

Asexuality 101

**Things you've wanted to know about
asexuality but didn't know how to ask**

by Ace Toronto
acetonoronto.wordpress.com
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For Asexual Awareness Week 2014

Respect Guidelines

- Avoid things like racism, ableism, heterosexism, transphobia and/or gender policing
 - Take “call-outs” (or re-framing) gracefully
- Respect everyone's self-described identity
- Avoid asking questions about panelists' bodies
- Speak from your own experience;
 - Do not speak *for* others / *for* a group

Asexual: no sexual attraction
(and/or no partner-focused sexual desire)
— may or may not experience romantic attraction

Grey-asexual/Greysexual: some sexual attraction
Demisexual: sexual attraction only after intimacy

Non-asexual allies

(“sexual” or “zedexual” or “allosexual”)

Community

“ace” for everyone on the asexual spectrum

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- Romantic
- Aesthetic
- Intellectual
- Sensual, etc.

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- But it can be hard to tell the difference
 - For some people they match up or overlap
 - For some people they are distinct
- Romantic vs. Sexual

Asexual Spectrum

Asexy Census (Asexual Awareness Week, 2011)

- Romantic orientation vs. Sexual orientation
- Romantic orientation diversity in ace community:
 - Aromantic (aro).....20%
 - Homoromantic (gay or lesbian).....5-10%
 - Heteroromantic (straight).....20%
 - Biromantic (bi) or panromantic (pan).....20%
 - Other (e.g., WTF-romantic), etc.....30%

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- Lots of gender diversity
 - 1 in 5 is trans and/or gender-variant

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- Not always clear-cut or a simple spectrum
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- Not always clear-cut or a simple spectrum
- Demisexual & grey-sexual or grey-aseexual
 - May identify strongly with asexuality but still sometimes experience sexual attraction OR
 - May experience sexual attraction but not sexual desire (and not interested in sex) OR
 - May enjoy or desire sex but only under specific (rare) conditions
- Demi-romantic & grey-romantic

Ace people's relationships

- Friendships
- Families (of origin, created and found, etc.)
- Community relationships

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- Families (of origin, created and found, etc.)
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- Maybe romantic relationships
- Maybe intense “non-normative” relationships
 - **queerplatonic** (or quirkyplatonic)... “**zucchini**”
 - **Not** romantic relationships but also..
 - Not adequately expressed by “friendship”

When ace people date...

- Relationships: monogamous or poly
- Asexual or non-asexual partners
 - online/long-distance with other aces
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- Sometimes these relationships are celibate
- Sometimes ace people have sex
 - “Compromising” to have sex is often a problem
 - Social expectations & pressure vs. Consent
 - If you don't **really** feel you could say no & believe that it would be okay... then it's not consensual

Challenges facing people on the asexual spectrum...

- Asexuality as invisible / impossible: lack of info
- Homophobia, heterosexism & gender-policing
 - Asexuality-related homophobia
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- Amatonormativity (relationship hierarchy)
 - People not recognising important relationships

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 - People not recognising important relationships
- Compulsory sexuality & the sexual imperative
 - Sexual coercion & “corrective rape” from partners
 - “reparative therapy”... trying to “cure” asexuality

Not everyone has (equal) access to an asexual/ace identity...

- Some aces face other marginalisation that make relating to asexuality more complicated... E.g.,:
- Groups that are hypersexualised or de-sexualised

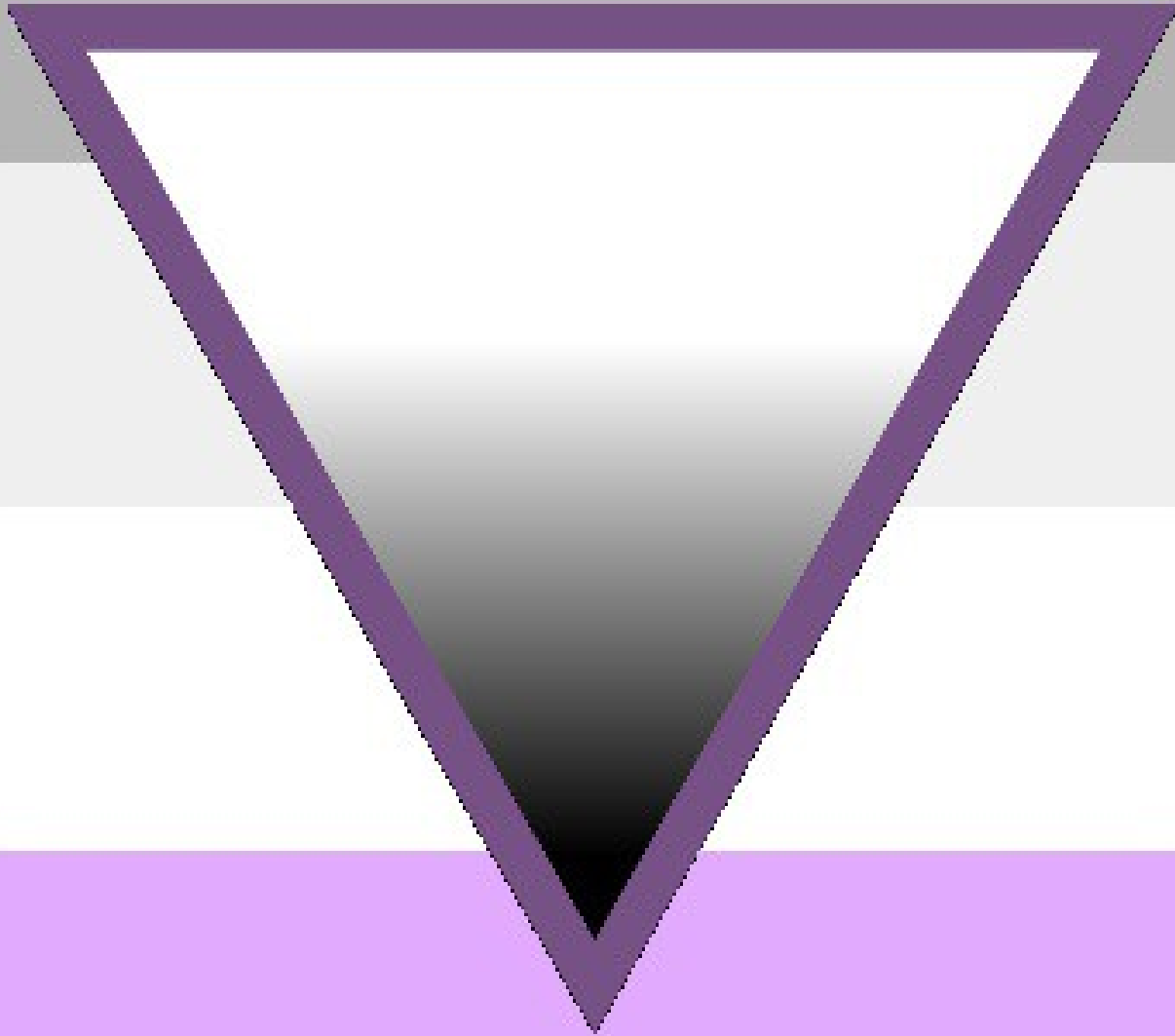
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- Groups that are hypersexualised or de-sexualised
 - People from racialised & colonised communities
 - People with disabilities / disabled people
 - People with mental health issues / psych. survivors
 - Autistic people
 - Survivors of trauma / violence / sexual abuse

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- **All ace identities are valid... respect them**
 - Some people might not identify with ace communities

Questions?



Resources

- For more basic information about asexuality:
 - Asexual Visibility & Education Network (AVEN)
 - **asexuality.org**
- For more advanced discussions:
 - Asexual Agenda collaborative blog
 - **asexualagenda.wordpress.com/**
- For local ace community OR to book a workshop for your organisation:
 - Ace Toronto: **acetoronto.wordpress.com**
 - E-mail us: **ace.toronto.outreach@gmail.com**