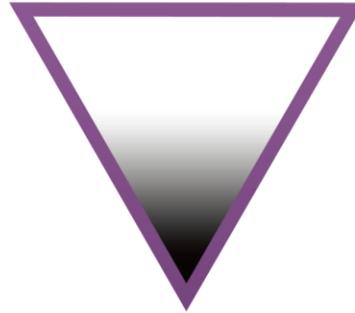


The Asexual Community

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) was founded in 2001 with two primary goals: to create public acceptance and discussion of asexuality and to facilitate the growth of an asexual community. Since that time, it has grown to host the world's largest online asexual community, serving as an informational resource and meeting place for people who are asexual and questioning, their friends and families, academic researchers, and the press. The network has additional satellite communities in ten languages.

Members of AVEN have been involved in media coverage spanning television, print, and radio and participate in lectures, conferences, and Pride events around the world.



Internet Resources

Asexual Visibility and
Education Network

<http://www.asexuality.org>

Asexual Explorations:
Promoting the Academic
Study of Asexuality

<http://www.asexualexplorations.net/>

Asexuality on LiveJournal

<http://community.livejournal.com/asexuality>

Asexuality

101



**Asexual Visibility and Education
Network (AVEN)**

Asexuality 101

An asexual is someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

This means that they do not have an intrinsic desire to have sex with others.

How do I know if I'm asexual?

Many asexual people start out experiencing a sense of alienation around sexuality. They do not understand why their friends fixate on sex, and they find sexual acts dull or uncomfortable. Because our society delivers negative messages about people who are uninterested in or unable to have sex, some asexual people feel broken.

Asexual people who have had more time to become comfortable with themselves have often found ways to have nonsexual intimacy replace sexual intimacy as a source of emotional support and fulfillment. They are generally comfortable around sex so long as no one expects them to desire it.

No one can tell you whether or not you are asexual. If the word "asexual" and the asexual community are useful tools to help you figure yourself out, pick them up and use them. If they ever stop being useful tools, you can put them down and no one from the asexual community will judge you. Your experiences may or may not align with those described above; it is up to you to decide whether the term "asexual" fits your experience.

Can asexual people have sex?

Yes. Asexuality is different from celibacy, an asexual can have sex and still be asexual in much the same way that a lesbian can have sex with a man and still be a lesbian. This is a complicated issue and generally occurs in romantic relationships between sexual and asexual people. Many successful sexual/asexual relationships do not involve sex, and in those that do sex often plays a different role than it would in a relationship between two sexual people.

Physically, most asexual people are capable of experiencing sexual arousal. Some asexual people describe this arousal as "not attached to anything." It exists but is not associated with the desire to have sex with a partner. Some asexual people masturbate.

Can asexual people fall in love?

Yes. Love and sex are different things, and asexual people are as capable of experiencing love as anyone else. For many asexual people, love happens in romantic partnerships which rely on powerful nonsexual ways to express intimacy. For other asexual people love happens primarily in close friendships, in community ties, or in relationships with self. Emotional intimacy is complex and multi-faceted, and the ways that asexual people find it are complicated and diverse. Each asexual person must explore intimate relationships on her, his, or his own terms.

How can I be supportive of asexual people?

Asexual people often struggle with a "sexual imperative": the assumption that everyone needs sex to be happy. Sexual people who are allies of the asexual community can be supportive by calling out and questioning this assumption, and by celebrating fulfillment through nonsexual intimacy alongside celebrations of sexuality. Sexual allies can continue to openly discuss and celebrate their sexuality so long as they create safe spaces for asexual people to do the same.