



Ace & Arospec Terms

Asexual (and the asexual spectrum or asexual/ace umbrella)

- people who experience little or no sexual attraction and/or sexual desire for sexual contact with others and/or interest in participating in sexual relationships or sex, etc.
 - Asexuality is diverse and no single definition or criterion will work for everyone
- There is a diverse spectrum of identities and experiences under the umbrella of “asexuality” experiences, including people who identify as “**asexual**” and those in the “grey zone” (e.g., **grey-asexuals** who might experience some degree of sexual attraction or just sometimes & **demisexuals** who might experience sexual attraction but only after forming a meaningful emotional bond albeit not necessarily a romantic one)

Ace (n, adj):

- Short-form (slang) for everyone on the asexual spectrum or “under the asexual umbrella”, including diverse asexual spectrum identities such as grey-asexual and demisexual

Note: Non-English language communities sometimes use “ace” but it doesn't work as well

Aromantic (and aromantic spectrum— “arospec”):

- people who experience little to no romantic attraction and/or desire to pursue romantic relationships
- There is a diverse aromantic spectrum with many identities under the aromantic / aro umbrella like demiromantic and grey-romantic/grey-aromantic, with even more fluidity & ambiguity than the ace umbrella

Aro (n, adj)

- short for aromantic (and sometimes also for everyone on the aromantic spectrum, equivalent to arospec)

Demisexual (n, adj) [Demiromantic]:

- people who only experience sexual attraction [or for demiromantic: romantic attraction] after forming (strong) emotional connections (which may or may not be in the context of a romantic relationship)

Grey-asexual or greysexual (n, adj): [grey-romantic]

- people who identify somewhere on the asexual spectrum, who experience sexual attraction [or for grey-romantic, romantic orientation] rarely, weakly, or only in specific circumstances
- “Grey-asexual” and “greysexual” are not interchangeable, and may communicate different nuances

Romantic orientation (n): (analogous to sexual orientation— often part of a “sexual orientation” defined broadly)

- Describes of someone's romantic attraction (if it exists) to people of particular gender(s), whether...
 - homoromantic or gay/lesbian; heteroromantic or straight; biromantic or bi; polyromantic (attraction multiple, but not necessarily all, genders—different from polyamorous); panromantic or pan, etc.
 - and/or via some unclear pattern (WTFromantic or quoiromantic)
- Or experiencing little or no romantic attraction (aromantic / on the aromantic spectrum)

Note: romantic and sexual orientations don't necessarily match each other and not everyone identifies with a romantic orientation or finds the concept useful. There is not going to a system to classify everyone neatly.

Squish (n):

- basically a non-romantic “crush”; attraction that is non-romantic (and non-sexual) in nature

WTFromantic or quoiromantic (used for the “-romantic” only):

- experiencing or possibly experiencing some kind of romantic attraction (e.g., not aromantic or completely aromantic), but also not really sure how this attraction is directed
- may include variable & changing romantic attractions or romantic attractions that don't have a clear pattern

Zedsexual / zsexual / allosexual / non-ace (n, adj):

- words to describe people who are not on the asexual spectrum (e.g., non-asexual people)
- an alternative to “sexual” was needed to avoid inappropriately sexualising people who are routinely inappropriately and violently sexualised against their will (e.g., queer and trans people of colour, women of colour, survivors of violence and sexual abuse, people with disabilities / disabled people, etc.)

Note: The word “allosexual” is commonly used, but some people reject it because it draws on clinical authority connected to medical abuse (past and present) and some people want to avoid that in their ace terminology



Gender-related Terms

Trans (transgender) (adj):

- an umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth
- can also be a specific identity
- trans people might or might not take steps to change their outward appearance, self-expression or body to reflect their gender identity

Transsexual (adj): *Note: word has complicated politics. If referring to others, usually just use trans/transgender*

- refers to people whose sense of their own body does not match the sex they were assigned at birth (usually this goes along with having a gender identity that does not match the gender assigned at birth)
- can be a specific identity (older terminology)
- transsexual people might or might not take steps to change their outward appearance or body to reflect the sex they identify with or their gender identity

Gender binary (n):

- the social system where there are exactly 2 genders (men and women) defined in opposition to each other
 - ties masculinity and maleness to men and femininity and femaleness to women
- the gender binary is not universal, and for many cultures the imposition of the gender binary was an act of colonial violence by Europe (and Britain) and the US

Non-binary or nonbinary (adj): *(sometimes abbreviated as nb or enby but not always interchangeable)*

- umbrella term for gender identities that do not fit neatly within the man-woman gender binary system
 - some non-binary genders are culturally specific
- sometimes a specific gender identity

Genderqueer (adj):

- umbrella term for gender identities and gender expressions that “queer” the gender binary
- sometimes a specific identity
- much overlap with “non-binary” but different in scope and implications (the two are *not* interchangeable)

Agender (adj):

- identity or umbrella term for not having a gender identity or identifying with no gender or ungendered, etc.

Androgynous (adj):

- identity or umbrella term for a kind of non-binary gender implying some combination of conventionally “m” and “f” aspects
- older word than many of the other gender-related terms and carries different meanings in different contexts

Cis (cisgender) (adj):

- someone whose gender identity straightforwardly matches the gender they were assigned at birth

Cissexual (adj):

- someone whose sense of their own body matches the gender or sex assigned at birth
- often used interchangeably with cisgender but there are complicated politics behind why people would or would not do that or what it means to use the two interchangeably re: transmedicalism (e.g., defining “trans” strictly according to sex dysphoria and medical definitions) & policing trans identities
 - *Using “cisgender” (and not using “cissexual”) is more friendly to trans and/or non-binary people who do not necessarily have body dysphoria or do want to change their bodies*

Ciscentrism, cissexism, cisgenderism (n):

- a sum total of social expectations and ideologies, institutions, practices, etc. that treat being “cis” as the default or the “norm” and/or superior way of being, or as not requiring an explanation, while assuming that trans and other non-cis experiences do require an explanation (and are less valid than cis ones)
- *Note: differences in implications for the 3 words but likely to encounter them used interchangeably*

Examples of pronouns (or possessive adjectives) other than “he” and “she”:

- *they/them/their; ze/hir/hir (pronounced “here”); xie, xem, xyr; ey/em/eir*