

## WHAT IS ASEXUALITY?

Asexuality is a sexual orientation describing people who do not experience sexual attraction. Most individuals find there are certain people they are not sexually attracted to. For asexuals, this includes everybody!

## WHAT CAUSES ASEXUALITY?

As with all sexual orientations, what causes asexuality is still unknown. Recent academic studies reveal no major biological or psychological difference between asexual and non-asexual people. We hope that as the study of human sexuality grows that the study of asexuality also grows.

## ARE ASEXUALS AGAINST OTHER PEOPLE HAVING SEX?

**No.** Asexuality is not anti-sexuality. While it is true that many asexuals never have sex, this is not the same thing as having a sex-negative attitude. Most asexuals are open-minded in their attitudes toward sex regardless of their personal feelings towards it. 73% of asexuals identify as sex-positive.

## CAN ASEXUAL PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE?

**Yes.** Asexual people have the same range of emotional needs as everyone else and vary widely in how they fulfill or express their needs. Some asexuals are happiest on their own or with a group of close friends while others have a desire to date and seek long term partners.

## QUICK FACTS

### ASEXUALITY IS NOT:

- Celibacy
- Androgyny
- Sexual repression or aversion
- Sexual dysfunction
- Loss of libido due to circumstance or age
- Fear of intimacy
- The inability to find a partner

### ASEXUAL PEOPLE MAY:

- Want friendship and understanding just like everyone else.
- Fall in love
- Experience arousal and orgasm
- Be of any gender, age, or background



Statistics cited and quotes used are from the asexual community census. Public data on the census is available here: <http://www.tinyurl.com/AsexyCensusResults>

Cover photo: the asexual contingent in the San Francisco Pride Parade in 2012, the fourth year that AVEN has participated in San Francisco. Photo courtesy of Gaia Steinberg.

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# ASEXUALITY: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

***“I would like to be included in the community but asexuality is never mentioned in the LGBT communities I’ve been involved with.”***

- Write in response from the Asexual Community Census

### ISN’T ASEXUALITY JUST CELIBACY?

No. Asexuality is a sexual orientation and celibacy is a conscious choice not to have sex regardless of sexual desire. Many asexuals do not consider themselves celibate as they are giving up no more in abstaining from sex than a person abstaining from sex with someone they aren’t sexually attracted to. Furthermore, some asexual people do choose to have sex and therefore are certainly not celibate.

### WHAT DO ASEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS LOOK LIKE?

Asexual relationships are based on elements that are also important for many non-asexual people like understanding, trust, commitment, emotional intimacy, and communication. Physical intimacy may be important or not as important in relationships that asexual people form. An asexual person can find someone aesthetically (or visually) attractive, be interested in someone romantically, and fall in love. Asexuals also often form relationships that blur the lines between friendship and romance.

### WHY DOES AWARENESS ABOUT ASEXUALITY MATTER?

Sexuality is such an important aspect of our culture that people who don’t relate to the sexual norm can feel inadequate or isolated. Asexual people may believe or be told that they are “broken” or need to be “fixed” by their family, friends, or doctors. By raising awareness about asexuality we hope to let people know that they are not alone, and that exploring sexuality on your own terms is nothing to be ashamed of. We want asexual people to know there are others out there just like them. Creating positive space for asexual people to explore sexuality enables everyone to be open and honest without fear of alienation and misunderstanding.

***“I don’t feel like I belong because my (a)sexuality makes me invisible and erased.”***

- Write in response from the Asexual Community Census

### HOW DOES ASEXUALITY RELATE TO OTHER IDENTITIES?

Many asexuals can be emotionally and/or romantically attracted to other people and many additionally identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, or straight. There are also aromantic people who do not experience romantic attraction. Asexuals may identify as any gender; 20% of the community identifies as transgender or questioning their gender identity. In addition, 41% of asexuals identify as part of the LGBT community.

### ASEXUALITY AND THE LGBT MOVEMENT

There are many similarities between the LGBT and asexual communities. Asexuals often experience a feeling of being different in puberty and have a coming out process similar to the LGBT one. We talk about relationships outside of the heteronormative scope. We are rejected for being asexual. In addition to almost half of asexuals identifying as LGBT, another 39% identify as LGBT allies. The intersectionality of these two communities is clear. We urge LGBT leaders to treat asexual people who come out with dignity and respect and make space for them to be included in the LGBT community.

For more information, please visit [www.asexuality.org](http://www.asexuality.org) or [www.asexualawarenessweek.com](http://www.asexualawarenessweek.com)