

RU ASEXUAL AWARE?

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WHAT IS ASEXUALITY?

Asexuality is a sexual orientation that describes people who are not sexually attracted to anyone. Generally speaking, people who identify as asexual experience little to no sexual attraction. Like with any community asexual people's lived experiences are unique and the terms they may use to describe those experiences differ and evolve every day. Please refer to the 'Asexual Terminology' to become familiar with some of these terms.

DO ASEXUAL PEOPLE HAVE SEX?

It is important to distinct the difference between attraction and behavior. Asexuality is the lack of experiencing sexual attraction, and it is not about a person choosing to reframe from having sex (which can be described as celibacy or abstinence). There are many reasons why a person could desire and consent to have sex, such as to experience sensual or erotic stimulation, regardless of whether or not they are asexual. Some asexual people have no interest in sex and some enjoy and seek out the experience. This is a personal decision for every individual, and that decision should always be respected. Asking an asexual person about whether or not they have sex without invitation is invasive and disrespectful.

DO ASEXUAL PEOPLE EXPERIENCE ROMANCE?

While an asexual person generally experiences little to no sexual attraction they may still experience romantic attractions towards other people. Many asexual people desire deep interpersonal connections and intimacy, and many choose to have romantic relationships. Regardless of whether or not the people in these relationships have sex is not what makes them romantic, and whether or not they choose to have sex is up to them.

HOW DO ASEXUAL PEOPLE KNOW THEY'RE ASEXUAL?

Asexual people know they are asexual in the same way that everyone is aware of their own feelings and experiences. Because of ignorance and lack of education many people assume asexual people don't experience sexual attraction because something is wrong with them or they simply haven't met the right partner(s).

Though there are some medical and/or psychological conditions that may induce a weakened sex drive this is not the same as a lack of sexual attraction, and just because somebody identifies as asexual doesn't mean they must have one of these conditions. And while it is true that any individual's sexual and/or romantic orientation may change throughout their lifetime (regardless if they are asexual or not), one should never use that fact to treat another person's identity as invalid or pretend. Asexuality is an identity that warrants respect and acknowledgement, and is not something that needs to be changed.

ARE ASEXUAL PEOPLE LGBTQ?

Asexual people are a sexual minority similarly to other sexual minorities that fall within the larger LGBTQ community, though their lived experiences will differ unless they identify as LGBTQ in addition to asexual. It is up to asexual individual to decide whether or not they identify with the LGBTQ community or not. Though some LGBTQ communities acknowledge, accept, and provide resources for asexual people they are still marginalized within the larger LGBTQ community.

ASEXUAL TERMINOLOGY

This is a list of asexual terminology. Please note this is not a comprehensive list and language evolves every day. It is up to an asexual person to choose what terms best describe their experiences and identity so please ask before assuming how somebody self-describes/identifies.

Asexuality: A sexual orientation that describes people who experience little to no sexual attraction.

Ace: Slang term for asexual identified people.

Demisexual: A sexual orientation that describes people who may experience sexual attractions to some other individuals only after they have established an emotional bond. Some people mistake this orientation for a moral stance against having sex before falling in love. Demisexuality is about orientation and experience, not behavior.

Gray-Asexual: A sexual orientation that describes people who generally experience little sexual attraction, and identify somewhere between asexual and sexual on the sexuality spectrum.

Romantic Orientation: Description of an individual's romantic attractions, or to whom they generally experience romantic attractions to. Anyone can experience these types of romantic orientation regardless if they identify as asexual. Usually prefixed with a word that designates their orientation:

- Hetero-Romantic: Romantic attraction to some people of a different sex as the individual
- Homo-Romantic: Romantic attraction to some people of the same sex as the individual
- Bi-Romantic: Romantic attraction to some men and women.
- Pan-Romantic: Romantic attraction to some people who fall anywhere along the gender spectrum
- A-Romantic: No romantic attraction to anyone. People who identify as A-romantic may still desire partnership of some kind, just not in a romantic sense.
- Gray-Romantic: Little romantic attraction to some people. May identify somewhere between asexual and sexual on the sexuality spectrum.

Squish: Slang term similar to a 'crush', an asexual term used to describe an interest in somebody that goes beyond traditional friendship roles and experiences.

Queerplatonic: A type of non-romantic relationship where there is a strong emotional bond and commitment amongst everyone involved that goes beyond what is traditionally thought of as friendship. A-romantic people may or may not experience these types of relationships (among other kinds).

HOW CAN I BE AN ALLY FOR ASEXUAL PEOPLE?

- Respect and believe asexual people when they disclose their identity and experiences to you. Do not make them feel that their identity is invalid, pretend, or something that needs to be changed.
- Avoid asking asexual people invasive or invalidating questions (such as asking if something "caused" their asexuality). These questions can be hurtful and create an unsafe environment. If you have a question to ask an individual ask if you can ask first, and frame the question in a respectful way. Understand and respect that person is not obliged to educate you and may not feel comfortable.
- Watch what you say. Avoid using blanket statements (ex. everybody needs sex) that erase or invalidate asexual experiences. Become familiar, and utilize, asexual terminology.
- Acknowledge asexuality as an identity in conversations around sexual orientation where asexuality is being ignored. Recommend for asexuality to be an option on surveys, questionnaires, and other places where people report their sexual orientation.
- Continue educating yourself about the asexual community and know resources to recommend. Be conscious that all communities evolve over time.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

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[Asexualawarenessweek.com/docs/AceGlossary.pdf](https://asexualawarenessweek.com/docs/AceGlossary.pdf)