

WHAT IS ASEXUALITY?

Asexuality is a sexual orientation for those who experience a lack of sexual attraction towards any and all genders. An asexual person may also use this label to mean that they have a lack of desire for sexual relationships or activity. Along with any sexuality, asexuality exists on a spectrum. Asexual can be used as an umbrella term for those who identify with any asexual identity/grey identity/label. Within the asexual spectrum, folks can identify with the split attraction model, meaning that they possess a romantic orientation that is separate from their sexual attraction.

60%

of people who
identify as asexual
are under 21.

Source: Asexy Community Census
www.tinyurl.com/AsexyCensusResults

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ASEXUAL YOUTH

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YOUNG ACE ISSUES

Compulsory sexuality

Asexual youth face many issues as a result of societal expectations, specifically **compulsory sexuality**. Compulsory sexuality is the expectation that everyone experiences sexual attraction and behaviour. Because of this, it has been extremely difficult for asexual people to “come out” and seek relationships without feeling pressured to conform to the societal standard of sexuality.

From Childhood

Pre-teen/teenage youth are encouraged by teachers, parents and other mentors that they may feel new “urges” that are supposed to be some form of prelude to early sexual attraction. For asexual youth, this stage of life can often be difficult, because they may not be experiencing what their adult mentors are telling them that they should be experiencing.

Assumptions and Stigma

Historically, asexuality has been wrongly correlated with mental and physical illness, sexual assault/abuse, trauma or disability. Some asexual people live with mental illness, or are survivors of trauma/abuse, but this does not necessarily influence their asexuality in all cases. This assumption can make ace and aro youth feel like they're sick, or even broken.

Erasure

Erasure in this context is the act of dismissing or invalidating an identity, acting as though it doesn't exist. Even within the queer community, trouble having their orientation legitimized, because other queer folks feel sexual attraction, which they don't. Youth on the ace spectrum often experience difficulty coming out, as they are often told that they are too young to know that they are not interested in sexual attraction/activity.

MAKING SAFER SPACES

Ace/aroyouth face many **pressures to conform**. There are many things that teachers/guardians, parents, and service providers can do to create safer spaces for asexual youth.

- **Teach** them to unlearn the idea that they will experience sexual attraction at some point in their life.
- **Advocate** for consent-focussed sexual education; many asexual youth encounter a social or physical pressure to have sex.
- **Let all youth know** that it is normal to not experience sexual attraction, sex drive, or libido.
- **Normalize** relationships that don't include sex, such as platonic and romantic ones.
- If a youth comes out as asexual to you, **validate** their feelings, ensure that they're aware that they are not abnormal or broken in any way.
- **Direct** them towards resources and peer support platforms that may be useful to them in coming to terms with and embracing their sexuality.