

Ace Toronto
acetoronto.wordpress.com
ace.toronto.outreach@gmail.com OR ace.toronto.general@gmail.com

Workshop notes to accompany “Asexuality & Sex Ed” Slides (June 2014)

1.5 hours total

Title: From Bananas to Zucchini: How Talking About Asexuality Contributes to Queer and Trans Positive, Comprehensive Sexual Education

Overview of Presentation/Activity:

Conversations about asexuality have untapped potential for talking about gender and sexual diversity, desire, healthy relationships and consent—all essential components of good sexual education. Because asexual people have had to create new language to figure out who we are and to navigate our relationships, the asexual community brings new ideas, words and meanings into the discussion sometimes even names of vegetables. In the asexual/ace community, we've also had to figure out how to talk about identity and relationships from many different gendered (and agendered) perspectives, including many from beyond the gender binary. We can share what we have learned about safely exploring diverse forms of physical and emotional intimacy and a variety of desires, and about negotiating boundaries in many kinds of relationships.

This workshop begins with a brief introduction to asexuality and uses concepts familiar within the asexual community to explore sexuality and relationships in ways that will promote positive healthy discussions for diverse young people who are (probably) not asexual. Cutting through some assumptions that often govern dating relationships (e.g., that romantic partners are responsible for meeting each other's sexual and emotional needs) we will collectively expose some of their negative consequences (e.g., unspoken sexual obligations compromise consent; narrow views of possibilities for intimacy limit relationships). Everyone benefits when we figure out what we really do want and need from others, learn to talk about this honestly and openly, and challenge the expectations governing what we are “supposed to do” with our partners and friends—and sometimes that means cuddling with your zucchini.

Logistical Needs:

Space with moveable chairs and several tables/desks.

Large paper / bristol boards (something to write on for everyone to see).

A projector and screen

Workshop Overview:

Goals of queer and trans positive sex education? (10minutes)

==> **get people to list their names, pronouns, organisation and goals & put them up where everyone can see**

Intro to asexuality presentation (15 minutes)

key concepts and language

- different kinds of attraction
- asexual spectrum (grey, demi)
- diversity within the asexual community including gender diversity
- romantic orientation
- different kinds of relationships

Activity:

Lightning Brainstorming Relationships (5 minutes)

**split people up into groups & give each group a card with one of the 4 types relationships and a large paper/board to brainstorm on*

friendship

immediate family (parent, guardian, sibling)

dating / romantic relationship

queerplatonic relationship

- What do people in these relationships do with each other?
- What responsibilities do people in these relationships have toward each other?
- How should other people treat these relationships?

Look/listen to other groups (10 minutes)-- put responses somewhere everyone can see

Respond to other groups re: assumptions (15 minutes)

- What value and assumptions do you see?
- Do you see anything that challenges assumptions you made?

Bring up these assumptions and values if participants don't:

- that romantic partners are responsible for meeting each other's sexual and emotional needs
- relationships hierarchies linked to other things with damaging consequences
- unspoken sexual obligations compromise consent
- narrow views of possibilities for intimacy that limit relationships
- what people are supposed to do with partners and friends
- consent, coercion and social expectations

Group discussion about challenging these assumptions or issues (15 minutes)

- How can that be addressed or talked about via a discussion of asexuality?

And bring in tools from asexuality if participants don't:

- talking about romance vs. talking about sex
- euphemisms like "more than friends" or "special to you"
- how to define "crush"? Other words like "squish"
- different kinds of relationships-- friendships, dating relationships, other kinds of relationships
- different kinds of touch... what do people really want?

Wrap-up (15 minutes)

How do you think that talking about asexuality helps you meet your goals of queer and trans* positive sex ed?

Some things to bring up if participants don't...

- way to start challenging compulsory sexuality
- lots of new and powerful language to talk about relationships, identity and desire
- different ways of talking about intimacy and touch
- destabilising “intercourse” as “sex” as pinnacle of “intimacy”