

# The Development & Internalisation of an Asexual Identity



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## WHAT DID WE DO?

Asexuality is defined as an enduring lack of sexual attraction towards others. As a sexual orientation, it has only recently become a focus of research in the social sciences. In society it remains relatively unrecognised, notwithstanding evidence that 1-2% of the population are asexual.

The experience of being asexual, and developing a sense of oneself as such, in a heterocentric world might be expected to be similar to that of being gay, being a member of a sexual minority which can be misunderstood or subject to prejudice; there are also important differences however, not the least of which is the relative absence of public awareness of even the existence of asexuality.

In this study, we interviewed five asexual women about their experience of coming to recognise their asexuality, internalising this as part of their identity, and engaging as an asexual person in a sexualised world.



1-2% OF PEOPLE  
ARE ASEXUAL, YET  
THE EXISTENCE OF  
ASEXUALITY IS  
UNKNOWN TO  
MANY.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

We found that a common experience of participants was a process of searching to find a way of understanding their sexual identities. A recurring feature in their narratives was a growing realisation in their youth that they were in some way different from the majority of their peers, without knowing quite how. Several participants spoke of entering straight and gay relationships in an attempt to find their identity, before ultimately becoming aware of asexuality through a web search or simply by chance.

Participants also reported a lack of awareness of asexuality among family friends, sometimes negatively affecting acceptance of their sexual identity.

A greater awareness of asexuality in society can be of great benefit to asexual people in more quickly understanding their sexuality, and in being understood by others.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

