



Asexual and Aromantic Identity

(a brief introduction)

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Who am I?

- Asexual, aromantic(?), trans/nonbinary
- Not the final word on anything in this presentation



A few definitions


If you're asexual, you...

- can't reproduce by yourself (in this context)
- are not a plant
- aren't necessarily celibate
- might still be in a sexual relationship
- might still want one (even if you aren't in one)
- *don't feel sexual attraction*



If you're asexual, you get this cool flag!



The background is a solid pink color. In the top right corner, there are several overlapping geometric shapes: a dark pink square, a medium pink square, and a light pink square, all partially cut off by the edge of the frame.

Asexual people
make up about 1%
of the population.

If you're aromantic, you...

- aren't a cold, emotionless robot
- might still be in a romantic relationship
- might still want one (even if you aren't in one)
- *don't feel romantic attraction*



If you're aromantic, you get this other cool flag!



The top right corner of the slide features a decorative arrangement of overlapping triangles in various shades of pink and magenta. The text is centered on the left side of the slide.

There's no
interesting statistic
on this slide.

Important notes

- Asexual/aromantic are umbrella terms
- They're sexual/romantic orientations like any others
 - Completely normal, you're not broken
 - Not a choice



Are asexual and aromantic people queer?

yes.

(if they choose to identify that way)





What is attraction?

Attraction is...

- ???
- I am certainly not qualified to talk about this




Things attraction is not

- Experiencing attraction \neq sex-positive/neutral/averse
- Attraction \neq desire
- Attraction isn't a choice



Things that might be definitions?

- “you’ll know it when you see/feel it”
 - A strong(?) desire to [have sex with, be in a romantic relationship with, ...] a specific person
 - “An emotional response that [sexual/romantic] people often feel that results in a desire for [sexual/romantic] contact with the person that the attraction is felt towards”
 - If this sounds like nonsense, you might be asexual/aromantic
- 

Many types of attraction

- Sexual attraction
- Romantic attraction
- Aesthetic attraction
- Sensual attraction



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The split-attraction model

What/why?

- Some people find it helpful to separate sexual and romantic attraction when labeling themselves
- ...so they do.
- Example: heteroromantic asexual






Ace/aro identity is a spectrum

The Kinsey scale

- Probably the first time people thought about sexuality as a spectrum
- First published in 1948
- Binary-centric (exclusively heterosexual ⇨ 0, exclusively homosexual ⇨ 6)
- “X” for something pretty close to “asexual”



Ace/aro spectrums

- “Asexual” and “aromantic” are umbrella terms
 - Some other terms/prefixes:
 - gray-asexual: not asexual but not sexual either (a gray area)
 - gray-aromantic: same thing, just with romantic attraction
 - demi-: only feel attraction after some condition is met (often emotional connection)
 - lith/akoi-: doesn't want attraction reciprocated/”only in theory”
 - quoi-: unsure/unable to understand or define attraction
 - many others!
- 

On microlabels

- They're great! If you find them useful, wonderful.
- Don't feel pressured to define yourself in incredible detail
- ID'ing as just "asexual" or "aromantic" is completely okay
- Not ID'ing as anything is also completely okay



What do we call non-aseexual people?

- “sexual”
- “allosexual”
- “not asexual”
- others!





Some asexual history

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We've always been
around

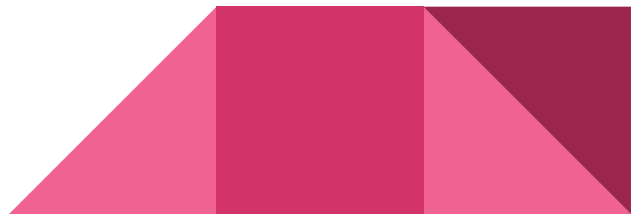
Some asexual history

- Earliest mention of anything even remotely similar was 1896
 - But see references, this isn't a very good connection (in my opinion)
- 1948, Kinsey scale X
- 1983, asexuality was well-known enough to be in a paper (Nurius)



Why haven't the terms been around longer?

- Asexual people are the smallest sexual minority (probably)
- Communities didn't really exist until recently, it was hard to find other aces
- Onset of the internet correlates very closely with widespread use of the term



Community history

- First online “community” is possibly the comments on a 1997 article about asexuality, “My life as an amoeba” (see references)
- Email list formed in 2000
- AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network) formed in 2001, David Jay
 - likely what prompted more widespread use of the term “asexual”
 - AVENues, a newsletter / magazine for the community formed in 2006
 - AVENwiki is now a pretty comprehensive source of information



More community history

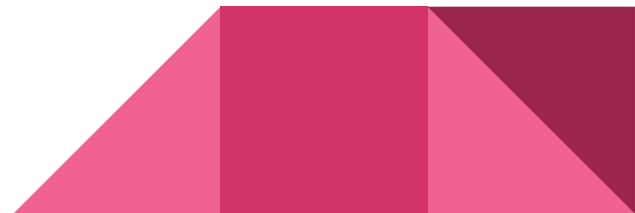
- First ace group at pride was San Francisco, 2009
- In 2010, New York and Vermont specifically included asexual identity as a protected class (along with other sexual orientations)



Conclusion

Main takeaways

- Asexual/aromantic people don't feel sexual/romantic attraction
- Asexual/aromantic can be used as umbrella terms
- Being asexual/aromantic isn't a choice
- Being asexual/aromantic is completely normal
- Attraction is difficult to define (especially if you're asexual/aromantic yourself)





Acknowledgements/thanks

Where to find more information

AVENwiki is a fantastic resource: <http://wiki.asexuality.org/>

Feel free to ask me questions, too! If you don't want to ask them publicly, feel free to find me after the meeting or ping me on GroupMe.

Also I'd encourage you to reuse this presentation yourself; just credit me (Tris Wilson) + share any changes you make in the same way (CC BY-SA).

Link to presentation + references:

<https://twodoublequotes.org/ace-identity>