

Asexuality can be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of experiences and attractions that includes individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction.

People who share this experience often refer to themselves as **asexual** or **ace** for short.


Similarly, **aromanticism** can be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of experiences and attractions that includes individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction.


People who share this experience often refer to themselves as **aromantic** or **aro** for short.

Some people might identify as both asexual and aromantic (ace/aro) or may identify with only one.



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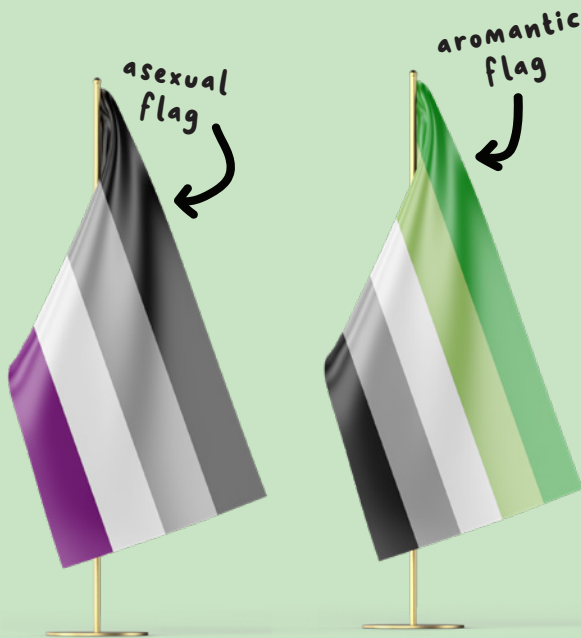
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NORTHERN
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all about **ASEXUAL & AROMANTIC IDENTITIES**

We acknowledge the generous support of the Government of Canada for the redevelopment of our educational resources and materials.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Developed by Jacq Brasseur, with support from
Catherine Currie following consultation with
2SLGBTQIPA+ Northerners in 2021/2022.

SPLIT ATTRACTION MODEL

The **Split Attraction Model** is an approach to understanding human sexual and romantic attraction by recognizing each of these aspects of a person's attraction as fundamentally different.

This is the idea that **a person can experience romantic attraction separate from sexual attraction**. While this may be a new concept for some people, it can be helpful to think about your own experiences. There most likely has been a situation where you were physically attracted to somebody, but not emotionally attracted to them, or vice versa.

Some who apply a Split Attraction Model to their understanding of attraction might also go as far as to separate or differentiate aesthetic, platonic or sensual attraction as well.¹

While these categories can seem like an overanalysis of how human beings might experience attraction, some sociologists argue that the Split Attraction Model offers more "nuance and deeper understanding"² of the vastness of human sexuality.

Some people may not experience a split attraction when it comes to their sexual and romantic attraction. For instance, a person may be romantically and sexually interested in women, whereas another person may be romantically interested in women and sexually interested in people of any gender.

¹ Jas, Y. (2020). Sexuality in a non-binary world: redefining and expanding the linguistic repertoire. *Journal Of The International Network For Sexual Ethics & Politics*, (Special Issue 2020), 71-92. <https://doi.org/10.3224/insep.si2020.05>

² Carroll, M. (2020). What Can Asexuality Offer Sociology? Insights from the 2017 Asexual Community Census. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/bh7t3>

ACE / ARO FAQs

Is asexuality like celibacy or abstinence?

No, asexuality is a sexual orientation and identity, not a lifestyle choice like celibacy or abstinence. Some asexual people, just like non-asexual people, might choose to be celibate or abstinent, but this does not define their sexual orientation.

Do all asexual people hate sex?

It can be helpful to think about asexuality like more of a spectrum. Different asexual people are going to have different feelings about sex and sexual relationships, just like non-asexual people. Sexual orientation is about how we experience attraction, not necessarily how we have sex.

Do asexual and aromantic people still have relationships or partnerships?

Yes! Many ace and aro people have meaningful relationships with others.

Are ace / aro people part of the 2SLGBTQIPA+ umbrella?

Yes! That's what the A stands for in the acronym. Some ace / aro people who only have different gender relationships may choose not identify with the gender and sexually diverse community, but others might.

All ace and aro people, no matter how they have relationships, are welcome in the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community.

Are people asexual or aromantic because of trauma or abuse?

No. While people of all sexual orientations, including asexuals and aromantics, can experience violence or abuse, it is important to remember that these experiences do not cause a person to have a certain sexual orientation.

AM I ACE OR ARO?

The important thing to remember is that you don't have to use certain words to describe yourself just because that's the "box" that you fit into. That being said, here are some things that might apply to you if you're part of the ace/aro community:

- you find yourself romantically attracted to people, but rarely or never interested in being sexually intimate with them
- you find yourself sexually attracted to people, but rarely or never interested in being romantically intimate with them
- you rarely or never experience sexual or romantic attraction to others

If you are an asexual or aromantic person in the NWT looking for support or community, reach out to us.

ACEPHOBIA & AROPHOBIA

Acephobia and arophobia (sometimes referred to as aphobia) refers to the discrimination or stigma that asexual and aromantic people experience due to their sexual or romantic orientation.

Often, asexual and aromantic people are accused of being "broken" or "mentally ill" or only identifying as such because of trauma. This is an example of acephobic and arophobic attitudes.

It is important that we're challenging this type of stigma, because it often goes unaddressed, even with 2SLGBTQIPA+ communities.

If you are looking to learn more about asexuality, aromanticism or aphobia, talk to us about our workshops!