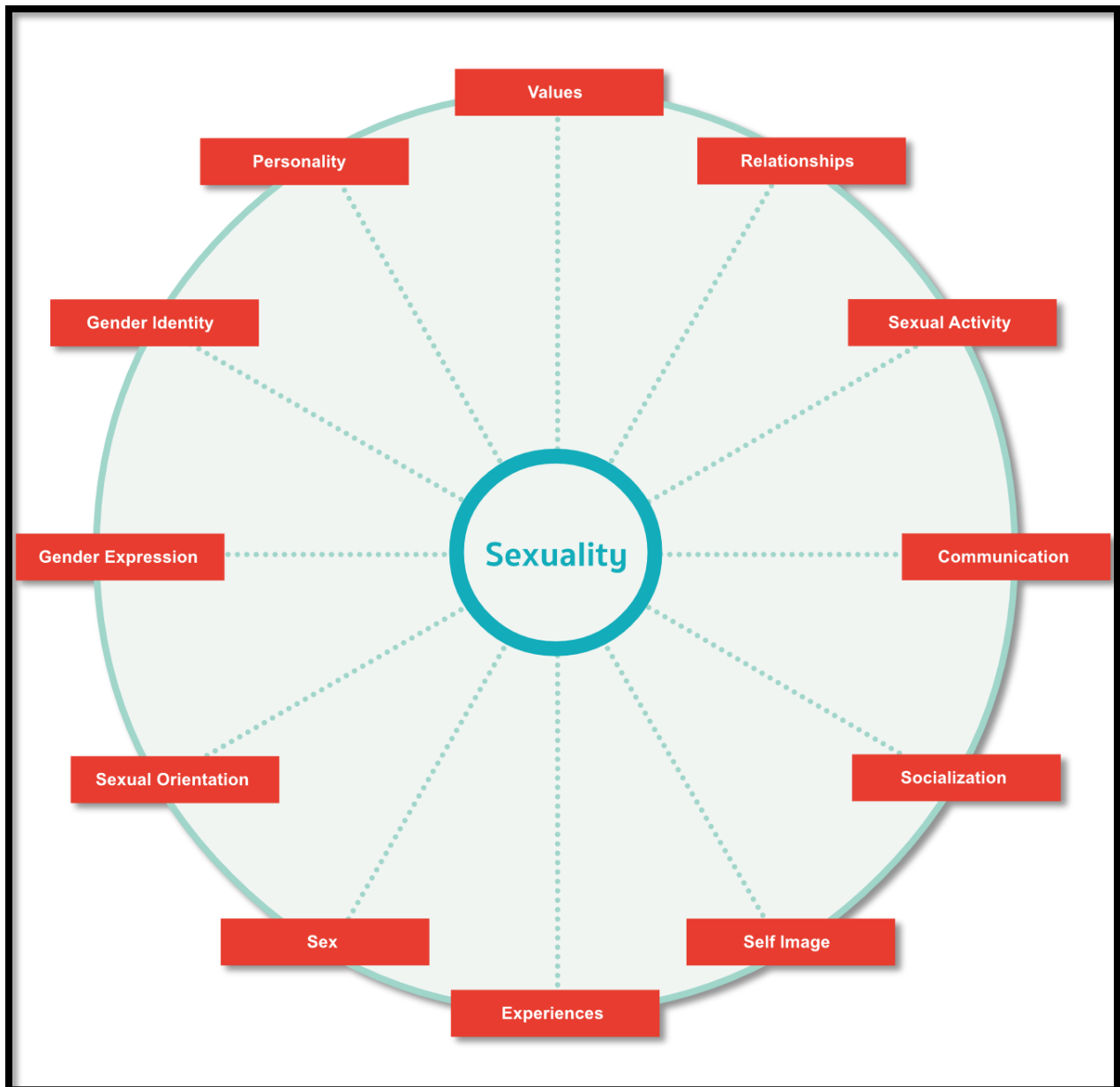


# Sexuality Wheel

## WHAT IS SEXUALITY?

Sexuality is a word we use to talk about how we understand our bodies and how we understand our relationships. This understanding includes all aspects of who we are - our values and beliefs, bodies, desires, relationships, gender and our thoughts and feelings about all of these. Because our sexuality is made up of so many different components, our understanding of our own sexuality is ever-changing and unique to each person.



The most important thing to understand about sexuality is that it is self-defined; that is, that every person is allowed to talk about and understand their own sexuality in their own way that makes sense to them. Sexuality is dynamic and always changing; often we may discover that different parts of our lives may interact with each other in confusing or affirming ways. This is ok and is part of our normal development. Exploring our own sexuality, rooted within principles of consent and sexual rights, is a key determinant of our health and wellness.

## **Sexuality**

Sexual health cannot be defined, understood or made operational without a broad consideration of sexuality, which underlies important behaviours and outcomes related to sexual health. The working definition of sexuality is:

“...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” (*WHO, 2006a*)