

6 April 2023

# Raising visibility and awareness for Asexuals

Thursday 6 April marks International Asexuality Day, an event that aims to promote visibility of people under the asexual umbrella.

Asexuality remains a relatively unknown sexual orientation when compared with other LGBT+ identities. The difficulties that asexual people face in day-to-day life are lesser known and the communities that asexual people have built to address these issues.

Asexuality is a sexual orientation defined by a lack of sexual attraction to other people, but like any other sexual orientation asexuals, or 'aces,' aren't all alike; there is a considerable range of experiences and attitudes towards relationships and sexual activity in the community.

Many, though not all, asexuals experience romantic attraction to other people and enter into long-lasting and loving relationships, whether that be with a person of the same or a different gender. Aromantic asexuals may not be interested in romance but are still capable of close, platonic friendships.

To anyone who doesn't know much about the asexual community, the language aces use to describe their experiences can come across as overly clinical. Indeed, there is a perception of asexual people as being somewhat cold and frigid, or in denial about their sexuality. This may seem like a harmless stereotype, but it is one that has done a lot of damage to the asexual community.

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [declassification of asexuality as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association](#) (arguably the most influential psychiatric body worldwide). It wasn't until 2017 that similar steps were taken in the UK, when 25 health, counselling and psychotherapy organisations signed a [memorandum of understanding condemning the practice of conversion therapy for trans and asexual people](#). Prior to these interventions, asexuality was seen as a condition to be cured, rather than an identity that aces could find pride in.

There's still a long way to go to ensure that the principles laid out in the memorandum are upheld by health practitioners. Thankfully, both the LGBT+ community and the trade union movement have been increasingly supportive and inclusive of asexual people in recent years. The 2017 memorandum, a victory for both trans and asexual people, is a testament to what can be achieved through co-operation and community.

[International Asexuality Day](#) may be a relatively new addition to the calendar, but it's one that celebrates decades of struggle for recognition. Happy International Asexuality Day.