

= Asexuality =

Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction to anyone , or low or absent interest in or desire for sexual activity . It may be considered the lack of a sexual orientation , or one of the variations thereof , alongside heterosexuality , homosexuality and bisexuality . It may also be an umbrella term used to categorize a broader spectrum of various asexual sub @-@ identities . A study in 2004 placed the prevalence of asexuality at 1 % in the British population .

Asexuality is distinct from abstention from sexual activity and from celibacy , which are behavioral and generally motivated by factors such as an individual 's personal or religious beliefs . Sexual orientation , unlike sexual behavior , is believed to be " enduring " . Some asexual people engage in sexual activity despite lacking sexual attraction or a desire for sex , due to a variety of reasons , such as a desire to pleasure themselves or romantic partners , or a desire to have children .

Acceptance of asexuality as a sexual orientation and field of scientific research is still relatively new , as a growing body of research from both sociological and psychological perspectives has begun to develop . While some researchers assert that asexuality is a sexual orientation , other researchers disagree .

Various asexual communities have started to form since the advent of the World Wide Web and social media . The most prolific and well @-@ known of these communities is the Asexual Visibility and Education Network ( AVEN ) , which was founded in 2001 by David Jay .

= = Definition , identity and relationships = =

Asexuality is sometimes referred to as " ace " or " the ace community " by researchers or asexual and LGBT people . Because there is significant variation among people who identify as asexual , asexuality can encompass broad definitions . Researchers generally define asexuality as the lack of sexual attraction or the lack of sexual interest , but their definitions vary ; they may use the term " to refer to individuals with low or absent sexual desire or attractions , low or absent sexual behaviors , exclusively romantic non @-@ sexual partnerships , or a combination of both absent sexual desires and behaviors . "

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network ( AVEN ) defines an asexual as " someone who does not experience sexual attraction " and stated , " [ a ] nother small minority will think of themselves as asexual for a brief period of time while exploring and questioning their own sexuality " and that " [ t ] here is no litmus test to determine if someone is asexual . Asexuality is like any other identity ? at its core , it 's just a word that people use to help figure themselves out . If at any point someone finds the word asexual useful to describe themselves , we encourage them to use it for as long as it makes sense to do so . "

Asexual people , though lacking sexual attraction to any gender , might engage in purely romantic relationships , while others might not . There are asexual @-@ identified individuals who report that they feel sexual attraction but not the inclination to act on it because they have no true desire or need to engage in sexual or non @-@ sexual activity ( cuddling , hand @-@ holding , etc . ) , while other asexuals engage in cuddling or other non @-@ sexual physical activity . Some asexuals participate in sexual activity out of curiosity . Some may masturbate as a solitary form of release , while others do not feel a need to do so .

With regard to sexual activity in particular , the need or desire for masturbation is commonly referred to as sex drive by asexuals and they disassociate it from sexual attraction and being sexual ; asexuals who masturbate generally consider it to be a normal product of the human body and not a sign of latent sexuality , and may not even find it pleasurable . Some asexual men are unable to get an erection and sexual activity by attempting penetration is impossible for them . Asexuals also differ in their feelings toward performing sex acts : some are indifferent and may have sex for the benefit of a romantic partner ; others are more strongly averse to the idea , though they do not typically dislike people for having sex .

Concerning romantic or emotional aspects of sexual orientation or sexual identity , asexuals may identify as heterosexual , lesbian , gay , bisexual , queer , or by the following terms to indicate that

they associate with the romantic , rather than sexual , aspects of sexual orientation :

aromantic ; lack of romantic attraction towards anyone

biromantic ; as opposed to bisexual

heteroromantic ; as opposed to heterosexual

homoromantic ; as opposed to homosexual

panromantic ; as opposed to pansexual

People may also identify as a gray @-@ A ( such as a gray @-@ romantic , demiromantic , demisexual or semisexual ) because they feel that they are between being aromantic and non @-@ aromantic , or between asexuality and sexual attraction . While the term gray @-@ A may cover anyone who occasionally feels romantic or sexual attraction , demisexuals or semisexuals experience sexual attraction only as a secondary component , feeling sexual attraction once a reasonably stable or large emotional connection has been created .

= = Research = =

= = = Prevalence = = =