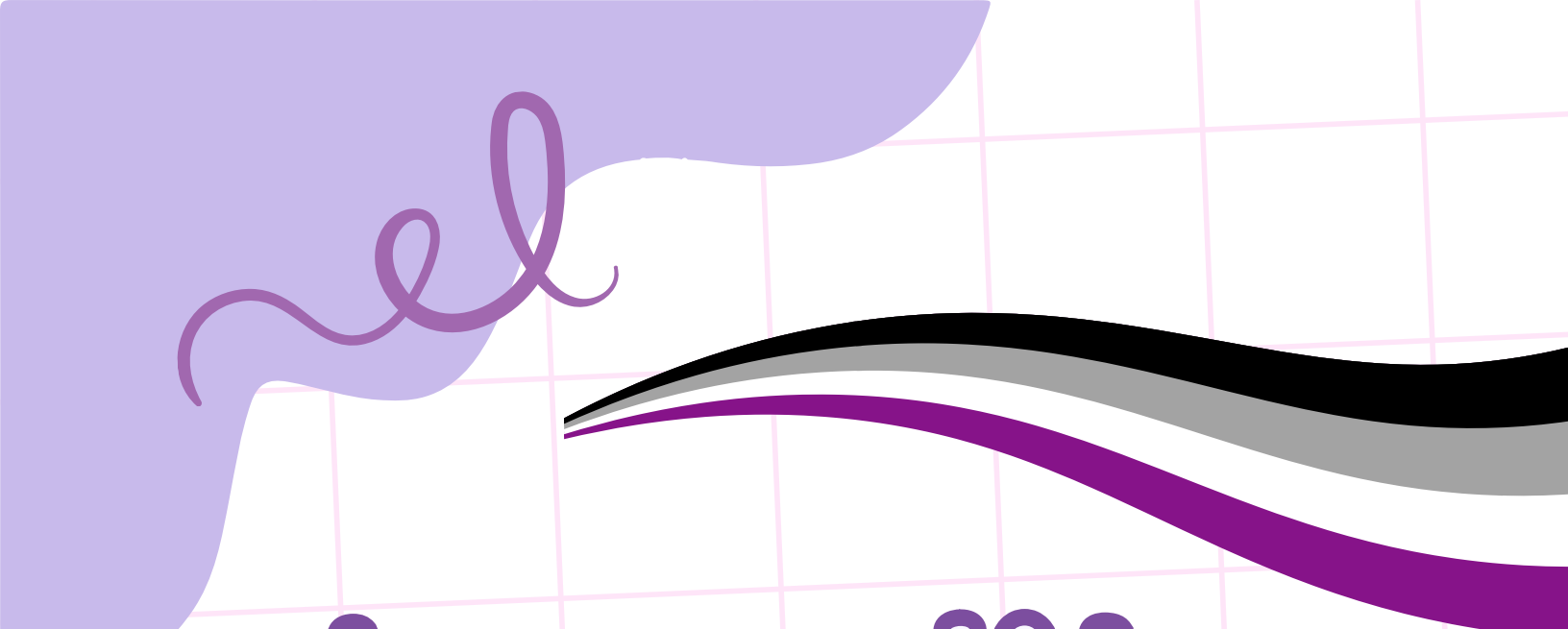




Asexuality and Mental Health

Allie Gawron, NAMI Intern



NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Mercer

Serving the New Jersey Capital Area

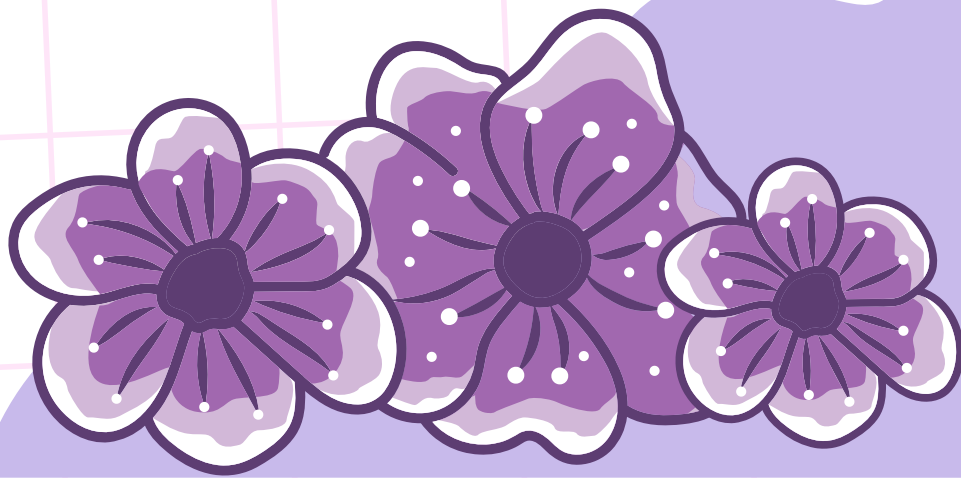
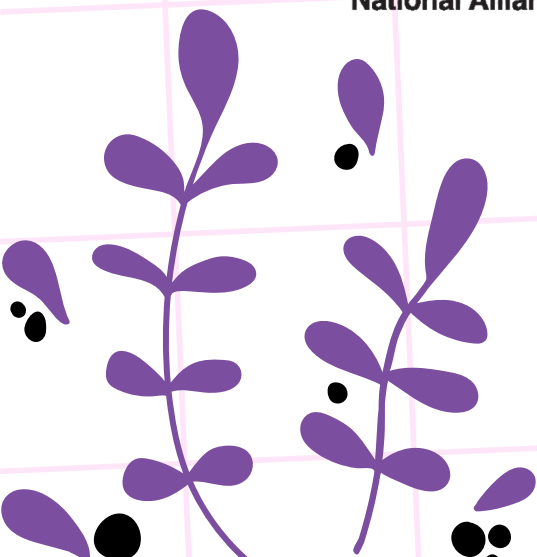
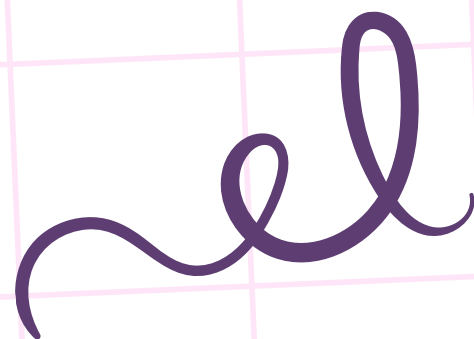




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Author's Note



Hi! My name is Allie Gawron, and I am a rising senior at The College of New Jersey interning with NAMI over the summer of 2026. I am majoring in Clinical & Counseling Psychology along with Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I eventually want to go to graduate school to obtain my Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology, and work with all different populations. Some of my passions include trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and mental health advocacy.

Outside of my research and academic endeavors, I am a 988 Chat & Text counselor, board game club president, and tiny dog lover. I also really love to travel! Interning at NAMI Mercer has been very fulfilling, and I cannot wait to share this with others who are interested in the asexuality spectrum. I identify as asexual, so this topic is one that is close to my heart. I have been met with nothing but kindness throughout the summer I interned, and hope I can encourage others to contribute to destigmatizing mental health as a whole along with asexuality.



Hotlines



Please utilize these hotlines anytime! No struggle is too small, and you deserve support with whatever you are going through. Your feelings matter, and I am glad you are here.

988 (Available in English and Spanish)

NAMI Helpline (609-799-8994 x17)

911 (Emergencies)

CONTACT Listening Line (609-737-3300, Mon. through Fri. between 11 AM - 3 PM)

Trevor Project (LGBTQIA+)

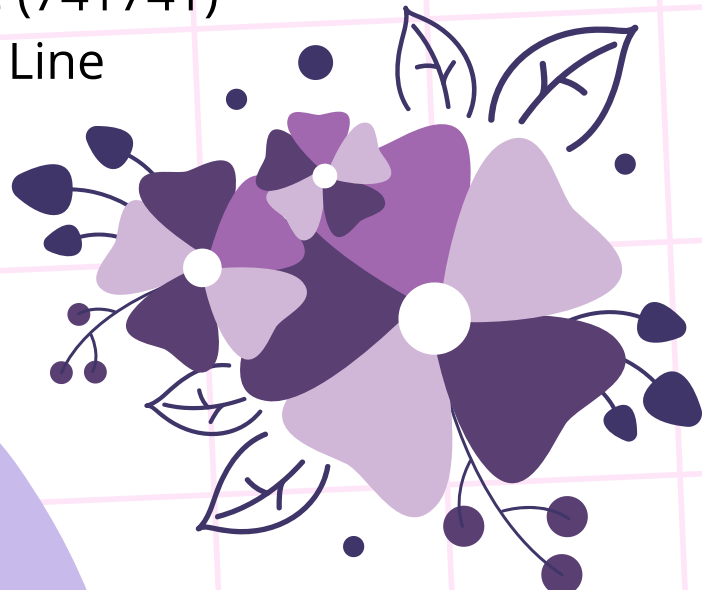
Text: 678-678

Call: 1-866-488-7386

Chat: located on website

Crisis Text Line (741741)

The Hope Line



What is Asexuality?

Asexuality exists on a spectrum! People who are ace experience little or no sexual attraction to others, or experience it in a way that isn't normative.



Above is a basic breakdown of sexual attraction! There are many more specific labels that people may use.

People who identify as asexual can still have romantic relationships. Love doesn't have to equal sex, and you can still have intimacy without being physical.

Importance



The Human Rights Campaign found that 82% of asexual individuals said their biggest challenge is mental health.

In a world where we are told it is in our human nature to reproduce and have intercourse, asexuals can feel extremely ostracized.

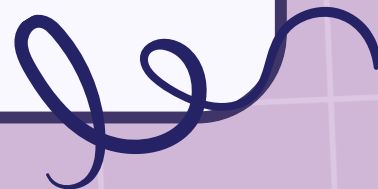


This is rooted in...

- **Stigma!!**
- Dismissal and disbelief
- Societal pressure to have sex
- Being viewed as “broken”
- Attempts to “fix” asexual people
- Illegitimacy
- False media depictions
- The myth that celibacy = asexual



(Human Rights Campaign)



Importance

A common thing asexual people are told is that they haven't found the right person. This can be extremely invalidating, pushing the narrative that asexuality is a phase or a choice.

This can lead to imposter syndrome, uncertainty and self-doubt, depression, anxiety, and no relevant care.

In fact, **all lacks of sexual desire were once considered a mental illness in the DSM until 2013.**

Coming to terms with any sexuality can be a tough hurdle to get over, and highlighting the importance of mental health with asexuality is vital for helping those on the spectrum feel comfortable with their sexuality.





History

It's important to recognize
that being asexual has
always existed!

Asexuality is a part of our human nature just as much as other identities. Part of bridging the gap between asexual individuals and mental health treatment is normalizing this identity, and making others feel comfortable when they come out as asexual.

(Harmless, 2024)



MINI TIMELINE

- * The earliest known reference was in 1860.
- * In 1972, Lisa Orlando published "The Asexual Manifesto".
- * The asexual pride flag was introduced in 2010.
- * Now, asexuality has started to become prioritized in LGBTQIA+ research!

Mental Health Concerns



Here are some questions or thoughts that asexual people may have:

I want to just be normal.

Am I broken?

Is there something wrong with me?

Can I really be like this?

Will my partner still love me?

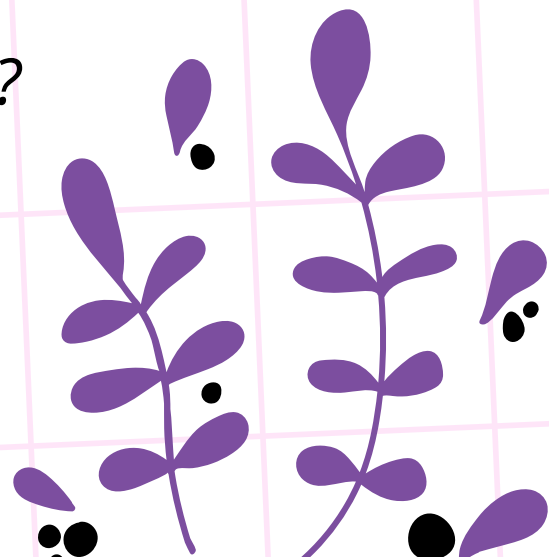
Why don't I fit in?

I feel pressure to have sex.

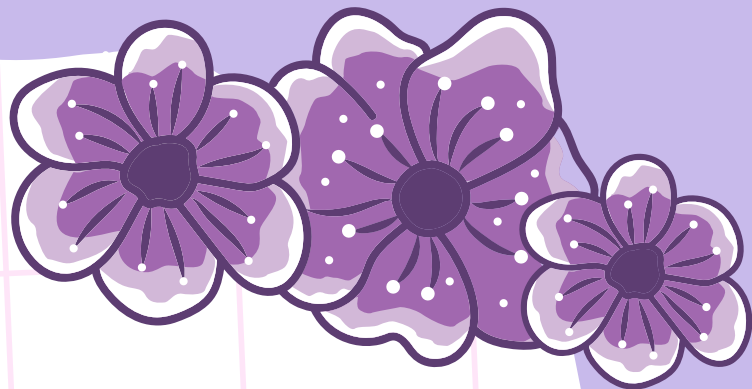
Is this just a phase?

I feel like no one understands me.

*Will I ever find someone
that accepts me?*



Mental Health Concerns

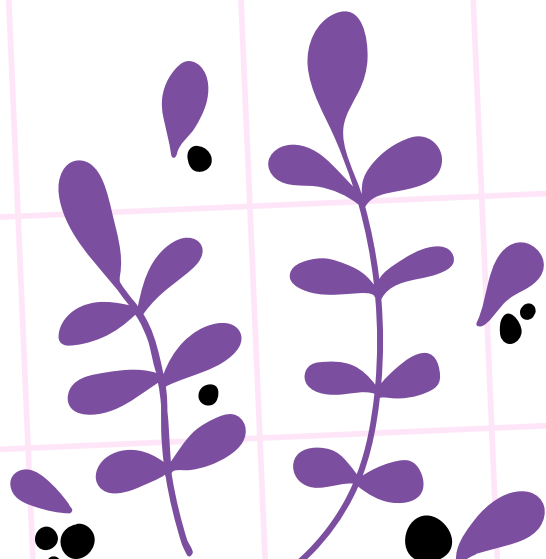


Many of the previous examples have to do with uncertainty, self-doubt, and anxiety. There is a lack of visibility around being asexual, and coming to terms with it can be hard when you realize you are different from your peers.



Being asexual is completely normal and a valid identity that others share, and you are not alone in feeling unsure. There is nothing wrong with being asexual, but it can take time to be fully happy with your sexuality.

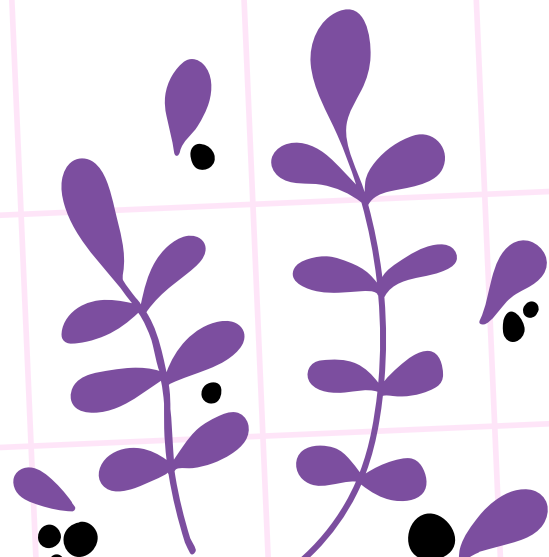
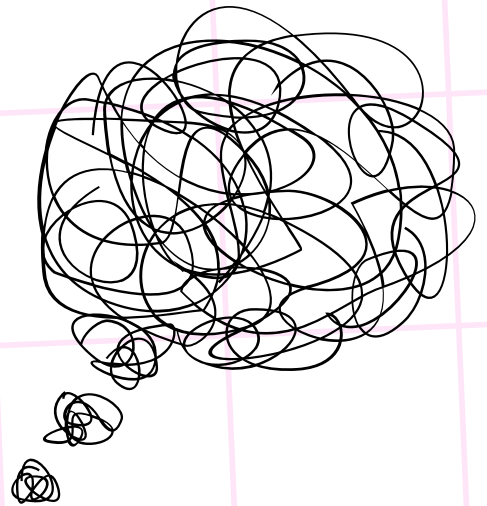
Imposter syndrome is also common, which is when people feel like a fraud about their sexuality. Just because you have or have had sex doesn't mean you aren't asexual. Navigating any sexuality can come with being confused and uncomfortable at times.



Mental Health Concerns

One of the reasons why **anxiety** is so prevalent in asexual people is because the society we live in is incredibly sex-focused, and deviating from this norm can be scary.

It can be so nerve-wracking to go on a date with someone and anticipating how they will respond when you don't want sex. With some people, they tell their date beforehand. Some other people don't say until the time feels right, and that is also okay. Anxiety can also come from their reaction, which can include negativity or harassment.



Support

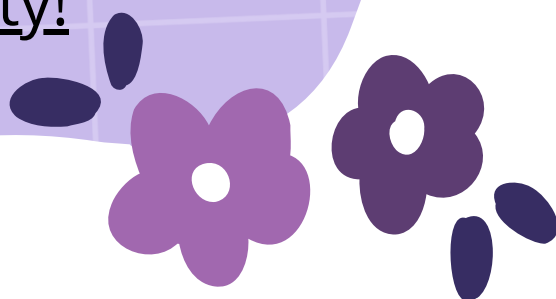
Respect boundaries, maintain communication about the relationship, and explore other kinds of intimacy. Do not pathologize asexuality or any sexual orientation!

Connect

Queer-affirming therapy, safe spaces, and support groups can be incredibly helpful. Isolation is a big factor in poor mental health in the asexual community!

Validate

Asexuality isn't the result of mental illness, a phase, or from trauma. Let the person know that they are not incapable of fulfilling love and connection.





Break the Stigma

These are some facts about asexuality and mental health you may not know!

People who are asexual can still have sex, self-pleasure, and watch adult content. Some may choose not to engage with any sexual topics at all. Asexuality isn't just a complete absence of sex if the person doesn't want it to be – it depends on the individual.

A common emotion asexual people may feel is guilt if they engage with sexual content. This might make them question their identity or feel like they are faking their orientation. Asexuality varies with each person!





Break the Stigma

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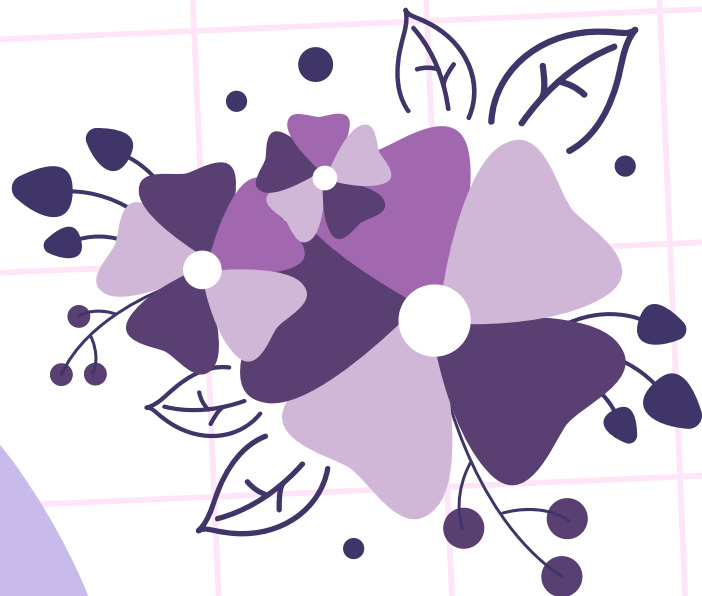
People who are asexual also did not choose to be this way. **This makes it different from celibacy, which is a voluntary decision!** It is inherently how someone experiences attraction. Someone who does not realize they are asexual may feel disgusted or repulsed by sexual content, or only like it in certain contexts.



Resources



- **The Asexual Visibility and Education Network (asexuality.org)**
- PFLAG
- The Trevor Project
- Asexuality Archive
- The Asexuality Handbook (asexuality-handbook.com)



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