



Aromanticism

Best practice guidelines

Recommended supplement: Attraction

Definitions

'**Aromanticism**' is a romantic orientation used by those who do not experience romantic attraction. People who experience aromanticism often refer to themselves as '**aromantic**' or '**aro**' (as either a noun or adjective, interchangeably).

Additionally, aromantic is also used to describe a range of romantic orientations that only sometimes experience romantic attraction, or experience romantic attraction with specific caveats. This range of romantic orientations is referred to as the '**aromantic spectrum**'.

Someone who is asexual may or may not still experience other types of attraction to any sort of people. For example, an aromantic person who is sexually attracted to their own gender may identify as both gay and aromantic.

Aromantic spectrum

Every aromantic individual may experience their identity differently. Some aromantic people like to use more specific identity labels within the aromantic spectrum, rather than just calling themselves aromantic.

Grey-/Gray-(romantic) refers to people who only experience romantic attraction sporadically and/or weakly. It also may be used by people who feel partially aromantic. It can be used as an umbrella term for other aromantic spectrum identities that have a similar relationship to aromanticism.

Aroflux refers to people whose romantic attraction fluctuates between different identities, but generally stays within the aromantic spectrum.



Demioromantic refers to people who only experience romantic attraction after developing a strong emotional bond with someone.

Frayromantic refers to people who experience romantic attraction but that attraction fades after developing a strong emotional bond with someone.

Recipromantic refers to people who only experience romantic attraction when they are made aware that someone else is romantically attracted to them.

Akoiromantic refers to people who experience romantic attraction but don't want it reciprocated, and may lose romantic attraction when it becomes reciprocated.

In addition, **quoiromantic** refers to people who can't define whether they experience romantic attraction or not, or have a complex relationship with their romantic attraction which makes it difficult to describe their romantic orientation. People who are quoiromantic may consider themselves to be part of the aromantic spectrum, but some quoiromantic people do not see their identity as being an aromantic one.

Romance aversion, indifference, and favourability

Aromantic people differ not only in their romantic orientation, but also how they feel about and react to the idea of romance—both when they are exposed to it and in general.

Aromantic people may be '**romance-averse**' or '**romance-repulsed**', meaning that they find romance uncomfortable in some way. Depending on the individual, this might be a sense of mild unease, a severe and visceral discomfort, or somewhere in between. Some romance-averse aromantic people are repulsed by the whole concept of romance, while other romance-averse aromantics are only uncomfortable when it is directed towards them. Romance-averse aromantic people may use the micro-label '**apothiromantic**' to describe their repulsion towards romance.

Aromantic people may also be '**romance-indifferent**', meaning they do not have any particular feelings towards or against the concept of romance.

'**Romance-favourable**' aromantic people like or enjoy romance. They may enjoy romantic interest and affection directed at them, even if they do not experience romantic attraction themselves.



Alloromanticism and amatonormativity

Alloromanticism is the inverse of aromanticism. This umbrella term collectively refers to those who experience romantic attraction and are not part of the aromantic spectrum.

Amatonormativity (Brake 2012) is the societal assumption that everyone experiences romantic attraction, the expectation that everyone aspires to enter into an exclusive long-term romantic and sexual relationship and have children with that one partner, and the belief that such relationships should be prioritised and protected above all others. Amatonormativity impacts everyone, but aromantic people and polyamorous people are particularly harmed by it.

Amatonormativity is largely the reason that aromantic people are often wrongly believed to be emotionless or lonely. It equates the capability to express and feel romantic love with the capability to express and feel emotions as a whole. Amatonormativity implies that people cannot be perfectly happy without a romantic partner.

Inclusive language

Much of the language we use to talk about relationships and experiences of romance is not inclusive of aromantic people, and dismisses their experiences. The language we use can also reinforce harmful stereotypes about aromantic people.

Non-romantic relationships

Aromantics who do not desire romantic relationships may still desire non-romantic relationships. Such non-romantic relationships may be familial, platonic, sexual, queerplatonic, and so forth.

'**Queerplatonic relationships**' (QPR) are relationships that defy the amatonormative values that dictate the differences between non-romantic and romantic relationships. This includes the idea that romantic relationships are more important or more meaningful than other types of relationships, and that only romantic partners should move in together and have children.

People in a queerplatonic relationship are '**queerplatonic partners**' (QPP) with each other. The term '**zucchini**' is sometimes also used to describe partners in a queerplatonic relationship, though it can be considered an infantilising term.



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Though queerplatonic relationships are heavily tied with aromanticism, the concept is not strictly an aromantic one. Anyone of any romantic orientation can be part of a queerplatonic relationship.

Comparable to a romantic crush, a '**squish**' is a strong feeling of platonic love towards someone, and a desire to be their friend, or be in an otherwise platonic relationship with them. Like queerplatonic relationships, squishes are associated with aromanticism but are not exclusive to aromantic people.

The desire to be in a queerplatonic relationship with someone may be called a squish. However, the term '**plush**' may also be used specifically for queerplatonic relationships.

References

Brake, Elizabeth. 2012. *Minimizing Marriage: Marriage, Morality, and the Law*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

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