



Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities

By 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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Editorial Review

Review

Written by a psychotherapist who specializes in kink-friendly sex therapy and a research psychologist, this book offers a nonjudgmental glimpse into the world of BDSM (bondage/discipline, dominance/ submission, sadism/masochism). In a supportive tone, Ortmann and Sprott discuss the way society misunderstands a potentially healthy set of sexual behaviors, employing largely Jungian analysis to explain the appeal of kinky play and including a generous selection of fascinating case studies drawn from Ortmann's private practice. The book provides encouragement for people who feel marginalized by their sexual preferences (and includes a guide to finding a sex therapist). The authors definitively dismiss popular claims that BDSM practitioners are mentally unwell or that their behaviors result from abusive childhoods. Instead, they describe the eroticism of power, the playacting of shame, and even show how this kind of play can serve as its own form of therapy. Ortmann and Sprott highlight the difference between the appearance of a behavior and its "psychological meaning and impact." The heart of the work is the individual stories of Ortmann's clients, chief among them the moving stories of BDSM practitioners "coming out" as "kinky" to the people in their lives. (*Publishers Weekly*)

This BDSM guide offers in-depth information for the curious, newbies, and the skeptical. Ortmann is a kink-friendly psychotherapist, sex therapist, and writer; Sprott a research psychologist with academic credentials. The tone is both readable and supportive in describing components of sexual behavior commonly included within BDSM: restraint, pressure, sensation, and power exchange. Throughout, elements of consent, community, mutuality, and safety are emphasized. Especially useful are case studies and sample dialogs illustrating helpful vs. toxic therapist-to-patient dialogs, as well as interpartner conversations. This is not a sex manual, however, and readers are referred to other books for how-to and how-not-to information. A full chapter addresses finding a good counselor or therapist. **VERDICT** Kinksters, friends and families, and helping professionals are all at risk for misunderstanding BDSM owing to a lack of knowledge. Learning about consent, community, mutuality, and safety can reduce physical and psychological risk. This strongly recommended primer will go a long way toward supporting safer and more enjoyably diverse sexualities. (*Library Journal*)

Every once in a while, a book comes along that shines like a star in a vast, dark sky of words. While the subject matter — BDSM sexualities — hardly seems like the stuff of which literary classics are made, David Ortmann and Richard Sprott's brave new book, *Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities*, is certainly worthy of note. Conversational in style, thick with rich descriptions of actual people, and brimming with uncommon wisdom appropriate for a post-Millennial mindset, this is a book to be borne proudly. (Plus it's bound to be a great conversation starter on the subway commute home.) . . . You don't have to be a sexual outsider to enjoy this book. What is required is a nonjudgmental curiosity about human sexuality in all its myriad forms. If you fit this criteria, then this is an excellent read that I highly recommend. (*Out In Jersey*)

Sexual Outsiders is a good step in making the helping professions understand [kinky people and BDSM sexuality]. (*The History of BDSM*)

As a sex therapist who specializes in sexual minority practices, I have read virtually every book written on

BDSM in the past 30 years. *Sexual Outsiders* is truly one of a kind. The way the authors have woven in Richard Sprott's background in science with David Ortmann's clinical practice made for a very compelling read. The case studies were brilliant and kept me turning the pages in anticipation of how each story would turn out. This book is a wonderful contribution to our field. (Neil Cannon, Ph.D., LMFT, Certified Sex Therapist & Couples Counselor, Denver, Colorado)

Sexual Outsiders is a significant contribution helping everyone to accept and understand their (or their loved one's) BDSM interests. (Charles Moser Ph.D., Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality)

This is the book I needed 15 years ago when I started stumbling my way through treating the KINK community. It's answered all my questions. It should be mandatory reading for all ethical clinicians who should know something about treating alternative sexualities by now. The clinical community needs to STOP re-traumatizing, marginalizing, pathologizing, and trying to "fix" the people who come to them for help. Either they need to learn the skills taught in this book, or refer "sexual outsiders" out to someone educated, trained and willing to give these individuals the treatment they need and deserve. This book is for anyone who practices BDSM, treats patients struggling with related issues, and for anyone interested in further understanding this lifestyle and its community. (Dorothy Hayden, LCSW, Manhattan Center for Sex Addiction Therapy, Kink-Aware psychotherapist, speaker and author)

Every person who identifies as BDSM and every therapist treating them should read this book. (David J. Ley, Ph.D., author of *The Myth of Sex Addiction and Insatiable Wives: Women Who Stray and The Men Who Love Them*)

Sexual Outsiders is a brave and lucid exploration of ways honest, open, intimate sexuality can help to heal some emotional and psychological wounds, and of the need for self-understanding to make such intimacy possible. (William A. Henkin, Ph.D., co-author: *Consensual Sadomasochism: How to Talk About It and How to Do It Safely*)

As an out-kinky person for 40 years, and as a psychotherapist, I found Ortmann and Sprott's new book *Sexual Outsiders* to be a report on being kinky from a psychological point of view. *Sexual Outsiders* offers the reader an invaluable amalgamation of kink identities. Whether the reader be a leather-newbie, a vanilla but kink-friendly therapist, a curious friend of a kinkster, or anyone who may be in contact with BDSM folk, *Sexual Outsiders* is a book you won't want to miss. As the commodification of BDSM culture proliferates, it will be books like *Sexual Outsiders* that'll prove to be a positive catalyst toward ending social stigma, and to putting suffering back in the dungeon where it belongs. (Winston Wilde, DHS, LMFT, doctor of human sexuality, licensed marriage & family therapist, certified sex therapist)

David Ortmann and Richard Sprott are pioneers in developing this roadmap for kink-affirmative psychotherapy. People in the BDSM community, or those practicing in secrecy, will read this book, especially the moving personal stories, and feel like they are in a support group. Professionals will have their minds - and knowledge base- opened and expanded. *Sexual Outsiders* breaks new ground. (Margie Nichols, Ph.D., PhD, psychologist and sex therapist; founder and director of the Institute for Personal Growth, New Jersey; founder and first director of the Hyacinth Foundation; author, speaker, and activist on LGBTQ issues; contributor, *Principles and Practices of Sex Therapy* and *Handbook of Systemic Sex Therapy*)

In *Sexual Outsiders*, authors David Ortmann and Richard Sprott perfectly complement each other writing about research, theory, and therapeutic practice with clients who are sexual adventurers. In an excellent and thoughtful deconstruction of the mainstream sexual culture, they explore the question of "how did we get here?" and, further, "how can we get somewhere better?" They propose the acceptance and honoring of the

rich complexities of sexual diversity as a path for escaping the imposed shame that can constrict our lives, as they offer a wonderful guidebook to outsider sex and understanding power as an erotic resource. Read and learn from these warriors for sexual freedom as they show us how to explore our precious inner wilderness. (Dossie Easton, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; co-author of *The Ethical Slut*)

Sexual Outsiders serves as a gentle introduction to BDSM while exploring the psychological needs of people who decide to explore this powerful realm of sexuality. There are few books that so beautifully position themselves as BDSM primers for the curious newcomer as well as the partners, friends and family of BDSM practitioners. This book does just that brilliantly and is destined to become a classic of the genre. (Race Bannon, co-founder of Kink Aware Professionals, author of *Learning The Ropes: A Basic Guide to Safe and Fun BDSM Lovemaking*, and blogger (bannon.com))

About the Author

David M. Ortmann, LCSW, is a psychotherapist, sex therapist and author in private practice. His work has been published in journals, magazines, and anthologies of fiction and non-fiction. His areas of clinical focus and study are the sexuality of the BDSM, Leather and Kink communities, concepts and theories of masculinity, and the processes of human attachment and differentiation. He speaks locally and nationally in an effort to promote Leather, Kink, and BDSM community visibility and improve clinical psychotherapeutic interventions for these populations.

Ortmann is a member of The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF), The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT), the Northern California Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology (NCSPP) and is one of the founding members of the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS).

Richard Sprott, Ph.D., is a research psychologist in developmental science and lecturer in the Department of Human Development and Women's Studies at California State University, East Bay. He is the executive director of CARAS, the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities, a community-academic partnership to enhance and encourage scientific investigation and scholarly analysis of under-studied sexualities, like BDSM and polyamory.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marc Gaul:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a book. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled *Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities*. Try to stumble through book *Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities* as your buddy. It means that it can being your friend when you sense alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , let us make new experience and knowledge with this book.

Gloria Smith:

As people who live in often the modest era should be change about what going on or facts even knowledge

to make these individuals keep up with the era which is always change and progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what one you should start with. This Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Nathan Marker:

This Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities is great book for you because the content that is full of information for you who also always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it info accurately using great manage word or we can say no rambling sentences included. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but hard core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities in your hand like obtaining the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no e-book that offer you world inside ten or fifteen second right but this book already do that. So , this is good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt that will?

William Hughes:

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