and Methods for Effective Education

Evonne Hedgepeth, Ph.D. and Joan Helmich, M.A.

This book is the most comprehensive book to date to help teachers and community health educators understand the “how” and “why” of effective HIV/AIDS-prevention and sexuality education.