

# Categorizing Jeffrey Epstein's Paraphilias

by Roslyn Myers, Ph.D., J.D.

*The case of Jeffrey Epstein, the notorious, widely-hated, and deceased pedophile whose name has been associated with a myriad of celebrities and politicians, is used as the framework for a discussion of the varieties of pedophilic syndromes. Author Roslyn Myers outlines the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) criteria for these disorders, pointing out—surprisingly for many of us—that according to these criteria, Mr. Epstein, with his penchant for young women who were almost legal adults—was not, technically speaking, a pedophile. She goes on to describe the various subcategories of pedophilic interests, noting that pedophilia is hardly a unitary term describing the entire population of individuals who seek sexual contact with children.*

**N**ews reports often refer to Jeffrey Epstein as a “pedophile,” and charges brought against him have included “child molestation.” These terms are often equated, but they have different meanings and applications. At this time, a *DSM* diagnosis is moot, but it is worth examining the nomenclature used in publicity about the investment advisor to clarify their meanings and to consider the distinctive features of Epstein’s system of preying on girls.

## PARAPHILIA AND PARAPHILIC DISORDERS

Paraphilia “disorders” refer to paraphilic sexual interests that cause distress or impairment in the individual or for which their satisfaction would entail harm or risk of harm to others. Disorders imply a risk of hands-on offending with children. The word “disorder” distinguishes “the mental makeup that is inherent to pedophilia from acts of child sexual abuse.” (Fred S. Berlin, *Pedophilia and DSM-5: The Importance of Clearly Defining the Nature of a Pedophilic Disorder*, 42 *J. Am. Acad. Psychiatry L.* 404 (2014).) Of the “dozens, even hundreds, of identified paraphilias and paraphilic disorders, all of

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which are replete with ambiguity and controversy” (*id.*), the *DSM-5* identifies only the following eight:

1. Voyeuristic disorder: spying on others in private activities;
2. Exhibitionistic disorder: exposing the genitals;
3. Frotteuristic disorder: touching or rubbing against a nonconsenting individual;
4. Sexual masochism disorder: undergoing humiliation, bondage, or suffering;
5. Sexual sadism disorder: inflicting humiliation, bondage, or suffering;
6. Pedophilic disorder: sexual focus on children;
7. Fetishistic disorder: using nonliving objects or having a highly specific focus on nongenital body parts; and
8. Transvestic disorder: engaging in sexually arousing cross-dressing. (American Psychological Association (APA), *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th, 2013) (*DSM-5*), available at <https://DSM.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm19>; *DSM-5 Clinical Cases* Ch. 19 (John W. Barnhill, M.D., ed.), doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9781585624836.jb19, available at <https://DSM.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.books.9781585624836.jb19>.)

### **Additional Paraphilic Disorders Debated, But Not Included in *DSM* Revision**

Other paraphilic disorders were debated during the lead-up to the last revisions to the *DSM*. Specifically, paraphilic coercive disorder, which “refers to a diagnostic category based on sexual arousal to coercion or non-consenting sexual behavior,” and hypersexual disorder, which “refers to an excessive level of sexual behavior or preoccupation that results in clinically significant impairment in functioning,” were discussed. Also, “pedohebophilic disorder was coined to refer to sexual attraction to peripubescent children.” In the end, the workgroup on paraphilias decided not to include these proposed changes to the *DSM*, “which suggests that the proposed changes did not satisfy the general consensus of the scientific community.” (Renee Sorrentino, *DSM-5 and Paraphilias: What Psychiatrists Need to Know*, 33(11) *Psychiatric Times* (Nov. 28, 2016), available at [www.PsychiatricTimes.com/dsm-5/DSM-5-and-Paraphilias-What-Psychiatrists-Need-Know](http://www.PsychiatricTimes.com/dsm-5/DSM-5-and-Paraphilias-What-Psychiatrists-Need-Know).)

### **Indicators of Disorder**

The *DSM-5* lists as one indicator that an individual has some form of pedophilia that he or she has “acted on” pedophilic sexual urges. (APA, *DSM-5* Ref. 1,

p. 697.) Importantly, the *DSM* diagnosis for pedophilic disorders does not separate contact offenders from noncontact offenders. (Berlin, *supra* (noting that “acting on” urges could describe actual contact, i.e., molesting a child, or merely engaging in pedophilic fantasies while masturbating).) Setting aside the illegality of viewing sexualized images of children, clinicians are aware that privately viewing and fantasizing about such images does not necessarily reflect an interest in actual contact with a child.” (*Id.* at 404, 405.)

## **DID HIS APPETITE FOR YOUNG GIRLS MAKE EPSTEIN A PEDOPHILE?**

That Jeffrey Epstein had “an appetite for children” was widely known. (Erica Orden, *Two Alleged Victims Confronted Jeffrey Epstein at His Bail Hearing*, CNN, Jul. 15, 2019, available at [www.CNN.com/2019/07/15/us/Jeffrey-Epstein-Bail-Hearing/index.html](http://www.CNN.com/2019/07/15/us/Jeffrey-Epstein-Bail-Hearing/index.html).) The inability to control his paraphilic sexual urges seems self-evident from the timing, risk-taking, and persistence of Epstein’s conduct, as outlined in corroborated reports by victims and those closest to him. Taking action on paraphilic urges that harm another person is the essence of a paraphilic disorder. (See *DSM-5, supra*; Sorrentino, *supra*.)

### **High Likelihood of Reoffending**

Consistent with Epstein’s Level-III registration tier in Florida, the likelihood of reoffending for offenders with paraphilic disorders is high. “[R]esearch on sexual offenders has shown that those with paraphilic disorders are at high risk for committing future sexual offenses.” (*Id.* See also G. Tenbergen et al., *The Neurobiology and Psychology of Pedophilia: Recent Advances and Challenges*, 9 *Frontiers in Human Neurosci.* 344 (June 24, 2015), available at [www.NCBI.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26157372](http://www.NCBI.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26157372); C.C. Joyal et al., *The Neurobiological Origins of Pedophilia: Not That Simple*, 16(1) *J. Sex Med.* 153 (Jan. 2019), doi: 10.1016/j.jsxm.2018.10.015.)

But Epstein’s preferred age range for sexual encounters did not include preadolescents. Nearly all of his known victims have been close to or past the age of consent. With few exceptions (that are currently known), Epstein’s victims were all in their mid-teens to early 20s. Given what is known about his behavioral patterns, the targeting of younger girls (i.e., younger than 15) was rare. This may have been circumstantial, a result of relying on women to recruit girls who would be autonomous enough to be on-call—which would not be the case for an elementary-aged child.

### **Epstein Did Not Fit Criteria for Pedophilia**

Reports thus far indicate that Epstein preferred girls who were on the cusp of adulthood—and that he was not interested in these victims when they reached maturity. At least one victim has said that, at 24, she knew she was too old for the wealth manager’s taste in women.

Selecting victims who were no longer girls but not quite women also gave Epstein and his inner circle of recruiters an advantage in manipulating and controlling these girls. Although it does not alter the coercion, threats, and violence that are the substance of the criminal acts perpetrated by Epstein, the fact that many of his victims were past the age of consent appears to have been a fortuity, not a plan. That is, it does not appear that Epstein or his inner circle strategically chose victims who had aged out of the statutory rape laws.

Thus, from the available information, Epstein did not fit the criteria for pedophilia, for which the age range ends when the victim shows secondary sex characteristics. (See MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia, *Adolescent Development*, available at <https://MedlinePlus.gov/ency/article/002003.htm> (Jul. 31, 2019).)

## **DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CHILD MOLESTATION AND PEDOPHILIC DISORDER**

There is an overlap between the understanding of child molesters and pedophiles. But treatment and clinical diagnoses are distinct. It has often been observed that although virtually all those with a pedophilic disorder molest children, not all child molesters are pedophiles.

### **Child Molesters**

For laypeople, “child molester” is a catchall term used to describe an array of perpetrator typologies when a child is sexually victimized. An image commonly associated with the term is that of a nonviolent, older male targeting a child victim and coaxing the child to trust him sufficiently for the perpetrator to gain control and sexually touch the victim (without penetration). “For law enforcement purposes, a child molester is simply an individual who engages in illegal sexual activity with children.” (Kenneth V. Lanning, Nat’l Ctr. for Missing & Exploited Children, *Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis for Law Enforcement Officers Investigating Cases of Child Sexual Exploitation* 1 (3d, 1992), available at [www.NCJRS.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/149252NCJRS.pdf](http://www.NCJRS.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/149252NCJRS.pdf).) Child molestation may be intrafamilial (incest) or extrafamilial—both of which involve sexual offenses against a child victim.

**Molestation as Maladaptive Attempt to Meet Emotional Needs.** An individual who has molested children may be primarily sexually orientated to adults. Research has found that many men who molest their own children or related female children have sexual interests that are indistinguishable from those of nonoffending males. Studies indicate that a nonpedophilic adult may molest children in a maladaptive attempt to meet emotional needs. Some child molesters engage in sexual behaviors with children because they believe they are unable to be intimate with an adult partner, but others may be married.

These offenders may have age-appropriate relationships with peers, yet they may prefer relating to children to escape feelings of powerlessness, inferiority, and isolation.

**Preferential Child Molesters.** A “preferential child molester” finds children sexually attractive and has a need for frequent, repeated sexual contact with them. Preferential child molesters are motivated to target a large number of victims and may be part of a sex ring to ensure that their victim pool is plentiful. They tend to follow a ritualized practice when engaging in sexual behavior, sticking to a highly predictable pattern even when it presents risks of getting caught. They follow traditional grooming techniques: selecting children who are experiencing emotional or physical neglect; seducing the target over time to gradually lower their sexual inhibitions by giving the target attention, affection, and other benefits; using adult status and authority to further the coercion. (Lanning, *supra* at 8.) According to behavioral analysis:

The biggest problem for this child molester is not how to obtain child victims but how to get them to leave after they are too old. This must be done without the disclosure of the “secret”...This child molester is most likely to use threats and physical violence to avoid identification and disclosure. (*Id.* at 7.)

## **Pedophilia**

Pedophilia is a type of paraphilia for which the focus involves sexual activity with a prepubescent child. In the *DSM-5*, the term “paraphilia” is defined as “any intense and persistent sexual interest other than sexual interest in genital stimulation or preparatory fondling with phenotypically normal, physiologically mature, consenting human partners.”

It is estimated that the prevalence of pedophilic disorder in the general population is 3% to 5%. (*DSM-5, supra.*) Pedophiles have a clear sexual attraction to children, generally under the age of 13. Their relationships with children are organized around the desire to exploit the victim for sexual gratification. Indeed, their relationships with adults may also be organized around gaining access to children. Pedophiles are often charismatic, charming, and skilled at manipulating adults as much to gain their trust and access to children as to forestall detection. These offenders may have hundreds of victims over the course of their lifetimes.

**Indefinite Monitoring Recommended for Pedophilic Disordered Individuals.** Any behavioral expression of pedophilic disorder is a criminal offense in the United States, Canada, and Europe, as well as most other places in the world. Some authors differentiate between a desire for children that is “ego-dystonic and resisted, causing guilt, shame, and distress,” and a desire for children that is “indulged through fantasy, associating with other pedophiles,

possession and trading of pornographic images, or direct observation, self-exposure, or physical contact with a victim.” (*DSM-5*, 302.2 (F65.4).) The *DSM* cautions that an individual who is predatory (i.e., pedophilic disordered) will not be safe around children at any point in their lives, and therefore they should be monitored indefinitely. (*Id.*)

Borrowing from the “more elegant” language of the *DSM-III*, pedophilic preferences are described as “the act or fantasy of engaging in sexual activity with prepubertal children [as] a repeatedly preferred or exclusive method of achieving sexual excitement.” (Ray Blanchard, *The DSM Diagnostic Criteria for Pedophilia*, 39 *Arch. Sexual Behav.* 307 (2010), quoting *DSM-III* (2010).) Specifically, pedophilia may be indicated by following criteria:

1. Recurrent, intense sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child (generally age 13 years or younger) for a period of at least six months; and
2. Taking action on the urges or experiencing significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning because of the urges.

**Differentiation Between Preferences and Disorders.** The *DSM-5* differentiates between paraphilic preferences “that inhere in the individual and that have some existence independent of specific, observable actions” and paraphilic disorders, in which the behavior harms another person. (*Id.* at 304. See Ray Blanchard et al., *Pedophilia, Hebephilia, and the DSM-V*, 38 *Arch. Sexual Behav.* 335 (2009).) In other words, paraphilia is a condition—one that might or might not be acted upon and, if so, need not involve illegality (e.g., having sex with a consenting adult who is physically “childlike” (small stature, flat chested)). (Lanning, *supra* at 3.)

Whereas child molestation refers to overt phenomena, pedophilia refers to a mental condition or orientation that might never be realized in overt action against another. The same individual can be both “child molester” and “pedophile,” but not all child molesters are pedophiles, and not all pedophiles are child molesters. (See, e.g., Michael C. Seto, *Precisely Defining Pedophilia*, 31 *Arch. Sexual Behav.* 498 (2002); Michael C. Seto, *Pedophilia & Sexual Offending Against Children: Theory, Assessment, & Intervention* 5 (2008).)

## **MORE PARAPHILIA CATEGORIES FURTHER DELINEATE AGE GROUPS**

Some scholars have argued for recognition of other age-based categories of paraphilia, including hebephilia (11 to 14 years-of-age) or ephebophilia (15 to 16 years-of-age). (See Ryan C.W. Hall & Richard C.W. Hall, *A Profile of Pedophilia: Definition, Characteristics of Offenders, Recidivism, Treatment Outcomes, and Forensic Issues*, 82 *Mayo Clin. Proc.* 457 (2007).)

## Hebephilia

The less familiar term “hebephilia” refers to a paraphilia marked by a sexual preference for youths who are already entering puberty. (See B.C. Glueck, Jr., NY State Dep’t Mental Hygiene, *Final Report: Research Project for the Study and Treatment of Persons Convicted of Crimes Involving Sexual Aberrations, June 1952 to June 1955* (1955).) The focus of sexual interest is pubescent children who show early signs of secondary sex characteristics but are not yet sexually mature. (See Blanchard et al., *supra* at 336.) Generally, the age range is 11 to 14, but the condition may be more recognizable by the subject’s description of erotic preferences, since the age divisions in paraphilic subcategories are narrow and actual levels of maturity do not always correspond to the age limits for a given term.

Some research indicates that hebephilia is as common, if not more so, than erotic impulses toward young children:

The available data therefore indicate that hebephilia may be as great a clinical problem as pedophilia...[A]ttraction to children of pubescent ages is more frequently [anonymously] reported than is attraction to those of prepubescent ages...[and among male convicted sex offenders,] offense histories or assessment results suggest erotic interest in pubescent sometimes outnumber...interest in prepubescent children...The foregoing findings are consistent with the results of large-scale surveys that sampled individuals from the general population and included questions regarding sexual experiences with older persons when the respondent was underage. These results suggest that a substantial proportion of respondents who had had such experiences reported ages at occurrence that fall within the normal time-frame of puberty. (Blanchard, *supra* at 311, *citations omitted*.)

## Rare Paraphilias

Increasing attention is being paid by researchers to the variations among different types of paraphilias. One article provides an overview of the research on “nepiophilia (infant/toddlers), pedophilia (prepubescent children), hebephilia (pubescent children), ephebophilia (postpubescent, sexually maturing adolescents), teleiophilia (young sexually mature adults, typically 20s and 30s), mesophilia (middle-aged adults, typically 40s and 50s), and gerontophilia (elderly adults, typically 60s and older).” (Michael Seto, *The Puzzle of Male Chronophilias*, 46(1) Arch. Sexual Behav. 3 (Jan. 2017).) The difficulty with these categories is that they collide with age-of-consent laws. (See Table 1, Age of Consent and Exemptions by State.)

How do we understand psychiatric conditions involving sexual paraphilias that, when acted upon, do not violate the law? The debate on this question can be summarized in the following arguments:

The basic issue is that sexual attraction to pubescent youngsters [hebephilia or ephebophilia] is not the slightest bit abnormal or unusual.

Until recently, the age of consent was age 13 years in most parts of the world (including the United States) and it remains 14 in many places. Evolution has programmed humans to lust for pubescent youngsters. Evolution has programmed humans to lust for pubescent youngsters—our ancestors did not get to live long enough to have the luxury of delaying reproduction...It is natural and no sign of mental illness to feel sexual attraction to pubescent youngsters. (Allen Frances, blogpost, *Hebephilia Is a Crime, Not a Mental Disorder*, Blogpost, Psychiatry Times (Dec. 16, 2011) available at [www.PsychiatricTimes.com/blog/frances/content/article/10168/2006997](http://www.PsychiatricTimes.com/blog/frances/content/article/10168/2006997).)

Responding to the above statement:

This rhetorical sleight-of-hand ignores the distinction between sexual attraction and sexual preference...The issue is not whether normal men respond sexually [in phallogometric readings] to early pubescents. The issue is whether it is normal for an adult to respond as much or more to early pubescents than to physically mature individuals. In other words, would it be normal for an adult, given a free and unencumbered choice of sexual intercourse with a 12-year-old or an equally attractive 20-year-old, to take the 12-year-old every time? (*Id.*)

One difference between Epstein and the average hebephophile is that he employed sexual rituals as part of his financial business model.

Jeffrey Epstein would then take or initiate up to four business calls during any particular sexual massage after claiming he would be on the verge of ejaculating and would stop in order to make a phone call, at times saying that nearing sexual climax evoked certain important thoughts in Jeffrey Epstein's mind. (Miami Herald Series.)

**Table 1: Age of Consent and Exemptions by State**

State	Age of Consent	"Romeo & Juliet Law," also known as Close-in-Age Exemption	Acceptable Difference Between Ages	Notes
Alabama	16	Y	2	
Alaska	16	Y	3	The age of consent does not apply if the perpetrator is in a position of authority.
Arizona	18	Y	2	Exemption if the person under-18 is the partner's spouse. Defenses exist for sex between an individual under age 19 (or an enrolled high school student) and not more than two years older than the partner.
Arkansas	16	Y	3	Exception for sex between individuals under age 18 and 14 years or older. Defense exists when younger partner is under 12 and defendant is no more than three years older.
California	18	N	0	Punishments will vary depending on the respective ages of both victim and offender. Sex between a child under 14 and an adult (seven or more years older) can be charged as separate crime.
Colorado	17	Y	4	Exemption for sex between individuals 16- to 17-years-old and partners who are less than 10 years older. Exemption for under-15 if partner is less than four years older. Child prostitution laws encompass 18-years-old and under.
Connecticut	16	Y	2	Exemption for sex between an individual over age 13 with one not three or more years older. Exemption for sex between an individual under age 13 and a partner who is less than two years older. For any partner over age 20 with authority over the victim (as guardian, coach, instructor, etc.), age of consent rises to 18.
Delaware	18	N	0	Exemption for married minors aged 16 or 17 to a partner who is under age 30. Exemption for sex between an individual under age 16 and a partner no more than four years older. Children under age 12 may not legally give consent under any circumstances.
Florida	18	N	0	Minors aged 16 or 17 may consent if the partner is not older than 23 years.
Georgia	16	N	0	Sex between offenders under age 19 and victims no more than 15 is a misdemeanor rather than a felony.
Hawaii	16	Y	5	Exemption for sex between minors aged 14 and 15 and a partner less than five years older.
Idaho	18	N	0	Severity of charges can depend on the age difference between victim and offender.

(Continued)

**Table 1: Age of Consent and Exemption by State (Continued)**

State	Age of Consent	“Romeo & Juliet Law,” also known as Close-in-Age Exemption	Acceptable Difference Between Ages	Notes
Illinois	17	N	0	If the offender is in a position of authority or trust over the victim, the age of consent is raised to 18.
Indiana	16	N	0	If the offender is a guardian, adoptive parent or grandparent, step-parent, childcare worker for the minor, or military recruiter attempting to enlist the minor, the age of consent is 18, not 16. Exemption for sex between 14- and 15-year-olds and partners under age 18. Defense exists for Romeo-and-Juliet couples less than four years apart in age.
Iowa	16	Y	4	Exception for sex between those aged 14 and 15 and partner less than four years older. No school employee may engage in sexual intercourse with a current student.
Kansas	16	N	0	Severity of charges depends on the age difference between partners.
Kentucky	16	N	0	If the offender is in a position of authority or trust over the victim, the age of consent is raised to 18.
Louisiana	17	Y	3	Exceptions exist for under-aged married couples.
Maine	16	Y	5	Exemption for sex between 14- and 15-year-olds with partners less than five years older.
Maryland	16	Y	4	Charges can vary based on the age differences between victim and offender.
Massachusetts	16	N	0	Age of consent is raised to 18 if victim is “of a chaste life.”
Michigan	16	N	0	Age of consent is raised to 18 when the older party is an authority figure. Sex between teachers and students of any age is illegal.
Minnesota	16	Y	2	Age of consent is raised to 18 when the older party is an authority figure. Exemption for sex between one aged 13 to 15 and partner no more than two years older. Children under 13 may consent only with partner less than 36 months older.
Mississippi	16	Y	2	Exemption when the age gap is less than 36 months.
Missouri	17	N	0	Defenses may exist if the offender made a mistake with regard to the victim’s age.
Montana	16	N	0	

(Continued)

**Table 1: Age of Consent and Exemption by State (Continued)**

State	Age of Consent	“Romeo & Juliet Law,” <sup>39</sup> also known as Close-in-Age Exemption	Acceptable Difference Between Ages	Notes
Nebraska	16	N	0	Punishments may vary depending on ages.
Nevada	16	N	0	
New Hampshire	16	N	0	Exemption applies to persons older than 13 but younger than 16 who are less than three years apart in age. Age of consent is raised to 18 when the older party is an authority figure.
New Jersey	16	Y	4	Exemption exists for persons aged 13 to 15 with partner up to four years older. Age of consent is raised to 18 if the older partner is a parent, guardian, sibling, a relative closer than a fourth cousin, or an individual with some authority over the younger party (for example, a teacher or the victim’s boss).
New Mexico	16	Y	4	Age of consent is raised to 18 when the perpetrator is a school-system employee, a school health service provider, or a school volunteer who is over 18, at least four years older than the victim, and is aware that the victim is a student in school.
New York	17	N	0	Punishment varies depending on the age of the offender. No defense based around lack of knowledge of the victim’s age.
North Carolina	16	Y	4	Exemption exists when the offender is less than four years older. No employee of a K-12 institution (unless they are not a teacher, administrator, student teacher, safety officer, or coach) may engage in sexual activity with a student regardless of age.
North Dakota	18	N	0	
Ohio	16	N	0	Exemption exists allowing minors aged 13 and older to consent to a partner under age 18.
Oklahoma	16	N	0	Exemption allows minors over age 14 to consent to a partner younger than 18.
Oregon	18	Y	3	Age of the offender affects the severity of the punishment.
Pennsylvania	16	Y	4	De-facto age of consent is actually 18 (due to Pennsylvania’s corruption of minors statute). Persons aged 17 and 16 may consent to each other, but not to partners 18 or older. Persons between 13 and 15 may or may not be able to consent to a partner less than four years older—who might not be affected by the statutory rape laws but could be prosecuted for other offenses.

(Continued)

**Table 1: Age of Consent and Exemption by State (Continued)**

State	Age of Consent	“Romeo & Juliet Law,” also known as Close-in-Age Exemption	Acceptable Difference Between Ages	Notes
Rhode Island	16	N	0	Exemptions for sex between teens aged 16 and 17 teens with those aged 14, but not younger. Punishments vary depending on the ages of both parties.
South Carolina	16	N	0	Defense may exist for mistake of age.
South Dakota	16	N	3	Punishment may be reduced for offenders under age 18 or no more than three years older than the victim.
Tennessee	18	Y	4	Exemption allows teens ages 13 to 18 to consent to partners less than four years older. Punishments differ depending on the ages of victim and offender.
Texas	17	N	3	Exemption or defense may exist if older partner is no more than three years older than the victim and of the opposite sex. Sex between a school employee and a student is prohibited, unless married.
Utah	18	Y	10	Exemption exists for sex between teens aged 16 and 17 and partners less than seven years older. Exemption may exist for partners between seven and 10 years older if they had no reasonable knowledge of the minor’s age.
Vermont	16	N	0	Exemptions exist for sex when older party is under age 19 and younger party is at least 15 years. Age of consent rises to 18 if one partner is related to the other or is in a position of authority over the victim.
Virginia	18	N	0	Exemption exists for sex between teens aged 15 to 17 (with each other) and minors 13 to 15 (same).
Washington	16	Y	2	Age of consent is raised to 18 when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners are a foster-parent and foster-child;</li> <li>The older partner is at least 60 months older than their 16- or 17-year-old partner and abuses their significant relationship (as defined by RCW 9A.44.010) to have sex; or</li> <li>Partners are teacher and student (up to 21-years-old).</li> </ul>
West Virginia	16	Y	4	
Wisconsin	18	N	0	Marital exemption exists for 16- and 17-years-old.
Wyoming	17	Y	4	

Source: Adapted From [www.AgeOfConsent.net/States](http://www.AgeOfConsent.net/States)



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