



Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities

David M. Ortmann, Richard A. Sprott Ph.D. executive director of CARAS (Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities); co-author Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities

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Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities delves into the unique experiences of individuals in BDSM communities. While misunderstandings surrounding these communities prevail, BDSM sexuality cuts across race, gender, nationality, and sexual orientation. BDSM describes forms of sexuality that incorporate restraint, pressure, sensation, training, and elements of both erotic and non-erotic power exchange between the engaged parties. Some BDSM “scenes” include role-playing, spanking, blindfolds, ropes, and erotic costuming.

Sexual Outsiders is designed as a guide for BDSM community members who must wade through the quagmire of unique problems they face: coming out to family, friends and partners; distinguishing abusive relationships from healthy consensual ones; finding and developing community; overcoming shame and denial; exploring whether BDSM sexuality can be a healing tool; gaining access to quality, culturally competent psychotherapy; and finding strategies to develop a healthy sexual self-esteem in the face of current medical and social standards that view them as sick or pathological. The book also serves as an educational primer for those whose partners, friends, and family members are involved in BDSM.

In terms of challenges faced by BDSM communities, the most significant is living with a stigmatized sexuality shame, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, depression, and a lack of adequate, competent mental health care. Issues such as coming out as a sexual minority, finding community and partners, and dealing with scenes and relationships that go wrong are some the common experiences shared by members of BDSM communities. *Sexual Outsiders* employs common sense, good humor, and vivid anecdotes while incorporating basic ideas about human behavior, psychology, philosophy, interviews, history, and clinical case studies to illustrate the real lives and experiences of men and women in BDSM communities. Anyone wanting to learn more about this unique, and more-common-than-you-think expression of sexuality, will find in these pages insight into the various challenges BDSM practitioners face, and the many strengths that people in the BDSM communities have developed in the face of social stigma and prejudice.

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