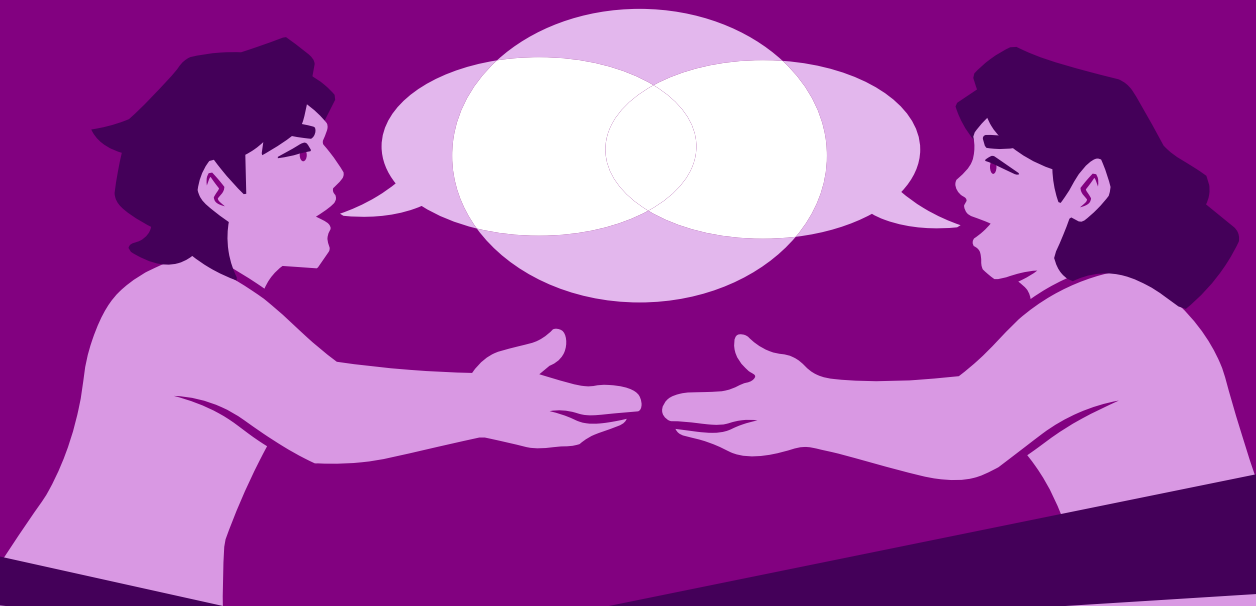


Ace Stories Project

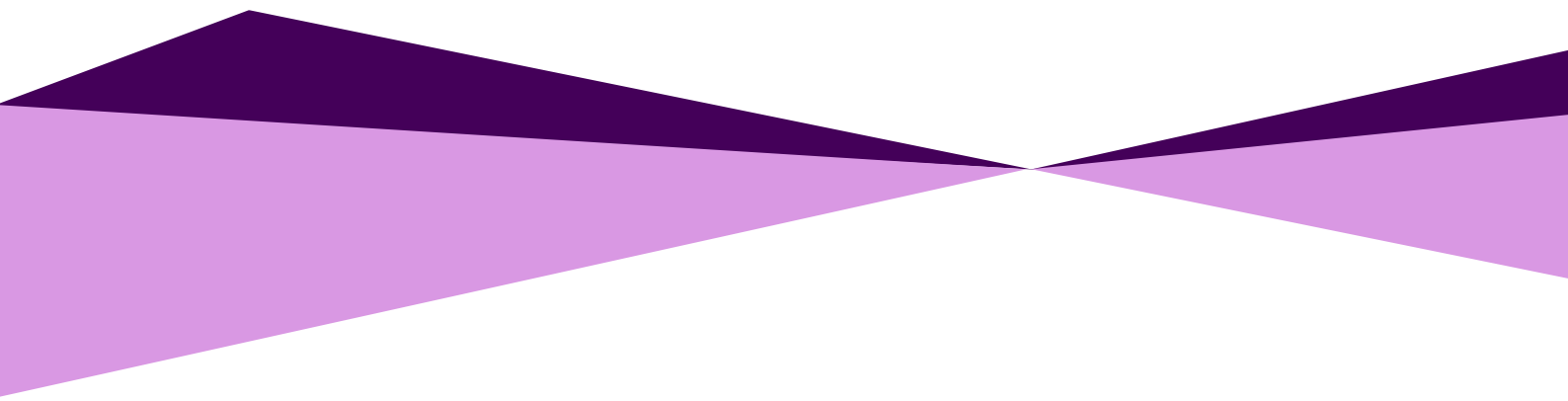
A collaboration for
International Asexuality Day
Compiled by Peter Berkemeijer



NOAI



2024



Ace Stories Project

Compiled by Peter Berkemeijer

NOAI



In collaboration with



FAD
Foreningen for
Aseksuelle i Danmark

2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
YouTube playlist	7
Brazilian Portuguese	8
Luna do Brasil	9
A.M. do Canadá	9
Tali do Brasil	10
Luna Silva do Brasil	11
Danish	12
Luna fra Brasilien	13
A.M. fra Canada	13
Dutch	14
S. uit Griekenland	15
Luna uit Brazilië	15
A.M. uit Canada	15
Carol uit Brazilië	16
Mariam uit India	16
Bree uit de Verenigde Staten	18
Ziba uit de Verenigde Staten	18
T. uit Singapore	19
Ashe uit Mexico	20
Ruben uit Nederland	21
Pepper uit de Verenigde Staten	22
Kemmie uit het Verenigd Koninkrijk	23
English	24
S. from Greece	25
Luna from Brazil	25
A.M. from Canada	25
Carol from Brazil	26
Mariam from India	26
Bree from the United States	27
Ziba from the United States	29
T. from Singapore	30
Ashe from Mexico	30
Ruben from the Netherlands	31
Amethista from Brazil	32
Moon from Brazil	32
Orion Lima from Brazil	32
Julia from the United States	33
Cooper from the United States	33
Blue from Singapore	34
Dubu from Australia	35
Carla from Spain	35

Anon from the United Kingdom	36
notsl from Argentina	36
Christa from the United States	36
Laura from the United States	37
J. from the United States	37
Daniel from Russia	38
Valen from the United States	38
Phoenix from the United States	39
Samuel from England	39
Pepper from the United States	40
Vaultdweller 1001 from	40
Paige from the United States	40
Arson from the United States	41
Sam from Brazil	42
Flyingturtle64 from the United States	42
Vicky from Germany	43
Akira from Canada	43
Mary from the United States	44
Jyothi from the United Kingdom	45
Kemmie from the United Kingdom	47
Bianca from Brazil	47
SR from Iraq	48
Maddy from Australia	49
A Pawn from the United States	49
Natalia from Russia	51
Arshley from Canada	52
Ariel from Brazil	52
J.L. Mellor from the United States	53
French	54
S. de Grèce	55
Luna du Brésil	55
Carol du Brésil	56
Mariam d'Inde	57
Ziba des Etats-Unis	58
T. de Singapour	59
Ashe du Mexique	60
Ruben des Pays-Bas	61
Arshley du Canada	62
German	64
Luna aus Brasilien	65
A.M. aus Kanada	65
Greek	66
S. απο την Ελλάδα	67
Λούνα από Βραζιλία	67
A.M. από Καναδά	67

Nepali	70
क्यानडाबाट ए एमको कथा	71
भारत (इन्डिया)बाट मरियमको कथा	72
Polish	74
Luna z Brazylii	75
A.M. z Kanady	75
Russian	76
S. из Греции	77
Луна из Бразилии	77
A.M. из Канады	77
Марьям из Индии	78
Бри из Соединенных Штатов Америки	79
Spanish	82
S. de Grecia	83
Luna de Brasil	83
A.M. de Canadá	83
Mariam de India	84
Bree de Estados Unidos	85
Cristina de España	86
Additional Information	88
Acknowledgements	89
Translators	89
Editors	89
Design	89
Contact information	90
International Asexuality Day (IAD)	90
Argentina: Club Asexual (CABA)	90
Brazil: Coletivo Abrace	90
Denmark: Asexual Association Denmark	91
France: Rencontres asexuelles	91
Germany: Aspec*German	91
Greece: Greek Aces/Aros	91
The Netherlands: The Netherlands Organisation for Asexuality	92
Nepal: Nepali Aspecs	92
Poland: Stowarzyszenie Asfera	92

Introduction

On the first International Asexuality Day (IAD), in 2021, the Netherlands Organisation for Asexuality (NOA) launched the Ace Stories Project in collaboration with ace advocacy organisations worldwide. In preparation we set up a Google Form, asking asexual people from various countries for their stories. We and other ace activists worldwide would then translate these stories in our own languages, read them out and create videos that we then published on the IAD YouTube channel.

The idea was to give a voice to people within our community who weren't heard, who remained invisible. We wanted to collect stories from people who didn't feel safe to come out, and have these stories read out by people who are safe to come out. That way, those of us who don't face the challenges or repercussions others in the community do, can literally lend their voices and faces to those who are less privileged. It was also important for us that the stories were translated. That way they were accessible to more people, including people who don't speak English.

Although we counted on maybe 10 to 20 stories, the response was overwhelming, and we soon had to close the Google Form, as so many people were willing to participate by telling their story. We eventually ended up with around 50 stories in multiple languages from sixteen different countries. It is great that so many people wanted to partake, and we want to thank everyone who sent in their story. Next, we had to figure out a workflow to translate stories into various languages and have them read out. Various translators and readers (often the same person) saw the importance of the project and were willing to invest their time in it. Of course, we want to thank these people too. Although the idea was that the stories were read out by people who were safe enough to do so, as it turned out, for some languages we only received audio because some readers did not feel safe or comfortable enough to show themselves on video on the internet.

For a while, someone from NOA, the initiator of the project, would choose a story every two weeks, send it to the various translators and upload the video and audio files we received to YouTube. On the IAD YouTube channel you can still find videos from this project in Dutch, English, Greek, Nepali, Russian, Polish and Spanish. Unfortunately we had so many stories, this became a bit overwhelming and the project came to a halt. We still had a lot of stories left and we wanted to do justice to everyone who had sent something in. That's why we decided to assemble all of the stories in one publication, along with all the translations we managed to get.

This brings us to an important disclaimer: not all the stories are translated, which is why there are, for instance, fewer stories in French than in English. Still, we wanted to include the translations, because they're such an important part of the project and its goal. This publication isn't perfect, but it's been a labour of love by people who invested their free time to bring all of these stories from our community to the public.

So why is this project so valuable? Reading through the different stories you'll see that many respondents mention not being taken seriously, or people around them not believing asexual people are oppressed or discriminated against. At the same time, they write about being treated horribly, or having experienced sexual assault, because their asexuality clashes with the normative system of their culture. Some of them try sex because

they think they have to. Many of the respondents write about coming out as asexual and being medicalised, being sent to a doctor or therapist and receiving treatment (which obviously doesn't make them any less asexual). As such, they are testimonies of violence against asexual people around the world.

This collection of testimonies is proof for doctors, lawmakers and other figures of authority, for anyone who doesn't believe us or thinks asexuality is fake. Proof that we are here, we exist everywhere in the world, and things need to change to stop this violence against us.

As many of the stories contain sensitive and traumatic topics, such as sexual violence, substance abuse, conversion therapy and aphobia, we have included trigger warnings before each story. It is possible we missed some trigger warnings, so please be cautious if you have any triggers.

Peter Berkemeijer (NOA secretary)
Amber Witsenburg (NOA chairperson)
April 6th 2024

YouTube playlist

The recordings for the Ace Stories Project were uploaded and can still be found on the International Asexuality Day YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@InternationalAsexualityDay). They can also be found as part of playlists on the IAD YouTube Channel for different languages.

Dutch

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M6e6D_QkO3ZX_yMecaPIsS_

English

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M61guCIMo39bvnMZGgTQSM9>

Greek

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M4srR9fvkyaE7nG-93MbGy8>

Nepali

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M6UKvVfikjYf3yCGJNhwcjx>

Russian

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M41wDQSZcWLRmTm8co9d39a>

Spanish

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGDR528ez1M7kKpyexo_CL6nLrO4R73Gf

Brazilian
Portuguese
**Português
brasileiro**

Editor & translator
Coletivo Abrace

Luna do Brasil

Eu descobri bastante tarde que era ace. A primeira vez que eu notei que algo parecia estranho foi quando eu beijei um garoto pela primeira vez. Todo mundo descrevia um sentimento eufórico etc., mas eu não senti praticamente nada.

Nos meus relacionamentos seguintes foi o mesmo e, sempre que eu sentia que nós poderíamos ir um passo adiante, eu me sentia desconfortável e doente, então eu parava e nós terminávamos. Eu odiava que eu acabava machucando, não apenas a mim, como também esses caras quem eu realmente gostava. Eu senti que algo estava errado comigo por muito tempo, e eu apenas odiava isso.

Então, depois de finalmente pesquisar sobre o que eu estava sentindo, tentando achar um sentido em tudo, eu encontrei a palavra assexualidade. Foi um alívio tão grande descobrir que eu não estava sozinha em me sentir assim, que eu não estava quebrada por isso.

Agora eu tenho uma comunidade na qual posso falar com pessoas como eu e, agradecidamente, tenho amigos que me entendem. Porém até agora eu não consegui falar uma palavra sequer sobre isso para a minha família, com medo do que eles possam dizer ou fazer. Não tenho certeza se algum dia eu terei como sair do armário, mas eu espero conseguir encontrar a coragem de ser eu mesma e não mentir mais sobre essas coisas para eles. Eu apenas posso ter esperança de que esse dia vai chegar, de que eles vão estar OK com isso e me amar apesar de tudo.

A.M. do Canadá

Aviso, essa história contém: coerção, agressão sexual, estupro corretivo, terapia de conversão, acefobia.

Eu comecei a questionar minha identidade sexual quando tinha 14 anos. Eu tinha acabado de terminar com meu primeiro namorado e estava refletindo sobre o fato de que eu não tinha sentido muita atração física por ele, apesar de me sentir muito atraída romanticamente.

Por um tempo eu usei a possibilidade de ter um desenvolvimento tardio como desculpa, mas esses sentimentos apenas nunca começaram para mim. Quando eu sai do armário para a minha mãe, ela me colocou na terapia. Meus médicos diziam que eu não estava “engrenando com minha feminilidade” e minha mãe especificamente falava “ela acha que é ace” quando conversava com eles.

Isso me causou um monte de auto-questionamentos e eu me perguntava se realmente tinha alguma condição médica. Foi quando eu terminei com meu segundo namorado que eu percebi que isso não ia acontecer para mim. Ele tentava me fazer gostar de certas coisas através de... érr... toques e métodos não muito consensuais. Ele se orgulhava de tentar me “transformar em alguém sexual”, mas eu apenas não me sentia fisicamente atraída por ele. Eu nunca me senti fisicamente atraída por ninguém, e precisei de muita auto-reflexão e aceitação para me direcionar a esse ponto.

É infeliz que minha história não seja incomum, então, meu único desejo para aces jovens é

que elus entendam seus limites e entendam que elus não precisam, por NENHUMA razão, mudar. Eu espero que vocês digam não quando precisarem e descubram que vocês não deveriam estar desconfortáveis, ou deixar pessoas fazerem o que quiserem com vocês, para estar em um relacionamento amoroso.

Está tudo bem ser ace e está tudo bem ter seus limites, mesmo que outras pessoas penssem que esses limites são um pouquinho estranhos. Continue forte e mágica, minha pequena família ace!! <3

Tali do Brasil

Aviso, essa história contém: afobia, acefobia, sentimento de abandono ou vulnerabilidade.

Oi, eu sou a Tali. Moro em uma pequena cidade do sertão nordestino. Me descobri assexual aos 18 anos, quando vi uma entrevista na tv, de uma sexóloga, falando sobre a assexualidade. Nunca tinha ouvido falar do assunto, e foi como se a luz entrasse em minha vida. Sempre senti que era diferente das outras meninas, elas falavam em ficar com meninos, em namorar, e eu não queria aquilo e não entendia toda aquela empolgação, me sentia perdida.

Os anos foram passando e cada vez mais eu era cobrada pela família e pelos amigos, por não me relacionar com ninguém. Cheguei a mudar de escola, por me sentir desconfortável com os olhares e cochichos, acho que eles pensavam que eu poderia ser lésbica. Eu era uma adolescente de 14 anos que estava totalmente perdida, em um mundo sem informação.

Cheguei a ficar com dois garotos, nas duas ocasiões, por pressão das minhas amigas. Ao ficar com eles não senti nada, e isso me confundiu, cheguei a questionar minha sexualidade. Quando você vive em um lugar onde a religião predomina, o que está fora do padrão é visto como errado, então você se esconde nas sombras ou se camufla. E é isto que faço até hoje. Nem meus pais ou qualquer outro parente e amigo sabe sobre o que realmente sou. Deixo pensarem o que quiserem, pois não acho que sejam capazes de entenderem ou respeitar o que sou, também tenho medo de ser discriminada. As pessoas costumam odiar e desprezar o que não entendem. Me sinto muito solitária, perdi amigos por não consegui me encaixar socialmente.

Descobrir o que sou, tirou um peso dos meus ombros, me fez aceitar como sou. Saber que existem pessoas como eu, me dá a sensação de que não estou só nesse mundo. Hoje tenho 30 anos, ainda virgem, nunca namorei, nem me apaixonei. Estou bem com isso, mas gostaria que a sociedade não fosse tão cruel com o que consideram diferente do "normal".

Luna Silva do Brasil

Aviso, essa história contém: afobia, acefobia, linguagem acefóbica.

Me descobrir como assexual foi um processo difícil e demorado. Ninguém falava sobre isso, e durante minha adolescência achei que tivesse algo errado comigo; não era possível que todo mundo tivesse tanto interesse assim em outras pessoas, enquanto eu só achava a visão de uma ou outra um tanto agradável. Sou uma pessoa que não gosta muito de contato físico e tem outras formas de demonstrar afeto, o que acaba fazendo com que os outros tentem me enquadrar naquele estereótipo de ace “frio e calculista”.

Durante a adolescência muitos apenas me diziam que eu era lésbica já que não tinha interesse em relacionamento com garotos, só que eu também não tinha interesse em relacionamento com garotas. Quero dizer, sempre amei livros de romance e tudo, mas pra mim as coisas não funcionavam assim. Eu não me sentia assim. Então, quando me perguntavam se eu tinha interesse em ficar com alguém em uma festa eu só dizia que não, era tida como puritana, mas, em qualquer outra ocasião que eu fizesse alguma piada pesada ou de duplo sentido, todos ficavam chocados. Ninguém conseguia entender que ser assexual não é uma escolha ou algo que possa ser controlado.

Em casa tem sido outro desafio, minha mãe sempre andava com cobranças do tipo “quando você vai arrumar um namorado?” ou “vai me dizer que não sente vontade de ficar com ninguém?” e eu venho fugindo das respostas, já que sei que se falar “oi mãe, eu sou assexual” ela vai entender que tenho alguma doença e tentar me tratar como tantos já fizeram.

Mesmo dentro da própria comunidade LGBTQIA+ existem aquelas pessoas que só me enxergam como alguém que quer atenção, por isso evito falar sobre minha assexualidade. Já me forcei a certas coisas tentando ser “normal” antes de me entender por completo e isso me machucou bastante. Seria ótimo que todos pudéssemos ter acesso a informações básicas sobre as atrações existentes.

Hoje em dia, enfrentar a assexualidade na vida adulta em um mundo onde as pessoas enxergam sexo como parte fundamental da existência tem sido outro obstáculo, assim como me abrir pra qualquer relacionamento e explicar para as pessoas que as coisas funcionam de forma diferente para mim, mas que ainda tenho sentimentos e não estou quebrada. Na verdade, o pior é ser vista como doente e receber comentários do tipo “você diz essas coisas porque nunca ficou comigo, eu posso te curar” então apenas me escondo atrás dessa fachada de garota tímida e reservada para fugir de coisas assim.

Ironicamente, acabei por me descobrir lésbica há pouco tempo, o que dificultou mais ainda as coisas. Tenho muito orgulho de quem sou, mas sinto como se houvesse um alvo em mim. Mesmo outras lésbicas com quem convivo já disseram que minha assexualidade não passa de um trauma ou um resultado da nossa sociedade, como se o fato de eu ser ace fosse apenas uma última resistência em aceitar minha sexualidade. Aos poucos tenho tido cada vez mais coragem de falar e dividir experiências, mas ainda morro de medo das pessoas erradas descobrirem.

Danish **Dansk**

Translator

Martin Spangsbro-Pedersen
from Asexual Association Denmark

Luna fra Brasilien

Jeg indså meget sent, at jeg var asexuel. Første gang jeg bemærkede, at noget føltes underligt, var da jeg kyssede en dreng for første gang. Alle beskrev følelsen af eufori osv., men jeg følte slet ikke noget. For mine næste forhold var det det samme, og hver gang det føltes som om vi ville gå et skridt videre, følte jeg mig ubehagelig til mode og syg, så jeg stoppede, og vi slog op. Jeg hadede, at jeg endte med at gøre nogen ondt, ikke kun mig selv, men også disse fyre, som jeg faktisk virkelig godt kunne lide. Jeg følte i lang tid, at der var noget galt med mig, og jeg hadede det bare. Derefter, efter endelig at have kigget nærmere på, hvad jeg følte, og forsøge at finde mening i alt, fandt jeg ordet asexualitet. Det var sådan en lettelse at finde ud af, at jeg ikke var alene om at føle mig sådan, og jeg var ikke ødelagt på grund af det. Nu har jeg et community, hvor jeg kan tale med folk som mig, og heldigvis har jeg venner, der forstår mig. Men hidtil har jeg ikke været i stand til at sige bare et ord om det til min familie, bange for hvad de måske siger eller gør. Jeg er ikke sikker på, at jeg vil kunne springe ud en dag, men jeg håber, jeg kan finde modet til at være mig selv og ikke lyve mere over for dem om disse ting. Jeg kan kun håbe, at den dag kommer, og at de vil være OK med det og elske mig alligevel.

A.M. fra Canada

Advarsel, denne historie indeholder: tvang, seksuelt overgreb, korrigerende voldtægt, omvendelsesterapi og acefobi.

Jeg begyndte at sætte spørgsmålstejn ved min seksuelle identitet, da jeg var 14. Jeg havde lige slået op med min første kæreste, og jeg havde reflekteret over det faktum, at jeg ikke følte meget fysisk tiltrækning til ham på trods af at jeg var meget romantisk tiltrukket. I et stykke tid slog jeg det hen da jeg tænkte, det sikkert ville komme senere, men disse følelser startede bare aldrig for mig. Da jeg sprang ud for min mor, fik hun mig sat i terapi. Jeg fik at vide af mine læger, at jeg ikke "passede godt ind i det med min feminine sider", og min mor sagde specifikt "hun tror, hun er asexuel", da hun talte til dem. Dette forårsagede, at jeg tvivlede meget på mig selv, og jeg spekulerede på, om jeg havde en medicinsk tilstand. Først da jeg slog op med min anden kæreste, indså jeg, at det aldrig ville ske for mig. Han forsøgte at få mig til at kunne lide bestemte ting gennem ... øhm... berøringer og der var ikke noget element af samtykke i hans metoder. Han var stolt af hans forsøg på at "gøre mig seksuel", men jeg var bare ikke fysisk tiltrukket af ham. Jeg har aldrig været fysisk tiltrukket af nogen, og det krævede meget selvrefleksion og accept for at få mig til dette punkt. Det er beklageligt, at min historie ikke er ualmindelig, og mit eneste ønske for andre unge asexuelle er, at de forstår deres grænser og forstår, at der ingen grunde er for at ændre dem. Jeg håber, du siger nej, når du har brug for det, og indser, at du ikke behøver at være ubehagelig til mode eller lade folk gøre hvad de vil for at du skal være i et kærligt forhold. Det er okay at være asexuel, og det er okay at have grænser, selvom andre mennesker synes, at disse grænser er lidt underlige. Forbliv stærk og magisk, min lille asexuelle familie !! <3

Dutch Nederlands

Editors

Amber Witsenburg, Anja Stoop,
Bregje, Peter Berkemeijer

Translators

Amber Witsenburg, Anja Stoop

S. uit Griekenland

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: vermelding van seks en afobisch taalgebruik.

Ik wist al heel jong dat ik niet voldeed aan de heteronormatieve standaard van de maatschappij. Zes jaar lang was ik op zoek naar het label dat het beste bij me past, maar ik voelde me nooit 100% mezelf. Ik voelde me vaak onder druk gezet om seks met iemand te hebben om erachter te komen hoe dat is. Ik heb veel relaties gehad waar ik me ongemakkelijk bij voelde omdat mijn partner fysiek contact wilde, terwijl ik alleen wilde knuffelen of zoenen. Die relaties voelden vaak eerder aan als een vriendschap dan als een relatie, terwijl ik diep vanbinnen wist dat mijn partner dat niet wilde. Na mijn laatste relatie, een jaar geleden, begon ik na te denken over wat er mis was. Toen ik klein was zei ik al dat ik asexueel was, maar ik werd er zelfs door mijn vriendenkring van overtuigd dat je seks moet hebben om erachter te komen hoe dat is. Nou, nee... Ik hoefde het niet te doen om te weten dat ik asexueel ben.

Luna uit Brazilië

Ik realiseerde me pas laat dat ik asexueel ben. De eerste keer dat ik merkte dat er iets aan de hand was, was toen ik voor het eerst met een jongen zoende. Iedereen beschreef de euforie enzo, maar ik voelde helemaal niets. Het was hetzelfde bij mijn volgende relaties en telkens wanneer het voelde alsof we een stapje verder zouden gaan, voelde ik me ongemakkelijk en misselijk, dus kapte ik het af en maakten we het uit. Ik vond het vreselijk dat ik niet alleen mezelf pijn deed, maar ook deze jongens die ik daadwerkelijk leuk vond. Ik had heel lang het gevoel dat er iets mis met me was en dat vond ik verschrikkelijk. Uiteindelijk, nadat ik had opgezocht wat ik nou precies voelde om te proberen het allemaal te begrijpen, ontdekte ik het woord asexualiteit. Het was zo'n opluchting om erachter te komen dat ik niet de enige was die zich zo voelt, en dat er daardoor niet iets mis met me is. Nu heb ik een community waarin ik met mensen kan praten die zijn zoals ik. En gelukkig heb ik vrienden die me begrijpen. Maar tot nu toe heb ik er nog niets over kunnen zeggen tegen mijn familie. Ik ben bang voor wat ze zullen zeggen of doen. Ik weet niet zeker of ik ooit uit de kast kan komen, maar hopelijk kan ik de moed vinden om mezelf te zijn en niet meer tegen ze te liegen over deze dingen. Ik kan alleen maar hopen dat die dag ooit komt, dat ze het prima vinden en toch van me houden.

A.M. uit Canada

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: emotionele manipulatie, seksueel geweld, correctieve verkrachting, conversietherapie en acefobie.

Ik begon te twijfelen aan mijn seksuele identiteit toen ik 14 was. Ik had het net uitgemaakt met mijn eerste vriendje en ik had nagedacht over het feit dat ik niet veel fysieke aantrekking voor hem voelde, hoewel ik wel veel romantische aantrekking voelde. Een tijdje schoof ik het opzij met het idee dat ik een laatbloeiër was, maar die gevoelens kwamen gewoon nooit voor mij. Toen ik uit de kast kwam bij mijn moeder, stuurde ze me naar een psycholoog. De dokters zeiden dat 'mijn vrouwelijkheid zich niet goed ontwikkelde' en mijn moeder vertelde ze specifiek: 'ze denkt dat ze asexueel is'. Dit zorgde voor veel twijfel bij

mezelf en ik vroeg me af of ik een medische aandoening had. Pas nadat ik het met mijn tweede vriendje uitmaakte, besepte ik dat het gewoon niet ging gebeuren voor mij. Hij probeerde me bepaalde dingen leuk te laten vinden door... ehm... aanrakingen, en door dingen te doen die ik eigenlijk niet wilde. Hij was er trots op dat hij probeerde me 'seksueel te maken', maar ik was gewoon niet fysiek tot hem aangetrokken. Ik heb me nog nooit fysiek tot iemand aangetrokken gevoeld en ik had een lange tijd van zelfreflectie en acceptatie nodig om dat te kunnen uitspreken. Het is jammer dat mijn verhaal niet ongewoon is. Mijn wens voor jongere asexuelen is dat ze hun grenzen kennen en begrijpen dat ze om GEEN ENKELE reden hoeven te veranderen. Ik hoop dat je nee zegt wanneer dat nodig is en je realiseert dat je je niet ongemakkelijk hoeft te voelen of mensen maar van alles met je hoeft te laten doen zodat je een liefdevolle relatie kunt krijgen. Het is oké om asexueel te zijn en het is oké om grenzen te hebben, zelfs als andere mensen vinden dat die grenzen een beetje raar zijn. Blijf sterk en magisch, kleine ace familie! <3

Carol uit Brazilië

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: afobie, verplichte seksualiteit, verplichte heteroseksualiteit, amatonormativiteit, psychische mishandeling door zorgverlener en conversietherapie.

Mijn verhaal begon toen ik 15 jaar was en asexualiteit ontdekte via het internet. Ik begon me direct te identificeren als aromantisch asexueel en ik dacht niet dat mensen daar problemen mee zouden hebben. Ik vertelde het aan een paar mensen met wie ik op school omging en zij vonden het prima. Ik dacht dat anderen het ook prima zouden vinden, maar het jaar daarna hoorde ik iemand zeggen dat het een ziekte is. Toen besloot ik om het voor me te houden en alleen uit de kast te komen bij mensen waarmee ik close was en bij wie ik me op m'n gemak voelde.

Mijn nachtmerrie begon een paar jaar later toen ik last had van een depressie en naar een psycholoog ging. Relaties waren nooit een probleem voor me, maar zij bleef volhouden dat ik iemand (een man) moest vinden, moest trouwen en kinderen moest krijgen. Op een dag kwam ze erachter dat ik asexueel ben en zei ze dat zoiets niet bestaat en dat ze me zou genezen. Ik ben er gewoon mee gestopt. Niemand weet waarom en de paar mensen die ik erover heb verteld zagen het probleem niet met een psycholoog die je probeert te dwingen je (a)seksualiteit te veranderen.

Mariam uit India

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: afobische taal, dwanghuwelijk, huiselijk geweld, geestelijke mishandeling, seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag, seksueel geweld en verkrachting binnen het huwelijk.

Hoe kom je erachter dat je asexueel bent totdat je seksualiteit kent? Ik ben 34 jaar en ik realiseerde me dit recentelijk.

Ik had besloten niet te gaan trouwen. Zoals je weet hebben wij, vooral meisjes, in de Indiase cultuur niet het recht om zelf te beslissen met wie je gaat trouwen en wanneer. Ik werd gedwongen en toen ik me verzette werd de situatie steeds erger. Mijn ouders mishandelden me fysiek en mentaal, ik werd thuis opgesloten en ervan beschuldigd dat ik arrogant

was en aanzoeken afwees. In werkelijkheid had ik geen aanzoeken afgewezen, omdat ik zo werd gemarteld en gedwongen terwijl ik niet eens nee zei. Ik was klaar om te trouwen, omdat ik het gevoel had dat ik een last voor mijn ouders was. Dit gebeurde toen ik tussen de 21 en 25 jaar oud was als een reeks incidenten.

Meisjes kunnen hier worden gepest en mishandeld door iedereen en mensen verheerlijken dat vanwege de cultuur. Ik werd zelfs geplaagd door vrienden op school omdat ik niets snapte van de dingen waar mijn leeftijdsgenoten het over hadden: liefde, romantiek, seks, enzovoorts. Toen ik 26 was, trouwde ik na allemaal dramatische incidenten. Mijn echtgenoot trouwde laat volgens het Indiase systeem. Hij was die dag zo opgewonden en hij speelde met mijn lichaam alsof hij een speeltje had. Ontsnappen aan martelingen was de enige reden dat ik mijn huwelijksovereenkomst tekende, maar dit was een ander soort marteling. Mijn hart was gebroken. Hij verkrachtte me in dat huis. Dit gebeurde de volgende dag opnieuw in een huisje dat we hadden gehuurd en ik schreeuwde in de hoop dat mensen me van hem konden redden, maar het hielp niets. Dagenlang lag ik als een lijk met het idee dat het mijn plicht was om seks te hebben, en werd ik verkracht. Als hij eens naar mijn gezicht en in mijn ogen had gekeken, had hij het zich kunnen realiseren, maar dat deed hij niet.

Ik werd depressief en ik was boos op mijn ouders, onze cultuur, familieleden en vrienden, en ik begon afstand van ze te nemen. Later begon ik zijn fysieke aanrakingen weerzinwekkend te vinden, omdat ik me zo ongemakkelijk voelde. Jaren verstreken... Om me financieel te ondersteunen, gaven mijn ouders me een gebouw om een bedrijf te beginnen. Hoewel ik een fitness-studio of een dansstudio wilde beginnen, werd mijn keuze niet gerespecteerd en ik werd gedwongen om een coachingsinstituut te beginnen. Daarvoor moest ik al het werk alleen doen, van assistent tot docent tot manager, dag en nacht. Daarnaast ging ik aan de slag met nog twee projecten voor het extra inkomen. Mijn zogenaamd perfecte echtgenoot, die egoïstisch, chauvinistisch, hypocriet en pervers was en die me nooit heeft geprobeerd te verleiden, maar mijn lichaam wilde gebruiken voor zijn eigen genot, veroordeelde me alsof ik een affaire had. Zonder enige discussie dumpte hij me in het huis van mijn ouders.

Toen ik mijn onschuld probeerde te bewijzen, werd ik genegeerd en ik raakte getraumatiseerd, wat mijn werk beïnvloedde. Later begon ik me af te vragen waarom er zoveel seksueel misbruik was geweest, terwijl ik niet geïnteresseerd was in seks. Waarom werd ik gemarteld en verkracht? Toen leerde ik over asexualiteit. Ik deed onderzoek op Google, YouTube en Facebook en ik kon mezelf vinden in de ervaringen die werden gedeeld in de asexuele gemeenschap op sociale media. Nu ben ik van hem gescheiden na meer dan acht jaar huwelijk. Ik wil nu werken voor degenen die worden onderdrukt in deze gemeenschap en voor kinderen.

Dank je wel.

Bree uit de Verenigde Staten

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: acefobisch taalgebruik.

Ik zat op de universiteit toen ik erachter kwam dat ik aseksueel ben. Dat was altijd lastig voor me. Vooral omdat ik moest proberen dezelfde hoeveelheid aantrekkingskracht en intimiteit te voelen voor mijn partners als zij voor mij voelden. Mijn vrienden hadden het altijd overzien. Dat ze die meer begonnen te accepteren. Dus heb ik mijn moeder een link naar AVEN gestuurd en ik heb haar verteld dat ik aseksueel ben, dat ik dit al jaren weet en er nu 100% zeker over ben. En... ze heeft er helemaal niets meer over gezegd. Geen reactie. Ik weet niet zeker wat dat betekent, maar het is in ieder geval beter dan de afwijzing die ik van mijn tweelingzus heb gekregen. Dus voor nu beschouw ik het maar als een win.

Ik ben nu bij verschillende vrienden uit de kast gekomen, maar ik moet nog steeds voorzichtig zijn op sociale media en in mijn gesprekken met collega's. Ik werk voor de overheid en mijn werkgever is niet erg LHBTQIA+-vriendelijk. Ik praat ook niet over aseksualiteit met mijn familieleden buiten mijn ouders en zussen, want zij zijn nog conservatiever dan mijn ouders en zouden het niet begrijpen. Ik vind het niet erg om dit deel van mezelf het grootste deel van de tijd te moeten verbergen. Het is slechts een klein deel van wie ik ben. Maar ik zou wel willen dat er meer acceptatie en begrip was voor aseksualiteit in het algemeen. Dan zouden mensen zoals ik niet het gevoel hebben dat we niet kunnen uitspreken hoe we ons (niet) voelen wanneer we vrienden maken. Dan zouden we niet hoeven kiezen bij wie we wel of niet uit de kast kunnen komen. En dan zou het makkelijker voor ons zijn om een label te plakken op hoe we ons voelen, voordat we boven de 20 zijn of pas heel laat in ons leven, wanneer we al veel moeilijke ervaringen hebben gehad doordat we ons niet zo voelen als anderen.

Ziba uit de Verenigde Staten

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: seksueel geweld, seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag en acefobisch taalgebruik.

Toen ik jong was, dacht ik altijd dat ik een heteroseksueel meisje was. Maar als ik zei dat ik hetero was, voelde dat altijd een beetje verkeerd. Als tiener wist ik dat ik niet op meisjes viel, maar ik viel ook niet helemaal op jongens. Ik heb in mijn hele leven maar drie keer een crush gehad op een man, en elke keer kon ik minstens een jaar lang alleen maar aan deze persoon denken.

Ik ben een meer pessimistische versie van een hopeloze romanticus. In de onderbouw van de middelbare school begon iedereen seksuele aantrekkingskracht te ervaren en wist iedereen heel veel over seks, maar mij werd niets verteld. Als een vrouw van kleur op een witte school werd ik door elke jongen op school gepest. Ik had geen besef van ware romantische of seksuele aantrekkingskracht. Aangezien geen van mijn vrienden het had over seks, wist ik niet eens dat andere mensen seksuele aantrekkingskracht voelden of wisten wat seks was. Ik kwam er pas achter wat seks inhoudt toen ik op mijn veertiende fanfiction begon te lezen.

Toen ik in de vierde zat, ontwikkelde ik eindelijk mijn eerste crush op een jongen. Volgens mij vond hij mij ook leuk. Ik had nog nooit een jongen ontmoet die daadwerkelijk aardig

was en vrienden wilde zijn. Mijn gevoelens voor hem waren nooit van seksuele aard en ik had geen libido, ook al was ik een tiener. Toen er na een tijdje nog niks was gebeurd en we niet zoveel meer tegen elkaar te zeggen hadden, ontmoette ik iemand anders. Laten we hem Mason noemen. Mason gaf meer om me dan wie dan ook. We begonnen te daten en ik realiseerde me dat deze man een hoog libido had. Dit werd al snel een probleem. Hij vertelde me dat het normaal is dat meisjes masturberen, porno kijken, enzovoorts, maar ik begreep nooit waarom iemand dat zou doen. Ik geloofde heel lang in de mythe dat jongens meer behoefte hebben aan seks dan meisjes. Na een tijdje werd hij boos en begon hij seksueel en emotioneel misbruik van me te maken. Na acht lange maanden met hem gedatet te hebben, verliet ik hem en het grootste trauma in mijn leven eindelijk. Hoewel hij me tot seksuele handelingen dwong, hebben we nooit geslachtsgemeenschap gehad en daar was ik blij om.

Ik begon me op dat moment af te vragen of ik asexueel was of niet. Ik dacht dat ik het niet was, omdat een vriendin zei dat ze zich ook zo voelde na een moeilijke relatie en zij was niet asexueel. Nu ben ik achttien jaar en zit ik op de universiteit. Doordat ik in mijn eentje in quarantaine zat, was ik vaak alleen en had ik veel tijd om na te denken over mijn leven. Ik begon me schuldig te voelen over het feit dat ik achttien ben en nog steeds maagd ben. Ik walgde van mezelf omdat ik nog nooit seks heb gehad, maar diep vanbinnen wilde ik geen seks hebben. Het was maandenlang een constant gevecht in mijn hoofd. Tijdens dit gevecht had ik geen libido en geen behoefte aan seks. Ik wilde alleen van het label 'maagd' af. Ik haat dat label. Het wordt gebruikt als een manier om andere mensen belachelijk te maken en te kleineren, terwijl het biologisch gezien niet van belang is. Wat mensen ook zeggen, maagden en niet-maagden gedragen zich op dezelfde manier.

Een paar weken geleden heb ik eindelijk geaccepteerd dat ik asexueel ben. Eerst had ik mezelf ervan overtuigd dat ik alleen demisexueel was, maar ik realiseerde me al snel dat dat label niet bij me paste. Ik ben heteroromantisch asexueel. Ik heb het alleen nog maar aan een paar vrienden en mensen op het internet verteld. Het maakt me niet zoveel uit als mensen erachter komen, maar ik wacht nog even voordat ik bij mijn ouders uit de kast kom. Ik heb een crush op een nieuwe jongen. We hebben elkaar nog niet ontmoet en ik ben bang voor wat hij zal zeggen zodra hij erachter komt dat ik asexueel ben. Als hij er een probleem mee heeft, weet ik dat hij niet de juiste persoon voor mij is. Tot die tijd blijf ik elke dag mijn zwarte ring om mijn rechter middelvinger dragen, voor het geval dat iemand het herkent en hallo zegt.

T. uit Singapore

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: afobie, singlism en roken & alcoholmisbruik.

Ik heb bij mijn geboorte het label 'meisje' toegewezen gekregen en ben een seks-onverschillige tot seks-afwijzende panromantische asexueel. Tijdens mijn jeugd heb ik ontkend dat ik asexueel ben en pas recentelijk, op mijn 25e, heb ik geaccepteerd dat ik asexueel ben. Er bestaat een stereotype dat mensen die het label 'meisje' toegewezen hebben gekregen niet seksueel zijn totdat ze seks hebben gehad en ik dacht dat als ik iemand ontmoette die ik aantrekkelijk vond, ik me zou realiseren dat ik niet asexueel ben.

Als tiener heb ik veel tijd besteed aan roekeloos flirten met mensen die ik nauwelijks kende maar aantrekkelijk vond. Ik wilde me gewoon normaal voelen. Na twee relaties die uitgingen omdat ik werd gezien als koud en onverschillig, wilde ik gewoon het gevoel hebben dat

het niet aan mij lag en dat ik fysiek intiem kan zijn. Ik dacht altijd dat mijn exen misschien hyperseksueel waren en dat ik hun gretigheid niet prettig vond. Maar ik leerde al snel dat, ongeacht het gender, iedereen geniet van intimiteit.

Toen ik 21 was, leerde ik iemand kennen die ik erg aantrekkelijk vond. Ik had op dat moment al 7 jaar met niemand gezoend en op dat moment dacht ik dat mijn moment eindelijk daar was. Maar ik voelde een sterke, weerzinwekkende brok in mijn keel en ik wist dat het niet aan die persoon lag. Opeens moest ik denken aan de onzekerheden van mijn exen en op dat moment wist ik dat ik niet wilde dat zo'n prachtige jongen zich zo zou voelen. Ik slikte die brok in en heb die jongen nooit meer gezien. Diezelfde avond stopte ik met iedereen te flirten, maar begon ik te drinken en te roken om mijn zorgen en ontkenning te vergeten.

Nu ik ouder word, wordt mijn oma's wens voor een achterkleinkind steeds groter. Ik ben niet uit de kast gekomen bij de ouderen in mijn familie en ik weet niet of ze me ooit zullen geloven. Ik kom ook uit een islamitische familie, dus veel van mijn familieleden zouden geschokt zijn als ik ze vertel dat ik behoorlijk veel intimiteit heb gehad met zowel mannen als vrouwen. Soms kijk ik naar mijn demiseksuele en grijs-aseksuele vrienden en voel ik me gewoon een beetje jaloers. Ik wou dat ik óf kon genieten van zoenen en knuffelen, en misschien zo af en toe van seks, óf dat ik helemaal geen romantische aantrekking ervaarde, maar het is nu eenmaal zo.

Ik ben van plan om ook alleen te leven, maar de huizenprijzen in Singapore zijn belachelijk hoog en je moet minstens 35 zijn om een huis te kunnen betalen als je single bent. Ik hoop dat ik ooit in een mooi huis kan wonen met een leguaan als huisdier.

Ik denk er nooit aan om uit de kast te komen als aseksueel bij mijn oudere familieleden, maar het zou fijn zijn als ze wisten dat ik niet frivool ben en dat het aan mijn seksuele oriëntatie ligt dat ik moeite heb om een vaste relatie te vinden.

Ashe uit Mexico

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: acefobie, medisch machtsmisbruik en vermelding van corrigerende verkrachting.

In mijn land is het niet veilig om aseksueel, queer of LHBTQ+ in het algemeen te zijn. Ik wil Mexico niet naar beneden halen. Het is een prachtig land. Maar de verkrachtingscultuur en seksuele objectificatie zijn overal, zelfs in grapjes. Het probleem voor mij als aseksueel is dat mensen soms niet snappen dat ik een grap maak, maar niet meedoe. Ik kijk wel, maar ik 'voel' het niet. En soms zien mensen het verschil niet. 'Maar je ziet er niet uit als een celibataire heilige.' Nou, dat ben ik ook niet. Ik ben aseksueel, niet celibatair, en zeker geen heilige.

Er is intimidatie op straat, mensen kunnen zeggen dat je 'erom vroeg' vanwege je kledingkeuze of omdat je aardig tegen ze was. Ik ben gelukkig niet erg sociaal, maar de manier waarop ik me kleed of gedraag betekent niet dat ik dat soort aandacht wil. Ik heb geluk dat ik niet seksueel ben misbruikt omdat ik aseksueel ben, maar dat komt ook omdat ik extreem voorzichtig ben, en dat zou geen vereiste moeten zijn. In combinatie met het maatschappelijke klimaat ben ik hier erg boos over, maar ik voel me er ook hulpeloos over.

Een paar mensen waar ik close mee ben en waar ik bij heb geprobeerd uit de kast te komen hebben me verteld dat ze me niet geloven, dat het wel door een trauma zal komen, dat ik

de ware nog zal vinden of dat ze me wel van mening zullen helpen veranderen (iew, sme-
rig!) – uitspraken die de meeste asexuelen hebben gehoord. Het ergste was toen leraren
over seks spraken alsof het een biologische noodzaak is en deden alsof andere geaardhe-
den en genderidentiteiten niet bestaan (ik ben pan, asexueel en agender). Ik kon toen niks
zeggen, want dan zou ik gepest en mogelijk in gevaar gebracht worden. Ik heb het geluk
dat ik tenminste een partner heb bij wie ik compleet uit de kast ben en specifieke asexuele
of queer vrienden heb waarmee ik hierover kan praten. Zij begrijpen het, en vergeten het
soms zelfs, maar dat is niet zo erg.

Artsen, vooral gynaecologen en dermatologen, geloofden me niet toen ik ze vertelde dat ik
maagd ben. Ze hielden vol dat het niet waar was en dat ze me geen medicijnen voor acne
konden geven als ik loog. Maar ik loog niet en dit was alleen maar gênant. Ik ben hierdoor
ook bang om een afspraak te maken met een gynaecoloog, ook al heb ik de leeftijd bereikt
voor een controle. Ik heb geen seks gehad en ik ben bang dat ze ongevoelig en te ruw zul-
len zijn, of me schuldig laten voelen, ook al heb ik niks fout gedaan.

Mijn ex-vriend was celibatair en religieus. Ik lijk wel een magneet voor religieuze mensen.
Ik heb hem duidelijk verteld dat ik geen kinderen of seksueel contact wilde. Hij zei dat hij
dat prima vond, maar probeerde me vervolgens zover te krijgen om met hem te trouwen,
zodat we kinderen konden krijgen. Later 'accepteerde' hij dat we kinderen konden adopte-
ren, maar ik wilde helemaal geen kinderen en dat heb ik vanaf het begin duidelijk gemaakt.
Ik denk dat hij aannam dat hij me zou veranderen en evangeliseren, omdat ik in zijn ogen
'zuiver' was. En eerlijk gezegd voelde dat als verraad.

Ik heb het gevoel dat veel mensen me zien als een kind, vanwege mijn gebrek aan interes-
se in seks, gebrek aan aantrekking en vaste overtuiging over wat ik wil. Hoewel dit laatste
niet direct gerelateerd is aan mijn asexualiteit, helpt het niet. Maar ik wil dat mensen het
volgende weten: Ik ben geen kind, ik ben geen heilige, ik ben niet celibatair, of zuiver, of een
leugenaar. Ik voel me gewoon niet seksueel aangetrokken tot anderen, en als ik het er met
mensen over heb, vertel ik ze de waarheid. Maar het is slechts een klein deel van wie ik ben.

Ruben uit Nederland

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: afobie, vermelding van seks en grof taalgebruik.

Ik was gelukkig nog redelijk jong toen ik me realiseerde dat ik asexueel ben. Als het later
was geweest had ik wat stoms kunnen doen, omdat ik dacht dat ik van seks moest genie-
ten. De discussies over wat je in een vrouw zou willen zien waren erg ongemakkelijk voor
mij en het spel 'fuck, marry or kill' had twee opties die ik slecht vond. Maar ik wist niet dat
je asexueel kon zijn. Het was duidelijk voor me dat ik seks niks vond. Maar ik dacht dat ik
het leuk moest vinden. Het leek alsof elke jongen het erg leuk vond en ik wilde niet de enige
zijn die anders was.

Maar toen kwam een van mijn familieleden uit de kast als asexueel. Niet naar mij persoon-
lijk, maar iedereen had het erover en er werd gezegd dat het gewoon niet mogelijk was
vanwege de evolutie en zo. Op dat moment leerde ik eindelijk wat het was. Ik wist er eerst
niets van, dus ik deed wat onderzoek. En ik vroeg me af waarom niemand me hier ooit iets
over heeft verteld. Het is iets heel belangrijks, want ik stond op het punt om dingen te doen
waar ik heel veel spijt van zou hebben, alleen maar om als 'normaal' te worden gezien.

Maanden later, toen ik een paar van mijn beste vrienden erover vertelde, maakten ze er grappen over. Ik maak vaak seksuele grapjes, omdat het hele idee ervan grappig voor me is. Ze zeiden dat ik 'een seksueel persoon' was of ze stelden me rare persoonlijke vragen, zoals 'maar masturbeer je dan?' en 'hoe weet je dat je asexueel bent als je nog nooit seks hebt gehad?' Daarop antwoordde ik met 'heb je ooit een cactus in je reet gestopt? Hoe kun je dan weten dat je dat niet lekker zou vinden?' Later, toen ik ze vertelde dat ik biromantisch was, omdat ik wel met mensen wil knuffelen, antwoordden ze 'maar je bent toch asexueel?' En toen ik probeerde ze het verschil uit te leggen, begonnen ze over mijn identiteit te discussiëren alsof zij het allemaal beter wisten.

Ik heb het nog niet verteld aan mijn familie, behalve aan dat ene asexuele familielid, omdat ik heb gehoord wat ze over haar zeiden. Dat ze bijvoorbeeld nog niet de juiste piemel heeft gehad (EN DAT ZEG JE OVER JE ZUS???). Ik voelde me er heel ongemakkelijk bij en ik denk niet dat ik uit de kast kan komen bij zo'n familie.

Pepper uit de Verenigde Staten

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: acefobie, verplichte seksualiteit en conversietherapie.

Tijdens mijn jeugd werd mij verteld: 'je begrijpt het wel als je ouder bent' en 'word eens volwassen'. Mijn moeder ging met me naar de dokter, omdat ze ervan overtuigd was dat er iets mis met me was toen ik geen verlangen uitte naar een relatie of seks met iemand. Ze overtuigde me ervan dat er iets mis was met wie ik was. Ik haatte mezelf omdat ik niet 'normaal' was, maar tegelijkertijd walgde ik ervan om mezelf in situaties te plaatsen om 'normaal' te lijken. Uiteindelijk gaf ik het op om ooit normaal te zijn en ging ik mensen uit de weg. Ik werd onzichtbaar en daar was ik blij mee. Ik nam afstand van mijn moeder en andere mensen die me verachtten omdat ik geen interesse toonde. Ik ontsnapte en ontdekte iets waardoor ik wist dat het oké was om niet normaal te zijn. Eerst was ik er bang voor, maar het overweldigende gevoel van mezelf begrijpen was te sterk en ik leerde over asexualiteit.

Ik heb een thuis gevonden, een familie en een veilige plek om mezelf te zijn. De ace-gemeenschap heeft me geleerd dat het misschien niet normaal is voor sommige mensen, maar dat ik normaal ben voor mezelf. En dat is oké.

Kemmie uit het Verenigd Koninkrijk

Let op, dit verhaal bevat: acefobie, queerfobie en medisch trauma.

Ik kwam er rond m'n dertiende achter dat ik asexueel ben. Voor die tijd had ik nog geen woorden om te uitten hoe ik me voelde, maar toen ik de term 'asexueel' tegenkwam, paste dat goed bij me. Ik wist niet dat romantische en seksuele aantrekkingskracht verschillende dingen waren, dus ik was bang dat ik geen liefde zou kennen. Vijf jaar later vertelde ik drie vrienden dat ik asexueel ben. Een van hen steunde me. Een ander werd boos en zei dat niemand me zou willen en dat het toch niet bestond. En de derde verdween helemaal uit mijn leven. Ik zal nooit uit de kast komen bij mijn familie, want zij haten openlijk iedereen die LHBT+ is, inclusief asexuele mensen. Ik kan het risico niet nemen. Ik lees bijna dagelijks vreselijke dingen op sociale media en als asexueel en non-binair persoon vind ik het al eng om online uit de kast te zijn. Ik kan mijn familie niet om hulp vragen, want ze zouden me verstoten. Het pakte zelfs verkeerd uit toen ik het mijn dokter vertelde. Ik nam het snel terug toen die zich afvroeg of jeugdtrauma ermee te maken kon hebben en opperde dat een therapeut me kon helpen. Zelfs leden van de LHBT+-gemeenschap nemen mijn ervaring als asexueel persoon niet serieus, waardoor ik me 'minder' voel. Er is ook geen onderwijs over asexualiteit. Anders zou ik mezelf meer hebben geaccepteerd toen ik jonger was, denk ik. En dan zouden mensen die niet asexueel zijn ook leren wat het betekent om ace te zijn en dat het echt bestaat.

English

Editors

Peter Berkemeijer, Amber Witsenburg,
Anja Stoop, Chel, Arike/Aran van de Wa-
ter, Nicolien Boekhoudt

Translator

Story "S. from Greece" by Fran from the
Greek Aces/Aros team

S. from Greece

Warning, this story contains: mention of sex and acephobic language.

I knew from a very young age that I did not conform to the heteronormative standards of society. For 6 years I was looking for the "label" that would best represent me, but I never felt 100% myself. Many times I felt pressured that I have to make love to someone to see how it is. I had many relationships that I felt uncomfortable with because they wanted physical contact, while I only wanted hugs or kisses. Many times they felt like they were more of a friendship than a relationship even though I knew in my heart that they did not want that. After my last separation a year ago, I sat down and thought about what was wrong. When I was little I said that I was asexual but I was convinced even by my circle of friends that "you have to have sex to see". Well no ... I did not have to do it, to know that I am asexual.

Luna from Brazil

I realized very late that I was ace. The first time I noticed something felt strange was when I kissed a boy for the first time. Everyone described feeling euphoric etc, but I felt nothing at all. For my next relationships it was the same and whenever it felt like we would go a step further I felt uncomfortable and sick so I stopped and we would break up. I hated that I ended up hurting, not only myself, but also these guys that I actually really liked. I felt like something was wrong with me for a long time and I just hated it. Then, after finally looking up what I was feeling, trying to make sense of everything, I found the word asexuality. It was such a relief to find out I wasn't alone in feeling like that, and I wasn't broken because of it. Now I have a community where I can talk to people like me, and thankfully I have friends who understand me. But so far I haven't been able to breathe a word of it to my family, afraid of what they might say or do. I'm not sure I'll be able to come out one day, but I hope I can find the courage to be myself, and not lie about these things to them anymore. I can only hope that day will come, and that they will be OK with it and love me nonetheless.

A.M. from Canada

Warning, this story contains: coercion, sexual assault, corrective rape, conversion therapy and acephobia.

I started questioning my sexual identity when I was 14. I had just broken up with my first boyfriend and I had reflected on the fact that I didn't feel much physical attraction towards him despite being very much romantically attracted. For a while I brushed it off as being a late bloomer, but those feelings just never started for me. When I came out to my mom she put me in therapy. I was told by my doctors that I wasn't "meshing with my femininity" and my mom specifically said "she thinks she's ace" when she was talking to them. This caused a lot of self-doubt and I wondered if I had a medical condition. It wasn't until I broke up with my second boyfriend that I realized it wasn't going to happen for me. He tried to get me to like certain things through... ahem... touching, and not very consensual methods. He took pride in trying to "turn me sexual", but I just wasn't physically attracted to him. I've never been physically attracted to anyone and it took a lot of self-reflection and acceptance

to get me to this point. It's unfortunate that my story is not uncommon and my one wish for other young aces is that they understand their boundaries, and understand they don't for ANY reason need to change. I hope you say no when you need to and realize that you shouldn't have to be uncomfortable or let people do whatever they want to you for you to be in a loving relationship. It's okay to be ace and it's okay to have boundaries, even if other people think that those boundaries are a little bit weird. Stay strong and magical my little ace family!! <3

Carol from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: conversion therapy, psychological/emotional abuse by health-care provider, aphobia, amatonormativity, compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory sexuality.

My story starts when I was 15 and found out about asexuality on the internet. I identified as AroAce right away and I didn't think people would actually have a problem with it. I told some people I used to hang out with at school and they were ok with it. I thought everyone else would be ok, too, but then the next year I heard someone say it was a disease. I decided to keep quiet about it and only come out to people I was close to and felt comfortable with.

My nightmare started a couple years later when I was struggling with depression and started seeing a therapist. Relationships were never an issue for me, but she just kept insisting that I needed to find someone (a man), get married and have kids. One day she found out I am ace and said that there is no such thing and that she would fix it. I just quit. No one knows why and the few people I told about it didn't think it is a big deal having a psychologist trying to force you to change your (a)sexuality.

Mariam from India

Warning, this story contains: sexual assault, marital rape, non-consensual touching, psychological/emotional abuse, domestic violence, forced marriage and acephobic language.

How could one know he/she is asexual until knowing sexuality? I'm 34 years old and recently did I realize this.

I had decided not to get married. As you know in Indian culture, we, especially girls, don't have the right to decide about marriage- when, whom. I was forced and as I resisted, situations worsened. My parents physically and mentally harassed me, I was home-jailed, accused of being arrogant and rejecting proposals. In fact, I hadn't rejected any because I was that tortured and compelled and without even being unwilling. I had been ready to marry, as I felt I was a burden to them. This happened from 21 to 25 years old - a series of incidents.

Here girls could be abused by anyone and people glorify it based on culture (I was even teased by friends during school/college time like a buffoon for being ignorant about what my peers were discussing - love, romance, sex or maybe more). At 26, I got married after all sorts of dramatic incidents. That day he (late married according to the Indian system) was

so thrilled and he was playing with my body as though he got a toy. While escaping from torture was the only reason why I signed my marriage agreement, this was kind of another torture - I was more heart-broken. He raped me at that house and when the same was repeated at a lodge we hired next day, I screamed so that people could come to save me from him, but in vain. Few days I lay like a dead body thinking to have sex as duty, getting raped. If he ever looked at my face/eyes, he could realise, but he never...

I started getting depressed and was angry at my parents, our culture, relatives, friends and I started keeping distance with them. Later I started feeling repellant towards his physical touch as I was that uncomfortable. Years went by... My parents, to support me financially, gave me a building to run a business. Though I wanted to start a fitness/dance studio, as my choice was not valued, I was forced to start a Coaching institution, for which I had to work all alone from peon to the Professor to the manager to the all-in-all, day and night (along with that for extra income I took up 2 other projects). My so called perfect husband who was egoistic, male chauvinist, a hypocrite, a pervert who never had tried to convince me but wanted to use my body for his happiness, judged me as though I had an illicit affair. Without any arguments, he pushed me to my parents' house.

I was ignored while trying my innocence and I got traumatized mentally, which affected my work too. Later I started thinking why there has been so much sexual abuse even though I was not sexually interested. Why was I tortured, raped and what else? Then I came to know about asexuality- I researched it on Google, YouTube, Facebook and could relate to the experiences shared in the ace community on social media. Now I'm separated from him after over 8 yrs of marriage. Now I want to work for those who are suppressed and oppressed in this community and for kids.

Thank you.

Bree from the United States

Warning, this story contains: acephobic language.

I was in college when I found out I was asexual. Dating had always been hard for me, particularly trying to match the level of attraction/intimacy that my partners had toward me. My friends would talk about their partners' attractiveness, etc., and I just couldn't relate. I didn't feel like there was an intrinsic part of me that felt attracted to my partners in that way. It made me feel like an inadequate partner, and that I had less in common with my friends. I felt embarrassed anytime they discussed sexual aspects of their relationships or crushes, and I just... had nothing to share.

At some point, when I was sitting in my college dorm room, a Google search and a conversation with my older sister led me to AVEN's website. I read a couple of the FAQ pages, but eventually closed the browser window and went back to my life. While asexuality seemed interesting, and seemed like it fit how I was (not) feeling, it wasn't that important to me to attach a label to myself. Fast forward to spring/summer 2015... I was a senior in college, and at this point, I had had many more failed dating experiences. At that time, Tumblr was extremely popular among nerds like me. I happened to be scrolling through Tumblr one day and came across a post discussing the different types of sexual orientation. It was at that point that I finally joined the AVEN forum and began actively identifying as asexual. It felt so good to find a community of people who had similar experiences. By the end of the

year, I was actively involved in AVEN's forum and starting to display my asexuality more in my life. I had bought a black ace ring. And when sex/sexual attraction came up in conversations with my friends, I didn't shy away from talking about how I didn't feel the same as they did.

Whereas it used to be something I was ashamed of, I now realized it was okay to not feel the same way, and to be interested in other things. And I had even come out to my older sister, who had helped introduce me to asexuality in the first place. However, identifying as asexual hasn't always been easy. A few years ago, I tried to come out to my twin sister as asexual. As twins, we had a lot of shared experiences. Throughout my childhood, she was the only person who really "got" me. But she is also a very conservative person who believes the traditional "marriage and kids are a normal and expected aspect of life, and it's abnormal to want anything apart from the traditional." I was browsing the AVEN forum privately one day while I was sitting next to her (thinking that maybe I could use it to lead into a discussion around asexuality). But she peeked at my phone and saw the website, and immediately told me that it sounded weird, and that something was wrong with me. Since then, she has blatantly rejected my orientation, even going as far as to try to set me up with people to try to "fix" me. And if I happen to mention for the millionth time that I'm not interested in people the way that she is, she tells me I just haven't met the right person yet. It's a slap in the face, to have the one person you could rely on as a kid, refuse to believe you when you say you don't have the same wants in life as she does.

I have also tried to come out to my parents, with limited success. In my early 20s, I mentioned not feeling the same way about other people as most people do, without explicitly using the word "asexual." (I felt it was best to be vague, so that they wouldn't tell me I was buying into a fad or something. Like my twin sister, they were very skeptical of LGBTQIA+ identities. If I were to mention any terms that sounded related to LGBT+, they would instantly refuse to listen.) But I'm not sure that they understood this subtle way of communicating my identity to them. So I dropped the subject and just avoided talking about relationships/sex with them whenever possible. But then, a few months ago, my mom happened to mention that she and my dad are starting to see LGBTQIA+ identities in a new light. That they were starting to accept them more. So I texted my mom a link to AVEN, told her I was asexual, and that I've known for years and was 100% certain about it at this point. And... she hasn't said anything at all about it. No response. I'm not sure what that means, but it has to at least be more of a success, than the rejection I received from my twin sister. So, I'll call it a win for now?

I have now come out to various friends. But I still have to be careful of my presence on social media and my conversations with coworkers. I work in a government job and my employer isn't very LGBTQIA+-friendly. I also avoid talking about asexuality with any of my relatives outside of my parents and siblings, because they are even more conservative than my parents, and wouldn't understand. I don't really mind having to hide this part of myself most of the time. Because it's just one small piece of who I am. But I do wish that there was more acceptance and understanding of asexuality in general. So that people like me wouldn't feel that we have to shy away from voicing how we (don't) feel as we're making friends. And so that we wouldn't have to pick and choose who we come out to. And so that it would be easier for us to put a label on how we feel, before we're in our 20s or later in life, when we've already had a lot of difficult experiences, from not feeling the same way that others do.

Ziba from the United States

Warning, this story contains: sexual assault, non-consensual touching and acephobic language.

I grew up always assuming I was a straight girl. When I said I was heterosexual, something always felt off. I knew as a teen that I wasn't into girls, but I wasn't fully into men either. I have only had a crush on three men in my life, and each time, all of my thoughts were devoted to this person for at least a year.

I'm a more pessimistic version of a hopeless romantic. In middle school, everyone else was experiencing sexual desire and knew a lot about sex, but no one told me anything. As a woman of color in an all-white school who was bullied by every single boy at the school. I never understood true romantic or sexual attraction. As none of my friends talked about sex, I didn't even know other people felt sexual attraction or knew what sex was. I didn't find out what the act of sex was until I read fanfiction when I was 14.

Once I got to high school, in my sophomore year, I finally developed my first crush on a guy. I think he liked me too. I never met a guy who was actually nice and wanted to be my friend. My feelings for him were never sexual and my libido was non-existent despite being a teenager. After a while of nothing happening and us running out of things to say, I met someone else. We'll call him Mason. Mason cared for me more than anyone else, we started dating and I realized this man had a high libido. This soon became a problem. He told me that it was normal for girls to masturbate, watch porn, etc., but I never understood why someone would want to do that. For the longest time, I thought the myth about boys wanting sex more than girls was true. After a while, he became angry and the relationship became sexually and emotionally abusive. After 8 long months of dating, I finally left him and the biggest trauma of my life. Although he made me do sexual acts, I never fully had intercourse, and I was happy with that.

I questioned whether I was ace or not at that point. I figured I wasn't because my friend said she felt the same way after leaving a difficult relationship, and she wasn't ace. Now I'm 18 years old and in college. Being alone in quarantine gave me too much time alone and too much time to think and reflect on my life. I started to feel guilty for being an 18-year-old virgin. I was disgusted with myself for not having sex, but deep inside, I didn't want to have sex. It was a constant battle within my mind for months. Throughout this battle, I had no libido and no desire for sex; I only desired to free myself of the virgin label. I hate that label. It has been used as a way to make fun of and belittle other people when it doesn't have any significance biologically. Despite what people say, virgins and non-virgins act in the same manner.

A few weeks ago, I finally came to terms with being asexual. At first, I thought I convinced myself I was only demisexual, but I quickly realized that label did not fit me. I am heteroromantic asexual. I have only told a few friends and people on the internet. I don't really care if people find out, but I will refrain from coming out to my parents for now. I have a crush on a new guy. We haven't met in person yet, and I am scared of what he will say once he figures out that I am ace. If he has a problem with that, I'll know that he is not the person for me. Until then, I'll wear my black ring on my right middle finger every day, just in case someone recognizes it and says hi.

T. from Singapore

Warning, this story contains: substance abuse, aphobia and singlism.

So, I am an AFAB sexually-indifferent to sexually-repulsed panromantic asexual. I was in denial of my asexuality for most of my youth and only recently at 25 accepted the fact that I am asexual. There is this common understanding that AFABs tend to not be sexual until they have had sexual intercourse and I thought maybe if I met someone I'm attracted to, I would realize I'm not asexual. I spent a lot of my early 20s playing around and recklessly flirting with people I barely knew but found attractive. I wanted to just feel normal, and after breaking up twice because I was deemed cold and indifferent, I really just wanted to feel like I'm not the one at fault and can be physically intimate. I always thought maybe my exes were the ones who were hypersexual and maybe their eagerness turned me off. But I quickly learned that no matter what gender, everyone really enjoys intimacy.

When I turned 21, I found someone I thought was very attractive. I hadn't made out or kissed anyone for 7 years at that time and thought maybe my time had come. I felt a strong, repulsive lump trying to escape my throat and I knew it wasn't the other party's fault. Suddenly all my exes' insecurities came running through my mind and I knew at that time I didn't want such a beautiful guy to feel the same way. I swallowed my vomit and never saw him again. That same night, I stopped flirting around but turned to drinking and smoking to calm my worries and denial. As I grow older, my grandmother's desires for a grandchild become stronger. I haven't come out to any of the elders in my family, and I don't know if they'll ever believe me. I come from a Muslim family too, so admitting that I've had my fair share of physical intimacy with both men and women will definitely upset a lot of them.

Sometimes, I look at my demisexual and gray-ace friends and I can't help but feel a bit envious. I wish I could enjoy kissing and snuggling - and maybe the occasional sex, or at least not experience romantic attraction, but it is what it is. I plan to live alone too, but the housing prices in Singapore are ridiculous and to be able to buy a house as a single person, you have to be 35. I hope that I get to live in a nice house one day, with a pet iguana. I never think about coming out as ace to any of the elder family members, but it would be nice to have them know that I'm not being frivolous, and it's just the fact that my sexual orientation makes it hard for me to keep any relationship.

Ashe from Mexico

Warning, this story contains: abuse of medical authority, mention of corrective rape and acephobia.

In my country, being ace, queer, or in general part of the LGBTQ+ community is not safe. I don't want to diminish it. It's a beautiful place. However, rape culture and sexual objectification are everywhere, even in casual jokes. As an ace, the problem is, sometimes people do not get that I'm joking, but not participating, I'm watching, but not "feeling it", and sometimes people won't tell the difference. "But you don't look like a celibate saint" (well I'm not, I'm ace, not celibate, and for sure I'm not a saint).

There's street harassment, people can say you were "asking for it" because of how you decided to dress, or because you were nice to them. Luckily I'm not very social, but the way

I dress or act doesn't mean I'm trying to tease anyone. I'm lucky I haven't been sexually abused for being ace, but it's also because I'm overly cautious, and that shouldn't be required. That's also a combination with the social climate that makes me so mad, but that I also feel helpless about.

A few close people I've tried to come out to have told me "I don't believe you" or "it must be because of a trauma" or "you'll find the one" or "oh, I could try and change your opinion" (ew! gross), phrases most aces have encountered. The worst was when some professors talked about sex as a biological need and dismissing other sexualities and gender identities (I'm pan, ace and agender), and not being able to say anything, because I'll be mocked, and possibly endangered. I've been fortunate to at least have a partner I'm completely out with and certain specific ace or queer friends I've been vocal with about this. They understand (and sometimes even they forget, but I guess that's ok).

Doctors, especially OB/GYNs and dermatologists, have not believed me when I told them I was a virgin, insisting "it wasn't true" and "they couldn't give me medicine (for acne) if I lied", but I wasn't lying, and it was humiliating. I've been afraid of visiting OB/GYNs for this reason too, as while I'm at an appropriate age for a checkup, I haven't had sex and I'm afraid they'll be insensitive and too rough, or make me feel guilty while doing nothing wrong.

My ex-boyfriend was actually celibate and religious. I seem to be a magnet for religious people. I told him clearly I wasn't having children or sexual contact. He said it was ok, but then pushed to try and marry, so that he could have children. Later he "accepted" to just adopt, but I didn't want children at all and made it clear from the start. I think he assumed he was going to change me and evangelize me, because I was "pure" in his eyes, and to be honest, it felt like betrayal.

I feel like many see me as a child, because of my lack of interest in sex, lack of attraction, and firm values in what I want. These, although they are not directly related to my asexuality, don't help. But I want people to know: I'm not a child, I'm not a saint, I'm not celibate, or pure, or a liar. I'm just not sexually attracted to anyone, and if I'm opening to them, it's because I'm telling them the truth, and that's just a small part of who I am.

Ruben from the Netherlands

Warning, this story contains: mention of sex, aphobia and profanity.

Luckily I realized that I was ace at a youngish age. A little later and I could have done a bunch of dumb stuff, because I thought I needed to enjoy sex. The discussions over what you wanted to see in a women were very uncomfortable for me, and the game of "fuck, marry or kill" had two options I considered bad. Still, I did not know that you could be asexual. It was clear to me that I did not like sex. But I thought I had to. Every other guy seemed to really like it, and I did not want to be the only person who was different.

But then one of my family members came out as asexual. Not to me personally, but everyone was talking about it and they were saying that it is simply not possible because of evolution and stuff. That's when I finally learnt what it was. I did not know previously, so I did some research. And I was confused why nobody ever told me about this. It is something very important, since I was about to do stuff I would very much regret, just to be seen as "normal".

Months later, when I started telling some of my close friends, they would joke about it. I make sex jokes rather often, because the whole idea of that is funny to me. They would say I was “a sexual person”, or they would ask me very weird personal questions, such as “do you masturbate then?” and “how do you know if you never tried before?” To which I responded with “have you tried shoving a cactus up your ass, you would not know if you would enjoy it yet”. Even later, when I told them I was biromantic, because I just want to cuddle people, they would respond with “but you are asexual, right?” And when I attempted to tell them the difference, they were arguing about my identity like they knew it so well.

I still haven't told my family, except for the one ace family member, because I heard what they said about her. That she had not yet had the right dick (SAYING THAT TO YOUR SISTER???). It made me very uncomfortable, and I do not think I'll be able to come out to a family like that.

Amethista from Brazil

Nowadays I'm out to most of my friends, but it was not an easy task. It took me around two years to feel confident with my asexuality and get ready to tell anyone about it. It's actually funny how even nowadays (after three years out to my friends), it still feels hard saying the word “asexual” out loud. It feels heavy, it feels too intimate, and sometimes invasive to say “I am asexual”. When I hear ace friends and activists say it, I feel more confident by hearing how strong that statement feels. That's why I'm really grateful to all the people out there who are proud and are, little by little, making me feel proud enough to maybe one day tell not only my friends but also my family and the world about who I am and how I feel!

Moon from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: acephobic language and virgin shaming.

The few times I tried to hang out with or even talk to people who had a crush on me were uncomfortable. That's because sometimes during the first time seeing each other, they started talking about sexual things. It also happened to me that people called me 'depressed' and 'sick' for being a virgin and ace person. This made me feel insecure and sad, with the fear that I would never be enough for not wanting something sexual. I'm demisexual and demiromantic, and it's already hard for me to deal with people, feelings or whatever. I fear what completely AroAce people have to deal with. People don't deserve to feel this way because of something so superficial as a sex life.

Orion Lima from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: aphobia and aphobic language.

Hi, my name is Orion. My pronouns are they/them, I'm a closeted AroAce person and this is my history. I was 14 years old when I heard the word asexual for the first time. Without searching about it too much, I thought that the word describes me a lot and I tried to come out to my closest friends. One of them said to me: “What?! You can't be asexual. You can

still love and find a romantic partner!" That phrase stayed in my mind for weeks and I had internalized aphobia, so I left the asexuality aside and started calling myself bisexual and pansexual instead, with a feeling that I was wrong for 3 years. That was until I was talking with a friend about relationships and he said that he never wanted sex in his life, that he wanted to date but not have sex. I kind of related to the sex part, but not the romantic one. I never wanted a romantic partner or a romantic relationship. Two days later he said: "Brooh, I was talking with Isa. She explained asexuality to me and I think that I'm asexual". That made me question myself again, but I was in the last year of high school and didn't have time to question myself a lot. 3 weeks later the pandemic started and I had time to question myself. I searched about asexuality and with an open mind I started to identify as asexual. Weeks later I was scrolling through reddit and it recommended a subreddit about aromantic memes. I related with those memes, started my search into aromanticism and came to the conclusion that I'm aroace. I was excited to tell my parents, because the reactions of my friends were too good to be true and I have a good relationship with my parents. My parents didn't have the reaction that I thought that they would have. I tried to come out of the closet 3 times, and all of those times they had the same reaction; they said that I'm just a late bloomer, I'm too young to know, that everyone wants to have sex and have a romantic relationship and that I'm preventing myself from having these feelings. They are pushing me into the closet again and that kind of hurts. It's like they don't even try to accept me and I have to deal with that every day until I leave their house and start to live my life as I want.

Julia from the United States

Warning, this story contains: mention of (corrective) rape, acephobia and acephobic language.

I've known I was asexual since I was 14. I didn't know how to describe it until years later, but I always knew that I wasn't sexually interested in people. Every time I've tried to come out to people, I've been told that I'll "grow out of it" or that "it can be 'fixed' by a doctor should I so desire", when in reality, my asexuality isn't something to be fixed or changed. It's just who I am. Being an asexual woman means I'm constantly subjected to harassment simply for existing as who I am. It means being raped in the hopes of being turned allosexual. It means constant threats and abuse online. It means being told I'm not real and that I'm an attention seeker. My identity shouldn't need to be all of these negative things. I deserve to be accepted for just being asexual, both offline and online. I deserve to claim my identity as real and powerful, and I shouldn't have to explain it or defend it every time it's brought up. Being asexual is something I've always been, and it's something I've always been proud of, even when I was a kid.

Cooper from the United States

Warning, this story contains: acephobia and homophobia.

When I was in middle school, my family made a shit ton of gay jokes about me. I used to play Minecraft all day with friends and my parents put me in a literal closet so I wouldn't annoy anybody. So the easy joke for my family to make was: "haha, you came out of the closet".

My mom was usually very protective and told them not to say it at first, which was great. I really appreciated that.

Then I went to college. I started learning more and more info about my asexuality, as it was pretty clear to me that I was aro-ace at this time. In November 2019, I got a tattoo on my left forearm (which I don't regret to this day). My mom found out I got a tattoo during Spring break 2020 (what a great time for that). Two big things came up in that conversation that I remember to this day. One doesn't pertain to this, but the other does. She asked: "Are you gay?" I was confused, crying for about 40 minutes at this point, and said: "No, of course not. You know I'm ace." She pushed me, saying that if I lied to her about my tattoo that I could lie to her about my sexuality. So that was fun.

After this, she started hopping in on the gay jokes. I knew I've been ace since 10th grade of high school and I really cared about my sexuality, so I was getting angry. After about 3-4 days of it, I couldn't handle it and sat her down to stop. My older brother came in and said "Dude, why are you being so gay about this?". Then my mother started to laugh and made another joke. I was furious that she could yell at me about something she hated, but then she could just laugh off what I did. So I yelled at her back, left the house, and cried. It was too much for me to handle.

Time passed. This was back in January of this year. My mom was talking about how someone in her department was non-binary. She said she couldn't call them 'they/them' and just used their name. In my opinion, that's fine, better than using 'she/her'. We went into a conversation about how she didn't understand "all the letters", and "why they couldn't just be under one name". I tried to explain to her how the LGBTQ+ community worked, in terms she could understand. When that topic was done, she was not really gaining anything. She started a question with "So I know you're confused about your sexuality, but-", and I instantly cut her off and said: "No, I'm not. I'm an ace of spades and I have known it since 10th grade." She then explained to me how I don't have "enough experience" and how I "feel things differently". First of all, you just said how you don't understand the LGBTQ+ community to the fullest extent. Second, it's my body. I know how I'm feeling now. Can it change? Yes. But I know that I'm currently ace.

At this point, I understand how I feel and how I don't believe her on this. I love my mom and I know that she means the best for me, but this entire situation made me look back and realize that she isn't always right about everything, and how I need to look at her as a person, not as someone that I need to utterly believe in no matter what. I appreciate being able to come out to everybody except my family. They've been really sweet and supportive of everything I do, including me realizing that I might not be fully asexual, but just on the asexual spectrum. If you're reading this and you feel as if there's nobody to support you out there, think again. Even if it's as small as somebody online or somebody in person, if possible. Stay strong, be prideful, and do what you can to survive wherever you are. <3

Blue from Singapore

I am a 14 year old student living in Singapore. The people here don't know what asexual means and that there is a difference between romantic and sexual attraction. This is unfortunate, because when I came out to my friend, I had to explain it to her, which was rather difficult. I am not out to my family, because they will probably say "you're too young to know". I may not be persecuted for being asexual, but I will be invalidated.

Dubu from Australia

Warning, this story contains: acephobia and acephobic language.

Discovering my asexual identity was an immediate click once I found the term asexual after googling how I felt and seeing the word come up in the search results. Before that, I had never even heard of the term asexual, and had spent so many years trying to figure out if there was something wrong with me, why I was different from everyone else. I came out shortly after that, on Twitter and to some friends in real life. Of course I was hit with many questions and doubts, people telling me “You just haven’t met the right person yet” and guys saying they could “fix me”, but I stood strong and was very adamant about how I felt and how I identified. Since then, I also discovered my aromantic and agender identities and it’s amazing how much more confident I am about myself.

I haven’t come out to my family, and don’t feel the need to, as they’re homophobic/transphobic and I don’t want to put myself in that unsafe situation. Since I don’t need to introduce a partner to them, I am satisfied with where I am and having my friends as my support and family in that respect. It’s ok to not come out, and it’s ok to not come out to everyone. Do it when you feel comfortable and to people you trust and feel comfortable coming out to.

I’m very open about my experiences and journey, have connected with many other aces, and helped many to discover their own ace identities and to come out themselves. It’s amazing what a difference it makes for just one person to talk openly about asexuality. Imagine what a big difference it would make if schools actually educated kids about different sexualities INCLUDING asexuality. I myself wish I had learned about it earlier, as it would have saved me from so many years of self-doubt and hatred, and doing things I didn’t want to do because I was trying to be like everyone else.

Carla from Spain

Warning, this story contains: acephobia.

I only came out to one friend, who is bi. She told me that she used to think she was ace herself, but that it is really internalised biphobia and that I will grow out of it. But I grew up in a family with gay uncles and it was normal for me. I don’t have internalised biphobia. I would be happy to be bisexual. But I’m not, I’m asexual. And now this friend constantly tells others that I’m bi.

Other people who know what asexuality is have said that it is an illness or that it is a sign of a psychopath. It hurts.

Anon from the United Kingdom

Warning, this story contains: acephobic language.

Understanding myself as asexual has changed my life. I spent years thinking I was broken, less than, not a “real man”, an unworthy partner. Understanding that asexuality is a normal part of human variation, and not a failing on my part, has empowered me to be my full self. I still struggle with doubt, as society continuously tells me that asexuality is an internet fad, a pathology, or an imposition. But sharing experiences with other ace folk has helped me to begin to accept and love myself for who I am, rather than to try to be someone I am not.

notsl from Argentina

Warning, this story contains: mention of suicide, acephobia and homophobia.

I always knew I was different from the rest, but because I grew up in a strict house where only heterosexuality was the norm, I never knew who I was. I grew up lying about my attraction, even though I didn’t know about it at the time, and also thinking I was too young to do what my classmates or friends were doing. At 17, I told a guy friend that I liked him (that’s the way I deal with feelings) and he said he was asexual. I had never heard of that term, so I looked it up on the internet. That’s when I knew I had found the right term. My family is homophobic, my sister said she would kill herself if she had gay relatives, so I’m still in the closet. I’ve been single my whole life so I haven’t had the opportunity to talk about being ace openly. I fear they’ll kick me out of my house. I also have doubts about gender, but those are still in a box I don’t want to open. My ex-friends from high school made fun of me for not sharing their thoughts about sex and tried to change my sexual orientation by setting me up with dudes, so I cut them off. I was very lonely, for too long, but now I’ve found friends that accept me and a community that is amazing. Thank you for reading my story. PS: Thanks to the guy I told “I like you” back then. Without you, I wouldn’t be here.

Christa from the United States

Asexuality to me has come to mean freedom. Freedom from heteronormativity and compulsory sexuality, as well as freedom from established norms of what a relationship “is supposed to look like”. Growing up, the only examples that I got of intimate, life-long relationships were consistently heterosexual, white couples married with some kids. And while I could not articulate it at the time, I knew that this was not the path that I wanted to take. Whenever I thought about what I wanted my future to look like, I never had the language to describe it. It was not until I discovered asexuality in my early 20s that I could even begin to figure out what I wanted and how to describe it. I then had the language to describe that I wanted an intimate, life-long partner, but not necessarily the sex and the kids part. In fact, I think I could also be happily single my whole life if I never found someone who I would want to build a future with.

One important concept that I learned about was intimacy. There is not a hierarchy of intimacy, with hand holding on one end and sex on the other. Sex is an action, a verb, and it can either be intimate or incredibly lonely. Similarly, cuddling is an action that can either be

very intimate or alienating. And for some people, cuddles will always be preferable to sex. There is nothing wrong or unusual about that. But this aversion to sex is still stigmatized and looked down on in contemporary society. If you do not want sex you are labeled as “cold” or “robotic.”

I had a lot of anxiety about this throughout my life. Even when I was with a partner who told me that it was okay to not want sex, I would still feel pressure to deliver. But having this language of asexuality enabled me to find alternatives to this, and different ways of expressing intimacy. I think my anxiety around sex was more related to this idea that couples are supposed to share a certain special intimate activity with each other, one that is exclusive to this relationship. And knowing that there is no one way to be intimate has helped forge my own path with relationships.

I still do not know what I am doing with relationships, there are no mainstream examples of asexual couples and what these partnerships look like. But being able to talk about it, about what aspects make me anxious and which are comforting, has allowed me to navigate and create my own relationships more freely. Asexuality as a result means freedom to create a relationship where I finally feel comfortable and supported.

Laura from the United States

I remember first reading the word “asexual” (used in a non-flatworm capacity) at my first library job in a novel. I was 30. I finally had a word for me. Later I added aromantic to that as well. I was the kid in my junior high who picked a celebrity crush based on aesthetics so people would leave me alone (Leonardo DiCaprio, even though I thought his eyes were slightly too far apart). I told people “I want to focus on school,” or “I don’t like the gross boys who go to this school” to deflect questions about why I wasn’t dating anyone. Now, I’ve come out online and to my mother and brother. The thing is, we live in such a rural area, they’ve never really heard of anyone being asexual. I can tell my brother would rather not talk about it, and I’ve come out to Mom three times, she just doesn’t seem to notice. Almost as if not being interested in sex is such a minor thing that it is below notice. I guess that’s better than caring in a negative way, but still, I’d like to feel seen. There’s no queer community where I live. It’s very conservative. My father is a pastor, and I will never be able to tell him. I am both so glad to be who I am and to know that it is normal and good to be ace, but I am also very lonely in my ace-ness. Unfortunately, I don’t really have the prospect of being less lonely unless I drop my life and move hours away from my family into a bigger city. That would be a different kind of lonely. This whole thing feels like a note I’m writing to a therapist! Sorry. I meant to be funny when I started!

J. from the United States

Warning, this story contains: aphobia.

From a young age, I knew that I wasn’t interested in pursuing any sort of romantic (and later sexual) relationships. For a majority of my life, I believed I was just some weird straight kid.

It wasn’t until high school, when I became friends with members of the LGBT community,

that I realized that wasn't the case. Through these friends I began to learn about different sexualities. I learned about aromanticism and asexuality during this time, and I adopted both of those identities.

Even though I had found out what I was, my mother was less than supportive. While not directly antagonistic, my mother would continuously tell me that I might one day "change". With a deteriorated parental relationship and less than remarkable social skills, I turned to the internet for others like me. Today, I am friends with many like myself and have done my best to help others who struggle with their sexuality.

Daniel from Russia

Warning, this story contains: mention of a sexual act and mention of porn.

I always knew that I was somewhat different. I found sex pretty nasty and didn't want it. I just thought it was okay and would go away with time. But no. While others were watching porn, satisfying themselves, and so on, I didn't do it. Why? Perhaps it was a desire to be different from everyone else, or maybe I just hadn't found the One. But time went on and the desire to have sex didn't come. The first time I heard about asexuality and aromanticism was from the series "Hazbin Hotel". I thought "Oh, I have something similar to me here", and immediately after that I forgot about it, because it didn't matter before. But in February of this year, something came over me and I decided to see if I really fit the definition of asexuality. I was shocked by the results when I realized that I was actually ace. On the outside, I quickly accepted it, but on the inside a fire of doubts and excuses raged for another week. I began to feel bad for no reason at all. Something was spinning in my stomach, giving no rest. But thanks to the support of a rather small circle of people who also knew my feelings, I overcame it and accepted myself. I didn't come out to my family or to my college friends, and I think I will never do that. But it's ok for me, I am used to hiding my feelings and inner experiences from prying eyes, and experiencing them on my own. Maybe someday the day will come when I will boldly declare "I am asexual and proud of it", but not today, because my story as an asexual person is just beginning.

Valen from the United States

Warning, this story contains: acephobia, compulsory sexuality and slut-shaming.

I am a sex-repulsed asexual and I tend to be open about it. I want to share my experience so others can feel they are not alone. I have been told before, "You don't act or dress like an asexual." As if we have a checklist to complete in order to be "ace enough" for everyone else.

I am goth. I wear studs, chokers, and lots of black. I'm non-binary so I will even don black heels from time to time. Because of the "bondage fashion" I tend to enjoy, it is assumed that I am interested in bondage role play or rough intercourse. I am a dancer, and my favorite styles tend to be burlesque, scarf, belly-dancing, or club dancing. All of which are highly sexualized or linked to hook up culture in mainstream media and the generalized public.

My dancing is not an invitation. My clothing is not an invitation. The amount of skin I show

is not an invitation. The things I enjoy are not a defining factor of my sexuality. Ace people can pole dance. Ace people can wear short shorts and fishnets. A friend of mine made the comment that they love how much I can be perceived as sexual as it then desexualizes fashion, art, and elements of culture. So hopefully in the future, the only thing that is sexualized, is the act of sex itself. Not only widening asexual acceptance, but reducing other harmful side effects of an over sexualized culture.

The biggest issue this causes for me however is the dating scene. As I don't "conduct myself like an asexual", many people get upset when they find out I have no interest in sex and call me a "tease" or a "tramp" and aggressively end any level of relationship with me. This has led to a distrust of people when they flirt with me as my first assumption now is that they only see me as a sexual object and have no interest in me as an individual. Let ace people enjoy things and have fun without attempting to force them into a box of what you think asexuality should be. We are better than "sexy", we are "asexy" and won't dilute ourselves because someone can't control themselves.

Phoenix from the United States

Warning, this story contains: acephobia.

I came out as ace a little over 2 years ago. When I first came out, I kept getting comments like "you'll find the right person" and "how do you know if you've never tried it?". It was pretty rough for the first few months. Even now, I keep getting comments like that. Before I realized that I was aro too, I was in a relationship. I told him before we got together that I was ace and he seemed fine with it at first. About a week after we got together, his sister texted me saying, and I quote, "if you never change your mind, you're going to break his heart". She was basically saying that I should prioritize his sexual needs over my own (or lack thereof). After we were together for a while, he started talking about kids and what we were going to do when we got married. We ended up breaking up for other reasons, but that was a huge red flag as he knew I was ace and didn't want kids. However, I am now perfectly comfortable with myself and I won't let anyone tell me that I am broken or need to find someone!!!

Samuel from England

Warning, this story contains: profanity.

I feel pretty dumb looking back, as (with the benefit of hindsight) it's painfully obvious that I'm asexual; not caring how pretty a girl is, not being impressed by someone having sex, being surprised that someone would find me sexually appealing, etc..

I've never told anyone in real life that I'm asexual. Because of my depression and my naturally introverted personality, I doubt they would believe me, and it's really not worth the hassle. I'm comfortable with being ace, and at the end of the day how I feel about it is all that matters.

I know how painfully isolating what we all are can be, and how fucking terrifying it can be. But I want you all to know that you are not alone; I'm your brother, and I'll always have your back.

Pepper from the United States

Warning, this story contains: conversion therapy, parental abuse, acephobia and compulsory sexuality.

I grew up being told “you will understand when you are older” and “grow up”. My mother took me to the doctor because she was convinced that there was something wrong with me when I did not express a desire to be in any relationships or to have sex with anyone. She convinced me that there was something wrong with who I was. I hated myself for not being “normal”, but at the same time felt disgust for putting myself in situations that would make me seem “normal”. Eventually, I gave up on ever being normal and stopped interacting with people. I became invisible and I was happy to be. I got away from my mom and the other people who looked at me with disgust when I expressed no interest. I got away and discovered something that told me that it was OK to not be normal. At first it scared me, but the overwhelming sense of understanding myself was too great and I was introduced to asexuality.

I was able to find a home, a family, and a safe space to be myself. The ace community has taught me that while I may not be normal to some people, I am normal to myself, and that is OK.

Vaultdweller 1001 from the United States

Warning, this story contains: aphobia and aphobic language.

I am asexual and aromantic, and I think the biggest problem we face is a lack of understanding. Many people think that asexuality is a problem that needs to be fixed or isn't a thing at all. Because of this I am very much not out to anyone, as I don't know if they would take me seriously or not. Many people think that we don't feel emotions. The fact that people think this is both supported by studies and by my own experience with people I've talked to. I have been told online that asexuality is not real, that we do not belong in the LGBT community, that we are sociopathic, and many other damaging things.

Paige from the United States

Warning, this story contains: purity culture.

I realized I was asexual at a purity talk. Growing up in a Catholic middle school, it took me a while to realize that sexual attraction existed. My classmates and I were taught about the supposed wickedness of lust and abortions, but our teachers neglected to inform us about sex. This lack of information never bothered me or my classmates. They eventually gave us the talk but it pushed the abstinence agenda. Around this time, I began to notice a change in my friends: they were all developing a growing interest in boys. I brushed this off as an attempt at maturity and rebellion. But as more people I knew became interested in kissing, the more I distrusted my peers. I thought this was an elaborate prank, designed to humilia-

te me. Later in the year, I came across a screenshot of a Tumblr post which described one of my favorite characters as asexual. I looked it up and thought 'huh, that sounds like me,' and forgot about it for another four months. When I finally remembered it again, I was at a very Fundamentalist and deeply heterosexual Christian summer camp. They talked about purity and abstinence. I remember rolling my eyes because of the thought of having to endure yet another speech about a so-called problem I didn't believe was real. However, during the speech, something struck a chord with the audience. I don't remember the exact words but they made one of my friends cry. And soon many other people started crying, too. Then it clicked. Sexual attraction was real and the people around me experienced it. I was asexual. This revelation did not come easily. While I embraced the new term and the community, I began to wonder how my parents, relatives, and friends would feel. When coming out to my family, I had to create a PowerPoint to explain my orientation. I am happy that I have at least my foot out of the closet.

Arson from the United States

Warning, this story contains: parental abuse, acephobia, homophobia, transphobia, allonormativity, amatonormativity, gaslighting and compulsory heterosexuality.

So I figured out I was ace about two years ago if I remember correctly, and it was while I was talking on FaceTime with one of my friends. They asked if I had any crushes on anyone at any point in time. When I answered no, they pointed out I might be ace. I had never heard of that before, and honestly I just thought I was a late bloomer, so it never crossed my mind to check out if it was a real thing. Since then, I've come out to my friends and my therapist, but I've never felt comfortable talking to my family about it. I've also figured out that I want to go by she/they pronouns (I'm also homo/demi-romantic) and change my name but, again, I don't think my family would be very supportive of it. For a long time, I had never been introduced to the LGBTQ community and didn't even realize that gay people existed until around the middle of 8th grade. (When I told my mom about that, she said she didn't think that was a bad thing.) It hurts to see my family not care about the LGBTQ community at all, questioning why people are nonbinary/agender or gay (in their opinions there are only two genders), and talk about how there's too much representation in the media or even saying there are too many gay people. It hurts me to think that my friends and I aren't seen as equal in today's day and age. My mom doesn't understand what it means to be LGBTQ and why it's such a hard thing to be a part of sometimes. My grandmothers don't get "the whole trans thing", in the words of one of them, and continue to deadname my friends and are weirded out by their choices. One of my grandmothers is also pro-life and says she doesn't support gay marriage whatsoever. My brother has no gay friends (that I know of) and has questioned multiple times why one of my friends is non-binary, because he thinks it's "not normal" or "strange" and it doesn't really mean anything. I can't come out to my father either, as he also continues to deadname my friends, and says there are too many gays in the world and too much representation. I know some of these may be mild, but it's really hard to think they'll accept me for who I am. Especially my mother, who is always asking me if I have had crushes on boys, telling me I did have a crush in elementary school because I spent time with him (we were just friends if you wanted to know). "You GOT to have a crush on a boy" because it's "impossible at this point for you to not have", and telling me she is desperately waiting for the day I bring home a boyfriend and eventually have "hot s*x" with him. I've told her I don't like boys. I've told her I think boys and sex are disgusting to me. I've told her I don't want kids or marriage. I've told her so many things, and she just ignores or disregards me. She has never said she'd accept me if I were gay, or

any other sexuality and gender, but I honestly don't think she ever will. If I ever do come out to her, I have a feeling that she is going to continue to disregard my feelings and tell me they aren't real. She might even tell me "I just haven't found the right man yet" and that it's just a phase ("you'll get over it in no time"). I feel that my situation is better than a lot of others, but since I'm a very sensitive person, I think it'll be much harder for me to get over my depression and mental health problems if I do come out because of all of the hateful comments and actions I will probably receive (which could end tragically). I am glad I don't live in an abusive home anymore, but I still feel like if I want to protect myself from hateful/hurtful actions, I have to stay silent about my identity.

Sam from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: mention of verbal and parental abuse, aphobia, aphobic language, and singlism.

Hi, I go by Sam, and I'm a 20 year old Brazilian AroAce. Being AroAce in Brazil is something that I never heard until I started digging on the internet back in 2020. My country is known for its fantastic February celebrations known as Carnival, where you'll find pretty women wearing tiny bodysuits, lots of glitter and giant ornaments. The country is also known for the "Brazilian girl" stereotype: thin waist, big hips, boobs and butt, mocha skin. Everyone is sexualized from a very early age (like 12), and I swear the stories about prepubescent kids having sex are more common than you may think. Being asexual in a country that glamorises and elevates both romantic and sexual intimacy makes you feel down and exhausted. Everyone says that "you can't have a relationship without sex" and "dating is not possible without sex". Well, lucky me, I'm also aro (=/), but it's still tiring. Especially because they also say you need a romantic relationship to succeed in life. Being single is a sign of failure and immaturity: "you will understand it when you grow up".

I'm not out to my parents. If I did come out, they'd very much deny it, dismiss my feelings and opinions and gaslight me. I'm used to being emotionally abused by the excuses of "you're still living with us, we are good parents, others would kick you out, you owe me", but I don't think I will ever truly believe that's abuse. I don't feel safe coming out and I simply don't trust them with that information about me. I don't feel like I need to come out right now or in the near future. Maybe someday I'll have the urge to tell them about my AroAce-ness, especially 'cause I fear being misunderstood in my relationships, but that's something for later. I guess, in the end, the thing that I fear most is the fact that I'll need to explain it, more than anything else.

Flyingturtle64 from the United States

Warning, this story contains: compulsory (hetero)sexuality.

I am a Christian man from a Christian family, and as a result, my parents, my mother especially, want me to have the good ol' nuclear family. That's all well and good, but I'm ace. I can't tell anyone in my family, except maybe my sister. I've only ever told three of my closest friends, ones I trust more than my own mom. It's hard to tell people. Everyone expects you to have the same sexual thoughts as them, be attracted to them, or talk about other people with them in a sexual way.

I found out I was ace in high school. Before, I did have relationships with girls at my school, but I never really realized I was ace until year 11. From there, I told my best friend. He supported me fully, and is still a great help to me.

After Highschool, I joined the Army. In Basic Training, I met a lot of good friends. In Basic, I told another one of my friends. I've never trusted anyone more.

In the second half of Basic, I told a friend of mine who wasn't that good of a friend at the time, in an attempt to get used to telling everyone. This one was the hardest. He seemed indifferent to it, but he still kept it to himself.

Now I am in training for my Army job. I have plans to tell my roommate soon, and I am gathering more courage to tell more people. Don't be ashamed, and don't be scared. If people really want to know you, they should know one of the important things about you. If they can't take it, it's on them. Be yourself.

Vicky from Germany

I'm 14 and found the term asexuality around a year ago in a YouTube video. I decided to look into it, because I had been wondering what my sexual orientation was for a while at that point. I realized that asexuality explains exactly how I feel and why I had never felt any kind of sexual desire for anybody and didn't find sex, or anything like that, cool. After a few days, I decided to come out to my friends. They were very supportive and I felt very relieved. Later on, I also learned about aromantic people and I'm pretty sure that I am aromantic and sex-neutral. I'm still not out to anybody in my family, because I'm scared that they won't accept me or tell me that asexuality doesn't exist. I have told my mother that I'm questioning my sexuality, but she thinks that that's because my friends are LGBTQ+. That's not the reason and I tried explaining that to her, but she didn't listen and didn't believe me.

Akira from Canada

Warning, this story contains: mention of suicide and mention of sexual content.

I love being asexual. I found out about my asexuality when I was 12 and realized I wasn't heteroromantic or heterosexual whatsoever. At first, I had some support, but there were times where people said mean things or where my parents just wouldn't understand. I know lots of people had misconceptions about my asexuality, like thinking it came from experiencing trauma with sexual abuse or something, even though that never happened to me. As a trans man, my asexuality also helped me realize my own gender identity. I was able to identify why I was experiencing gender dysphoria, and my asexuality (and aromanticism) helped lessen and ease my internalized transphobia. I was bullied for being aromantic and asexual, and was nearly driven to suicide because of it. But I am okay now and am stronger than ever. Being asexual is important to me. And while I am an aegosexual/autochorissexual/anegosexual person who is apothisexual (this means I'm sex repulsed for myself, but enjoy and consume sexual content as long as it doesn't involve me in it), I find that my asexuality and the nature of it is very important and special. It makes my relationship with sex, romance, relationships, friendships, etc. more complex and wonderful. I know I've had my ups and downs, but being asexual is very significant to my identity.

Seeing asexual and aromantic exclusionists is very angering, hurtful, and harmful, but I know that they are just bigoted and illogical. I know I am part of the LGBTQ+ community regardless. And I feel at home in this beautiful community.

Mary from the United States

Warning, this story contains: abusive relationship, gaslighting, corrective rape, disbelieving sexual assault/abuse victims, racism, substance abuse, mention of sex and sexually explicit messages, purity culture, acephobia, allonormativity, and amatonormativity.

I grew up Christian, so in my youth it was actually very easy to be asexual, because I would always hide my lack of sexual interest behind my religion. Purity culture is absolutely toxic, but I was in a position to be able to use it to my advantage. I'm not very religious, but between pretending to believe in God and pretending to be heteroromantic allosexual, I would have much rather pretended to believe in God.

Then in college, the whole facade came crashing down. I was in a relationship with a guy who thought that it was his job to "correct" me and "fix" me. I felt that since he had taken my virginity, I was obligated to stay with him in order to keep up the "good Christian girl" act. He was cruel to me, and when I finally realized that, my biggest priority was that I didn't want him to do to other women what he had done to me. So I went to the cops about it. The cops didn't believe me, because he was doing well in school, his friends vouched for him, and frankly because I'm black and he's white. Had our roles been reversed, I am certain the cops would have done something. In going to the cops, everyone had to know my business. I needed witnesses for certain situations and my parents drove me to the courtrooms and police stations. I had to answer a million questions that felt as though nobody believed me. So everyone in my life knows about what he did to me.

Unfortunately, this has been like a scarlet letter¹ for me. It has prevented me from coming out, because whenever I try, everyone thinks that I'm not asexual, I'm just not over this trauma. I've even had a therapist say this to me. But I was asexual before I met that guy. It's a part of my identity as a person, not a reaction to trauma. I was strong enough to be able to tell my story to every Tom, Dick, and Harry in town. So if I was allosexual, wouldn't I be strong enough to get my sex life back?

But anyway, I got into a relationship so that people would view me as "healthy". It's a long-distance relationship, so when I'm traveling it's easy to tell people that try to hit on me that "I've got a boyfriend back home", and play the role of this loyal, caring girlfriend. But sometimes I do have to go back home. And despite the fact that I love my home town, and I'm always excited to see my parents, him being there makes me dread going back home. I have to get pretty drunk in order to put up with having sex with him. Over phone calls and texts with him; I don't mind sending nudes, because my naked body doesn't really mean anything to me, but what makes me really uncomfortable is all the overtly sexual, flirty, trying to initiate sexting type stuff. I literally find that more repulsive than sex itself. And I have told him that my whole body physically cringes when he sends me that stuff. And he thinks I'm kidding and always says shit like "aww, you know you love it" and stuff like that. He's also really into goey, romantic, baby talk crap. Which makes him less and

1. A scarlet letter "A" formerly worn by one convicted of adultery

But anyway, I got into a relationship so that people would view me as “healthy”. It’s a long-distance relationship, so when I’m traveling it’s easy to tell people that try to hit on me that “I’ve got a boyfriend back home”, and play the role of this loyal, caring girlfriend. But sometimes I do have to go back home. And despite the fact that I love my home town, and I’m always excited to see my parents, him being there makes me dread going back home. I have to get pretty drunk in order to put up with having sex with him. Over phone calls and texts with him; I don’t mind sending nudes, because my naked body doesn’t really mean anything to me, but what makes me really uncomfortable is all the overtly sexual, flirty, trying to initiate sexting type stuff. I literally find that more repulsive than sex itself. And I have told him that my whole body physically cringes when he sends me that stuff. And he thinks I’m kidding and always says shit like “aww, you know you love it” and stuff like that. He’s also really into goey, romantic, baby talk crap. Which makes him less and less attractive to me every time he does it. Every time I even try to approach the subject, he takes it super personally and tells me about how difficult it is to be rejected by his own girlfriend, how insecure he is, and he implies that I’m responsible for those insecurities. I get all guilt-tripped and he convinces me that I’m selfish (and maybe I am).

But, my parents like him, we both eventually want kids and, when it’s not gross romance trash, we get along very well, so it’s worth sticking around. I worry that if I ever lived with him, I might develop a dependency or addiction to alcohol. So for now, it’s convenient that my job requires constant travel.

I dream of a time where one day I am retired, have been married and divorced, raised a couple of kids to adulthood and I live in a time where asexuality is more accepted. Both my parents are retired. My dad has remarried, but my mom doesn’t believe in remarriage and lives by herself. She hikes and bike rides and shops all with her platonic friends, and had a roommate for a while, that’s her close friend, but not a sexual or romantic partner. My mom is living the exact dream of a life that keeps me going most days. I’ve told her that. I don’t think she understands the difference between celibacy and asexuality, and I’m pretty sure she expects me to eventually marry my current boyfriend and have kids. I’ll cross that bridge when we get there. She’s the closest thing I’ve ever had to acceptance when coming out, and I’m glad that after everything, at least I have my mom.

Jyothi from the United Kingdom

Warning, this story contains: mention of sex and substance abuse, acephobia, and acephobic language.

I joined the AVEN network a decade ago.

When I was 5, I remember having feelings of wanting to be sexless without any sexual organs. I clearly remember writing in my diary that I wanted to be neither male nor female, I wanted to be sexless and genderless. As time went on, I always knew I was not like my friends. They would bring pictures of boys and obsess about them, talking about marriage and babies. I, on the other hand, would stare at all the pictures they would bring in, and I did not get it. Nothing made sense. I could not comprehend the words ‘hot’ or ‘cute’. When I would see people, I never saw the outside of them, it was as though they were transparent to begin with, I could only see their souls and not what their flesh looked like.

I knew I was asexual, but because we live in a hypersexualised society with no apparent alternatives other than engaging in sex according to the majority, asexuality is denormalized and stigmatised.

In all honesty, I never understood attraction, I could not comprehend it whatsoever. So, I decided to study it at university. I became a sex scientist, learning about the different ways allosexuals interacted with the human body and derived attractiveness judgements from arbitrary features such as areolas. It was later when I worked as a scientist in a research lab, aptly named 'Sexual Attraction Lab' that I came out as asexual, which I think was perhaps the last time I ever mentioned I was asexual publicly. I asked one of the professors what they thought about asexuality, and he replied with 'they don't exist, it is all bullshit and it's probably related to sexual trauma' (which I had never had). I waited a moment and whispered, 'I am asexual'. He said, 'I didn't know, how could I know that you've never experienced anything', then ran out of the room.

Of course, being young, dumb, and impressionable, I believed this professor of sex, and decided that 'of course, I'm probably mistaken and am actually heterosexual or something'. I decided I should get a boyfriend and have sex. The process was devoid of any emotion or attraction. I joined a dating website and picked a suitable partner who I assumed I would have something to talk about with as they were in science too. We met and he tried to kiss me the whole time. I did not know what the hell to do, as I did not feel anything. Then a month later we had sex, the first time for me. I specifically remember exclaiming out loud 'is that all it's about?' Every time we had sex, the only way I could get myself to do it was by drinking an entire bottle of whisky. Because if I were not completely intoxicated, it was not possible.

Anyway, after being with a man for a bit, I thought to myself, clearly I'm not hetero, maybe I'm into women instead. I dated a woman for a while and still I could not do the sex bit without being completely intoxicated. I just stopped trying after a while because it obviously was not working, made me uncomfortable and was hurting me on a mental and physical level.

A year later I became friends with someone whilst travelling. We became best friends and chatted for hours and hours. He later asked me out on a date. Still, I was not attracted to his physical form nor was I interested in sex. Of course, I felt like I had to have sex in the beginning, but that was short lived as I began to own and understand who I actually was. Today we are still best friends, but married and we have been together for the past seven years, having had a non-sexual relationship for the past 6. As he is heterosexual, we have an arrangement for him to get his 'sexual' needs outside of the house. By law my marriage is annulable because technically it has never been 'consummated'. Also, being of South Asian heritage, I find it quite troubling dealing with in-laws wanting us to have children all the time. My husband prefers me not to come out as asexual as he feels ashamed. Which just adds to the stigma.

Furthermore, working in fashion I have told a few of my colleagues recently that I am asexual. Which has had disastrous results, with terribly rude and invasive questions. I do not feel there are any safe spaces to come out in, including the LGBTQIA+ community. For now, I occupy the space in between, where most people assume I am heterosexual, when in reality I am a queer asexual. It has been hard being closeted for so many years. I feel that the efforts of Yasmin Benoit in raising awareness have done wonderful things for the community. Furthermore, seeing Todd in 'BoJack Horseman' was also a revelation because it felt like it gave us permission to exist. I hope the environment changes soon, so I can

come out in peace, free from discrimination, and help others who have long felt the same as me feel visible.

However, unfortunately today is not that day.

Kemmie from the United Kingdom

Warning, this story contains: medical trauma, acephobia, queerphobia and compulsory sexuality.

I realised I was asexual when I was around 13. I didn't have the right vocabulary to express what I was feeling beforehand, but I discovered the word "asexual" and thought it described me quite well. I didn't know that romantic and sexual attraction were different things, so I was scared that I would be unloved. Five years later, I came out to three of my friends, telling them that I was asexual. One was very supportive. Another was very angry, saying that nobody would want me and that it was just a made up thing anyway. The third cut me out of their life completely. I will never come out to my family, because they openly express their hatred for anyone who is LGBT, including asexual people, and I cannot risk that. Almost every day I see horrible things being said on social media, and as an asexual non-binary person, it terrifies me to even be out online. I cannot go to my family for support, because they would definitely cut me off. Even telling my doctor that I'm ace was a mistake. I took it back as quickly as I could once they started talking to me about whether or not childhood trauma had an effect, and that maybe seeing a therapist could help. I've seen members of the LGBT community invalidate my experiences as an asexual person too, so I feel as though I'm "less-than" because of it. There is no education about asexuality at all. If there had been, I think I would have accepted myself more growing up. And for those who aren't asexual, they'd learn what it means to be ace and that it is a real thing.

Bianca from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: acephobia.

I wanted to come out to my mom, because my friend came out as bi to their father and said it was like the pressure was lifted off their back. So I took my copy of the book 'Loveless' and translated lots of parts to my mom, telling the story of Georgia along the way. In the end I asked what she thought of it and her literal words were "that's sad". I never mentioned the sad parts of the book, just the educational ones. And I told her that this is a story about a girl discovering her sexuality and learning to accept herself. So I just started to cry and that's when my mom finally noticed what I was trying to do and said "oh, I felt like that when I was sixteen, you don't need to label yourself". I answered by saying "what if I want to label myself" and she responded with "you won't feel that way when you're older". So I just went to my room and cried. About my father, I'm not out to him and I know he likes the TV show House, so he would probably just think that I am sick. To end on a positive note, I have two friends and both of them really support me. For instance, we share memes about asexuality all the time.

SR from Iraq

I found out about asexuality when I was approximately 14 years old, but I only started identifying as such at 17. The road to coming to terms with it and accepting it was less difficult for me than for some other people, but it was long.

I looked at posts about asexuality when I first found out about it, and even though there were many things I related to, I couldn't quite let myself take on this identity. It was partially the thought that I was too young to truly decide, and I guess partially I was in denial that I wasn't like my allosexual friends.

I couldn't relate to my friends when they talked about the hot guy they saw at the mall or about the sexy picture of a celebrity. Because of that, I started thinking that maybe I was a lesbian; because if I'm not attracted to guys, I must be attracted to girls, at least sexually. But alas, I was not.

In a heteronormative society, anything that deviates from what's 'normal' is bad or weird. As an asexual person, I feel like we are constantly exposed to the propaganda of a straight, monogamous and sexual relationship, and the idea that sexual and romantic attraction are one and the same. Despite knowing that this simply isn't true, internalised aphobia makes it difficult to completely overcome these ideas. This is partially why it took me three years to be comfortable identifying as ace.

The way I finally decided to choose this label was through a lengthy discussion with one of my friends about asexuality and how I might relate to it. She was very supportive and non-judgmental, and she really helped me accept the label. Thinking back on when I was younger, there were things which were clear indicators, but I mainly chalked it up to being young, inexperienced or just different. Finding asexuality was freeing at 14, and allowing myself to identify as asexual at 17 was even more freeing and relieving.

Despite it being freeing, there are sides to it that are personally a bit difficult, like the loneliness I sometimes feel. No one I know is ace, or even on the ace spectrum, and I don't have any online ace friends or mutuals, so I don't really have anyone to talk to that I could relate to. The people that I have come out to are very supportive but, even though I shouldn't feel like this, I feel like I am burdening them or taking over the conversation when I bring up being ace.

It gets lonely to be the only ace person in a group of people who are talking about the sexiest celebrities or the hottest couples, because I just don't understand what they mean by it. I can tell when people are pretty, but I will never understand the sexual attraction that people just casually have. I can't look at someone and think: 'wow, I want to have sex with them'.

As a young kid I guess that made it difficult for me to relate to my peers; they were talking about finding cute guys on the beach, but I was there with question marks floating around in my head as to what they deemed cute and what the criteria were for it. As I grew up, for years I spent hours upon hours thinking about asexuality; what it would mean for me to identify as ace, if it would change anything.

I'm 18 now and I've been out for about 7 months, but only to 4 people. I know I can't come out to my parents or family, mainly because I don't think they would validate my identity –

they'd probably deny its existence. I can't come out to a lot of friends either, because most of them have never been exposed to the LGBTQ+ community properly, so I don't know how they would react to me being part of it. It intimidates me when they ask questions about the LGBTQ+ community, because I don't know their reactions, because their acceptance of it affects their acceptance of me, and I don't think I would handle it well if they reacted badly.

If there's one thing I would want to improve, it would be to find someone who is also ace, to share my experiences with, and to turn to when I am surrounded solely by allosexuals.

Maddy from Australia

Warning, this story contains: acephobia and ace exclusionary behaviour.

The first time I came out to people, it was to a group of friends in high school, many of whom were queer themselves. The first thing they said to me was "you know you're not LGBT, right?" I hadn't even mentioned anything to that effect, just that I thought I might be asexual and I was immediately shut down and belittled. I didn't come out to anyone else for years after that. I felt so small and alienated in a space that I used to feel safe in.

A Pawn from the United States

Warning, this story contains: conversion therapy, purity culture, religious discrimination, aphobia, queerphobia, heteronormativity, allonormativity and amatonormativity.

Discovering my asexuality has left me to decide between community and identity. Some days, I'm not sure which one to pick, and if I have a choice at all.

I have lived my whole life in the heart of the "Mormon Bubble," referring to that Northern Utah region dominated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Being raised in a culture steeped in the Mormon religion severely stunted my understanding of self. From my youth onwards, my life plan was laid out for me; first dating, then marriage, finally children and grandchildren. The heteronormative amatonormativity was taught not just as the norm, but as predestination. So, as a child, I never questioned it. Statements such as "when you start dating..." and "when you get married..." seemed as unobtrusive as "when you have breakfast..." or "when you start high school..."

When I finally discovered my asexuality in my third year of university, I was scared. Though I had struggled with feelings of internal conflict about partnering my whole life, they were easier to dismiss when I wasn't an adult. Now that I was "eligible", the reality of my lack of attraction – and lack of desire for partnership – came into conflict with my religious beliefs, my family values, and cultural expectations. For a non-partnering aromantic-asexual, a future in Mormonism is bleak.

There are few things the Latter-Day Saint Church places more emphasis on than a heteronormative family unit. One document, published in 1995 by the Church entitled, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," is considered as binding as scripture and is literal doctrinal canon. The Proclamation does not mince words when stating how it feels about queer

relationships, or abstaining from partnering altogether when it says, "Marriage between man and woman is essential to His [God's] eternal plan". In Mormon doctrine, to reach the highest part of heaven where you can live with God and His Son, you must be married in a heterosexual relationship through the church's sacred marriage ceremony called "sealing". If I stay a good Mormon, then I, along with my queer siblings, will be "made straight" in the next life, where we will be given partners to live the rest of eternity within a heterosexual companionship. We are taught this as if it is a mercy, and not a slap in the face.

This doctrine leads to Mormonism's pervasive purity culture. Often, asexual individuals are left out of the conversation when it comes to purity culture, but it is just as toxic for us as any other sexual orientation. If "purity" is central to purity culture, then it begs the question, purity for what purpose? In Mormonism, purity is directly tied to "saving your virtue for marriage". While any sexual activity outside marriage is considered one of the greatest sins, marriage is the end goal for Mormon purity. As a non-partnering aromantic-asexual, the whole purpose, the whole plan, is disrupted by my existence.

This is why I remain deep inside the closet. In a family and community culture where LDS doctrine is everything there is to life, my asexuality is considered nothing more than a terrible burden. Should my family members find out about my orientation, ecclesiastical intervention is a guarantee. The church has been known to promote and conduct conversion therapy in the past; I see no reason to think I would be the exception. Even if that didn't happen, my asexuality, by doctrinal decree, could never be accepted.

I am fortunate enough to be safely out to two cousins who have wholeheartedly and lovingly embraced my true self, but even in conversations with them the conflict arises. To be an ally and a Mormon is a paradox. You cannot be one without sacrificing elements of the other; more often, parts of both are chipped away until only distorted versions are left. To embrace anything outside the heteronormative, cisnormative, and amatonormative, a Mormon ally has to reject what is supposed to be direct revelation from God. Perhaps the incompatibility within Mormon doctrine could be dismissed as what Mormons love to call "the errors of men", but these men are supposed to be mouthpieces for Deity. Dismissing their words as "error" is no small task; ask any Black member of the Church.

There's a recurring argument that says certain orientations, like asexuality, have an easier time in the wider culture because of their "straight-passing privilege". I don't claim to be an expert on the topic, but I can say that asexual individuals have no such thing in Mormon culture. The expectation for heteronormative marriage is so essential to Mormonism, that as a person reaches eligibility, eyes begin to watch. As the years pass, the suspicion will grow. Effort must be seen, otherwise, the reality becomes plain. There's a time bomb buried inside me. When it goes off, everyone will see what I am made of.

I cannot lie forever. Eventually, I must pick who I really am. For now, my mind is set on leaving this religion, though not just for reasons of my orientation. Even if I tried to stay, the clock is counting down and, eventually, my family will have to learn who I am. Sadly, when I do this it will be seen as picking between an "immature sin" I refuse to forsake or being with my family after death. In truth, I will have to pick between being with my family in this life or living authentically but perhaps alone. To an extent, my family will have to pick between me or their religion. I have no confidence that I will like their choice, and that scares me.

While I count the days 'til I must decide between my community, my family, and my identity; I linger in my closet. I do not know who will be on the other side of the door. I hope there is someone there to greet me. Even so, one day, I will open it.

Natalia from Russia

The first time I thought “maybe I am asexual” was when I was 14, but I pushed it away because I thought that I was too young to think about sex and relationships. When I was 16, I started to look up a lot of information about orientations, because a friend came out as bisexual. I remember one of our talks. We saw a tweet with some kind of joke or game that had a list underneath “every person on Twitter has at least one of these points”. So we played it and when I saw the point “part of LGBTQ+” I was like “I don’t know”. I definitely knew one thing: I am not straight. I started searching online with the phrase “I am pansexual”, because I didn’t see any difference in my attraction to any gender. Now I understand that the reason for the lack of difference is my asexuality and aromanticism.

I don’t have a coming out story, because I never came out to anyone. I’m scared. Asexual individuals face problems in countries where being LGBTQ+ isn’t illegal, but I’m not one of them. I’m not only scared because of the law in my country, but also how my parents would react as they know little about gender identities and sexual orientations. They don’t even know the basics. I am trying to change this, but it isn’t easy. They have absorbed a lot of homophobia and I need time to explain everything. So I hope my talks work. They had never heard about asexuality and aromanticism before I told them. As our relationship isn’t good either, I don’t think I’m ready to come out to them yet, and I don’t think they are ready either. My friends are a different story. They know a lot about the LGBTQ+ community and aren’t homophobic, but asexuality is different. I have a lot of fears about their reactions. I’m so afraid that they areophobic or won’t take it seriously. I’m afraid that they will disappoint me and that it will be the end of our friendship. So definitely not fun. Well, they are really cool and have never disappointed me, but I’m still scared.

I needed someone to talk to as it’s very difficult to deal with all the aroace stuff alone. Sometimes I just cry. So I’ve made a second Twitter account where I write about aromanticism (we use the format “as *name of orientation or movement* I forbid”, followed by stereotypes or different bullshit about *name*). As there were already accounts about asexuality, I made one about aromanticism). It helped me find people I can talk to. We share our experiences and just understand each other. I know there are sites with “communities” on them like AVEN or AUREA, but I don’t feel confident enough to write there. So I only read discussions on them and think things like same, same, oh cool, I also have this experience. Sometimes I hate my fear, and I always hate my country’s laws and level of LGBTQ+-phobia. Sometimes I cry because I feel powerless. But doing some kind of activism on Twitter, helping people learn about who they are, and making aces and aros more visible means I’m not powerless. So I am not powerless despite the thoughts in my mind.

I want rights. I want to feel free to talk to people about my orientation. I want there to be more education about the community. I want more aces and aros to be visible.

Arshley from Canada

I don't know if I have much of a story to tell... I guess I could start at the beginning: the documentary *(A)sexual*. I had watched that documentary two years prior to "rediscovering" asexuality. At the time, I shrugged it off. I thought: yeah, that can apply to them but it could never apply to me! I had erected a wall of denial and convinced myself that I "just hadn't found the right one yet." Two years after watching the documentary for the first time, I was sitting at my computer and suddenly had a realization, a eureka moment: out of all of my former high school friends, I was the only one who had never dated anyone. Not only that, but I had absolutely no interest in dating either. Perhaps it was coincidence or irony, but I was on YouTube and one of the videos recommended to me was one about asexuality created by Ash Hardell (their three-part series on the ace & aro spectra and communities). To make a long story short, after a great deal of research (and persistent denial), I finally accepted my AroAce identity. However, although my sister and friends are very accepting of me, I don't think I'll ever come out to my parents or anyone else in my family. Even though their persistent comments on the fact that I am still single get on my nerves. They're all religious to some extent and hold very anti-queer attitudes and beliefs that they aren't afraid to express whenever the occasion presents itself... Despite this, I am so thankful that I found aromanticism and asexuality! I can now understand myself better and am so proud to be part of these communities!

Ariel from Brazil

Warning, this story contains: compulsory sexuality.

I spent my teen years questioning myself until I was exhausted. I couldn't know for sure if it was a phase, if I was ill, or if I was just imagining things. I remember listening to friends talking to each other about masturbating while thinking about someone and it didn't make sense to me. In fact, when masturbation came up, there were either people laughing because they assumed I did it, or there were people who really knew me and pitied me for being too much of an innocent, pure saint of a teenager. That sparked something in me, some sort of anger. At some point my mind decided that it was easier to accept that I was just a straight and broken person and that I would grow out of it. When I went to college, I met people who were weirded out by my reactions to their very explicit sexual language. So I tried to expose myself to it to see if I could cure myself somehow, which didn't happen. What did happen was that I discovered that I was ace, then gray-ace, which snowballed to bi, enby, and maybe aro. I'm fairly okay with being queer nowadays, but being both trans and ace brought me a lot of anxiety at first. I hope one day questioning teens will feel safer than closeted me. I wrote a paper on David Jay in school and yet forgot how revolutionary queerness could be. I hope teens will know sex doesn't make anyone more mature, that not feeling sexual attraction doesn't mean they're broken, and that they'll grow up just fine like everyone else. Asexual teens are forever valid.

J.L. Mellor from the United States

Warning, this story contains: queerphobic language.

Growing up I got crushes on boys, like most girls do. Just mild childish crushes where I just wanted to be friends with them, and maybe hold hands. Nothing big. But when I was 13, it just stopped. I was no longer interested in any of the boys. I didn't know why it just turned off. Because of that I wondered if maybe I actually liked girls. But the thought of doing anything remotely physical with a girl grossed me out. I didn't want to hold hands with or kiss a girl, and I wasn't curious about how girls had sex. Confused as I was, I figured that maybe I was a late bloomer, and my interest would eventually turn back on.

Luckily, I was able to worm myself out of conversations about boys at school or at sleepovers. Most just assumed I was this goth cynic who was not into the notion of love. I was fine with that. It was the ones who thought that maybe I was just naïve/clueless and thought they'd break me out of my shell that got to me. They would watch any interaction I had with boys with rapt attention. If the boys were nice to me or we held a conversation, it was seen as the potential start of a relationship. Most of the time, this effort was wasted. I went on two dates in high school (a Halloween dance and prom), and I didn't feel like I really missed out on anything.

Home used to be my safe space, because my sisters were so much younger than me and didn't care about my lack of love life. But when they hit puberty, they did care. So they would leave me alone if I had a guy friend over, I would use him as a stand-in boyfriend so they wouldn't worry. But then I met a guy who I became friends with. We could talk about a wide range of subjects and I liked spending time with him. When he proposed to me, I thought about it long and hard before agreeing to marry him. I figured I'd never be bored with him, he was a nice sweet guy, and he never tried to push me into anything physical. So I thought even if sex wasn't on the table, it would still be a good relationship. So I thought maybe my desire (as limited as it was), just turned on at 23 instead of 13.

At some point I found an app where you play as a bisexual woman with love interests that are male, female and non-binary. It helped me confirm that I wasn't interested in girls. But one character identified as demisexual, and I'd never heard of that term before. I was going to do a piece of artwork, and wanted to see if they had their own flag. They do, and I read the description and thought: that sounds like me. Wow. This explains so much. I'm sharing this because as far as I understand, demisexual falls under the asexual umbrella, but I still don't know what I am.

My husband has been really supportive, and I think he's relieved about this revelation. I haven't told anyone else. Parts of the USA are different, but the part where I live is homophobic and transphobic. People believe that God made you the way you are, that any non-heterosexual urges are to be fought so that you can prove you are stronger than the devil who would exploit those weaknesses, and that the key to eternal happiness is to marry and have a heterosexual marriage with children. All things that would make an asexual person feel broken for not caring about some of those things. Asexuality wasn't even acknowledged as something people can be. I had to get the information from Google.

French **Français**

Editors

Estance Delclaux-Hammon
Juno from Asfera

Translator

Estance Delclaux-Hammon

S. de Grèce

Avertissement de contenu : rhétorique acephobe, mentions de relations sexuelles.

Je savais depuis très jeune que je n'étais pas conforme aux standards hétéronormatifs de la société. Pendant 6 ans, j'ai cherché l'étiquette qui me conviendrait le mieux, mais je ne me suis jamais senti.e 100% moi-même. À de nombreuses reprises, y a eu de la pression, il fallait que j'ai des rapports sexuels avec quelqu'un.e pour voir comment c'était. J'ai eu beaucoup de relations où je me sentais mal à l'aise, parce qu'iels demandaient du contact physique, alors que je voulais seulement des câlins et des bisous. Plusieurs fois, iels ont eu l'impression que notre relation était plus platonique que romantique, même si je savais au fond de moi que ce n'était pas ce qu'iels voulaient. Après ma dernière séparation, il y a un an, je me suis assis.e et j'ai réfléchi à ce qui n'allait pas. Lorsque j'étais jeune, je disais que j'étais asexuel.le, mais j'ai été convaincu.e, même par mon cercle d'ami.e.s qu'il fallait "essayer d'avoir des rapports sexuels pour voir". Et bien non... Je n'avais pas besoin de le faire pour savoir que je suis asexuel.le.

Luna du Brésil

J'ai réalisé très tard que j'étais asexuelle. La première fois que j'ai remarqué que quelque chose semblait étrange est la première fois que j'ai embrassé un garçon. Tout le monde racontait se sentir euphorique et tout, mais moi je ne ressentais rien du tout. Lors de mes relations suivantes, c'était la même chose et lorsque j'avais l'impression que nous allions franchir une étape, je me sentais mal à l'aise, malade, j'arrêtais et ensuite c'était la rupture. Je détestais le fait que je finissais par blesser, non seulement moi-même, mais également ces garçons que j'appréciais sincèrement. Très longtemps, j'ai eu l'impression que quelque chose n'allait pas avec moi et je détestais juste ça. Enfin, après avoir fait des recherches sur ce que je ressentais, essayant de donner un sens à tout ça, j'ai trouvé le mot asexualité. C'était un tel soulagement d'apprendre que je n'étais pas seule dans mon ressenti et que je n'étais pas cassée à cause de ça. Maintenant, j'ai une communauté où je peux parler à des gens comme moi et, heureusement, j'ai des ami.e.s qui me comprennent. Mais jusqu'à présent, je n'ai pas pu dire un mot de tout ça à ma famille, par peur de ce qu'ils pourraient dire ou faire. Je ne suis pas sur.e de pouvoir un jour faire un coming out, mais j'espère pouvoir trouver le courage d'être moi-même et de ne plus avoir à mentir sur ces sujets-là avec elleux. Je ne peux qu'espérer que le jour viendra et que ça ne leur posera pas de problème et qu'ils m'aimeront malgré tout.

A.M. du Canada

Avertissement de contenu : coercition, agression sexuelle, viol correctif, thérapie de conversion et acephobie.

Mon questionnement sur mon orientation sexuelle a commencé lorsque j'avais 14 ans. Je venais de rompre avec mon premier petit ami et je me suis fait la réflexion que je ne ressens pas beaucoup d'attirance physique pour lui, alors que je ressentais bien une attirance romantique. Pendant un moment, j'ai mis ça de côté en me disant que ça viendrait avec le temps, mais je n'ai simplement jamais commencé à ressentir ces sentiments. Lorsque

j'ai fait un coming out à ma mère, elle m'a envoyé consulter en psychologie. Mes docteurs m'ont dit que "je n'acceptai pas bien ma féminité" et ma mère leur a dit spécifiquement "elle pense qu'elle est asexuelle" lorsqu'elle leur a parlé. Cela m'a beaucoup fait douter de moi et je me suis demandé si j'avais un problème médical. Ce n'est que lorsque j'ai rompu avec mon deuxième petit ami que j'ai réalisé que ce n'était pas quelque chose qui allait se passer pour moi. Il avait essayé de me faire apprécier certaines choses à travers ... hum... le toucher et des méthodes pas très à cheval sur le consentement. Il avait pris de la fierté dans sa tentative de me "rendre zedsexuelle", c'est à dire non-asexuelle, mais je n'étais tout simplement pas attiré par lui physiquement. Je n'ai jamais été attirée physiquement par qui que ce soit et il m'a fallu beaucoup d'introspection et de bienveillance afin d'arriver maintenant à ce point. C'est bien dommage qu'il y ait autant d'histoires comme la mienne et mon seul souhait pour les autres jeunes aces est qu'ils comprennent leurs limites et qu'ils comprennent qu'ils n'ont pas à changer, pour aucune raison. J'espère que vous dites non lorsque c'est nécessaire et que vous réalisez que vous ne devriez pas être dans une position où vous êtes inconfortables ou laisser les gens vous faire tout ce qu'ils veulent afin d'être dans une relation aimante. C'est okay d'être ace et c'est okay d'avoir des limites, même si les autres pensent que ces limites sont un peu étranges. Restez fortEs et puissantEs, ma famille d'aces !! <3

Carol du Brésil

Avertissement de contenu : aphobie, thérapie de conversion, abus par un professionnel de santé, impératif à l'hétérosexualité, impératif à la sexualité et amatonormativité.

Mon histoire commence lorsque j'avais 15 ans et que j'ai appris l'existence de l'asexualité sur Internet. Je me suis identifié.e comme aroace immédiatement et je n'ai pas pensé que les gens auraient vraiment un problème avec ça. Je l'ai dit à certaines personnes avec qui je traînais à l'école et pour iels c'était ok. Je pensais que les autres n'auraient pas de problème non plus, mais l'année suivante j'ai entendu quelqu'un.e dire que c'était une maladie. J'ai décidé de rester discrète et de n'en parler qu'à ceux dont je suis proche et avec qui je me sens à l'aise.

Mon cauchemar a commencé quelques années plus tard lorsque j'ai fait une dépression et commencé à voir une psychologue. Les relations n'avaient jamais été un problème pour moi, mais elle continuait à insister qu'il fallait que je trouve quelqu'un.e (un homme), que je me marie et que j'aie des enfants. Un jour, elle a appris mon asexualité et elle a dit qu'une chose pareille n'existait pas et qu'elle allait me soigner. J'ai juste laissé tomber. Personne ne sait pourquoi, les quelques personnes à qui j'en ai parlé n'ont pas trouvé que c'était un problème qu'un.e psychologue essaye de forcer quelqu'un.e de changer d'orientation (a) sexuelle.

Mariam d'Inde

Avertissement de contenu : agression sexuelle, contact physique non-consensuel, rhétorique acephobe, viol conjugal, violences psychologiques, violences conjugales et mariage forcé.

Comment peut-on savoir si on est asexuel·le avant de connaître la sexualité ? J'ai 34 ans et j'ai réalisé ça récemment.

J'avais décidé de ne pas me marier. Comme vous le savez dans la culture indienne nous, en particulier les filles, n'avons pas le droit de décision sur le mariage, ni quand, ni avec qui. J'ai été forcée et comme j'ai protesté, la situation s'est aggravée. Mes parents m'ont harcelé et agressé, j'ai été emprisonnée au domicile familial et accusée d'être arrogante et de rejeter des demandes en mariage. La vérité c'est que je n'avais rejeté personne, parce que j'étais contrainte et tourmentée sans même être protestataire. J'étais initialement prête à me marier, comme je ressentais que j'étais un fardeau pour mes parents. ça s'est passé de mes 21 à mes 25 ans, une série d'incidents.

Ici les filles peuvent être agressées par n'importe qui et c'est glorifié dans la culture (j'ai même été moquée par des ami·e·s pendant ma scolarité et mes études comme étant à la ramasse, parce que j'étais ignorante de ce dont les gens de mon âge discutaient - l'amour, la romance, le sexe et peut-être davantage). À 26 ans, j'ai été mariée après tout un tas d'incidents dramatiques. Ce jour-là, il (marié tard d'après le système indien) était tellement enthousiaste et il jouait avec mon corps comme s'il avait reçu un jouet. Alors qu'échapper à l'enfer était la seule raison pour laquelle j'avais signé mon contrat de mariage, c'était une autre forme de torture - j'avais encore plus le cœur brisé. Il m'a violé dans cette maison là et lorsqu'il a recommencé la même chose le jour suivant dans une auberge qu'on avait réservée, j'ai hurlé pour que des gens puissent venir me sauver de lui, mais en vain. Plusieurs jours, je suis restée allongée comme un cadavre, pensant que les rapports sexuels étaient un devoir, se faire violer. S'il avait jamais regardé mon visage, les yeux, il aurait pu réaliser, mais il n'a jamais...

J'ai commencé à devenir déprimée et j'étais en colère contre mes parents, contre notre culture, les membres de ma famille, les ami·e·s et j'ai commencé à garder de la distance avec elleux. Plus tard, j'ai commencé à ressentir du dégoût lorsqu'il me touchait, j'étais mal à l'aise à ce point-là. Les années ont passé... Mes parents, pour me soutenir financièrement, m'ont donné un immeuble pour lancer une entreprise. Alors que je voulais commencer un studio de dance ou de fitness, comme mon choix n'était pas pris en compte, j'ai été forcée de commencer une institution de coaching, pour laquelle je devais travailler seule, de petite main à professeur, de manager à femme-à-tout-faire, jour et nuit (en plus de ça, afin d'avoir davantage de revenus j'ai entrepris deux autres projets en plus). Mon soi-disant mari parfait, qui était égoïste, machiste, un hypocrite, un pervers qui n'avait jamais essayé de me convaincre, mais voulait utiliser mon corps pour son bonheur, m'a jugé comme si j'avais une liaison clandestine. Sans aucun argumentaire, il m'a renvoyé à la maison de mes parents.

J'ai été ignorée lorsque j'ai tenté de prouver mon innocence et j'ai été traumatisé mentalement, ce qui a aussi affecté mon travail. Plus tard, j'ai commencé à me demander pourquoi il y a eu autant de violence sexuelle alors que je n'étais pas intéressée sexuellement. Pourquoi est-ce que j'ai été torturée, violée et le reste ? Puis j'ai entendu parler de l'asexualité - j'ai fait des recherches sur Google, YouTube, Facebook et je pouvais m'identifier aux expériences qui sont partagées dans la communauté asexuelle sur les réseaux sociaux.

Maintenant je suis séparée de lui après plus de huit ans de mariage. Maintenant je veux travailler pour ceux qui sont silencieuse-s et opprimé-e-s dans cette communauté et pour les enfants.

Merci.

Ziba des Etats-Unis

Avertissements de contenu : agression sexuelle, contact physique non-consensuel et rhétorique acephobe.

En grandissant, je suis toujours partie du principe que j'étais une fille hétérosexuelle. Quand je disais que j'étais hétérosexuelle, il y avait toujours quelque chose qui ne collait pas vraiment. Ado, je savais que je n'aimais pas les filles, mais j'aimais pas complètement les hommes non plus. J'ai seulement eu des béguins pour trois hommes au cours de ma vie et, à chaque fois, toutes mes pensées étaient dévouées à cette personne pendant au moins un an.

Je suis une version pessimiste de la romantique invétérée. Au collège, tous les autres ressentaient du désir sexuel et savait beaucoup de choses sur le sexe, mais personne ne me disait rien. En tant que femme racisée dans une école entièrement blanche, qui était harcelée par tous les garçons de l'école, je ne comprenais pas la vraie attirance romantique ou sexuelle. Comme aucun·e de mes ami·e-s ne parlait de sexe, je ne savais même pas que d'autres personnes ressentaient de l'attirance sexuelle ou savaient ce qu'était le sexe. Je n'ai appris ce que c'est qu'une relation sexuelle que lorsque j'ai lu des fanfictions à 14 ans.

Une fois que je suis arrivée au lycée en seconde, j'ai enfin ressenti mon premier béguin pour un garçon. Je pensais qu'il m'appréciait aussi. Je n'ai jamais rencontré de mec qui pour de vrai m'appréciait et voulait être mon ami. Mes sentiments pour lui n'ont jamais été sexuels et ma libido était inexistante, malgré le fait que j'étais ado. Après un moment où rien ne s'est passé et où on a plus rien trouvé à se dire, j'ai rencontré quelqu'un d'autre. Appelons le Mason. Mason est la personne qui prenait le plus soin de moi, on a commencé à sortir ensemble et j'ai compris que cet homme avait une libido élevée. C'est rapidement devenu un problème. Il m'a dit que c'était normal que les filles se masturbent, regarde de la pornographie, etc., mais je n'ai jamais compris pourquoi quelqu'un·e voudrait faire ça. Pendant très longtemps, j'ai pensé que le mythe comme quoi les garçons voulaient plus de sexe que les filles était vrai. Au bout d'un moment, il s'est mis en colère et la relation est devenue sexuellement et émotionnellement abusive. Après 8 longs mois de relation, je l'ai enfin quitté, lui et le plus grand traumatisme de ma vie. Même s'il m'a fait faire des actes sexuels, je n'ai jamais eu des relations sexuelles à proprement parler avec lui, et j'étais contente de ça.

Je me suis demandé si j'étais ace ou pas à ce moment-là. Je me suis dit que non parce qu'une amie m'a dit qu'elle avait ressenti la même chose après être partie d'une relation difficile et elle, elle n'était pas ace. Maintenant j'ai 18 ans et je suis à la fac. Être seule pendant le confinement m'a donné trop de temps seule et trop de temps pour penser, réfléchir à ma vie. J'ai commencé à ressentir de la culpabilité d'être vierge à 18 ans. J'étais dégoûtée avec moi-même de ne pas avoir de relations sexuelles, mais au fond de moi je ne voulais pas avoir de relations sexuelles. C'était un combat permanent dans mon esprit pendant des mois. À travers ce combat, je n'avais pas de libido ou d'envie de sexe, je voulais juste me libérer de l'étiquette « vierge ». Je déteste cette étiquette. Elle a été utilisée afin de se moquer et de

rabaisser les autres, alors qu'elle n'a aucune importance, biologiquement parlant. Malgré ce que les gens disent, les gens vierges et les gens pas vierge se comportent de la même manière.

Il y a quelques semaines, j'ai enfin accepté le fait que je suis asexuelle. Au début, j'ai pensé que je m'étais convaincue que je n'étais que demisexuelle, mais j'ai rapidement réalisé que l'étiquette ne me convenait pas. Je suis asexuelle hétéroromantique. Je ne l'ai dit qu'à quelques ami·e·s et à des gens sur Internet. Je m'en fiche un peu si les gens l'apprennent, mais je ne vais pas faire de coming-out à mes parents pour le moment. J'ai un béguin sur un nouveau mec. On ne s'est pas rencontré·e·s en personne pour l'instant et j'ai peur de ce qu'il va dire lorsqu'il va comprendre que je suis ace. Si il a un problème avec ça, je saurais qu'il n'est pas la bonne personne pour moi. D'ici là, je porterai ma bague noir sur le majeur de la main droite tous les jours, juste au cas où si une personne le remarquerait et dirait coucou.

T. de Singapour

Avertissements de contenu : aphobie, consommation de produits et discrimination envers les personnes célibataires.

Alors je suis un·e asexuel·le panromantique AFAB, entre indifférent·e et révolté·e par le sexe. J'ai été dans le déni de mon asexualité pendant l'essentiel de ma jeunesse et ce n'est que récemment à 25 ans que j'ai accepté le fait que je suis asexuel·le. Il y a cette croyance commune que les personnes AFAB ont tendance à ne pas être sexuel·le·s avant d'avoir des relations sexuelles et j'ai pensé que peut-être si je rencontrais une personne qui m'attirait, je réaliserais que je n'étais pas asexuel·le. J'ai passé une bonne partie de ma vingtaine à m'amuser et flirter outrageusement avec des gens que je connaissais à peine mais que je trouvais attirant·e·s. Je voulais simplement me sentir normal·e et après deux ruptures parce qu'on me jugeait froid·e et indifférent·e, je voulais vraiment juste sentir que je n'étais pas la personne en tort et que je pouvais mettre en place de l'intimité physique. Je pensais toujours que c'était peut-être mes ex-es qui étaient hypersexuel·le·s et que leur enthousiasme me refroidissait... Mais j'ai rapidement appris que peu importe le genre... tout le monde apprécie vraiment l'intimité.

Quand j'ai eu 21 ans, j'ai rencontré une personne que je trouvais très attirante. Je n'avais pas embrassé ou embrassé personne depuis 7 ans à ce moment-là et j'ai pensé que mon moment était peut-être venu. J'ai senti une grosse boule de dégoût qui essayait de sortir de ma gorge et j'ai su que ce n'était pas la faute de l'autre personne. Tout à coup, les doutes et vulnérabilités de mes ex-es me sont revenus à l'esprit et j'ai su à ce moment-là que je ne voulais pas qu'un mec beau comme ça ressente la même chose. J'ai avalé mon vomi et je ne l'ai jamais revu. La même nuit, j'ai arrêté de flirter dans tous les sens, mais je me suis mis·e à boire et fumer pour calmer mes anxiétés et mon déni. A mesure que je vieillis, l'envie de petits-enfants de ma grand-mère se renforce. Je n'ai fait de coming out à aucun membre des générations plus âgées de ma famille et je ne sais pas si iels me croiraient de toute manière. Je viens aussi d'une famille musulmane, donc admettre que j'ai eu pas mal d'intimité physique avec des hommes et des femmes c'est clair que ça en contrarierait plusieurs.

Parfois je regarde mes ami·e·s demisexuel·le·s et grayaces et je ne peux pas m'empêcher d'être un peu envieuse. Je voudrais pouvoir apprécier les bisous et les câlins - et peut-être parfois du sexe, ou au moins ne pas ressentir d'attirance romantique, mais c'est comme ça. Je prévois aussi de vivre seul·e, mais les prix de l'immobilier sont ridicules à Singapour et il

faut avoir 35 ans pour pouvoir acheter un logement quand on est célibataire. J'espère que je pourrais vivre dans une belle maison un jour, avec un iguane de compagnie. Je ne pense jamais à faire un coming out en tant qu'ace à aucun des membres plus âgés de ma famille, mais ce serait bien qu'ils sachent que je ne suis pas superficielle et que c'est simplement mon orientation sexuelle qui complique le fait de maintenir une relation pour moi.

Ashe du Mexique

Avertissements de contenu : abus d'autorité médicale, acephobie et mention de viol correctif.

Dans mon pays, être ace, queer ou en général faire partie de la communauté LGBTQ+ est dangereux. Je ne veux pas le minimiser. C'est un endroit magnifique. En revanche, la culture du viol et l'objectification sexuelle sont partout, même dans les blagues banales. En tant qu'ace, le problème c'est que parfois les gens ne comprennent pas que je blague, mais que je ne participe pas, que je regarde mais que « ça me chauffe » pas et parfois les gens ne voient pas la différence. « Mais on ne dirait pas que tu es un·e saint·e-nitouche abstinent·e » (bah j'en suis pas un·e, je suis ace, pas abstinent·e et certainement pas un·e saint·e).

Il y a le harcèlement de rue, les gens peuvent dire que « tu l'as bien cherché » à cause de la manière dont tu as décidé de t'habiller ou parce que tu as été gentil·le avec elleux. Heureusement je ne suis pas très sociable, mais la manière dont je m'habille ou je me comporte ne veut pas dire que j'essaie d'allumer quelqu'un·e. J'ai de la chance de ne pas avoir été agressé·e sexuellement parce que je suis ace, mais c'est aussi parce que je fais très attention et ça ne devrait pas être nécessaire. C'est aussi une combinaison avec le climat social qui me rends dingue, mais qui m'emplit aussi d'impuissance.

Quelques ami·e·s proches à qui j'ai essayé de faire un coming out m'ont dit « je ne te crois pas », « ça doit être à cause d'un traumatisme », « tu vas trouver lae bon·ne » ou « oh, je pourrais essayer de te faire changer d'avis » (beurk !), des phrases que la plupart des aces ont entendues. Le pire c'était quand des enseignant·e·s ont parlé de sexe comme d'un besoin biologique et nié les autres orientations sexuelles et identités de genre (je suis pan, ace et agenre), sans que je puisse pouvoir dire quoi que ce soit, parce que je serai moqué·e et possiblement mis·e en danger. J'ai eu de la chance d'avoir au moins un·e partenaire avec laequel·le je suis complètement out et certain·e·s ami·e·s aces ou queers avec qui j'ai pu en parler librement. Iels comprennent (et parfois même iels oublient aussi, mais j'imagine que c'est ok).

Les docteurs, en particulier les gynécologues et les dermatologues, ne m'ont pas cru lorsque j'ai dit que j'étais vierge, iels ont insisté, « c'est pas vrai », « on ne peut pas vous donner de traitement (pour l'acné) si vous mentez », mais je ne mentais pas et c'était humiliant. J'ai peur d'aller voir lae gynécologue à cause de ça, comme j'ai un âge où il faut que j'aille faire une visite de contrôle et que je n'ai pas eu de relations sexuelles et j'ai peur qu'ils soient pas très prévenant·e·s, trop dur·e·s ou me fasse culpabiliser alors que je n'ai rien fait de mal. Mon ex-petit ami, lui, était abstinent et religieux. J'ai l'impression d'être un aimant à personnes religieuses. Je lui ai dit clairement que je n'aurais pas d'enfants ou de contact sexuel. Il a dit que ça lui allait, mais après il a insisté, voulait qu'on se marie pour qu'il puisse avoir des enfants. Plus tard, il a « accepté » de se contenter d'adopter, mais je ne voulais pas d'enfants tout court et l'avait dit clairement dès le début. Je pense qu'il est parti du principe qu'il allait me changer et m'évangéliser, parce que j'étais « pur·e » à ses yeux et franchement, j'ai res-

senti ça comme une trahison.

J'ai l'impression que beaucoup me voient comme un enfant, à cause de mon manque d'intérêt pour le sexe, mon absence d'attraction et mes convictions fermes dans ce que je veux. Mes convictions n'aident pas, même si elles ne sont pas liées directement à mon asexualité. Mais je veux que les gens le sachent : je ne suis pas un enfant, je ne suis pas un· saint·e, je ne suis pas abstinent·e ou pur·e ou un·e menteuse. Je ne suis simplement pas attiré·e sexuellement par qui que ce soit et si je m'ouvre à elleux, c'est parce que je leur dis la vérité et c'est juste une petite partie de qui je suis.

Ruben des Pays-Bas

Avertissements de contenu : Aphobie, obscénités, mentions de relations sexuelles.

Par chance, j'ai compris que j'étais ace assez jeune. Un peu plus tard et j'aurais pu faire tout un tas de conneries parce que j'aurais pensé que j'avais besoin d'apprécier le sexe. Les discussions sur ce qu'il fallait avoir sur une femme me mettaient très mal à l'aise et le jeu « baise, épouse ou assassine » avait deux options que je considérais mauvaises. Mais je pensais qu'il fallait que je le fasse. Tous les autres mecs semblaient vraiment aimer ça et je ne voulais pas être le seul à être différent.

Mais un membre de ma famille a fait un coming out en tant qu'asexuelle. Pas à moi directement, mais tout le monde en parlait et iels disaient que ce n'était tout simplement pas possible à cause de l'évolution et tout ça. C'est à ce moment là que j'ai enfin appris ce que c'était. Je ne savais pas avant, alors j'ai fait des recherches. Et je ne comprenais pas pourquoi personne ne m'en avait jamais parlé. C'était quelque chose de très important, puisque j'étais sur le point de faire des choses que j'allais vraiment regretter, juste pour être perçu comme « normal ».

Des mois plus tard, lorsque j'ai commencé à en parler à certain·e·s de mes ami·e·s proches, iels faisaient des blagues là-dessus. Je faisais des blagues de cul assez souvent, parce que globalement l'idée me semblait marrante. Iels ont dit que j'étais « une personne très sexuelle » ou m'ont posé des questions personnelles très étranges comme « tu te masturbes du coup ? » et « comment tu peux savoir si tu n'as jamais essayé ? » Ce à quoi j'ai répondu « est ce que tu as essayé de te foutre un cactus dans le cul, bah sinon tu peux pas savoir si tu aimeras ou pas ». Même plus tard, lorsque je leur ai dit que j'étais biromantique, parce que je veux juste faire des câlins, iels ont répondu « mais tu es asexuel, non ? » Et quand j'ai essayé de leur expliquer la différence, iels débattaient de mon identité, comme si iels la comprenaient vraiment bien.

Je n'ai toujours rien dit à ma famille, à part à la personne ace, parce que j'ai entendu ce qu'iels disaient sur elle. Qu'elle n'avait pas encore eu la bonne bite (DIRE ÇA À SA SŒUR ???). Ça m'a mis super mal à l'aise et je ne pense pas que je pourrais faire un coming out dans une famille comme ça.

Arshley du Canada

Je ... je ne sais pas si j'ai vraiment une histoire à raconter... Je suppose que je pourrais commencer par le début : le documentaire (A)sexual. J'avais regardé ce documentaire deux ans avant de « redécouvrir » l'asexualité. À l'époque, j'avais rejeté le message du film. Je pensais, « Oui, ça peut s'appliquer à eux, mais ça ne pourrait jamais s'appliquer à moi ! » Je m'étais érigé un mur de déni et j'étais convaincue que « je n'avais pas encore trouvé la bonne personne ». Deux ans après avoir regardé le documentaire pour la première fois, j'étais assise devant mon ordinateur et j'ai soudainement eu une réalisation, un moment eurêka : de tous mes anciens amis du secondaire, j'étais la seule à n'être jamais sortie avec qui que ce soit. Non seulement ça, mais l'idée de sortir avec quelqu'un ne m'intéressait pas du tout. C'était peut-être une coïncidence ou purement ironique, mais j'étais sur YouTube et l'une des vidéos qui m'était recommandée en était une sur l'asexualité créée par Ash Hardell (sa série en trois parties sur les spectres et les communautés ace et aro). Pour faire court, après de nombreuses recherches (et un déni persistant), j'ai finalement accepté mon identité aroace. Cependant, même si ma sœur et mes amis m'acceptent telle que je suis, je ne pense pas que je ferai un jour mon coming out à mes parents ou d'autres personnes de ma famille même si leurs commentaires persistants sur le fait que je suis encore et toujours célibataire m'agacent. Ils sont tous religieux dans une certaine mesure et ont des attitudes et des croyances très anti-queer qu'ils n'ont pas peur d'exprimer chaque fois que l'occasion se présente... Malgré tout, je suis tellement reconnaissante d'avoir trouvé les communautés aromantique et asexuelle ! Je peux maintenant mieux me comprendre en tant que personne et je suis si fière de faire partie de ces communautés !



German Deutsch

Editor

Tildrun Weber

Luna aus Brasilien

Ich habe erst sehr spät gemerkt, dass ich asexuell bin. Das erste Mal, dass ich merkte, dass sich etwas seltsam anfühlte, war, als ich zum ersten Mal einen Jungen küsste. Alle beschrieben, dass sie sich euphorisch fühlten usw., aber ich fühlte überhaupt nichts. Bei meinen nächsten Beziehungen war es genauso und immer wenn es sich so anfühlte, als würden wir einen Schritt weitergehen, fühlte ich mich unwohl und krank, also hörte ich auf und wir machten Schluss. Ich hasste es, dass ich am Ende nicht nur mich selbst verletzte, sondern auch diese Typen, die ich eigentlich sehr mochte. Ich hatte lange Zeit das Gefühl, dass etwas mit mir nicht stimmt, und ich habe es einfach gehasst. Dann, nachdem ich endlich nachgeschlagen hatte, was ich fühlte und versuchte, mir einen Reim auf alles zu machen, fand ich das Wort Asexualität. Es war so eine Erleichterung herauszufinden, dass ich mit diesem Gefühl nicht allein war und dass ich daran nicht zerbrochen war. Jetzt habe ich eine Gemeinschaft, in der ich mit Leuten wie mir reden kann, und zum Glück habe ich Freund:innen, die mich verstehen. Aber bis jetzt konnte ich meiner Familie noch kein Wort davon sagen, aus Angst davor, was sie sagen oder tun könnten. Ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob ich eines Tages in der Lage sein werde, mich zu outen, aber ich hoffe, dass ich den Mut finden kann, ich selbst zu sein und sie nicht mehr über diese Dinge anzulügen. Ich kann nur hoffen, dass dieser Tag kommen wird, und dass sie damit einverstanden sind und mich trotzdem lieben werden.

A.M. aus Kanada

Inhaltshinweis: diese Geschichte enthält Themen wie Nötigung, sexuelle Übergriffe, Vergewaltigung als Abhilfe Konversionsversuche und Acefeindlichkeit.

Ich begann meine sexuelle Identität in Frage zu stellen, als ich 14 war. Ich hatte mich gerade von meinem ersten Freund getrennt und ich hatte über die Tatsache nachgedacht, dass ich keine große körperliche Anziehung zu ihm verspürte, obwohl ich mich sehr zu ihm hingezogen fühlte. Eine Zeit lang habe ich es als "zu spät gezündet" abgetan, aber diese Gefühle haben bei mir einfach nie angefangen. Als ich mich meiner Mutter gegenüber geoutet habe, hat sie mich in eine Therapie gesteckt. Die Ärzt:innen sagten mir, dass ich "nicht zu meiner Weiblichkeit passe" und meine Mutter sagte im Gespräch mit ihnen ausdrücklich, dass "sie denkt, sie sei ein Ass". Das verursachte eine Menge Selbstzweifel und ich fragte mich, ob ich eine Krankheit hatte. Erst, als ich mich von meinem zweiten Freund trennte, wurde mir klar, dass das für mich nicht in Frage kommt. Er versuchte, mich durch... ähm... Berührungen und nicht sehr einvernehmliche Methoden dazu zu bringen, bestimmte Dinge zu mögen. Er war stolz darauf, zu versuchen, mich "sexuell zu machen", aber ich fühlte mich einfach nicht körperlich zu ihm hingezogen. Ich habe mich nie zu jemandem körperlich hingezogen gefühlt, und es brauchte eine Menge Selbstreflexion und Akzeptanz, um mich an diesen Punkt zu bringen. Es ist bedauerlich, dass meine Geschichte nicht ungewöhnlich ist, und mein einziger Wunsch für andere junge, asexuelle Menschen ist, dass sie ihre Grenzen kennen und verstehen, dass sie sich nicht aus IRGEND EINEM Grund ändern müssen. Ich hoffe, dass du "nein" sagst, wenn es nötig ist, und dass du erkennst, dass du dich nicht unwohl fühlen musst oder zulassen solltest, dass Leute mit dir machen, was sie wollen, damit du in einer liebevollen Beziehung bist. Es ist okay, asexuell zu sein, und es ist okay, Grenzen zu haben, auch wenn andere Leute denken, dass diese Grenzen ein bisschen seltsam sind. Bleib stark und magisch, meine kleine Ace-Familie!!! <3

Greek

Ελληνικά

Editor & translator

Fran

from the Greek Aces/Aros team

S. απο την Ελλάδα

Προσοχή αυτή η ιστορία περιέχει: Ασοφοβική γλώσσα και Αναφορά σε σεξουαλική δραστηριότητα.

Ήξερα από πολύ μικρή πως δεν συμβάδιζα με τα heteronormative πρότυπα της κοινωνίας. Για 6 χρόνια έψαχνα την “ταμπέλα” που θα με αντιπροσώπευε καλύτερα, όμως δεν ένιωθα ποτέ 100% ο εαυτός μου. Πολλές φορές αισθανομουν πιεσμένη πως πρέπει να κάνω έρωτα με κάποιον για να δω πως είναι. Είχα πολλές σχέσεις που ένιωθα άβολα γιατί ήθελαν φυσική επαφή, ενώ εγώ ήθελα μόνο αγκαλιές ή φιλία. Πολλές φορές αισθανομουν σαν να ήταν περισσότερο φιλία παρά σχέση αν και ήξερα μέσα μου πως δεν ήθελαν κάτι τέτοιο. Μετά τον τελευταίο μου χωρισμό πριν μια χρονιά, κάθισα και σκέφτηκα τι πάει στραβά. Όταν ήμουν μικρή είχα πει πως ήμουν asexual αλλά με είχαν πείσει ακόμα και ο φιλικός μου κύκλος πως “πρέπει να κάνεις σεξ για να δεις”. Ε λοιπόν όχι...δεν χρειάστηκε, για να μάθω πως είμαι asexual.

Λούνα από Βραζιλία

Συνειδητοποίησα πολύ αργά ότι ήμουν ασεξουαλική. Την πρώτη φορά που παρατήρησα ότι ένιωσα παράξενα, ήταν όταν φίλησα ένα αγόρι για πρώτη φορά. Όλοι περιέγραφαν αυτή την αίσθηση ευφορίας, αλλά εγώ δεν ένιωσα τίποτα. Για τις επόμενες σχέσεις μου ήταν το ίδιο. Όποτε ένιωθα ότι θα πάμε ένα βήμα πιο πέρα, ένιωθα άβολα, έτσι σταματούσα, και χωρίζαμε. Μισούσα ότι κατέληγα να πληγώνομαι, όχι μόνο εγώ, αλλά και αυτά τα παιδιά που πραγματικά μου άρεσαν. Ένιωθα ότι κάτι πήγαινε στραβά με εμένα για πολύ καιρό, και το μισούσα. Στη συνέχεια, αφού έψαξα τελικά αυτό που ένιωθα, προσπαθώντας να κατανοήσω τα πάντα, βρήκα τη λέξη ασεξουαλικότητα. Ήταν μια ανακούφιση να ανακαλύψω ότι δεν ήμουν η μόνη που αισθάνομαι έτσι, και δεν είμαι χαλασμένη λόγω αυτού. Τώρα έχω μια κοινότητα όπου μπορώ να μιλήσω με ανθρώπους σαν κι εμένα, και ευτυχώς έχω φίλους που με καταλαβαίνουν, αλλά μέχρι στιγμής δεν μπόρεσα να πω τίποτα στην οικογένειά μου, φοβάμαι τι θα μπορούσαν να πουν ή να κάνουν. Δεν είμαι σίγουρη ότι θα μπορέσω να βγω μια μέρα ως ασεξουαλική, αλλά ελπίζω να βρω το θάρρος να είμαι ο εαυτός μου και να μην τους λέω πια για αυτά τα πράγματα. Μπορώ μόνο να ελπίζω ότι θα έρθει εκείνη η μέρα, που θα είναι εντάξει μαζί μου και θα με αγαπήσουν όπως είμαι.

A.M. από Καναδά

Προσοχή αυτή η ιστορία περιέχει: Εξαναγκασμός, σεξουαλική επίθεση, διορθωτικός βιασμός, Θεραπείες μεταστροφής και Ασοφοβία.

Άρχισα να αναρωτιέμαι για τη σεξουαλική μου ταυτότητα όταν ήμουν 14. Είχα μόλις χωρίσει με τον πρώτο μου φίλο και είχα σκεφτεί το γεγονός ότι δεν ένιωσα ιδιαίτερα φυσική έλξη απέναντί του παρά το γεγονός ότι προσελκύθηκα πολύ ρομαντικά. Για λίγο το υπέθεσα ως καθυστερημένη ανάπτυξη για μένα, αλλά αυτά τα συναισθήματα τελικά δεν ξεκίνησαν ποτέ. Όταν βγήκα στη μαμά μου σαν ασεξουαλική με έθεσε σε θεραπεία. Μου είπαν οι γιατροί μου ότι δεν «ένοιωθα τη θηλυκότητά μου» και η μαμά μου είπε

συγκεκριμένα «νομίζει ότι είναι σεξουαλική» όταν τους μιλούσε. Αυτό προκάλεσε μεγάλη αμφιβολία και αναρωτήθηκα αν είχα κάποιο ιατρικό πρόβλημα ως αιτία. Μόνο όταν χώρισα και με τον δεύτερο φίλο μου συνειδητοποίησα ότι δεν πρόκειται να συμβεί για μένα. Προσπάθησε να με κάνει να μου αρέσουν ορισμένα πράγματα αγγίζοντάς με, και με άλλες όχι πολύ συναινετικές μεθόδους. Υπερηφανεύτηκε για την προσπάθειά του να με «γυρίσει σεξουαλική», αλλά και πάλι δεν προσελκύθηκα σεξουαλικά. Ποτέ δεν προσελκύθηκα σεξουαλικά σε κανέναν και χρειάστηκε πολλή σκέψη και αποδοχή για να φτάσω σε αυτό το σημείο. Είναι ατυχές το γεγονός ότι η ιστορία μου δεν είναι ασυνήθιστη, και η μόνη μου επιθυμία για άλλους νέους ασέξουαλ είναι να κατανοήσουν τα όριά τους και να καταλάβουν ότι δεν πρέπει για κανέναν λόγο να αλλάξουν. Ελπίζω να πείτε όχι όταν πρέπει, και να συνειδητοποιήσετε ότι δεν πρέπει να νοιώθετε άβολα ή να αφήνετε τους ανθρώπους να κάνουν οτι θέλουν για να είστε σε μια ερωτική σχέση. Είναι εντάξει να είσαι σεξουαλικός και να έχεις όρια, ακόμα κι αν άλλοι πιστεύουν ότι αυτά τα όρια είναι λίγο περίεργα. Μείνετε δυνατοί και μαγικοί, μικρή μου σεξουαλική οικογένεια!! <3



Nepali नेपाली

Editor

Dr. Manita Newa Khadgi
from Nepali Aspects

Translators

Stories “Luna from Brazil”
& “A.M. from Canada”
by Sampada Uprety
from Nepali Aspects

Story “Mariam from India”
by Sage from Nepali Aspects

ब्राजिलबाट लुनाको कथा

मलाई म अयौनिक हूँ भनेर धेरै ढिलो महसुस भयो । जब मैले एकजना केटासँग मेरो पहिलो चुम्बन अनुभव गरे तबनै मलाई कस्तो अजीब महसुस भएको आभास गरेकी थिए । सबैले आफ्नो यस पहिलो अनुभवलाई निकै उत्साहपूर्ण वर्णन गरेपनि मलाई त्यस्तो केहि पनि महसुस भएको थिएन । मेरो यस पछिका अरु सम्बन्धहरू पनि पहिलेको जस्तै नै भए र हरेकपटक सम्बन्धलाई अगाडि बढाउन कोशिस गर्दा मलाई असजिलो महसुस हुन्थ्यो र हामी त्यही रोकिन्थ्यौ र सम्बन्धहरू पनि रोकिनथिए । यही क्रममा मैले आफूलाई मात्र नभई आफूले मन देखि मनपराएको केटाहरूलाई पनि चोट पूराइरहेको कुरा देखि मलाई साह्रै असन्तुष्टि भइसकेको थियो । लामो समयसम्म मलाई आफूमा केही गडबडी छ कि भन्ने भावनाहरू मनमा आइरहेको थियो र ति देखि मलाई घृणा भइसकेको थियो । त्यसैले मैले के अनुभव गरिरहेको थिए, यी सबैकुराको बोध गर्ने प्रयासमा मैले 'अयौनिक' भन्ने शब्द भेट्टाएँ । म बाहेक अरुले पनि म जस्तै अनुभवहरू भोगेको थाहा पाएर मैले धेरै राहत महसुस गरे र यस अनुभवले ममा केही कमी रहेको होइन र ममा केही खोट छैन भनेर पनि बुझें । अहिले मसँग मजस्तै अनुभव भएका मानिसहरूसँग अन्तरक्रिया गर्न मिल्ने समुदाय छ र मलाई बुझ्ने साथीहरू पनि छन् । तर अहिलेसम्म मैले यसबारे आफ्नो परिवारलाई एक शब्द पनि भन्न सकेको छैन, यसबारे उहाँहरूले के भन्नु र गर्नुहुन्छ भने डर लाग्छ । म एकदिन आफ्नो परिवार समक्ष आफ्नो पहिचानको बारेमा खुलेर बताउन सक्छु भनेर निश्चित छैन, तर म यो आशा गर्दछु कि म आफू जो हूँ त्यो बन्न साहस पाउँछु र यी कुराहरूका बारेमा परिवारसँग झुटो बोल्न पार्ने छैन । मैले यतिमात्र आशा राख्न सक्दछु कि एकदिन उहाँहरूले मलाई म जो हूँ त्यसरीनै स्विकार्नु हुनेछ र जे भएतापनि मलाई माया गर्नु हुनेछ ।

क्यानडाबाट ए एमको कथा

चेतावनी, यस कथामा: जबर्जस्ती, यौनिक हिंसा, रूपान्तरण थेरापि/चिकित्सा र अयौनिक प्रति घृणा समावेश गरिएको छ

मैले १४ वर्षको उमेरदेखि आफ्नो यौनिक पहिचानको बारेमा प्रश्न गर्न थालेको थिए । त्यहीबेला मेरो पहिलो सम्बन्ध भर्खरै टुटेको थियो र यहि कुरामा मलाई भान भयो कि मैले मेरो प्रेमी प्रति प्रणयात्मक(रोमान्टिक) आकर्षण महसुस गरेपनि शारीरिक आकर्षण भने धेरै महसुस गरेको रहेनछु । केही समयका लागि मैले आफूलाई ढिलो फक्राउने फूलझैँ सम्झेर एसका बारेमा सोच छोडिदिए, तर ममा कहिले पनि त्यस प्रकारको भावनाहरू उत्पन्न भएन । जब मैले मेरी आमालाई मेरो पहिचानका बारेमा खुलेर भने उहाँले मलाई थेरापीको लागि मानसिक चिकित्सककोमा लैजानुभयो । मेरा डाक्टरहरूले मलाई 'म आफ्नो स्त्रित्वसँग गाँसिन सकेको छैन' भने र मेरी आमाले डाक्टरहरूसँग कुरा गर्दा विशेषगरी ' उसले आफूलाई अयौनिक भनेर सोच्छिन' भनेर भन्नुभएको थियो । यो सबैले ममा धेरै आत्मा-संका उत्पन्न गर्यो र मलाई ममा केहि शारीरिक समस्या छ कि भनेर विचार जाग्न थाल्यो । जब मेरो दोस्रो प्रेमीसँग सम्बन्ध बिच्छेद भयो तब मात्र मैले राम्ररी बुझे कि यो मेरो लागि हुने छैन । मेरो प्रेमीले मलाई छोएर र असहमतिवादी बिधिहरू प्रयोग गरि मलाई केहि कुराहरू मनपराउन लगाउने प्रयास गरे । उनले मलाई 'यौनिक बनाउने' कोसिसलाई निकै गर्वका साथ लिएका थिए, तर म उनीप्रति शारीरिक रूपमा आकर्षित नै थिइन । म कहिले पनि कोहीप्रति शारीरिकरूपमा आकर्षित भएको छैन र यहाँसम्म पुग्नका लागि मलाई धेरै नै स्व-परिवर्तन र स्व-स्वीकृतिको सहायता चाहियो । मेरो कथा असामान्य छैन र यो कुरा निकै दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण छ । म जस्तै अन्य अयौनिक युवाहरूका लागि मेरो एउटा मात्र चाहना छ । उनीहरूले आफ्नो सिमा बुझ्नेछन् र कुनैपनि कारणले गर्दा आफू परिवर्तन हुनु आवश्यक छैन भन्ने कुरा पनि बुझ्नेछन् । मलाई आशा छ कि सबैले नाई भन्न पर्ने बेलामा भन्न सक्न र यो याद गर्नु कि एउटा मायालु सम्बन्धमा रहनका लागि आफू असहज हुनु पर्दैन र अरुलाई आफूसँग आफ्नो मर्जी विपरीत तर उनीहरूको मर्जीअनुसार जे गर्न पनि दिनुपर्दैन । हामी अयौनिक हुनुमा केही गलत छैन र अरुले जत्तिकै अनौठो ठाने पनि आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत सिमाहरू राख्नु पनि उत्तिकै ठीक छ । मेरो सानो अयौनिक परिवार बलियो र जादुमय रहोस ।

भारत (इन्डिया)बाट मरियमको कथा

चेतावनी यस कथामा: यौनिक हिंसा, वैवाहिक बलात्कार, जबर्जस्ती करणी, मानसिक र भावनात्मक हिंसा, घरेलु हिंसा, जबर्जस्ती विवाह र अयौनिक घृणा सम्बन्धी कुराहरु समावेश गरिएको छ

कसैलाई यौनिकता बारे नै थाहा नभएसम्म आफु अयौनिक हुँ भनेर कसरी थाहा पाउन सकिन्छ र ? म अहिले ३४ वर्षको उमेरमा यो कुराहरु मत्सुस गर्दै छु ।

म विवाह गर्दिन भनेर बसेकी थिए । तर थाहा नै छ नि सबैलाई, हाम्रो इन्डियन (भरती) संस्कृतिमा, विशेषगरी छोरिहरुलाई आफ्नै विवाह भए पनि, कोसँग-कहिले-कहाँ भनेर निर्णय गर्ने अधिकार छैन । मलाई विवाह गर्न बाध्य बनाइयो र मैले प्रतिकार गर्न थालेपछि, परीस्थिती बिग्रियो । घमण्डी भएर प्रस्ताव अस्विकार गरेको आरोप लगाएर घरमै बन्धी बनाइयो । वास्तवमा, मैले कसैलाई अस्विकार गरेकी थिइँन किन भने मलाई त्यो यातनाले लाचार थिए र कुनै इच्छा नै थिएन । म विवाह गर्न तयार भए, किनकी म मेरो परिवारको लागि एक बोझ भएको अनुभव भयो । यी घटनाहरु म २१ देखि २५ वर्षसम्म हुँदाको एक श्रृंखला हो ।

यहाँ छोरी मान्छेहरु जोबाट पनि दुर्व्यवहार हुन सक्छिन् र मानिसहरु संस्कृतिको आधारमा यसलाई महिमा र बदवा दिन्छन् । (मलाई मेरा स्कुल-कलेजका साथीहरुले मेरै उमेरका मान्छेहरुले रुचि लिने (प्रेम, रोमन्स, सेक्स वा अरु धेरै) बारे चासो नलिने भएर खिल्ली गर्थे । मैले थुप्रै नाटकिय घटनाहरु पछि २६ वर्षको उमेरमा बिहे गरे । हाम्रो समाजिक परम्परा हेर्ने हो भने मेरो बिहे ढिलो भएको हो । बिहेको दिन, उनी निकै उत्तेजित थिए र उनले एक खेलौना पए झै मेरो शरिरसँग खेल्दै थिए । घरको यातनाबाट भाग्न बिहेको सम्झौतामा बाधिँएकी म, यो अर्कै छुतै प्रकारको यातना र पिडा थियो- मेरो मुतु छियाछिया भयो । उसले मलाई घरमा र दोस्रो दिन लज (भाडा लिइएको) मा बलात्कार गर्‍यो । कसैले मलाई उसबाट बचाउन आउछन् कि सोचि म निकै चिच्याएँ, तर व्यर्थमा । त्यसपछि केहि दिनहरु म यौन सम्बन्ध पुरा गर्ने कर्तव्य भएको एक बलात्कृत लास जस्तै भए । सायद उनले मेरो आँखा वा अनुहार म हेरेका भए थाहा पाउँथे होला, तर उसले कहिल्यै....

म निराश र निरुत्साह हुन थालें र मलाई मेरो आमा, बुबा, हाम्रो संस्कृति, आफन्तहरु, साथीहरु रिस उठ्यो अनि उनिहरुसँग दूरी राख्न थाले । पछिपछि मलाई यति बेचैनी र असहज हुन थाल्यो कि मलाई उसको सानो शारिरिक स्पर्शबाटपनि तर्सिन थाले । यसरीनै वर्षहरु बित्यो ... मेरा आमा बुबा, मलाई आर्थिक सहयोग होस् भनेर व्यापार गर्न एउटा भवन दिनुभयो । म त्यहाँ फिटनेस वा नृत्य स्टुडियो खोल्न चाहन्थिएँ । तर मेरो चाहनाको कसैले कदर गरेरन्, म बाध्य भएर त्यसको सत्ता एउटा कोचिड संस्था सन्चालन गर्न थाले । त्यहाँ मैले दिनरात नभनी आफैले पिउन देखि प्रबन्धकसम्मको काम गर्नु पर्थ्यो, यो बाहेक थप आय (कमाड) को लागी मैले दुईओटा प्रोजेक्ट पनि गर्थे । मेरो 'नामको लागि' मात्र उत्तम श्री मान अहंकारी, पुरुष दुराग्रह, स्वाँगी र पथभ्रष्ट व्यक्ति थिए जस्ले कहिले मलाई मनाअन खोजेनन् र आफ्नो खुशीको लागि मेरो शरिर उपभोग गरेर मलाई नै एक अवैध सम्बन्धको रुपमा हेर्थे । एक दिन कुनै विवाद बिने उनले मलाई मेरो माइती फर्काइदिए ।

म निर्दोष छु भन्दा मलाई बेवास्ता गरियो र म मानसिक रुपबाट आघाट भएँ जसले गर्दा मेरो काममा नकारात्मक असर पर्न गयो । अनि पछि मैले सोचन थाले, म आफु यौनका कुरमा कुनै रुचि नभए पनि किन म माथि यौन दुर्व्यवहार भयो ? मलाई किन यति कठोर यातना, मलाई किन बलात्कार गरियो ? तब, मैले अयौनिकता (Asexuality)को बारेमा थाहा पाएँ- फकेबुक (Facebook), गूगल (Google), यु-तुब (YouTube) मा अनुसन्धान गर्दा अयौनिक समुदाय (Asexual/ Ace Community)ले सामाजिक सन्जाल (Social Media)मा लेख्नु भएको अनुभवसँगहरु साझा भेते । अहिले म बिहे गरेको ८ बर्षपछि उनीबाट अलग भएकी छु । अब म समुदायमा दमन र पीडित भएका मानिसहरु साथसाथै बच्चाहरुको लागि काम गर्न चाहन्छु । धन्यवाद ।



Polish **Polski**

Translator

Juno from Asfera

Luna z Brazylii

Bardzo późno zdałam sobie sprawę z tego, że jestem asem. Pierwszy raz zauważyłam że coś jest nie tak, kiedy całowałam się po raz pierwszy z chłopakiem. Każdy opisywał to uczucie jako euforię i tym podobne, ale ja nie czułam nic. W moich kolejnych relacjach działo się dokładnie to samo, a za każdym razem, kiedy wyczuwałam, że zaraz pójdziemy krok dalej, zaczynałam czuć się niekomfortowo i robiło mi się niedobrze, więc przestawałam i ostatecznie zawsze ze sobą zrywaliśmy. Nienawidziłam tego, że kończyło się to tym, że raniłam nie tylko siebie, ale też tych chłopaków, których tak naprawdę bardzo lubiłam. Czułam, że coś jest ze mną nie tak od dłuższego czasu i nienawidziłam tego uczucia. Po jakimś czasie, kiedy w końcu zdecydowałam się dowiedzieć co w rzeczywistości czuję i o co tu może chodzić, znalazłam pojęcie aseksualności. Niesamowitą ulgę przyniosła mi świadomość, że nie jestem sama w tych uczuciach, i że wcale nie jestem zepsuta. Teraz mam społeczność, w której mogę rozmawiać z osobami podobnymi do mnie i w której mam przyjaciół, którzy mnie rozumieją. Niestety wciąż nie byłam w stanie pisać o tym ani słowa mojej rodzinie, bojąc się co mogą powiedzieć albo zrobić. Nie jestem pewna czy kiedykolwiek będę w stanie wyznać im prawdę, ale mam nadzieję, że znajdę w końcu odwagę, aby być sobą i przestać kłamać na ten temat. Mogę jedynie mieć nadzieję, że kiedyś przyjdzie ten dzień, i że oni zaakceptują to i będą nadal mnie kochać.

A.M. z Kanady

Uwaga, historia zawiera: przymuszenie, przemoc seksualna, gwałt korekcyjny, terapię konwersyjną i asfobię.

Swoją seksualność zaczęłam kwestionować, kiedy miałam 14 lat. Właśnie zerwałam z moim pierwszym chłopakiem i zastanawiało mnie to, że nie czułam do niego za bardzo żadnego pociągu fizycznego, pomimo bycia bardzo zakochaną. Przez jakiś czas zbywałam tę myśl, mówiąc sobie, że przyjdzie na mnie jeszcze czas, ale te uczucia nigdy się nie pojawiły. Kiedy powiedziałam o tym mojej mamie, ta wysłała mnie na terapię. Lekarze mówili mi, że nie "zgrywam się z moją kobiecością", a moja mam mówiła im konkretnie, że "ona myśli, że jest aseksualna", kiedy z nimi rozmawiała. To wszystko sprawiło, że zaczęłam wątpić w siebie i zastanawiać się, czy przypadkiem nie cierpię na jakąś chorobę. Dopiero kiedy zerwałam z moim drugim chłopakiem uzmysłowiłam sobie, że to się po prostu nie wydarzy. On usiłował sprawić, żebym polubiła pewne rzeczy poprzez... ekhem... dotyk i inne sposoby, na które nie bardzo się godziłam. Bardzo był dumny ze swoich prób "obudzenia mojej seksualności", ale ja po prostu nie czułam do niego fizycznego pociągu. Nigdy nie czułam fizycznego pociągu do nikogo i wiele samorefleksji i akceptacji kosztowało mnie dotarcie do miejsca, w którym jestem teraz. Przykre jest to, że historie takie jak moja nie są rzadkością, moim jedynym życzeniem dla innych młodych asów jest to, żeby znali swoje granice i żeby rozumiali, że nie muszą się zmieniać z ŻADNEGO powodu. Mam nadzieję, że powiecie nie, kiedy będzie trzeba, i że rozumiecie, że nie musicie czuć się niekomfortowo, ani pozwalać drugiej osobie na co chce po to, żeby być w romantycznej relacji. Bycie asem jest okej, tak samo jak posiadanie swoich granic, nawet jeśli ludzie uważają te granice za dziwne. Poostań silna i pełna magii, moja mała asowa rodzinno!! <3

Russian

Русский язык

Editor & translator

Quad

S. из Греции

Осторожно, в этой истории содержится: Эйс-фобная лексика и Упоминание секса.

Эта история была отправлена С Из Греции. Я знал с раннего возраста, что я не соответствовал гетеро-нормативному стандарту общества. На протяжении шести лет я искал ярлык, который наилучшим образом представлял бы меня, но я никогда не чувствовал себя самим собой на сто процентов. Много раз я чувствовал давление из-за того, что я должен иметь половые отношения с кем-то, чтобы увидеть, какого же это. У меня было много отношений, в которых я чувствовал себя некомфортно, потому что все с кем я встречался, хотели физическую близость, в то время как я хотел только объятий или поцелуев. Много раз они чувствовали, что всё это больше похоже на дружбу, чем на отношения, даже несмотря на то, что в душе я знал, что они не хотят этого. После моего последнего расставания год назад, я сел и обдумал, что же было не так. Когда я был маленьким, я сказал, что я асексуал, но даже мой круг друзей убедил меня, что для того, чтобы убедиться, асексуален ли я, нужно заняться сексом. И так, нет. Мне не нужно было этого делать, чтобы знать, что я асексуал.

Луна из Бразилии

Я поняла, что я эйс, довольно поздно. Первый раз, когда я почувствовала что-то странное, было когда я поцеловала мальчика в первый раз. Все описывали чувства как эйфорию и т.д., но я ничего не почувствовала. То же самое было и со следующими взаимоотношениями, и всякий раз, когда мы делали шаг вперед, я чувствовала себя некомфортно и болезненно, так что я останавливалась и в итоге мы расстались. В итоге я ненавидела то, что причиняю боль не только себе, но тем парням, которые мне действительно нравились. Я чувствовала будто со мной было что-то не так и долгое время я ненавидела это. Потом, после того как я наконец посмотрела на то, что я чувствую, пытаюсь найти во всем этом смысл, я нашла слово «асексуальность». Это было такое облегчение, узнать, что я не одинока в своих чувствах и я не сломана из-за них. Теперь у меня есть окружение, где я могу поговорить с такими же людьми как я, и, к счастью, у меня есть понимающие друзья. Но пока у меня не хватает смелости рассказать об этом моей семье, боясь, что они скажут или сделают. Я не уверена, будет ли у меня возможность открыться им когда-нибудь, но, надеюсь, я найду в себе смелость быть собой, и не врать им о этих вещах. Я могу только надеяться, что этот день придет, и они поймут меня и будут любить, несмотря не на что.

А.М. из Канады

Осторожно, в этой истории содержится: Принуждение, Сексуальное Насилие, Корректирующее изнасилование, Конверсионная терапия и Эйс-фобная лексика.

Я начала задаваться вопросам о своей сексуальной идентичности, когда мне было 14. Я только рассталась с моим первым парнем и размышляла о том факте, что не чувствовала к нему физического влечения, несмотря на довольно сильные романтические чувства. Какое-то время я отмахивалась от этого, объясняя это поздним взрослением, но эти чувства так и не появились. Когда я открылась маме,

она отправила меня на терапию. Докторами мне было сказано, что я не «запуталась в своей женственности» и моя мама конкретно сказала «она думает, что она эйс» когда она разговаривала с ними. Это вызывало множество сомнений в себя и я задавалась вопросом, болезнь ли это. Это было до того момента, когда я рассталась со своим вторым парнем и я поняла, что ничего со мной не произойдет. Он пытался изменить меня через ... кхм... контакты и не очень приятные методы. Он гордился своими попытками «сделать меня сексуальной», но я просто не испытывала к нему физическое влечение. Я никогда его не испытывала ни к кому, и мне потребовалось множество размышлений и принятий, чтобы оказаться здесь. К сожалению моя история не редкость, и мое единственное пожелание другим молодым эйсам, это чтобы они понимали свои пределы, и что они НЕ ОБЯЗАНЫ меняться. Я надеюсь, что вы скажете НЕТ когда это будет нужно и поймете, что вам не нужно чувствовать себя неловко или позволять другим делать то, что они захотят, чтобы быть с вами в любовных отношениях. Это нормально быть эйсом и это нормально иметь пределы, даже если другие считают их немного странными. Оставайтесь сильными и волшебными, моя маленькая эйс семья!! <3

Марьям из Индии

Осторожно, в этой истории содержится: в этом тексте присутствуют сцены супружеского насилия, психологическое насилие, Домашнее насилие, Сексуальное насилие, Прикосновение без разрешения и Эйс-фобная лексика.

Как кто-то может знать, асексуальный(ая) он (она) до познания сексуальности? Мне 34 года и вот недавно я это осознала. Я решила не выходить замуж. Как Вы знаете, в Индийской культуре, мы, особенно девушки, не имеем прав решать с кем и когда вступать в брак. Меня заставляли и я сопротивлялась, ситуация ухудшалась. Мои родители физически и ментально изводили меня, я была в своём доме как в тюрьме, меня обвинили в высокомерии и отказе от предложений. На самом деле, я не отвергла ещё ни одно, потому что меня пытали и принуждали без всякого моего желания. Я была готова выйти замуж, так как я чувствовала, что являлась обузой для них. Это произошло с 21 до 25 лет-череды инцидентов.

Здесь девушки могут быть обижены кем угодно и люди возвеличивают это на основе культуры.. (Меня даже дразнили друзья перед школой/ колледжем, как шута, за невежество и незнание того, что обсуждали друзья моего возраста- любовь, романтику, секс или же БОльшее. В 26 я вышла замуж после всевозможных драматических инцидентов. В тот день(он, поздно женившийся, по Индийской системе) был так взволнован и он играл с моим телом как будто бы с игрушкой. В то время как побег от пыток был единственной причиной, почему я подписала моё согласие на бракосаключение, это была ещё одна попытка- я была ещё более с разбитым сердцем.. Он изнасиловал меня в том доме и когда это повторилось в домике, который мы арендовали на следующий день, я кричала, так что люди могли бы услышать меня и прийти, чтобы спасти меня, но тщетно. Несколько дней я лежала, словно мёртвая, думая о сексе как о долге быть изнасилованной.

Если бы он хоть раз взглянул в моё лицо/глаза, он бы смог понять, но он никогда не делал этого...

Я начала впадать в депрессию и злилась на своих родителей, нашу культуру, родственников, друзей, и я стала держать дистанцию с ними. Я стала чувствовать отвращение по отношению к его физическому прикосновению, для меня это было некомфортно. Шли годы... Мои родители, чтобы поддержать меня финансово, предоставили мне здание, чтобы вести бизнес. Хотя я хотела основать фитнес или танцевальную студию, но мой выбор не был оценён по достоинству, я была вынуждена открыть тренерский институт, для чего мне пришлось работать в полном одиночестве от реоп к профессору, к менеджеру, ко всему в целом, день и ночь, наряду с этим, я взяла ещё два проекта для дополнительного заработка. Мой так называемый идеальный супруг, который был эгоистом, шовинистом, лицемером, извращенцем, который никогда не хотел убедить меня, но хотел пользоваться моим телом для своего счастья, судил меня, будто бы я совершала что-то противоправное. Без каких-либо объяснений он вышвырнул меня в дом моих родителей.

Меня игнорировали, когда я пыталась доказать свою невиновность и я получила психологическую травму, которая повлияла и на мою работу. Позже я начала думать, почему было так много сексуального насилия, хотя я не была сексуально заинтересована. Почему меня пытали, насильовали и что ещё? Затем я узнала об асексуальности в Google, в YouTube, в Facebook и смогла соотнести с опытом, которым делились в сообществе "Ace" в социальных сетях. Сейчас я хочу работать для тех, кто подавлен и угнетён в этом сообществе и для детей.

Спасибо.

Бри из Соединенных Штатов

Осторожно, в этой истории содержится: Эйс-фобная лексика.

Я училась в колледже, когда поняла, что я асексуалка. Свидания всегда проходили сложно для меня, особенно попытки соответствовать уровню влечения/интимности, который мои партнеры проявляли ко мне. Мои друзья говорили о их активности с другими и т.д., но это было незнакомо для меня. Я не чувствовала будто это была свойственная часть меня, которая чувствовала влечение к мои партнерам таким образом. Это заставляло меня чувствовать себя неполноценной, и что я имею мало общего с моими друзьями. Я чувствовала себя растерянной каждый раз, когда они начинали обсуждать сексуальные аспекты их взаимоотношений или крашей и я просто... мне было нечем поделиться.

В какой-то момент, когда я сидела в своей комнате в общежитии, Google поиск и обсуждение с моей старшей сестрой привело меня на сайт AVEN. Я прочитала парочку страниц с часто задаваемыми вопросами, но в конце концов закрыла вкладку и вернулась обратно к своей жизни. В то время как асексуальность казалось интересной и вроде как оно подходило в том плане как я (не) чувствовала, это было не столько важно для меня, присваивать этот ярлык себе. Перенесемся в лето/осень 2015... Я была на выпускном курсе, и к тому моменту, я имело множество провальных свиданий. В то время Тамблер был очень популярен среди таких ботаников, как я. Как-то раз, я листала ленту Тамблера и наткнулась на пост, где обсуждают разные сексуальные ориентации. И это был тот момент, когда я наконец присоединилась к обществу форума AVEN и начала активно идентифицировать себя как асексуалку. Я была так рада найти сообщество людей, у которые испытывали похожий опыт. К

концу года я была активно вовлечена в жизнь форума AVEN и стала больше проявлять мою асексуальность в своей жизни. Я купила черное эйс кольцо. И когда тема секса/сексуальной ориентации поднималась между моими друзьями, я не стеснялась и говорила о том, как я не испытываю того, что испытывают они.

Раньше это было тем, чего я стыдилась, но сейчас я осознала, что это нормально не чувствовать это так, как другие, и не быть заинтересованной в этом. И я даже открылась своей старшей сестре, той, кто помогла мне в первую очередь представить мне мою асексуальность. Однако, идентифицировать себя как асексуалку не всегда было легко. Несколько лет назад, я пыталась открыться моей сестре-близняшке. Как у близнецов, у нас было много общего опыта. Сквозь мое детство она была единственным человеком, кто действительно знал меня. Но ко всему прочему она была очень консервативным человеком, кто верил в традиционные «брак и дети — это нормальный и ожидаемый аспект жизни, и это ненормально иметь чего-то кроме того, что является традиционным». В один день я читала AVEN, сидя при этом рядом с ней (я думала, что смогу использовать это как повод начать обсуждение асексуальности). Но она заглянула в мой телефон и увидела сайт, после сказала, что это звучит странно и что со мной что-то не так. С тех пор, она откровенно отрицала мою ориентацию, доходя до того, что она настраивала людей, чтобы те «исправили» меня. И если я говорю ей уже в сотый раз что я не заинтересована в людях таким образом, как заинтересована она, она говорит мне, что я просто ещё не нашла того человека. Это удар по лицу, иметь человека, на которого ты мог положиться в детстве, который теперь отказывается верить тебе, когда ты говоришь, что у тебя нет похожих потребностей, как у него.

Я также пыталась открыться моим родителям, и это был ограниченный успех. Когда мне было чуть больше 20, я упомянула, что не чувствую похожим образом, как большинство людей, при этом не упоминаю слово «асексуальность» (Я чувствовала, что пусть оно будет расплывчатым, так чтобы они не говорили мне, что я купилась на какую-то прихоть или типа того. Как и моя сестра-близнец, они скептически относились к LGBTQA+. Если бы я упомянула любой термин, связанный с LGBT+, они были мгновенно отказались бы слушать меня). Но я не уверена в том, что они поняли этот тонкий способ передать им мою ориентацию. Так что я прекратила разговор об этом и начала избегать разговоров о взаимоотношениях/сексе, как только могла. Но потом, несколько месяцев спустя, моя мама упомянула что она и отец начали рассматривать LGBTQA+ общество в новом свете. Что они стали больше принимать их. Так что я отправила ей ссылку на AVEN и рассказала, что я асексуалка, и что я знала об этом уже очень давно и что уверена в этом на 100%. И... она ничего не сказала. Нет ответа. Я не знаю, что это значит, но это более успешно, чем отвержение от моей сестры-близнеца. Так что, я могу назвать это победой?

Я открылась нескольким друзьям. Но мне все ещё нужно быть аккуратной в том, как я себя представлю в соцсетях и в беседах с моими коллегами. Я работаю на государство, и мой наниматель не очень дружелюбно относится к LGBTQIA+. Я также стараюсь избегать разговоров о моей асексуальности с любыми родственниками, кроме моих родителей и братьев с сестрами, потому что они ещё более консервативны чем мои родители и не поймут меня. Я действительно не против того, чтобы большую часть времени скрывать эту часть себя. Потому что это просто небольшая часть того, кем я являюсь. Но я желаю, чтобы в мире было больше принятия и понимания асексуальности в целом. Чтобы такие люди, как я, не чувствовали, что будто они должны избегать разговоров о том, как они (не) чувствуют, когда заводят друзей. И что мы не будем должны выбирать, кому открыться. И тогда будет намного проще

для нас присваивать себя ярлык того, как мы чувствуем, прежде чем нам исполнится 20 лет или позже, когда у нас уже было много трудных переживаний, из-за того, что мы не чувствуем то же самое, что чувствуют другие.

Spanish **Español**

Editor & translator
Pupi Dominguez

S. de Grecia

Aviso de contenido: menciones de sexo, invalidación de asexualidad.

Desde muy joven supe que no me ajustaba a los estándares heteronormativos de la sociedad. Estuve buscando la "etiqueta" que mejor me representara durante 6 años, pero nunca me sentí 100% yo misma. Muchas veces me sentí presionada a tener que hacer el amor con alguien para ver cómo es. Tuve muchas relaciones en las que me sentí incómoda porque querían contacto físico, mientras que yo solo quería abrazos o besos. Muchas veces, mis parejas sintieron que teníamos una relación de amistad más que de pareja, aunque yo sabía en mi corazón que eso no era lo que querían. Después de mi última separación, hace un año, me senté a pensar qué era lo que estaba mal. Cuando era más chica dije que era asexual, pero incluso mi círculo de amigos me convenció de que "hay que tener sexo para ver". Bueno, no ... Yo no tuve que hacerlo para saber que soy asexual.

Luna de Brasil

Me di cuenta que era ase muy tarde. La primera vez que me di cuenta que algo se sentía raro fue cuando besé a un chico por primera vez. Todos decían que se sentían eufóricos etc, pero yo no sentí nada. Mi siguiente relación fue igual y cada vez que parecía que íbamos a ir un poco más lejos, me sentía incómoda; así que terminamos la relación. Odiaba terminar lastimándome a mí y también a estos chicos que realmente me gustaban. Sentí que había algo mal conmigo durante mucho tiempo, y lo odiaba. Después de finalmente buscar información sobre la forma en la que me sentía, intentando entenderlo, encontré la palabra Asexualidad. Fue un alivio descubrir que no era la única que se sentía así, y que no estaba rota. Ahora tengo una comunidad en donde puedo hablar con gente como yo, y afortunadamente tengo amigos que me entienden. Pero hasta ahora no pude hablar ni una palabra sobre esto con mi familia, por miedo a lo que puedan decir o hacer. No sé si algún día podré salir del closet, pero espero poder encontrar el valor para ser yo misma y no mentirles sobre estas cosas. Solo puedo esperar que llegue el día en el que pueda decir quién soy y que lo acepten y me amen igual.

A.M. de Canadá

Aviso de contenido: coerción, violencia sexual, violación correctiva, terapia de conversión, lenguaje ase-odiante.

Empecé a cuestionar mi sexualidad cuando tenía 14, había terminado mi relación con mi primer novio y había reflexionado sobre el hecho de que no sentía mucha atracción física por él aunque sí me atraía mucho románticamente. Durante un tiempo lo dejé pasar pensando que era un caso de "desarrollo tardío", pero esos sentimientos nunca aparecieron. Cuando salí del armario con mi mamá, me mandó a terapia. Mis doctores me dijeron que no estaba "conectando con mi feminidad" y mi mamá específicamente les dijo "ella cree que es ase". Esto llevó a que tenga mucha baja autoestima y me pregunté si no tendría un problema médico. No fue hasta que terminé la relación con mi segundo novio que me di cuenta de que esas cosas nunca me iban a pasar. Intentó que me gustaran ciertas cosas... ejem... tocarme, y métodos no muy consensuados. Se enorgulleció de querer tratar

de “volverme sexual”, pero yo simplemente no me sentía atraída físicamente por él. Nunca me sentí atraída físicamente por nadie y me llevó mucha autorreflexión y aceptación llegar a este punto. Es una lástima que mi historia sea tan común y mi único deseo para les ases más jóvenes es que entiendan sus límites, y entiendan que no tienen NINGUNA razón para cambiar. Espero que digan ‘No’ cuando lo necesiten y que se den cuenta de que no deberían sentirse incómodos ni dejar que otras personas hagan lo que quieran con ustedes para poder estar en una relación romántica. Está bien ser ase y está bien tener límites, incluso si esos límites les parecen raros a otras personas. Manténganse fuertes y mágiques, mi pequeña familia ase!! <3

Mariam de India

Aviso de Contenido: contiene menciones de violación marital, agresión sexual, contacto no consensuado, lenguaje ase-odiante, abuso emocional y psicológico, violencia doméstica y matrimonio forzado.

¿Cómo puede saber una que es asexual sin saber de sexualidad? Tengo 34 años y no hace mucho que me enteré.

Había decidido no casarme. Como sabrán, en la cultura india no tenemos el derecho, en especial las chicas, de decidir sobre nuestro matrimonio: ni cuándo ni con quién. Me forzaron a casarme y, cuanto más me resistía, peor se volvían las situaciones. Mi madre y mi padre me hostigaban física y mentalmente, estaba presa en mi casa y me acusaron de arrogante y de rechazar propuestas. En realidad no rechacé ninguna propuesta, me estaban torturando y estaba siendo obligada cuando ni siquiera estaba resistiéndome. Estaba lista para casarme porque me sentía una carga para ellos. Esto sucedió desde los 21 hasta los 25 años. Una serie de incidentes.

Acá cualquiera podría abusar de una chica y la gente lo glorificaría justificándose en la cultura (incluso solían burlarse de mí en el colegio/facultad, como si fuera tonta por no entender las cosas sobre las que la gente de mi edad hablaba: amor, romance, sexo y quizás más). A los 26 me casé, después de todo tipo de incidentes dramáticos. Ese día, él (quien había tenido un casamiento tardío según el sistema indio) estaba muy emocionado y jugó con mi cuerpo como si se hubiera conseguido un juguete. Si bien la única razón por la que firmé el matrimonio fue para huir de la tortura, esta era de algún modo otra tortura: estaba más devastada. Me violó en esa casa y, cuando volvió a pasar lo mismo en el albergue que alquilamos al día siguiente, grité para que la gente pudiera venir a salvarme de él, pero fue en vano. Estuve acostada en la cama como un cadáver algunos días, pensando que tener sexo era mi obligación, ser violada. Si él alguna vez me hubiera mirado a la cara o a los ojos se habría dado cuenta, pero nunca...

Empecé a deprimirme y enojarme con mis xadres, nuestra cultura, familiares, amigas y comencé a distanciarme de ellos. Más adelante comencé a sentir repulsión por su contacto físico ya que así de incómoda me sentía. Pasaron los años, mis xadres, para apoyarme económicamente, me dieron un edificio para empezar un negocio. A pesar de que yo quería tener un estudio de fitness y danza, ya que mi decisión no tiene valor me forzaron a tener una institución de coaching, en la cual yo tenía que hacer todo por mi cuenta, siendo desde peón hasta profesore y gerente, día y noche (a la par de esto, tuve que empezar dos proyectos más para tener ingresos extras). Mi marido “perfecto”, quien era egoísta, machista, hipócrita, un perverso que nunca trató de convencerme de nada pero aún así quería usar

mi cuerpo para su propia felicidad, me acusó de serle infiel. Sin ningún argumento me echó a la casa de mis xadres.

Me ignoraron mientras trataba de probar mi inocencia y sufrí secuelas mentales, las cuales afectaron también a mi trabajo. Más adelante comencé a pensar porqué hubo tanto abuso sexual incluso si yo no tenía interés sexual. ¿Por qué había sido torturada, violada y más? Después conocí la asexualidad. Busqué en Google, Youtube, Facebook y me pude sentir identificada con las experiencias que compartía la comunidad ase en las redes sociales. Ahora hace ya 8 años que me separé. Ahora quiero trabajar por aquellos oprimides en esta comunidad y por les niñes.

Gracias.

Bree de Estados Unidos

Aviso de contenido: lenguaje ase-odiante.

Estaba en la universidad cuando descubrí que soy asexual. Las relaciones amorosas siempre han sido difíciles para mí, particularmente al tratar de igualar el nivel de atracción/intimidación que mis parejas sentían hacia mí. Mis amigos hablaban sobre el atractivo de sus parejas, etc., y yo simplemente no podía identificarme. No sentía que hubiera una parte intrínseca de mí que se sintiera atraída hacia mis parejas de esa forma. Me hacía sentir como una pareja poco adecuada, y que tenía menos en común con mis amigos. Me sentía avergonzade cada vez que ellos discutían aspectos sexuales de sus relaciones o crushes, y yo... no tenía nada que compartir.

En algún punto, cuando estaba sentade en mi habitación en la universidad, una búsqueda en Google y una conversación con mi hermana mayor me llevaron al sitio de AVEN. Leí un par de las páginas de preguntas frecuentes, pero eventualmente cerré la ventana del navegador y seguí con mi vida. Si bien la asexualidad parecía interesante, y parecía calzar con cómo (no) me sentía, no era importante para mí ponerme una etiqueta. Adelantando hasta la primavera/verano del 2015... estaba en el último año en la universidad y para este momento tenía muchas más experiencias de relaciones amorosas fallidas. En esta época, Tumblr era extremadamente popular entre les nerds como yo. Un día estaba en Tumblr y me encontré con un post discutiendo los distintos tipos de orientaciones sexuales. Fue en ese momento que finalmente entré a los foros de AVEN y comencé a identificarme activamente como asexual. Se sintió tan bien encontrar una comunidad de gente que había tenido experiencias similares. Para finales de año estaba activamente involucrade en los foros de AVEN y empezaba a mostrar más mi asexualidad en mi vida. Había comprado un anillo ase negro. Y cuando el sexo o la atracción sexual aparecían en conversaciones con mis amigos, no rehuía a hablar sobre cómo no me sentía igual que ellos.

Si bien solía ser algo de lo que me avergonzaba, ahora me doy cuenta de que está bien no sentirme de la misma forma y estar interesade en otras cosas. E incluso salí del armario con mi hermana mayor, quien me había ayudado a saber sobre la asexualidad en primer lugar. Sin embargo, identificarme como asexual no siempre ha sido fácil. Hace unos años, traté de salir del armario con mi hermana gemela. Como gemelas, hemos tenido un montón de experiencias compartidas. A lo largo de mi infancia, ella fue la única persona que de verdad me entendía. Pero también es una persona muy conservadora que cree en el típico "el matrimonio e hijes son un aspecto normal y esperado de la vida, y es anormal querer cualquier

cosa que se salga de lo tradicional". Un día estaba navegando el foro de AVEN de manera privada mientras estaba sentada junto a ella (pensando que quizás podría usarlo para hablar sobre asexualidad). Pero ella miró mi teléfono y vio el sitio, e inmediatamente me dijo que sonaba raro y que había algo malo conmigo. Desde entonces, ha rechazado descaradamente mi orientación, llegando al extremo de intentar arreglarme citas para tratar de "corregirme". Y si menciono por millonésima vez que no estoy interesada en la gente de la manera en la que ella lo está, me dice que solo no he encontrado a la persona correcta aún. Es una bofetada cuando la persona en la que podías confiar de pequeño se niega a creerte cuando dices que no tienes los mismos deseos en la vida que ella.

También he tratado de salir del clóset con mis xadres, con éxito limitado. Al principio de mis 20s mencioné no sentirme de la misma manera que la mayoría de la gente se siente respecto a otras personas, sin explícitamente usar la palabra "asexual" (sentí que era mejor ser vague, para que no me dijeran que me estaba sumando a una moda pasajera o algo así. Tal como mi hermana gemela, eran muy escéptiques de las identidades LGBTQIA+. Si mencionaba cualquier término que sonara relacionado a lo LGBTQ+, se habrían negado a escuchar inmediatamente). Pero no estoy segura de que hayan entendido esta manera sutil de comunicarles mi identidad. Así que dejé el tema y simplemente evité hablar sobre relaciones/sexo con ellos tanto como fuera posible. Pero luego, hace un par de meses, mi mamá mencionó que ella y mi papá están empezando a ver las identidades LGBTQIA+ de manera diferente. Que estaban empezando a aceptarlas más. Así que le envié a mi mamá el link a AVEN, le dije que era asexual y que lo he sabido por años y estaba 100% segura al respecto en ese momento. Y... ella no ha dicho nada en absoluto al respecto. Sin respuesta. No estoy segura de qué significa eso, pero tiene que ser al menos un éxito mayor que el rechazo que recibí de mi hermana gemela. ¿Así que lo llamaré una victoria por ahora?

He salido del armario con varias amigas. Pero todavía tengo que ser cuidadoso con mi presencia en las redes sociales y mis conversaciones con compañeros del trabajo. Trabajo para el gobierno y mi empleador no es muy amigable con la gente LGBTQIA+. También he evitado hablar de asexualidad con parientes que no sean mis xadres y hermanos porque son aún más conservadores que mis xadres y no lo entenderían. En realidad no me importa tener que esconder esta parte de mí la mayoría del tiempo. Porque solo es una parte pequeña de quien soy. Pero me gustaría que hubiera más aceptación y entendimiento sobre la asexualidad en general. Para que la gente como yo no sintiera que tenemos que rehuir de expresar cómo (no) nos sentimos cuando hacemos amigos. Y para que no tuviera que tener que elegir ante quiénes salgo del armario. Y para que fuera más fácil para nosotros ponerle una etiqueta a cómo nos sentimos, antes de llegar a los 20 o después en la vida, cuando ya hemos pasado por muchas experiencias difíciles por no sentirnos de la misma manera en la que lo hacen otros.

Cristina de España

Aviso de contenido: Menciones de abuso sexual, violencia física, abuso verbal, comentarios ase-odiantes, problemas de salud mental.

Soy una chica de 24 años, aromántica y asexual que descubrió su sexualidad al poco tiempo de haber terminado estrepitosamente una relación con un hombre hetero. Desde pequeña, no sentía atracción sexual o romántica hacia los demás y lo único que conocía era la atracción estética. En incontables ocasiones me opuse a las relaciones en general y sentía gran repulsión por el sexo, en especial los adolescentes, haciendo que mi vida en general

estuviera marcada por el rechazo, infantilización, acoso sexual y condescendencia. Habiendo sufrido abusos sexuales y físicos, muchas de las personas que conocía achacaban esta laguna de interés a mis problemas psicológicos, haciéndome creer durante años que necesitaba ser arreglada, pero ese interés jamás llegó. Por desgracia, toda esa presión caló en mí y durante años no era consciente de todo lo que estaba pasando, simplemente sufriendo de forma ansiosa sin darme cuenta de lo que quería realmente, confundiendo la atracción estética o platónica con sexual o romántica y sintiendo una increíble presión por perder la virginidad. Por suerte para mí, conocí a una persona que descubrió ser aroace como yo y en la que más adelante pude proyectarme y empezar a identificarme, al informarme y ser ayudada por verdaderos amigos conocedores sobre estas orientaciones. No sin antes, por desgracia, intentar una relación torpe e incómoda con un chico de mi edad con el que acabé rompiendo y definitivamente descubriendo mi sexualidad. A pesar de que el chico no intentó forzarme, las personas de nuestro alrededor y su familia, me presionaban exageradamente para que me dejara penetrar, a lo cuál este no se oponía y dejaba que me presionaran. Llegando incluso a ser etiquetada de aprovechada e insultada por no tener sexo con él. Lo que me llevó a situaciones realmente asquerosas y físicamente dolorosas. Por otra parte, mi familia es abusiva y mayormente ultracatólica. Las pocas personas que se consideran liberales, incluyendo las personas con las que vivo, no conciben siquiera la existencia de la asexualidad o el arromanticismo, llegando incluso a tratarme de forma inferior por no haber llegado a perder la virginidad pese a mis intentos. En cuanto al resto de las personas, ahora que he descubierto mi orientación, finjo simplemente no tener interés en la actualidad debido a mis estudios ya que, las veces que he tratado de hablar de ello, he recibido acefobia de forma asquerosa. En cualquier caso, todo es mejor ahora que me conozco a mí misma y he perdido por completo la presión por el sexo y parejas. Pese a todo el rechazo a la comunidad lgtb, descubrir sobre el espectro asexual y arromántico, ha sido lo mejor que me ha podido pasar en todos estos años y por fin siento que no soy un problema, que no tengo que hacer lo que no quiera con mi vida y he perdido toda ansiedad relacionada con la presión social, incluso llegando a resultar patéticos los intentos de mofarse sobre mí. Espero que esta historia le sirva a alguna persona para identificarse lo antes posible, sentir que no está solo o poder ayudar a alguna persona que necesite apoyo. Sé que da miedo identificarse con una comunidad machacada por la sociedad y a veces el miedo no te deja ver cómo eres o qué quieres. Pero el alivio que da abandonar toda esa presión, aunque seas solo tú el que sepa sobre tu sexualidad, es infinitamente más gratificante. Un consejo que me ayudó a mí enormemente a deconstruirme y permitirme saber qué realmente quería, es el hecho de etiquetarte en la asexualidad, aunque al principio creas no serlo, e investigar acerca de las diferentes atracciones humanas y las experiencias de asexuales. Ánimo donde quieras que estés.

Additional Information

The bottom of the page features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, angular shapes. A dark purple shape forms a wide, shallow 'V' shape that points downwards. Below this, there are lighter purple and white shapes that create a complex, layered effect, resembling a stylized landscape or abstract pattern.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, we want to thank everyone who submitted their story, without whom this project wasn't possible. We hope, wherever you are right now, that things got better. If they didn't, know that you aren't alone, even when things feel that way. The ace community is here for you, to listen, to show support or to help you when you need.

Also thanks to the translators and editors connected to IAD for making the stories available in different languages and thanks to the people recording the videos for giving a voice to those who can't easily speak out. Thank you Rick for making the cover. And lastly, but certainly not least, thank you Amber and later on Wiekie for coordinating the Ace Stories Project, making sure the stories got translated, recorded and posted on social media.

Translators

Brazilian Portuguese: Coletivo Abrace

Danish: Martin Spangsbro-Pedersen from Asexual Association Denmark

Dutch: Amber Witsenburg, Anja Stoop

English: Story S. from Greece by Fran from the Greek Aces/Aros team

French: Estance Delclaux-Hammon

German: Unknown

Greek: Fran from the Greek Aces/Aros team

Nepali: Stories "Luna from Brazil" & "A.M. from Canada" by Sampada Uprety from Nepali Aspects, Story "Mariam from India" by Sage from Nepali Aspects

Polish: Juno from Asfera

Russian: Quad

Spanish: Pupi Dominguez

Editors

Brazilian Portuguese: Coletivo Abrace

Dutch: Amber Witsenburg, Anja Stoop, Bregje, Peter Berkemeijer

Engels: Peter Berkemeijer, Amber Witsenburg, Anja Stoop, Chel, Arike/Aran van de Water, Nicolien Boekhoudt

German: Tildrun Weber

Greek: Fran from the Greek Aces/Aros team

France: Estance Delclaux-Hammon, Juno from Asfera

Nepali: Dr. Manita Newa Khadgi from Nepali Aspects

Russian: Quad

Spanish: Pupi Dominguez

Design

Rick van Staten

Contact information

International Asexuality Day (IAD)

Website <https://internationalasexualityday.org/en/>

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/InternationalAsexualityDay>

List with local organizations <https://internationalasexualityday.org/en/local/>

Email mailinternationalasexualityday.org	Telegram @IADofficial	Twitter/X @IADofficial
Facebook @IADofficialACES	TikTok @asexuality.day	VK iadofficial
Instagram @IADofficial	Tumblr iadofficial	

Argentina: Club Asexual (CABA)

Monthly meet-up group in Buenos Aires

Instagram
[@club.asexual.caba](https://www.instagram.com/club.asexual.caba)

Brazil: Coletivo Abrace

Linktree <https://linktr.ee/coletivoabrace>

Email coletivoabrace@gmail.com	Threads @coletivoabrace
Facebook @coletivoabrace	Twitter/X @ColetivoAbrAce
Instagram @coletivoabrace	

Denmark: Asexual Association Denmark *Foreningen for Aseksuelle i Danmark (FAD)*

Website aseksuelle.dk

Linktree <https://linktr.ee/aseksuelledk>

Email
info@aseksuelle.dk

Instagram
[@aseksuelledk](https://www.instagram.com/aseksuelledk)

Facebook
[@aseksuelle](https://www.facebook.com/aseksuelle)

France: Rencontres asexuelles

Meet-up group in France

Meetup <https://www.meetup.com/fr-FR/rencontres-asexuelles-meetup-ace/>

Germany: Aspec*German

Website www.aspecgerman.de

Email
mail@aspecgerman.de

Mastedon
[@aspec_german](https://mastodon.social/@aspec_german)

Facebook
[@aspecgerman](https://www.facebook.com/aspecgerman)

Twitter/X
[@aspec_german](https://twitter.com/aspec_german)

Instagram
[@aspec_german](https://www.instagram.com/aspec_german)

Greece: Greek Aces/Aros

Linktree linktr.ee/GreekAces

Email
greekaces.aceandproud@hotmail.com

Instagram
[@greekaces.aros](https://www.instagram.com/greekaces.aros)

Facebook
[@GreekAces](https://www.facebook.com/GreekAces)

The Netherlands: The Netherlands Organisation for Asexuality *Nederlandse Organisatie Asexualiteit (NOA)*

Website www.aseksualiteit.nl

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@aseksualiteit>

Email
info@aseksualiteit.nl

Instagram
[@aseksualiteit](https://www.instagram.com/aseksualiteit)

Facebook
[@aseksualiteit](https://www.facebook.com/aseksualiteit)

Twitter/X
[@aseksualiteit](https://twitter.com/aseksualiteit)

Nepal: Nepali Aspects

Website <https://nepaliaspecs.com/>

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@nepaliasexualsromantics7199>

Email
nepaliaspecs@gmail.com

Twitter/X
[@AspecN](https://twitter.com/AspecN)

Instagram
[@nepali.asexuals.romantics](https://www.instagram.com/nepali.asexuals.romantics)

Poland: Stowarzyszenie Asfera

Website <http://asfera.org.pl>

Email
asfera.stowarzyszenie@gmail.com

Instagram
[@asfera_polish_asexuals](https://www.instagram.com/asfera_polish_asexuals)

Facebook
[@aseksualizm](https://www.facebook.com/aseksualizm)

