

Asexuality 101: some basics about asexuality

What Is Asexuality?

Asexuality is an emerging sexual orientation. Some people who identify as asexual do not experience sexual attraction to other people, while others experience sexual attraction but no desire to act on these attractions.

Asexuality Is Not Celibacy

Asexuality and Celibacy are not the same. Many people who are asexual live a celibate life, meaning that they do not engage in sex with others. But while Celibacy is a choice (often motivated by religion and other life circumstances), asexuality is not.

About Relationships and Intimacy

Some people who are asexual lead solitary lives. Many form deep bonds of friendship. Some people who are asexual form long-term relationships with significant others, while others people who are asexual marry.

People who are asexual have varying levels of comfort with physical intimacy. Some do not like to be touched. Some enjoy cuddling, kissing and other forms of physical intimacy outside of sexual relationships. Some people who are asexual enter into fully sexual relationships with their partners for the sake of the love they share. Just like any person entering into a relationship that involves sex, people who are asexual need to communicate and agree with their partner(s) about the level of sexual interaction that is acceptable to the individuals involved. As in all successful relationships, communication is the key.

Asexual Isn't the Same as Sexless

The subjective experience of sexuality varies widely among people who are asexual. Some are uncomfortable with any reference to or depiction of sex while others are sex positive without wanting to participate in sex. Some people who are asexual masturbate and others do not. The only consistent defining characteristic of asexuality is that people who are asexual have no sexual attraction to other people and do not desire to engage in sexual activities with others. On any other issue of sexuality and human relationships, people who are asexual are as varied and diverse as people of other sexual orientations.

Why Is This Sexual Orientation Emerging Only Now?

There have probably always been people who are asexual, but until recently there has been no research or scholarly work done on asexuality. Additionally, the availability of the internet has made it easier for people who think they might be asexual to find others like themselves and form relationships and communities.