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Asexual
Visibility
and
Education
Network

Asexuality

The bumper book of

Frequently

Asked

Questions



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GENERAL FAQs

What is asexuality?

Asexuality is an orientation where someone does not experience sexual attraction. Essentially asexuals experience as much sexual attraction to the same sex as heterosexuals and as much to the opposite sex as homosexuals. Surveys have suggested that the incidence of asexuality is around 1% of the population.

What is AVEN?

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) is the biggest online community for asexuals. Its aim is to connect asexuals, to provide information, to raise awareness of asexuality and to be a place of support for both asexuals and non-asexuals where needed. While most members are asexual or under the asexual umbrella people of any sexuality are welcome.

How does a person know they are asexual?

When people hear about asexuality they tend to react in two different ways: either a clear ‘OMG that’s me!’ or a sudden identity crisis and a lot of soul searching to work out what they really feel, what they really want and why they’ve acted certain ways in the past. The basic issue is for someone to figure out if they’ve ever experienced sexual attraction. This may not be as easy as it sounds if a person has to untangle themselves from romantic and aesthetic attraction, libido, or a sexual history.

Is asexuality a phase? / Is asexuality permanent?

As an orientation, asexuality tends to be lifelong and may only ‘change’ if a young person finds themselves developing sexually later than they expected (although once puberty has finished, this is unlikely to happen), if they took the label on but for reasons of celibacy, low libido, fear of sex, not being ready etc, or if they find themselves later to be in the “grey area” between asexuality and other sexualities. Only rarely does an orientation that has been established for decades change, but this has been observed in several sexualities. If a person who was previously sexual is concerned they have become asexual, we usually advise a doctor’s visit to rule out a medical cause.

Isn’t it just celibacy/abstinence?

These are choices made by a person to abstain from sex and relationships, usually for personal, societal or religious reasons. Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction and therefore not a choice. Some asexuals do still identify as celibate alongside being asexual, however others do not associate with the label since they are not denying themselves anything, merely just being themselves.

Do asexuals look down on people who have sex?

A person who dislikes all forms of sex and sexual content is known as antisexual and this viewpoint has been observed not just in asexuals but in other orientations as well. Asexuality as an orientation does not include antisexuality in its definition. Antisexuality and ‘elitism’ is discouraged by the Asexual Visibility and Education Network.

Doesn’t that mean you can reproduce by yourself?

If asexuals split like amoebas, we wouldn’t be 1% of the population, we would be 2%... no, 4%... no, 8%... 16%... No, really, of course we can’t. It may be funny for you to say this when someone says “I’m asexual” but after the person you are saying it to has heard it a lot; you just look like an idiot. Of course we’ve all done about asexual reproduction at school, but what isn’t said so much is that heterosexual and bisexual are also forms of reproduction (the former regarding mammals like humans who have two separate sexes and the latter involving hermaphroditic life forms such as snails). Languages do reuse words and terminology where appropriate.

Does that mean that asexuals don’t want to get married/have children?

Many asexuals do still desire to have relationships and marriage as a progression of that. A significant number of asexuals would still like to have children as well, often opting to consider adoption but also a lot are prepared or desire to create families the natural way.

Why would an asexual want to be in a relationship?

Why would anyone want to be in a relationship? Asexuals can desire to have a partner for the same reasons as anyone else; romantic attraction, companionship, shared values, emotional connection etc.

If an asexual is dating a non-asexual, they should state their asexuality, right?

This can be a bitter idea for an asexual... the point when, after gaining the beginning of a connection with someone they want to get to know further, they risk their new date nipping to the toilet, climbing out of the window and running for the hills. It is generally agreed though that if there is an intention of continuing a relationship then communication should begin and expectations laid out. It should be noted though that not all people who eventually identify as asexual knew they were when they began a relationship, so people should be aware that they weren’t necessarily deceived if their partner suddenly comes out later on down the line.

Are asexual marriages sexless?

Not necessarily. In a mixed orientation relationship sex may occur as a compromise or as something that both people can enjoy and bond with. Even in a relationship between two asexuals there is no reason why they should not have sex if they feel they want to for whatever reason, but that sex is not a necessity.

What would be cheating in an asexual relationship?

Apart from the obvious, the answer to this question is somewhat under debate and it seems to be a matter of opinion from the people involved in the relationship. Generally cheating would be secretly doing anything with someone else that was understood to be exclusive to the relationship or if emotional feelings for someone else were cultivated and encouraged through that person's behaviour.

Do asexual people masturbate?

There is a difference between sexual attraction (sexual urges towards someone) and libido (general sexual urges). Libido is a changeable thing that fluctuates either naturally or in response to stimuli (such as medications, dietary changes, stress, etc) and is described by asexuals as a general feeling like hunger and that, following the analogy, attraction is like craving a particular food. To put it another popular way, a straight man marooned on a desert island with only other men will have a libido but will not be sexually attracted to anyone around him, leading him to masturbate or have sex outside of his orientation.

If they masturbate, then the people they are fantasizing about must be their orientation, simple, right?

Actually... no. It is natural for non-asexuals to use mental stimulation in order to heighten their experience; however it is possible to reach the eventual goal by physical stimulation alone. While some asexuals do attempt to visualise scenarios (incidentally not involving themselves or anyone they know as a participant) many will find that their minds swim off more towards what's for dinner or what items need putting on the shopping list. Besides, not all asexuals do masturbate.

Aren't disabled/old people asexual?

No, no and no. They can be, of course, but as people not as groups. Depending on the nature of their condition, some disabled people may be perfectly sexual or may at most have difficulties with arousal, perception of feeling or ability to participate in acts; this does not automatically make them lack sexual attraction if their brains are in a condition to perceive it. A recent survey showed that for many older people it was not so much lack of sexual attraction or desire that prevented frequency of intercourse but more lack of energy and health issues

(yes, Granny and Grandpa may be doing it more than you think...)

Is 'asexual' a person whose sex is neither female nor male?

Being born without sex organs at all is a rare, but not unheard of, form of intersex condition (the state of having anything besides full male or full female anatomy). In this case, we are not talking about sex organs or lack thereof; asexuality is an orientation where we don't experience sexual attraction. Most of us still have all our appropriate organs firmly matching a particular sex.

Do asexuals have problems with their sex organs?

For an asexual, usually issues such as inability to get an erection or uncomfortable penetration come as a result of asexuality and not a cause of it. Otherwise, if someone has got to this point in the first place, more often than not it has come about due to sexual attraction and things just not working is frustrating and not linked to sexuality.

Are all asexuals virgins?

While many are (after all, many have no pressing need or desire to) this is not the case for all asexuals. There are several reasons why an asexual may have sex, such as for experimentation, curiosity, for a partner, for children or for enjoyment.

Are all asexuals physically unattractive?

We are no more or less fugly than anyone else. Of course you are going to get a range of looks within any sexuality and the argument that asexuals are just people that can't get any is rather combated by asexuals reporting unwanted interest and even responses that their coming out has been rejected on the basis of their looks.

What do asexuals think about every 7th second?

Ooh... take your pick. Of course, in our modern society with advertising and plotlines in media it is hard not to think about sex in general but on the whole if AVEN were asked this question, the answer would probably jokingly be "cake".

Is asexuality a cult?

If we were a cult, we'd be the best cult in the world. We might start dancing around waving the asexual flag and sacrifice big slices of cake to a giant statue of Sherlock. Seriously... no.

Is asexuality caused by a bad sexual experience?

There is no reason to believe so. The majority of people who had an incidence of abuse in childhood or who had a bad sexual experience go on to become

sexual people whose trauma of the event may lead to an aversion or fear but not eradication of sexual attraction. Given this ratio of victims to asexuals, it is highly unlikely that this could be a cause of asexuality.

Is asexuality caused by something medical?

The two most common suggestions are Depression and Hormones. Depression lowers a person's libido, making them have less motivation to act on sexual attraction, but does not stop sexual attraction itself. Given the high rate of depression, if it were directly linked in any way to asexuality then the rate of asexuality would be much higher than it is. If anything, depression can be caused by asexuality (alienation, poor coming out responses, relationship stresses etc). As for hormones, many asexuals have found themselves to have normal amounts of hormones in testing and there is no evidence to show that hormones actually have a part in the ability or not to perceive sexual attraction.

Is asexuality linked to Autism/Asperger's?

While a noticeable number of AVEN members have Asperger's, this is not necessarily a link between the two. Firstly there would need to be research into the incidences of Asperger's in other sexualities to compare them to and secondly it has been said that people with Asperger's are more likely to realise they are asexual because of the logical thought and lack of social connections that are innate to the syndrome.

Is asexuality linked to Schizoid Personality Disorder?

Many asexuals find this idea intriguing. One of the possible criteria for Schizoid Personality Disorder is the lack of interest in sexual relations with others and its occurrence has also been placed at around 1%, however something that is quite evident from online asexual communities is that the vast majority of asexuals do not appear to have Schizoid Personality Disorder. This could be indicative of the rate of asexuality being significantly higher than previously thought.

Are asexual people immature/childlike?

No more so than people of other orientations. Simply not experiencing sexual attraction doesn't prevent someone from being a well-adjusted individual or capable of complex or mature thought.

Aren't asexuals really just closet gays?

The big question here is- why come out as asexual if you are really gay? Being homosexual is largely accepted in modern Western society and being asexual often results in mockery, poor responses, disbelief and alienation. There is simply no reason to pretend to be asexual.

How is asexuality different from being repressed?

Repression is described as a state whereby someone is prevented from expressing themselves sexually through feelings of guilt or shame. This simply isn't what asexuality is about. Although some asexuals are not willing to have sexual contact, to most it is just an irrelevant thing or they are even able to express themselves perfectly well in a sexual environment.

Are asexuals just ashamed of their bodies?

Quite possibly the majority of people asked would have something that they would change about themselves but carry on with their love lives regardless. Many asexuals are still sexually active or willing to dress in clothing that does not obscure their bodies as they would if they had major issues. Besides, this is another idea that would cause someone to shy away from sexual activity, not be asexual.

Do asexual people just want attention?

Claiming to be asexual just to get attention isn't a very good choice. Firstly, trying to get attention with something that is going to gain you ridicule isn't very good on the morale and will change the way people think of you. Secondly, if someone who does experience sexual attraction pretended to be asexual then either they would thwart their own efforts to get a sexual partner or they would have their deception questioned through their activity. The only attention we are after at the moment is visibility.

Are asexual people introverts?

The problem with this question is that most asexuals able to answer are from online asexual communities. People who are not introverted are less likely to spend extended amounts of time socialising on forums so any poll of an asexual site is going to get results skewed by this. Needless to say though that not all asexuals are introverted.

Does religion play a part in some people's asexuality?

At most, religion may influence a person's view on sexual behaviour and relationships. It may also cause someone who has found themselves not to be heterosexual to hide their orientation so as not to upset their families.

I had a pet pig as a child. Does that make me asexual?

OK, so this one is a joke. But really, you'd be surprised what people have tried to link asexuality with.

Are asexuals part of the LGBT?

Not officially. Some local LGBT groups, such as on school campuses, have decided independently of the main movement to include an A in the acronym however with lack of visibility much of the LGBT doesn't currently acknowledge asexuality as an option under the umbrella.

For asexuals themselves, there are some who are interested in romantic relationships with the opposite sex do not feel strongly enough about being different to warrant association with the LGBT or may not feel an affiliation with the group, however others feel that being included is a good step for the asexual movement since asexuals can suffer from the same feelings of isolation, confusion, lack of acceptance and lack of understanding that other non-heteronormative people do, where their only option would be to find a local LGBT (or similar) group for information and company. As well as that, asexuals may also be transgender or non-binary gender and wish to associate with the LGBT about that part of themselves.

So why do Asexuals attend Pride events?

One large goal of the Pride attendances is to promote visibility of our existence; through this, we can teach other people about what asexuality is or is not and maybe even help a few asexuals find themselves. Of course, as well as that, we are here to be Proud!

Are asexual people oppressed?

Asexuals tend more to be laughed at or disbelieved than actually oppressed. The main problem comes when people assume that sexuality is a black-or-white issue and that if you aren't obviously heterosexual then you must be homosexual and therefore asexuals can receive stigma and abuse related to homosexuality even if they try to explain otherwise.

Are there any slang terms for asexual?

'Asexual' became shortened to 'Ase', which, although it is still in use, has developed into the more common 'Ace'. The term 'asexy' is often used to describe something that is relating to asexuality, although 'ace' may also be used here.

Are there any symbols of asexuality?

Yes, although most of them are created by and largely specific to the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN).

~ **The AVEN Triangle**- this is English-speaking AVEN's home symbol, a triangle pointing down with a gradient from white to black, although sometimes seen with purple (AVEN's board colour). It was created based on the Kinsey Scale (a rating from 0 = heterosexual to 6 = homosexual with variations of bisexuality in between, with another group x = asexuality later added following the results of the survey) showing the white top line for

sexuality moving through the grey area to the black point (black being lack of colour just as asexuality is lack of sexual attraction).

~ **The black ring**- generally any shape, material or design as long as it is black, worn on the middle finger of the right hand. The black, as with the Triangle, signifies asexuality as a lack of something.

~ **The ace of spades/hearts**- this is more an in-joke than anything; given that 'ace' is a shortened term for 'asexual' it became a natural progression to start using the suits for reference. The ace of hearts is usually used for romantic asexuals (people who have the desire for relationships) and the ace of spades for aromantic asexuals (people who do not have the desire for relationships).

~ **AVEN cake**- this is definitely an in-joke... Originating from the idea that "cake is better than sex" (possibly originating itself from the recipe for Better Than Sex Cake) it seems references to cake (in particular an emoticon that looks like a slice of iced sponge with cherries on top) started as a joke and then became an AVEN tradition.

~ **The Asexual Flag**- the only symbol of asexuality that was not developed solely by AVEN, although the effort and progression of the project was started and concluded by them. The eventual design, voted on by a number of asexual websites, was four horizontal stripes in black, grey and white (for the sexualities) and purple (the colour of the AVEN boards and a popular asexual colour), signifying asexuality + grey-a and demisexuals + sexual allies = community.

For more information, the main asexuality website is www.asexuality.org (AVEN) which has its own wiki page and forum

PERSONAL FAQs

Am I still asexual if I:

~ masturbate?

Yes. Although libido (the urge for sexual stimulation) and sexual attraction (the target of a person's desire for mutual stimulation) are part of the same system, they do not always occur together. With asexuals, the biological need for stimulation may still be present and is more often than not satisfied alone.

~ am not a virgin?

Behaviour is not the same thing as orientation. Even people of other sexualities can have sexual contact outside of their usual range of attraction for reasons including experimentation and curiosity. Asexuals may have sex for several reasons besides those, including satisfaction of a partner, for children, enjoyment, etc. Since asexuality is not well known, many asexuals also have sex because they feel they should be 'normal' or because they are told or believe they will be 'fixed' after having sex, only to find this is not the case.

~ enjoy sex?

Absolutely. As with masturbation, for a lot of asexuals the physical plumbing still works and still reacts to direct stimulation. Obviously if a person is not interested in sexual contact then there are many reasons why sexual attempts will end in failure but if an asexual feels they are able to become sufficiently aroused and hold a positive viewpoint of the entire affair, there is no reason why they should not enjoy sex while still being asexual.

~ want a relationship?

There are different forms of attraction that are often interlinked but are not always together. The impulse to have a relationship with someone, known as romantic attraction, can occur with or without sexual attraction (note that people can be sexually but not romantically attracted to others). Since they are not joined, it is possible for an asexual to want the close bond, mutual love, trust, stability, etc that any other person might wish for in a partner.

~ have had crushes?

If the crushes have been sexual in nature then more intermediary terms such as "grey-a" are more likely to be suiting. Having romantic (i.e. having desires for relationships or a close bond) crushes does not stop a person from being asexual since they are not sexual in nature. Many asexuals report having intense feelings towards others that are more platonic, such as being attracted to a person's intellectual nature or strongly desiring to be friends with someone for non-romantic or sexual reasons. These impulses are jokingly known as AVEN as "squishes".

~ find people attractive?

Another form of attraction that is related to sexual attraction is what is known as "aesthetic attraction". This is the ability to see pleasing aspects of another person and it is entirely possible to find other people visually but not sexually attractive. Many asexuals state that they can see other people like "works of art".

~ have a fetish?

Not all fetishes are directly connected with another person so asexuals can get a sexual response or heightening from objects or ideas that do not need expression through a partner. As well as this, ideas such as dominance and submission can be solely a relationship dynamic and are not necessarily something that can only be used during sexual activity.

~ read/write/watch adult films or literature?

Some asexuals with libidos report that reading or watching adult material allows them to imagine further physical stimulation or play up to a perfect image of love as portrayed by society. The actual people in the sources are often ignored as irrelevant since the physical act is the focus of attention. Other asexuals favour more romantic plotlines where sex just happens to be an extension of a couple's relationship. While often asexuals can miss sexual cues or inferences that are obvious to the rest of society, many asexuals can be just as dirty-minded and may enjoy writing their own fiction, if only for the lolz.

~ have had a bad sexual experience?

Having a bad sexual experience sadly isn't uncommon, whereas asexuality as an orientation is. Sometimes bad experiences, such as being coerced into sex or doing it in the hope of becoming sexual (if one does not know about asexuality especially), are not the cause of asexuality but rather a result of it. If a person was sexual prior to the incident then it is more likely to be a form of trauma and should be worked through. If the incident occurred before any sexuality had become evident then remember that the vast majority of people who have had a bad experience or been abused turn out not to be asexual and are more likely to be averse to sexual contact rather than not experience sexual attraction. If the incident worries you, then just remember that no one will eat you for changing your label later if you should eventually feel that asexuality no longer describes you.

~ I am depressed or have some other illness/disorder/diagnoses?

Some brain traumas or malformations may be responsible for disconnecting the ability to experience sexual attraction but these occurrences are rare and generally obvious when they happen. Other than that, there is no evidence to connect various diagnoses with asexuality. Depression is notorious for lowering libido- not stopping sexual attraction but affecting the motivation to

act on urges- and is an extremely common affliction, meaning that if depression had a correlation with asexuality, there would be a lot more asexuals.

Sex is repulsive to me; does that mean I'm asexual?

Being disgusted by sex is not in the definition of asexuality since not all people who don't experience sexual attraction are against sex. Being personally against having sex oneself is described as being "repulsed" or "aversive" and is someone's own viewpoint. Being against sex in general, not just for oneself but also other people, is called "antosexual" and although some asexuals are also antosexual, they are not the same thing. People of other orientations can also be antosexual.

I can't get laid, am I asexual?

If you experience sexual attraction but just can't progress to the situation you want, then you aren't asexual, you are just unlucky. There can be a number of reasons why people just aren't going for it... maybe try a new personal image... or try to focus on other projects and relax against the desperation so it may come along by itself... or maybe take showers more often and get rid of the book of cheesy pick-up lines.

I want sex but I can't get an erection/I can't get aroused/it's painful, am I asexual?

If you experience sexual attraction but the actual sex is difficult, then it is more likely to be a medical or psychological problem affecting your ability to perform and you should see a doctor despite the embarrassment factor. If you are a virgin or inexperienced, then it may be that you just aren't as ready as you think you are and you should take it slower or that you may need to include more foreplay (or more interesting foreplay) to prepare you. If you decide that you are attempting sex because 'that's what people do' or that society says you need sex to be happy, then your failure to have sex could be asexuality-related.

Will I grow out of asexuality?

Asexuality is a sexual orientation just like any other. The vast majority of us have always been asexual. If you are still going through puberty then it is advised that you be aware that you are still developing and that things may change, but while the label applies to you there is no reason for you to not be allowed to use it. Some people do find out later that they experience sexual attraction rarely and may feel another labels suits them better. Many people who formerly identified as asexual did so either in young adolescence, misinterpreted their feelings as being lack of sexual attraction when they were later able to re-evaluate them or confused the definition.

Am I doomed to be alone forever if I am asexual?

Not at all. Given that asexuals are only 1% of the population and mixed orientation relationships can be complicated and fraught with issues, finding a life partner can be more difficult than for any other orientation but that does not mean they are impossible! With the rise of asexual communities and visibility projects, it is now easier than ever to meet other asexuals and also mixed relationships can benefit from this knowledge rather than being overwhelmed by confusion and feelings of rejection.

My therapist/doctor says that asexuality does not exist, are they right?

Asexuality is not a well-known orientation and therapists and doctors are only human with their own thoughts and opinions, so they may not believe in asexuality yet just as many others. Also remember that many therapists, especially those who specialise in sexual matters, usually only see people who are having problems in that area and are in distress so their natural inclination is to diagnose a disorder and attempt to fix it. Most asexuals are distressed not by their lack of sexual attraction but by secondary issues such as societal pressure, alienation, relationship incompatibility or rejection of their orientation by loved ones, so a good therapist should accept a person's self-identification and help them with these secondary problems.

For more information, the main asexuality website is www.asexuality.org (AVEN) which has its own wiki page and forum

NON-ASEXUAL FAQs

I know someone who is a misanthrope and claims to be asexual, are they really?

Being a misanthrope and being asexual are two possible unrelated states of being and there's no reason why one person can't be both. If someone's behaviour or beliefs come directly from being a misanthrope, then they may be celibate or antisexual rather than asexual. Unless there is any evidence that they are using their terminology wrongly to describe a dislike of sexual relations, then the polite thing to do would be to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Okay asexuals don't want sex after the first date but when they are ready they will change their mind and have sex in a relationship sooner or later down the road right?

Being asexual doesn't mean 'frigid' or a slow mover. While it is possible that some asexuals may be willing to eventually participate in acts for someone they love, it should never be assumed that this will be the case. The best thing in this circumstance, as it will always be in a relationship, is communication. Find out about the asexual's boundaries and what they are or are not willing to do and work out how compromise may best be achieved.

Can asexuals be "cured"? How can one turn an asexual into a sexual? / Can a sexual person become asexual?

Since asexuality is an orientation, attempts to 'rectify' the situation through hormone treatments, therapy or whatever else usually end in failure. At most, therapies may allow some asexuals to become more positive of sexual interaction and be more willing to try forms of compromise or have and enjoy sex but a partner should not automatically assume this occurrence. If an asexual is forced to undergo therapy, they may become resentful and this can damage a relationship.

Surprisingly to some, people from other orientations have sometimes asked for help in becoming asexual. These tend to be antisexuals (people who are disgusted overall by sex), partners of asexuals who love them enough to want to change themselves or occasionally someone struggling with their sexuality who wants to be free of it. Unfortunately there is no way to become asexual, only celibate.

If an asexual 'give in' to their sexual partner, is that technically rape?

It depends on the asexual and the circumstance. If the asexual is comfortable with having sex and does not feel pressured, then there is no reason to be alarmed about it. If the asexual is coerced into sexual activity with arguments such as "if you don't have sex with me then you don't love me" then the

resulting activity can be mentally scarring and regardless of the fact that forced consent was given the emotional result may differ little from sexual assault. Pressuring an asexual into unwanted activity can destroy a relationship worse than just walking away.

How can someone say they are asexual if they haven't had sex?

How can a straight man say he is straight if he hasn't had sex with another man? Sexual orientation is something that people know. Asexuals have the same amount of sexual attraction as a heterosexual to the same sex and a homosexual to the opposite sex. Whether or not a person has sex is irrelevant to deciding who one is or isn't attracted to in the first place.

Maybe they just haven't found the right person yet?

The chances of an asexual finding someone who will give them the magical sex of love and turn them into a raving nymphomaniac is drastically slimmer than many people would like to believe. While it is possible to be demisexual (someone who only experiences sexual attraction to a person after forming a strong emotional bond with them), many demisexuals feel the potential prior to the actual experience taking place. Receiving this response automatically after coming out is considering upsetting or insulting to an asexual and may be returned with a retort that the asker just hasn't found the right person from their same/opposite sex.

Why do asexuals need to come out?

There are many reasons for an asexual to want other people to know.

- ~ To be honest in or before a relationship
- ~ To feel as though they are not hiding a part of themselves
- ~ For general visibility
- ~ To fend off unwanted interest
- ~ To try to stop pressure from others to have a relationship/sex
- ~ So people may understand them better
- ~ In response to accusations of homosexuality

If my partner is asexual, does that mean they don't love me?

No, asexuals have as much ability as anyone else to fall in love; it's just that that love isn't automatically connected to a desire for sexual relations with a partner. It doesn't mean that they don't find you attractive either but that beauty they see in you isn't connected to anything sexual. Your partner may love you more than anything in the world.

Isn't an asexual relationship just like a friendship?

Being romantically inclined towards someone and being sexually attracted towards someone may come at once for many people, but even in non-asexuals they aren't always stuck together or else one-night-stands wouldn't exist. If a relationship – sex = a friendship, then by the same mathematics a friendship + sex = a relationship. The difference is in the emotional feelings and the dynamic of the connection. This connection is basically the difference between a sexual's loving relationship and 'friends with benefits'.

Do asexuals watch porn/read adult literature? My asexual friend writes slash. WTF?

Some asexuals with libidos report that reading or watching adult material allows them to imagine further physical stimulation or play up to a perfect image of love as portrayed by society. The actual people in the sources are often ignored as irrelevant since the physical act is the focus of attention. Other asexuals favour more romantic plotlines where sex just happens to be an extension of a couple's relationship. While often asexuals can miss sexual cues or inferences that are obvious to the rest of society, many asexuals can be just as dirty-minded and may enjoy writing their own fiction, if only for the lolz.

My friend has crushes on television characters and I find them looking at pictures of models, is she really asexual?

Is every crush you have sexual, or have you just looked at someone and gone "oh he/she is awesome!" Having an appeal to people on television or film doesn't have to be sexual; it can be caused by anything including intellectual skills, a sense of association or from pure badass. As for appreciating bodies, that doesn't have to be sexual either. Asexuals are still capable of appreciating physical attributes (known as "aesthetic attraction") and this distinction from sexual attraction is not particular to asexuals; after all, a straight woman may look at female models and call them beautiful or a straight man may easily recognise other good-looking men in the vicinity.

My ex was not asexual when we got together, now they claim they doesn't want anything with anybody cause they are asexual. Are they for real? Is it my fault?

It is possible that your ex was asexual when you first met but they did not know what asexuality was and they went on the only way they could; by pretending they were 'normal' and proceeding with society's expectations. Your ex may have enjoyed what you did together but ultimately it was just not what they want out of life and now want to identify openly as asexual. If they are rejecting relationships, they may be doing so because they decided relationships aren't what they want either or that they are concerned that any relationship will now be doomed to fail because of their asexuality. Whatever your ex feels now, it was not your fault.

I think my child/partner/friend/etc is asexual. Do I ask them? Do I suggest it?

If you feel the need to do anything, it is best to do so in an abstract way so as not to back the person into a corner or force them to come out if they are not ready to do so. If they have spoken to you about their confusion and you think asexuality may be an option, then you are freer to make a direct comment about how you found out about this thing called asexuality and suggest that they might look it up to decide for themselves. If this direct conversation would be inappropriate, there are more subtle approaches such as mentioning someone else who you heard was asexual or starting a Sherlock sexuality debate (while the asexual community claims him for themselves, many people do still prefer to see him as homosexual) or maybe even leaving a leaflet around the house where it might be seen. If the conversation has not come up before and it is just your suspicion, then it may be better to just leave it until the other person is ready to come out to you.

My child is Asexual, what did I do wrong?

Why should you have done anything wrong? The causes of asexuality are as yet unknown and there is no good blaming yourself for something that just seems to happen by itself. The best thing you can do now is show your support for your child and allow them to be happy in whichever way suits them best.

My child says they are asexual, but I say they are too young to know. Are they?

With a younger child going through puberty there is more room for sexuality to develop, however many people from other sexualities have stated their awareness of their orientations from an early age, on average around the pre-teen stage. Many asexuals also start to realise they are different around that age and come to associate with asexuality. While your child may change after a few years, it is polite to accept their word on it and in any case, if they are "too young to know" then they are probably too young for it to matter in a sexual context and there is no need for conflict. Just be accepting of their current situation and be open to the possibility that they may or may not revise their conclusion at a later date.

For more information, the main asexuality website is www.asexuality.org (AVEN) which has its own wiki page and forum