

ATTRACTION

a brief introduction, some info & quick tips

Though overlapping for some- attraction, desire, and love are all very different things. In order to understand the vast ways in which people identify, it's important to be able to differentiate between types of attraction and ways of relating to sex and sexuality. Start here!

KINDS OF ATTRACTION

romantic I want to date them

sexual I want to be sexual with them

platonic I want to befriend them

sensual I want to cuddle and hug them

aesthetic I like looking at them

For some people, all of these overlap when they like someone. For some people, romantic and sexual attraction are different depending on their identities and orientations.

alloromantic

folks who experience romantic attraction

gray aro/ demi-romantic

folks who experience some kind of romantic attraction, perhaps after establishing strong emotional intimacy

aromantic/aro

folks who do not experience romantic attraction, but may engage in certain romantic activities

ROMANTIC ATTRACTION



SEXUAL ATTRACTION

asexual/ace

folks who do not experience sexual attraction, but may engage in sexual activity

gray ace/ demi-sexual

folks who experience some kind of sexual attraction, perhaps after establishing strong emotional intimacy

allosexual

folks who experience sexual attraction

note! everyone

falls on these two spectra- one doesn't dictate the other!

free your mind...

Do you find yourself worried about people who are single/unmarried even though they have loving friends and family? Is a friendship less important than a romantic relationship? **Amatonormativity** is the belief that romantic relationships are superior to all other kinds. Do you assume that someone who doesn't want sex just hasn't had good sex yet or has something wrong with them? **Compulsory sexuality** is the belief that everyone should be sexually available or in a sexual relationship.

...and the rest will follow

When you begin to notice, you begin to see how much our society is built around the assumptions that everyone wants to have sex and everyone wants a romantic relationship. From saying a person's wedding day is the "most important day of someone's life" to assuming that people who don't want sex just haven't had the opportunity to yet.

If we allow ourselves and others to be freed of the limits of these assumptions and reflect on different kinds of attraction, that's a lot less pressure on all of us to fall deeply in love AND have perfect sex AND be attracted to our partners in every single way forever. It allows folks to engage in the kind of relationships that bring them joy, live most authentically, and enjoy a range of connection with others.

want more info?

visit <https://weiland.stanford.edu>



TIPS

When people share information about their romantic and/or sexual life, they're taking a risk in being authentic with you. Here's some ideas on how to support them:

1 believe them

When someone tells you about their orientations, partners, or love life, accept what they say and don't shame them.

2 don't make assumptions

Not everyone wants to have sex and/or a relationship. When asking people about themselves, try to refrain from assuming that they view sex and love the same way as you do!

3 challenge beliefs about sex & love

Reflect on the different ways you feel attraction and see if you can parse out the five different kinds within your own life.

4 educate yourself

Continue to reflect on how partnership and sex are assumed to be important to everyone. Learn more about aromanticism and asexuality. Continue to reflect on the nuances of identity and where you place yourself within them!