



Asexual Awareness Month

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## Asexual Awareness Month

“The man i went on a date with did more than try to "cure me" of my asexuality  
it's funny because i never thought someone's penis would be considered an antidote of any kind  
and i don't think that's what my doctor meant when he told me i needed more Vitamin D in my diet  
but apparently my sexuality was enough of a diagnosis for him to decide to play doctor with me  
maybe he should've put his stethoscope up to my mouth instead of between my breasts  
maybe then he would've heard me when i told him to stop it”

— Courtney Carola, *Have Some Pride: A Collection of LGBT Inspired Poetry*; 2017

## What is Asexuality?

# Asexuality 101

## Who Is Asexual?

An asexual person (“ace”, for short) is simply **someone who does not experience sexual attraction**. That’s all there is to it. Aces can be any sex or gender or age or ethnic background or body type, can be rich or poor, can wear any clothing style, and can be any religion or political affiliation. In short: There is no asexual “type”.

## A Misunderstood Orientation

Many people hear the word “asexual” and make assumptions about what it means. They think of single-celled organisms in a petri dish. They think of a celibate monk on far off mountaintop. They think of a genderless robot from outer space. Asexuality isn’t any of those things. In particular:

- ❑ Asexuality is not an abstinence pledge. (Although there may be abstinent aces.)
- ❑ **Asexuality is not a synonym for celibacy.** (There are celibate aces and promiscuous aces and aces everywhere in between.)
- ❑ Asexuality is not a gender identity. (Although there may be trans, non-binary, or genderqueer aces.)
- ❑ Asexuality is not a disorder. (Although there may be aces with physical or mental conditions.)
- ❑ Asexuality is not a choice. (Although not every ace is “born that way”.)
- ❑ Asexuality is not a hormone imbalance. (Although there may be aces with hormone issues.)
- ❑ Asexuality is not a fear of sex or relationships. (Although there may be aces who are afraid of or otherwise dislike sex or relationships.)

## Attraction, Not Action

**Asexuality is a sexual orientation, like homosexuality or heterosexuality.** And like being straight or being gay, it’s about what someone feels, not what someone does. Dating, having sex, masturbating, falling in love, getting married, or having children do not conflict with asexuality in any way. There are many reasons why an asexual person might do these things that do not require sexual attraction to be present. Experiencing arousal or orgasm also do not conflict with asexuality.

## Some Do, Some Don’t

Many questions people have about asexuality can be answered with the same phrase: “Some Do, Some Don’t.” Do asexuals date? Some do, some don’t. Do asexuals fall in love? Some do, some don’t. Do asexuals have sex? Some do, some don’t. Do asexuals masturbate? Some do, some don’t. Do asexuals like pepperoni pizza? Some do, some don’t. **We are all individuals, with our own individual preferences and personalities, refrain from general blanket statements that may perpetuate negative stereotypes.**

# The Gray Areas

Some people feel that they are “almost asexual” or “asexual with an exception”. That is, they strongly identify with being asexual, except for a few limited or infrequent experiences of sexual attraction. Gray-asexual people fall in between asexuality and non-asexuality. In some cases, they experience sexual attraction only rarely. In others, they’re unsure if they’ve experienced it or don’t feel that they quite fit the definition of asexual in some way. **Demisexual people are only capable of feeling sexual attraction after developing a strong emotional bond with someone. Demisexuality and gray-asexuality fall within what’s called the “asexual spectrum”.**

# The Concept of Love

Along with a sexual orientation, people have what’s called a romantic or affectional orientation that describes who that person might be romantically attracted to. In many people, the sexual and romantic orientations are aligned, so people tend not to think about them being separate concepts. It is not uncommon for asexuals to experience romantic attraction. Romantic orientations are given names that parallel sexual orientations. For instance, a heteroromantic person is someone who experiences romantic attraction toward a different gender, homoromantic toward the same gender, and so on. **A significant number of asexuals also identify as aromantic, which means that they do not experience romantic attraction.** Separating romantic and sexual attraction is not strictly limited to asexual people, however. For instance, it is possible for someone to be an aromantic heterosexual, or any other combination.

# How Can I Tell?

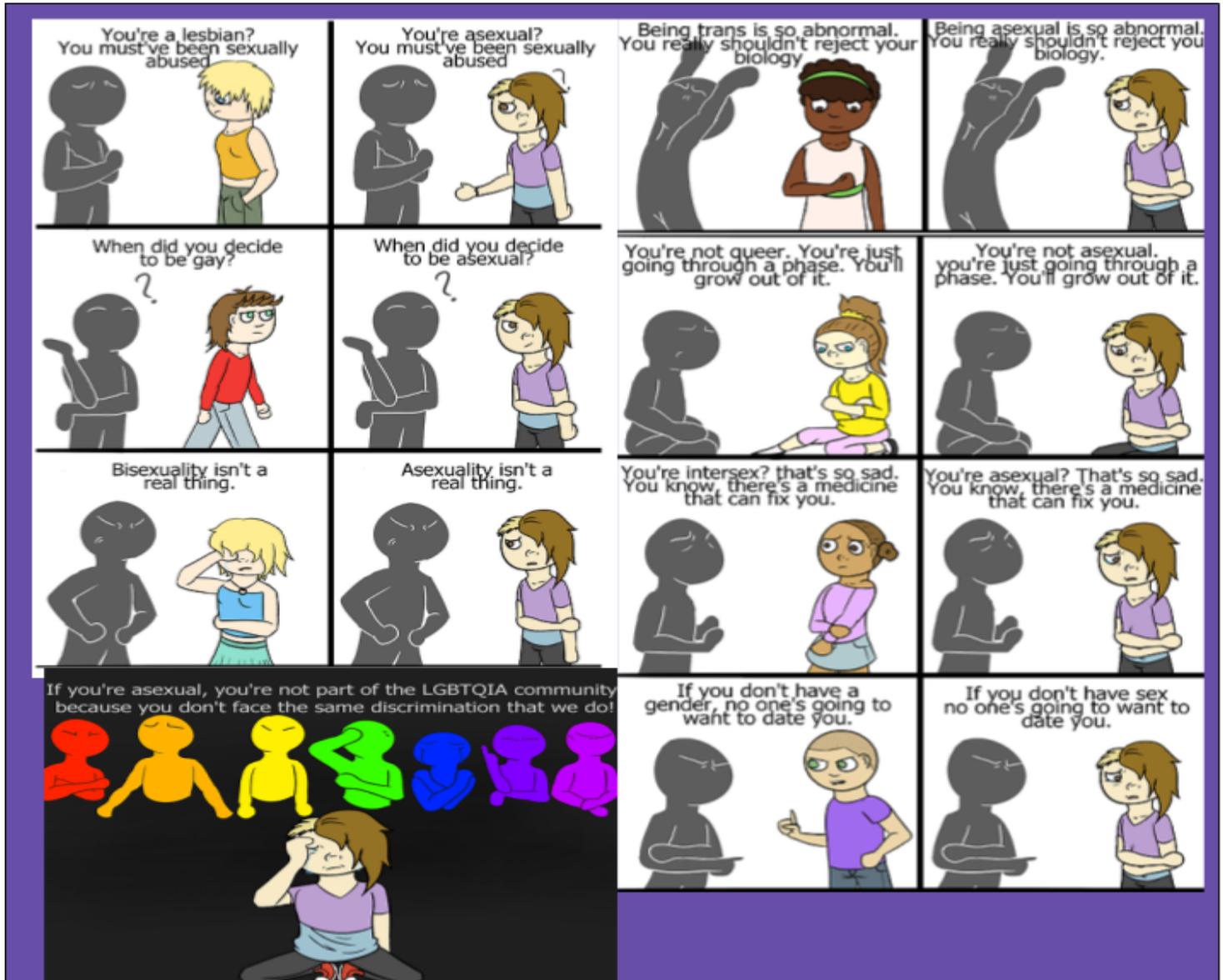
If you want to know if you’re asexual, ask yourself the following question: “Do I feel sexual attraction?” If the answer is “No”, you’re asexual. The problem with that question is that “sexual attraction” is a vague phrase. It’s difficult to say that you’ve never felt something, if you don’t know what that something feels like. If you’re still unsure, **[here is a list of questions to help guide \(not diagnose\) your thoughts:](#)**

- Are you generally disinterested in sex?
- Is your interest in sex more scientific than emotional?
- Do you feel left out or confused when others discuss sex?
- If you had sex, did you think it was dull or boring, and not the amazing experience other people made it out to be?
- Have you ever had to pretend to be interested in someone in order to fit in?
- Have you ever felt “broken” because you don’t experience sexual feelings like those around you?
- Have you ever felt that you were straight “by default” or that you were bi or pan because you were equally (dis)interested in all genders?
- Have you ever gone out with someone or had sex because you felt “that’s what you’re supposed to do?”

If you want to know if someone else is asexual, you have to talk to them about it. There are no outward signs of asexuality, and you shouldn’t attempt to label someone else against their will.

# Ace Community Struggles

Asexuality, “the invisible orientation”, struggles from lack of public awareness which leads to many in the ace spectrum having their experiences dismissed and mocked even from other members of the LGBTQI+ community. Despite often experiencing similar discrimination from society, asexual people often are excluded from LGBT+ community and support.



Check it out more asexual resources which are specific to Japan here:

<http://stonewalljapan.org/resources/asexuality/>

