

Aromantic Asexual Identities

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Mental health can be considered a hot topic within the LGBTQIA+ community,

Aromantic is a term for someone who experiences little to no romantic attraction to other people. This is just an umbrella term for the many other types of aromanticism in the spectrum, such as Demiromantic; only feeling romantically attracted to someone once a strong bond is made; or Greyromantic, which is for someone who experiences limited romantic attraction. Asexual, following a lot of those same terms just with the suffix “sexual” attached, are people who experience little to no sexual attraction.

Aroace people experience life differently, and its not always stationary. Some aroace people don't realize they are one the spectrum until very late into their lives, or on the other hand very early. It may seem like something that would be great, not having to deal with romantic relationships, or being used for sexual activities, but in reality, it's really not. Aroace people can push themselves into relationships they don't want to appease others, damaging their self worth and mental health. Many suffer with uncertainty, self-doubt, imposter syndrome, struggles fitting in, anxiety, and lack of culturally relevant care. (Asexuality & Mental Health. Mental Health America. <https://mhanational.org/lgbtq/asexual-community-mental-health>.) These issues affect their lives greatly, causing long term health problems such as depression, anxiety, and in some extreme cases, trauma.

The people of the community aren't the only ones hurting themselves either, the government does as well. “Many states have anti-discrimination laws that protect people on the basis of sexual orientation, but then go on to narrowly define sexual orientation in a manner that

excludes asexuality. Very few states recognize the concept of romantic orientation, and most of those have definitions that may exclude aromantic people.”(Musings On The Law. 2019, April 18. Asexuality Archive. <https://www.asexualityarchive.com/musings-on-the-law/>.) Aroace people have been completely ignored by the government for years, and have been erased from history. This leads to lack of faith in the government to be protected and cared for.

Societal pressure is how aroace people relate to social responsibilities. People for decades have encouraged those to get married and have kids. Ever since they were young, they had been teased for liking someone, or been felt outcasted when they didn't. Though, people can learn to love friends just as tightly, even if it is not the same love that society praises. “I've learnt some Things. Like the way friendship can be just as intense, beautiful and endless as romance. Like the way there's love everywhere around me - there's love for my friends, there's love for my paintings, there's love for myself.”(Oseman, A. 2018, March 5th. Loveless. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.) Oseman in her book Loveless introduces the idea and perspective of someone going through the journey of finding out they are aromantic asexual; Oseman has experience writing about this topic because she herself is also Aroace.

As an aroace person writing this, I have felt these societal pressures, and I have been forced to not feel safe in my skin for a long time. I had struggled with coming to the conclusion that i am aromantic asexual, but since I felt more comfortable, I wear my identity proud, willing to explain what it is to whoever is willing to learn. Coming to terms with an identity is hard, but its a lot less hard when theres a support system to rely on, especially those who are aroace as well. I write from experience, knowing my struggles and my battle against Amatonormativity, which is societal pressure to be in a romantic relationship. I am not forced to be someone who is not me.

References

Oseman, A. 2018, March 5th. Loveless. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

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