

What does it mean to be asexual?



When it comes to types of sexualities that people tend to define with or ones that they tend to go by, you hear lesbian, gay, or bi. Sexualities are used to define or to show your sexual preference whether it be the same sex, opposite sex, or both. It usually does not cross the mind that sexuality is not always what you are attracted to or what you prefer sexually when it comes to a gender or person but someones sexuality can be to have no sexual preference at all. That sexuality is defined as asexuality, asexuality is defined as characteristics in which a person has no sexual feeling or sexual desires, or in others words, asexuality is a lack of lustful feelings that is directed toward others. (Bogaert et al 2015) It is a real and an existing sexuality, and many people identify with that sexuality, however there are a lot of factors that also come into play when it comes to identifying asexuality. Many people seem to find it a little complicated when it comes to explaining what asexuality is and that is because there isn't just one simple definition or explanation and is easily confused with disorders. There are some misconceptions when it comes to asexuality because it may not be so simple to explain like other existing sexualities. People also tend to say asexuality is non-existent, a myth, or a phase, but that is also an misconception. (Frost et al 2017)

Although asexuality is defined to be a lack of a sexual drive or lack of sexual desire, it does not always mean that there is no sexual desire all. Many tend to believe or assume that people who identify as asexual, do not in any circumstance can not nor do not experience any type of sexual desire, especially when it comes to masturbation (Van Houdenhove et al 2015), evidence shows that when it comes to defining asexuality people are not

asexual tend to say that asexual people do not masturbate. Evidence has shown that the lack of sexual desire that asexual individuals show, primarily are towards others, in other words, when there is some type of form of desire in an asexual person, the desire is not towards another person, but instead towards themselves also known as a solitary desire. For example, there is evidence that there is a number of asexual people who indeed masturbate (Prause et al 2007) which shows that there are some asexual people that don't lack all forms of sexual desire. (Bogaert et al 2015) Masturbation to asexual individuals is looked at through a health perspective rather than in a sexual way or manner also showing how some asexual people may contain asexual desire that is not directed or towards someone or others which can be defined as a non-partner-oriented sexual desire. (Bogaert et al 2015) In other words, for some asexual people, there may be lustful feelings or sensations but those feelings are just not directed towards anyone.

Being an asexual individual does not mean that the individual cannot feel or experience romantic feelings or affectionate attraction towards others, it is possible for people who are asexual to be able to experience these feelings. There is a fine line between romantic attraction and sexual attraction, not all asexual people are aromantic which means to have no desire for romantic relationships. Being asexual does not mean you are incapable to be in a romantic relationship or incapable of having romantic feelings, asexuality is just a lack of sexual desire. You do not need to have sexual desire in order to feel romantic feelings or be in a relationship. In a public event that was organised by UWE Students' Union at the University of the West of England on November 2nd, 2016 that had a guest speaker by the name of Thomas

Gray who came to speak about asexuality, one of his arguments towards the misconception that asexuality is just celibacy or a pathological medical condition, he said, ' You can have sex without love, so why not love without sex?' (Frost et al 2017) sexual attraction and romantic attraction are two different things. An asexual person can be lesbian, bi, gay, and heterosexual, they can have a preference when it comes to a gender however there won't be a sexual desire but just a romantic desire. For example, a man is still gay if they wanted to be in a relationship with another man and pursue a romantic relationship and, even if he has no desire to engage sexually with his partner, he still can classify as homosexual. Asexual individuals can be in relationships even if there is no sexual desire or attraction. They can also form emotional bonds with people,

Asexuality is not necessarily a sexual disorder and asexuality is not always hypoactive sexual desire disorder. Although asexuality and hypoactive sexual desire disorder have similarities, it does not mean that being asexual means you have HSDD. In order to be diagnosed with HSDD, distress has to be shown before hand. Asexuality and HSDD are different in some ways, asexuality is a lifelong desire and asexual individuals do not feel distressed by their lack of desire or interest when it comes to sexual activities they don't see their lack of sexual desire or interest as something to distress about. (Gupta et al 2017). There is also evidence that provides and shows that there are individuals that classify themselves as asexual report a much more lower desire for a sexual experience and also report have much less " personal sex-related distress compared to people who has been diagnosed with HSDD. In addition to this finding, asexual individuals were more more

likely to report that they would rather not to participate in or experience sexual intercourse, whereas people who were diagnosed with HSDD reported that wished or would have liked to engage in sexual intercourse and experience or like to participate in other sexual behaviors (Grupta et al 2017). However, there is no clear cut line between hypoactive sexual desire disorder and asexuality.

There are also misconceptions that when you are asexual, you lack physiological sexual arousal but that is not always the case. Asexuality also does not also mean that all asexual individuals lack physiological sexual arousal, the definition of asexuality as a lack of sexual attraction or desire, or sexual attraction to others, it does not necessarily mean that asexual people lack the capacity to experience an erection or a vaginal lubrication. Asexual people are fully capable to experience an erection or sexual arousal, in fact, an asexual person reported that they were able to feel something when it came to arousal however there was just no attraction to anything. (Bogaert et al 2015) Just because someone is asexual it does not mean it is impossible for them to be aroused. However, data does suggest that asexuals may and do have difficulties experiencing sexual arousal. Although it does seem that their bodies can become aroused during sex, their mind and feelings are not. In the study that Van Houdenhove, Gijs, T'Sjoen, and Enzlin, conducted, there were some participants in the study that stated that they were just not interested in sex. It is not that they were incapable but rather had no interest.

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