

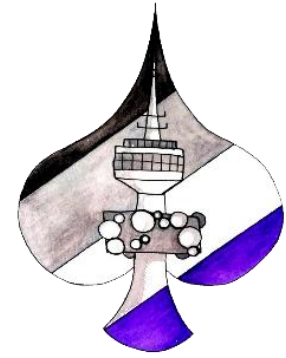
ACT Aces: Asexual Experiences Survey

FINAL REPORT

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Final Report – January 2020



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Introduction

In September of 2019, ACT Aces attended the Canberra Together conference, taking an opportunity to share our experiences with other local LGBTQIA+ organisations and individuals. In preparation for their attendance, our delegates discussed the issues most concerning us personally, and that we felt most affected the asexual community as a whole.

While we knew that certain experiences are commonplace in our community, as anyone who is part of a minority does, we could not find the statistical evidence to prove this. It was decided to create a survey that would ask questions about these issues and collect some data that we could use to show that the kinds of discrimination and violence we had experienced were not unique or isolated incidents. We wanted to identify the most urgent issues in our community, to inform our activism.

The scope of the survey grew as more ideas for questions were proposed, and we developed an interest in not just obtaining numbers but collecting other people's stories. We were about to tell our own, and we wanted to give others the opportunity to do the same. While there is an established history of sexuality and gender studies, little research is conducted into asexuality, and that is a frustration apparent in some of the comments written in the feedback section of the survey, where respondents expressed that they were excited to participate and thanked us for giving them the chance to write down their story, or just for asking at all.

We'd expected to get perhaps a few hundred responses, if we were lucky. We got nearly 1600, from people all over the world, on six continents. Many of the results ultimately shocked us. Some experiences, like sexual assaults, were more common than we'd expected. Other statistics seemed almost surreal: more respondents first learned about asexuality in fanfiction than in school sex education.

At Canberra Together, we were able to present our preliminary report and some early statistics. This, the final report, draws together all the data collected. It has informed our advocacy moving forward, and it has performed the secondary aim behind gathering this information: to show that there is value in researching the asexual experience and in expanding the understanding of what it means to be queer. This survey was not funded or supported by any research organisation, and it was conducted by volunteers on their own time.

- *Kate Wood, ACT Aces Survey Team*

Acknowledgments

Inordinate thanks to the survey team for their work building the survey, and working on the interpretation of results, each providing their own unique perspective on the findings and bringing invaluable lived experience and understanding to the table. Their expertise in different subject areas helped to create a survey, and a report, that looked at asexuality from so many different angles.

Particular thanks to Cat Cotsell for their tireless editing work, at all hours, and with great speed and efficiency. Thanks also for the gift of many beautiful turns of phrase that I wish I'd written!

And a thousand thankyou's to Jennifer Sutherland, for her methodological advice, editorial assistance and general encouragement.

Methodology

The Asexual Experiences Survey was written and analysed by a small working group of volunteers from ACT Aces. While there were some specific research goals in mind – such as gathering data about rates of sexual violence and whether asexuality is taught in Sex Education, many of the questions were asked with no one hypothesis or expectation about how the results might best be used.

While studies into asexual people's experiences have been conducted, ACT Aces wanted to gather not just the quantitative data, but also the meanings ace people give to their lived experiences in the world, to provide rich description of the asexual experience, and open up possibilities for further research. While many questions had checkbox and single-choice answers, most also had write-in fields provided, giving the opportunity for respondents to provide information about their experience in their own words. Section 4 of the survey, which asked questions about discrimination, oppression and violence specifically provided long answer spaces, inviting respondents to "Tell a Story". These questions led to respondents sharing their experiences, and these stories give a living, human face to the statistics gathered. We present these stories as preliminary qualitative data that describes the context and culture of asexual experiences as part of what it means to be queer.

This survey did not originate from a research institution, meaning it has not been subject to an ethics approval process, nor is it informed by a particular field of social science.

The push to create this survey originated from the lived experience of the survey team as asexuals. The team does contain academics who are familiar with the ethical principles governing human research. However, the survey results should not be viewed as a scientifically conducted, peer-reviewed research. Interpretation we present of the results are our own hypotheses and speculation, informed by our lived experience and the various scientific backgrounds of the survey team.

Given this, we emphasise that the recommendations made for further research in each section are informed by the data, interpretations and findings summarised here by a team of insiders to the community. For this reason, we contextualise the results as preliminary insider research.

There were five sections to the survey: *Demographic Information*, *Discovering Asexual Identity*, *Relationships and Family*, *Discrimination, Oppression and Violence* and *Pride and Social Experiences*. The survey questions are provided in Appendix A.

The survey was conducted using Google Forms as a platform. It was open for responses from August 26th until September 9th and shared to local Australian asexuality groups. The survey was anonymised, respondents were not required to sign into Google or give any contact information – this had the advantage of giving total anonymity, but potentially meant a person could take the survey more than once.

The survey link was circulated using the ACT Aces Facebook page; shared to members and with the other Australian groups. It was not a requirement of participation that respondents be in Australia, but it was expected that most would be so. Several days into the survey period, responses increased dramatically overnight, from about 250 to 850. The authors had no way of knowing where this sudden increase came from, but the new respondents came from a variety of locations, with the USA most represented.

The authors learned that the survey had been shared to the social media site Tumblr.com, where there is a large and active asexual community. They hypothesise that this is the source of the influx of non-Australian responses, although this cannot be proven. The practical effect of this is a much larger and more diverse sample, but with less local relevance.

After the survey was closed, Google Forms provided the responses in the form of a spreadsheet, as well as allowing the survey team to view each individual survey. Access to the results was limited to two people only – the person responsible for collating and interpreting the raw data, and the second person as a back-up in case of emergency.

A Preliminary Report, written in late September 2019, was presented at the 2019 Canberra Together conference and circulated among interested organisations. This report presented the results to each question individually. This Final Report provides greater detail, cross-referencing data, and looking more closely at certain subgroups, most significantly the 91 men and 172 Australian and New Zealanders.

This report takes many direct quotes from respondents to the survey – explanatory text within the survey explained to respondents that their words might be used in this way. The survey authors felt that the most good-faith interpretation of that text was to use quotes verbatim – including any spelling or grammatical errors. All quotes, therefore, appear exactly as written by the respondent.

DISCLOSURE: Because the survey sample size was expected to be quite small, members of the ACT Aces survey-writing team did take the survey themselves. The team member collecting and collating the data avoided using any responses that could identify a survey author in any quotes, examples or case studies and used these for quantitative purposes only. All responses are anonymised, with those participants quoted or used in case studies provided with a pseudonym chosen by the survey authors.

NOTE ON GENDERED TERMS: The authors asked about gender only, and refer to respondents as the gender they provided – respondents variously referred to themselves by the male/female or man/woman terms when describing gender. For the survey, therefore, the terms “male” and “female” do not hold any defined biological meaning. “Male” and “female” are used here as adjectives describing those who identify as men or women. As participants’ pronouns were not collected, the survey authors made assumptions based on the information that was given.

CONTENT WARNING: This report contains case studies, quotes and descriptions that are sometimes vivid and intense, and some readers may find them distressing. Asexual readers in particular may find that these stories reflect their own experiences of erasure, invalidation, harassment or violence. The survey team advises care when reading, particularly the case studies and personal accounts.

Results

A total of 1595 responses were received. As most questions were not compulsory, the size of the dataset varied between questions.

The quantitative results present valuable information about the issues that affect asexual people, the experiences that they have had, and areas where further research would be valuable. The write-in responses are a collection of qualitative data that cover a wider range of personal experiences than a survey of our own membership would provide.

A third key benefit of the results is where they provide information about what this survey did not do, what it could have done more effectively and what future research could or should do to fix these problems. This has led to a series of 21 recommendations, outlined in the text, and listed in full on page 69.

Key Terms

Asexual: Experiencing no sexual attraction.

Demisexual: Can sometimes experience sexual attraction, but only after a strong emotional bond has been formed (not every strong bond leads to attraction – just as a homosexual person is not attracted to every person of the same sex)

Grey-Asexual: Feeling as though asexuality is a label that mostly applies, but is in a “grey area”. Some reasons people choose this label include that they very rarely feel attraction, or that they have felt it once, or for only one person. (Sometimes called Grey-A or Grace)

Asexual Umbrella: Asexuality, demisexuality, Grey-A and all the other orientations that are forms of, or adjacent to, asexuality.

Allosexual: A term used to encompass everyone/everything that is not asexual. Allonormativity is the assumption that all people are allosexual.

Acephobia: Hatred, hostility and violence towards asexual people (Sometimes called A-Phobia)

Section 1: Demographic Information

1.0. The Split Attraction Model

Within the asexual community, sexual orientation is only one way in which to define attraction and understand one's identity. A survey that asks for sexual orientation must also ask for the other half of the equation.

The Split Attraction Model (SAM) is commonly used in the asexual community to delineate different types of attraction. The SAM recognises that a person can feel attraction in different ways, and that these feelings are not always in alignment or directed at the same genders. Forms of attraction include Sexual, Romantic, Aesthetic and Sensual.

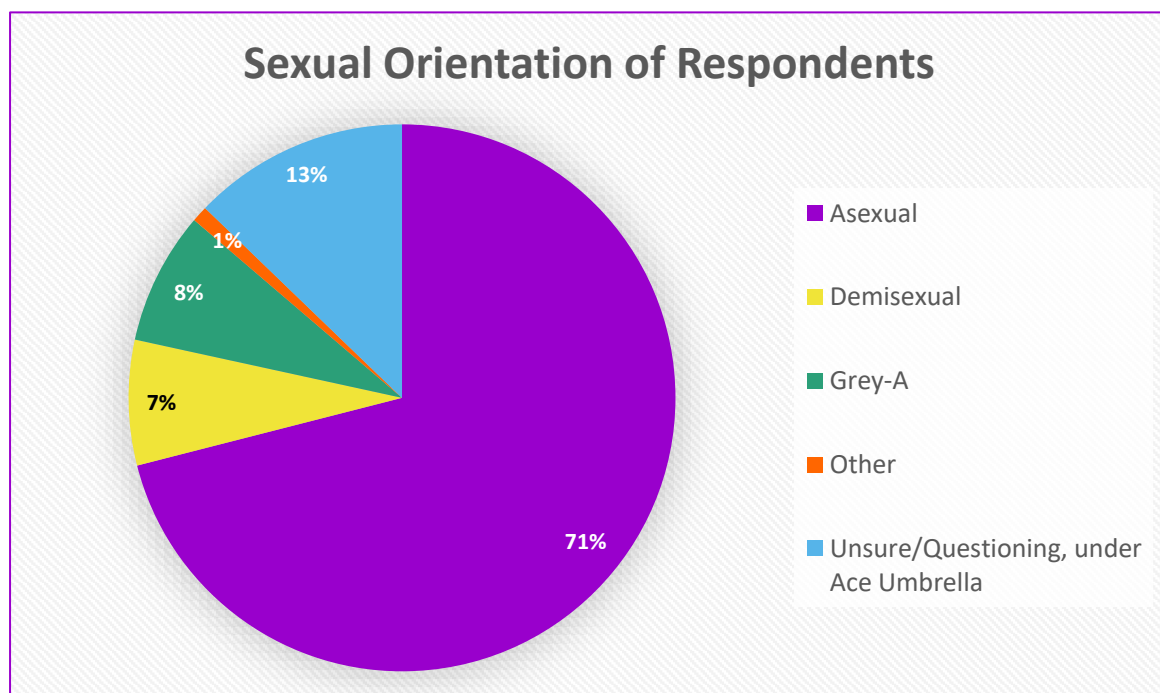
The meanings of words like *sexual* and *romantic* may differ between individuals and are considered to be representative of the person's subjective experience.

Many asexual people use Romantic Attraction as an identity. A person may be asexual, feeling no sexual attraction to others, but experience romantic feelings for people of a different gender. They might then identify as a Heteroromantic Asexual. Some of the women who participated in the survey identify as Asexual Lesbians.

In total, 5 respondents rejected the Split Attraction Model. 2 of them identified as Asexual and 3 of them as Aromantic.

1.1. Sexual Orientation

In filling out the survey form, Sexual Orientation was a required question. Respondents were able to select from a list of orientations commonly used and defined by the asexual community, or to write an alternative. Additional information on identities that could not be grouped can be found over the page.



According to the survey results, the most common self-identifier among respondents is “Asexual” (71%). “Asexual”, “Demisexual” and “Grey-A” together make up 86%, with another 13% listing themselves as “Unsure or Questioning”.

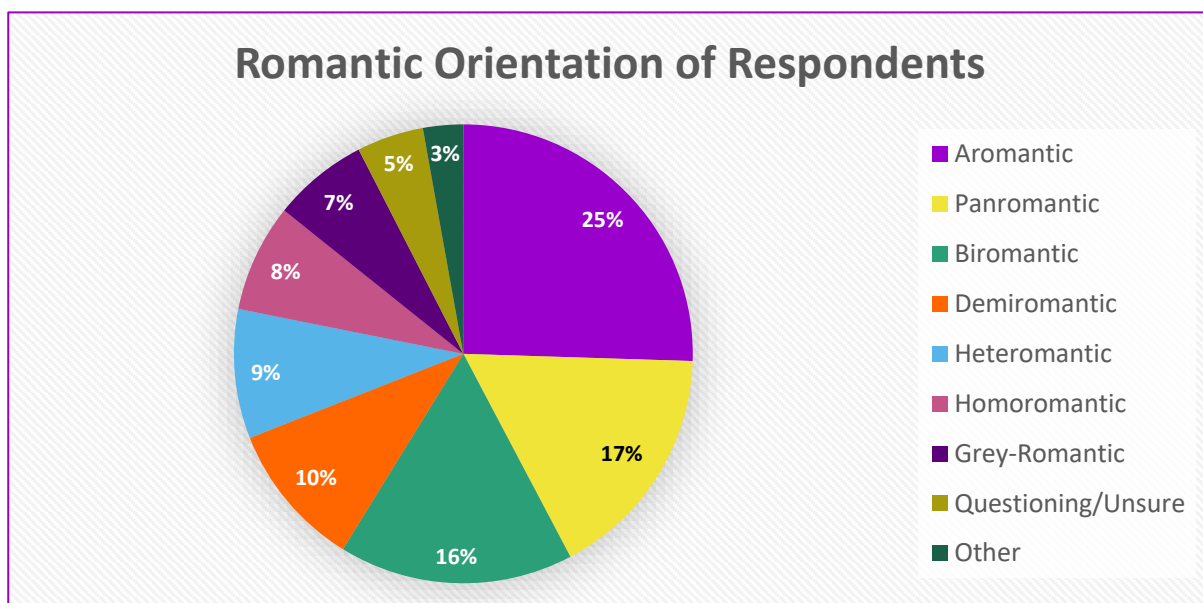
The 1% categorised as “Other” consists of the following.

- 4 x combination, e.g “Pansexual/Asexual”
- 3 x Aromantics who reject the Split Attraction Model
- 1 x person who identifies as Heterosexual, questioning if they might be Asexual
- 2 x Aceflux (fluctuates in/out/around the Asexual Umbrella)
- 1 x Apothisexual (identifying as both asexual and sex repulsed)
- 1 x Autochorisexual (only aroused by sexual situations involving other people)
- 1 x Cupiosexual (asexual but still desiring a sexual relationship)
- 1 x Lithsexual (only sexually attracted as long as that attraction is not/can never be reciprocated)
- 1 x Quoisexual (unsure about what sexual attraction actually is and whether they feel it)

All these identities have been defined under this survey as fitting under the Asexual Umbrella.

1.2. Romantic Orientation

Checkboxes were provided for romantic orientations considered common, with the addition of a write-in field. 97% of respondents fit into one of the eight provided categories. More than 3% used the write-in box. In some cases the write-in response was categorised under one of the original options, where a chosen term was a clear synonym for one of the checkbox options, for example, “Lesbian” for a female respondent was included under Homoromantic. Those that did not were grouped under “Other”.



The largest single group is aromantics, making up 25% of respondents.

Panromantics make up 17% of respondents, slightly ahead of biromantics at 16. One person identifying as “polyromantic” was categorised under Other. These orientations outnumbered the monoromantic identities. 9% of respondents are heteroromantic and 8% are homoromantic.

Several respondents combined *demi* with another term (e.g Bi-Demiromantic). As analysis necessitated some consolidation, these responses were grouped under “Demiromantic” – as that identity was the commonality shared by these respondents. This was considered the least disruptive approach for data accuracy, as only 11 respondents wrote-in their identity using the *demi-other* or *other-demi* format.

There were two respondents who rejected the Split Attraction Model. Both identified as “Asexual” in the Sexual Orientation question.

The 6 individuals grouped under “Other” wrote more than one Romantic Orientation (other than a combination including demiromantic, as discussed above). Two respondents wrote “None” rather than “Aromantic” and are consequently categorised under “Other”. This is to allow for the possibility that those respondents deliberately chose not to identify as Aromantic. The remaining write-in responses grouped under “Other” are:

- 2 x Aroflux (fluctuates in/out/around the Aromantic Umbrella¹)
- 1 x Autochorissexual (describing a disconnect between the self and the object of attraction)²
- 1 x Cupioromantic (desiring romantic connection despite experiencing no romantic attraction)
- 1 x Frayromantic (attraction exclusively directed at strangers)
- 1 x Homoflexible (not quite identifying as homosexual, as sometimes attracted to other genders)
- 1 x Polyromantic³
- 1 x Viramoric (non-binary person with attraction to men)
- 1 x Idemromantic (unable to differentiate between romantic and platonic feelings, and using other criteria to define relationships)

Aromantics experience their own unique challenges, and often describe feeling that there is a heavy emphasis in pop-culture and in society on romantic relationships and the importance of romantic love to happiness and fulfilment. This feeling of bombardment by a romantic culture can be isolating, and so it may be of interest, and of comfort, to many aromantic people to know that this was the largest single group of respondents. A person who is both asexual and aromantic is commonly called “AroAce”.

When originally writing the survey, the authors felt that allosexual aromantics should be included, but feedback indicates that this attempt at inclusiveness was problematic. The survey text welcomed allosexual aromantic respondents – but questions used only the term “asexual”. The survey authors received a number of Facebook comments, and two emails on this subject. The general theme of this feedback was that it is alright for asexual people to exclude allosexual aromantics from our research,

¹ The Aromantic Umbrella is a term for the many romantic orientations, such as demiromantic and grey-romantic, that are related to aromanticism.

² This would have been appropriate for inclusion under Sexual Attraction, but is included here as the respondent chose to write it under Romantic Attraction

³ Some definitions state that *polyromantic* describes an attraction to multiple but not all genders. Others state that *polyromantic* describes an attraction to multiple individuals at a time

but that if we do choose to be inclusive, that inclusivity should be built properly into a survey, not an afterthought or addition.

1.2. Romantic Orientation

Recommendation for Future Survey 1: If allosexual aromantics are to be included in research, this should be considered in the writing of the survey, ideally with input from a member of that community.

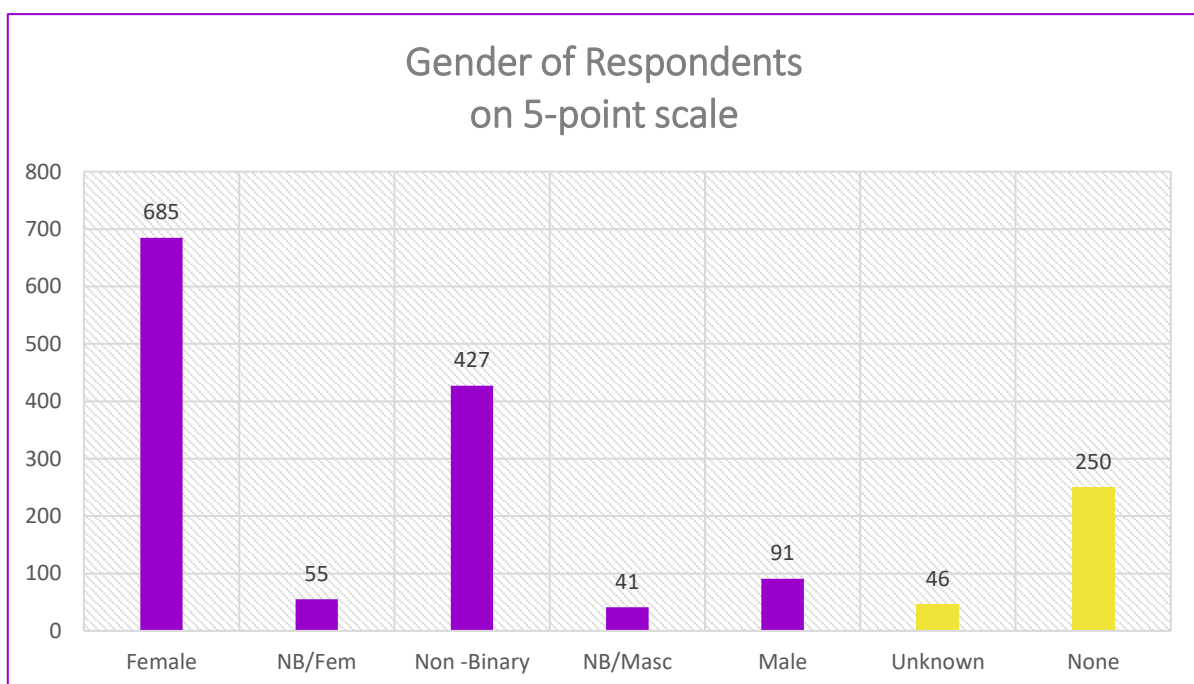
1.3. Gender

Gender was entirely a write-in category. This left divulging transgender status to the discretion of the respondent. The survey did not record transgender status, whether disclosed here on in any other part of the survey.

The question of including transgender status as a key data point remains contentious and depends heavily on the intended use of a survey. In this survey, gender was not a focus, but a question about transgender status would have been valuable in examining the intersection between asexuality and transgender experience. Future surveys producing data on this group would fill a major gap in existing literature.

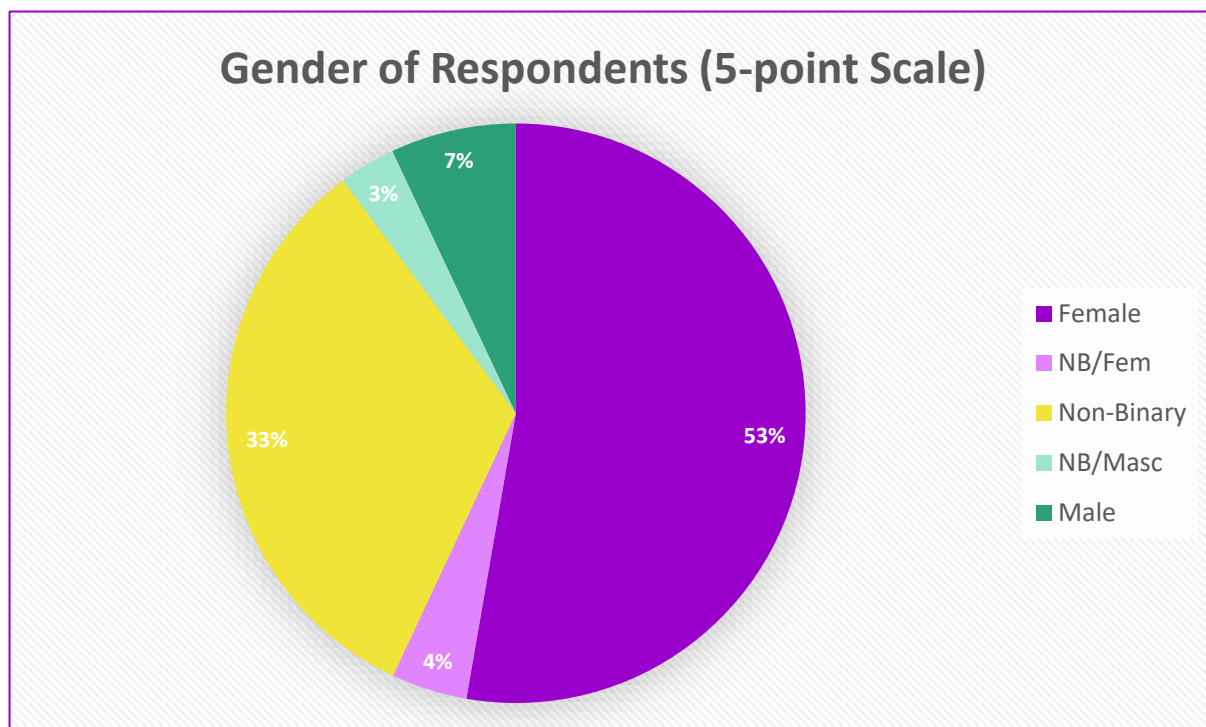
This survey also did not ask whether respondents were intersex, and the advice from advocacy organisation A Gender Agenda is that surveys should ask this as a stand-alone question.

Another result of leaving gender as a write-in category was the abundant variety of answers. Collating those answers for a clear and accurate depiction was achieved by assigning 5 groups: “Female”, “Non-Binary Femme”, “Non-Binary”, “Non-Binary Masc” and “Male”. These groups were created by the survey authors, based on their best interpretation. The object was analysis of trends by loosely grouping, not an attempt to define any of the diverse range of non-binary identities.



“Unknown” represents unusable information (eg. only “Trans” or “Cis”). “None” represents respondents who wrote some variation of “I do not have a gender”, or who left the question blank. These were not grouped under “Non-Binary” (NB). Agender was grouped under NB. The overwhelming majority of respondents were female or non-binary.

The following pie chart illustrates the dominance of female and non-binary representation. Responses listed as “None” or “Unknown” are excluded from the chart.



This gender imbalance is likely explained by the nature of the survey as self-selecting participation, and the gender roles associated with women and non-men participating in research. A similar imbalance can be found in other surveys on asexual-identifying people, such as the US-based *Asexual Census Summary Report*⁴ and the *Ace Community Survey Report*.⁵

ACT Aces is seeking ways to engage with local men who identify as asexual. We do not know whether local men are more likely to identify as asexual, more likely to respond to a survey or if some other factor is present. More information would allow us to connect with more asexual men in the ACT

Australia and New Zealand had the highest response rate of male respondents. 19% of local respondents were men, compared to 11% of respondents worldwide.

Men reported sexual violence at higher rates than the full cohort, and this is discussed in *Section 4.5. Men as Victims/Survivors of Violence (pg. 60)*.

⁴ Bauer, C., Miller, T., Ginoza, M., Chiang, A., Youngblom, K., Baba, A., Pinnell, J., Penten, P., Meinhold, M., Ramaraj, V. (2017). *The 2015 Asexual Census Summary Report*.

⁵ Bauer, C., Miller, T., Ginoza, M., Guo, Y., Youngblom, K., Baba, A., Penten, P., Meinhold, M., Ramaraj, V., Ziebert, J., Trieu, T., Adroit, M., (2018). *The 2016 Asexual Community Survey Summary Report*.

1.3. Gender

Recommendation for Future Survey 2: Provide gender question as a multiple choice format, but include the write-in option to retain the capture of descriptions of gender that are meaningful to the individual.

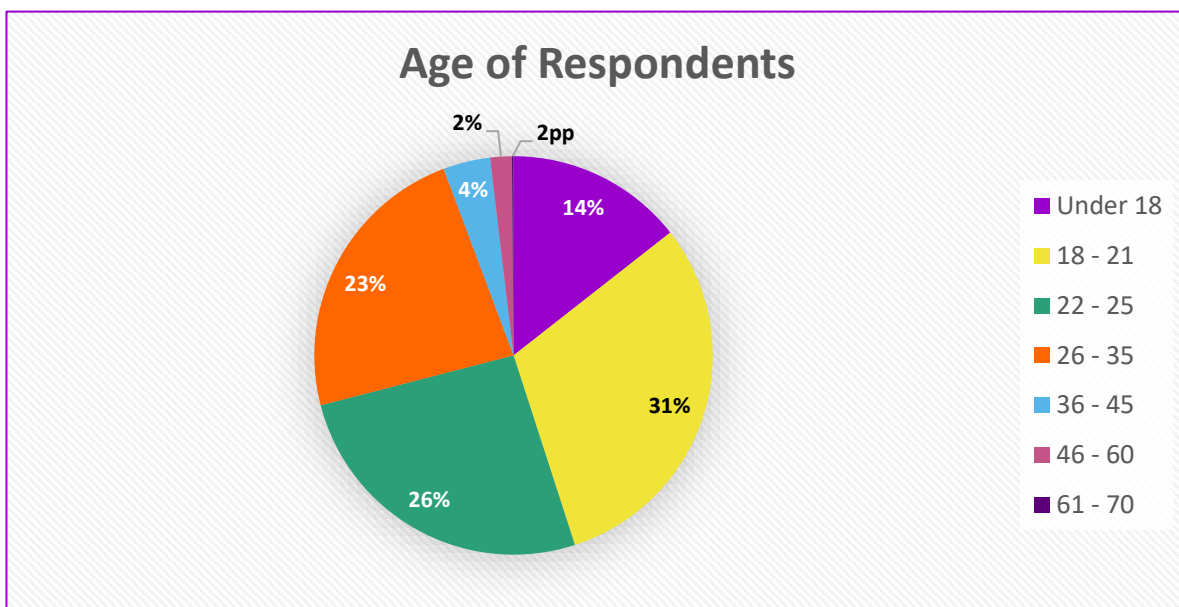
Recommendation for Future Survey 3: Collect data regarding respondents' transgender status.

Recommendation for Future Survey 4: Include a separate optional question asking if respondents are intersex.

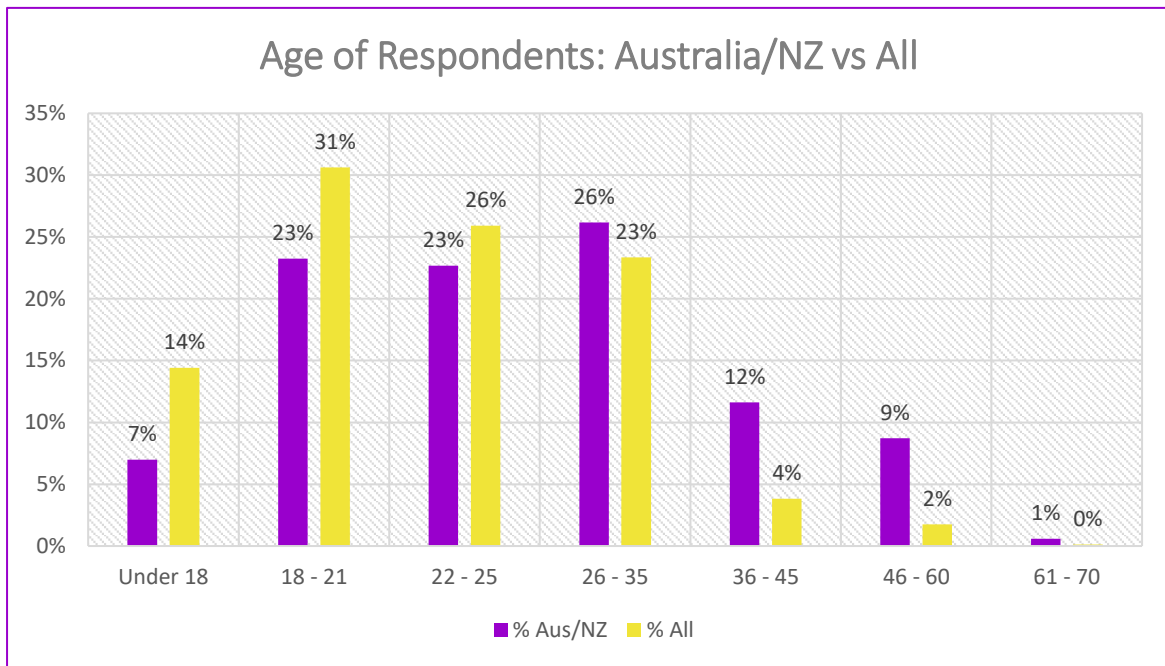
1.4. Age

Age was another required question. Seven age brackets were provided, with respondents choosing one.

45% of respondents were 21 and under. 49% were aged 22-35, inclusive. There were only two respondents older than 60.



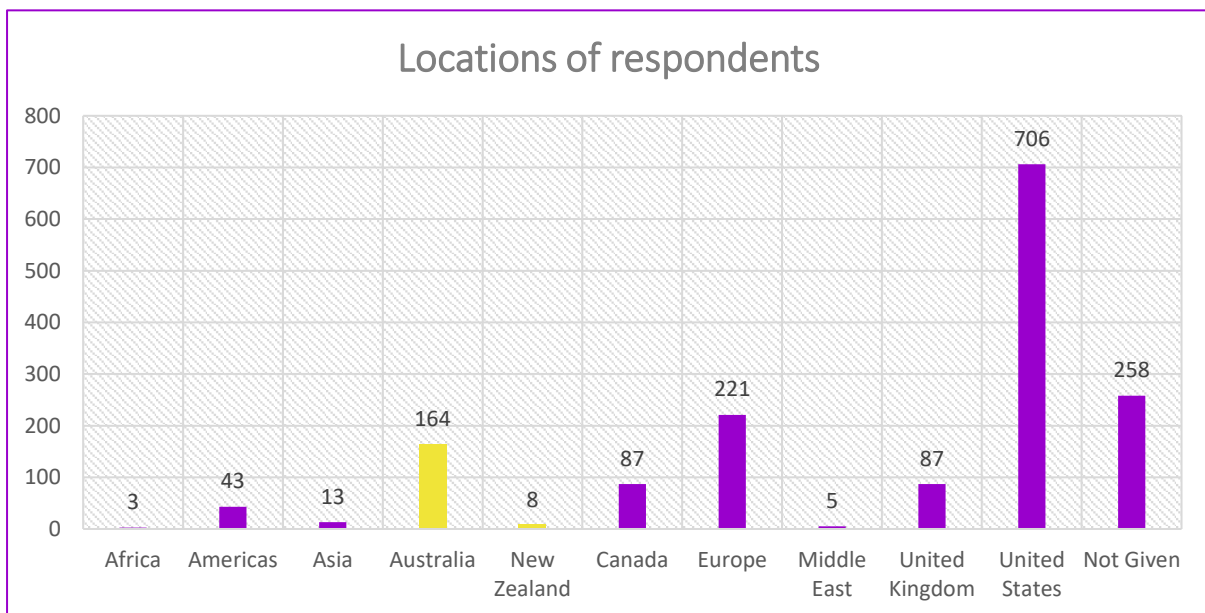
Respondents from Australia and New Zealand were notably older than the full cohort. While 14% of all respondents were under 18, only 7% of Australian/New Zealand respondents were in that same age group. 48% of Australian and NZ respondents were aged 26 or older, compared to only 29% of total respondents.



Social media platforms, which were the primary channel used to seek respondents for the survey, are one possible reason for the age gap. As discussed in the Introduction, it is probable that Tumblr was the most active platform in distributing the survey and according to search engine optimization site Search Engine Journal⁶, 66% of its users are under 35, and 39% are under 25.

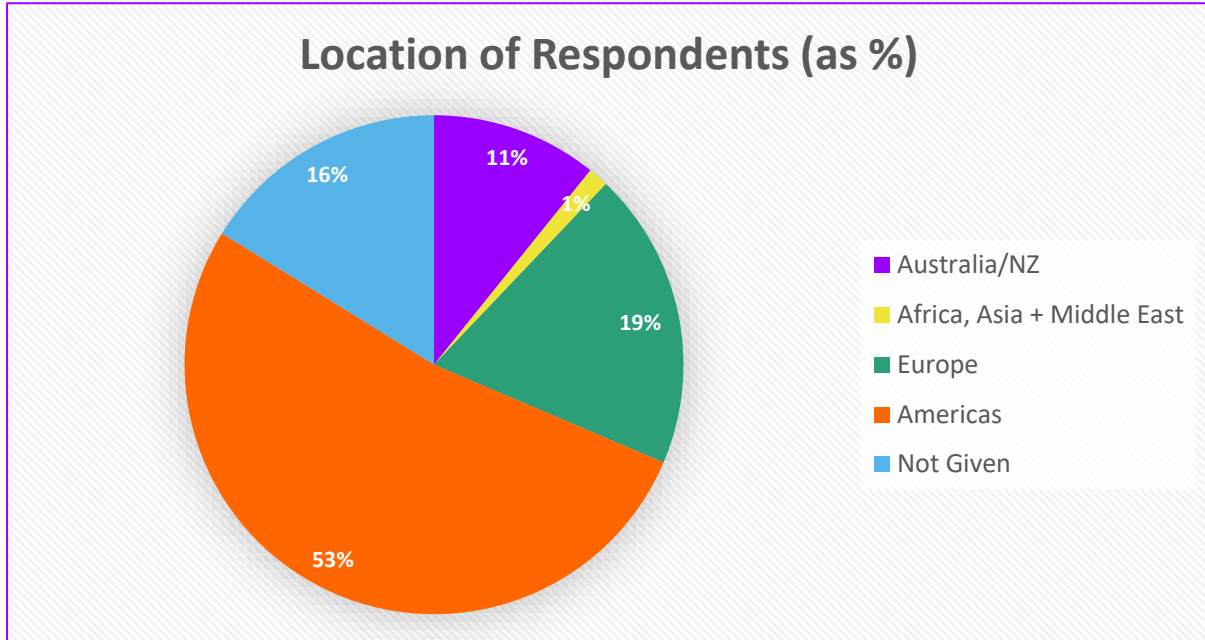
1.5. Location

As discussed in the Introduction, 706 (44.2%) of respondents are from the USA. It is the hypothesis of the survey authors that the dominance of the American userbase on Tumblr is the cause of this, but the survey did not capture where respondents learned about the survey.



⁶ www.searchenginejournal.com

The three African responses include two from South Africa, and one from Morocco. The Middle Eastern responses included three from Israel and one each from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. There were responses from Japan, India, the Philippines, Sweden, Costa Rica, Brazil, Finland, and many others. Aside from New Zealand and Australia, there were no Pacific nations.



In total, the responses from Australia and New Zealand numbered 172. The results to every question were compared with the entire cohort and examined for significant differences. The only differences that the survey authors thought were possibly significant to note were age and gender, as discussed above, and age at which respondents first realised that they are asexual (see [Section 2.1. Age on Discovering Asexual Identity \(pg. 21\)](#)).

CASE STUDIES

Salma (Morocco) and Olivia (Australia)

Salma and Olivia are both cis women aged between 26 and 35. Both identify as biromantic and asexual. Salma lives in Morocco while Olivia lives in Australia. Salma was chosen as a Case Study because of the detailed stories she shared. Olivia was randomly chosen from the four Australian respondents of the same age bracket and romantic orientation.

Although they live very distantly from one another, and have different cultural and religious backgrounds, these two individual respondents gave similar responses in two of the four subjects investigated by the survey: *Asexual Identity and Education* and *Relationships and Children*.

Asexual Identity and Education (Section 2)

Both women responded that they are “out” as asexual to at least one person. (S2.3.) Salma is out only to friends. Olivia is out to friends and at least one parent. Olivia responded that asexuality was not taught in their formal sex education, while Salma did not attend any sex education at all. (S2.5.)

The two women differed in where they first heard about asexuality. (S2.4) Salma first discovered the concept on the internet, while Olivia heard the word from another asexual person. This is further reflected in their other answers, such as where they went to seek further information when they began to explore their identity. (S2.6.) Salma gave a write-in response about a specific Facebook page, while Olivia ticked the boxes for both "Asexual groups online" and "Individual asexual people". Both women were similar in their choices to seek out other asexual people for information, and like many respondents, found a helpful community online.

Salma responded that she has never identified with any orientation other than asexuality and realised she was asexual at some point before age 19. (S2.1.) Olivia did not begin identifying as asexual until within their current 26 - 35 age bracket. She previously identified as bisexual, thinking that she "hadn't found the right person to have sex with yet". (S2.2.)

Relationships and Children (Section 3)

Both respondents are not currently in relationships but are open to the possibility. (S3.1.) Both do not want children. (S3.4.) They differ in that while Olivia identified that she had no previous committed relationships, Salma was once engaged to a man who was also asexual (S3.3.) She elaborated on this story in write-in responses to the questions on *Discrimination, Oppression and Violence*. (S4)

CASE STUDIES, cont.
Salma (Morocco) and Olivia (Australia)

Discrimination, Oppression and Violence (Section 4)

Olivia ticked two boxes in this section of the survey and told no stories. She reported being excluded from LGBTIQ+ spaces (S4.2.1.), and being told that asexuality is not real/normal. (S4.3.1.) The survey had no option except the write-in field to determine whether such incidents were one-off or ongoing.

Salma provided many write-in responses. She described intense pressure from her parents and other family members to get married and have children. She used the word "forced" several times. Her relationship with an asexual man she met online was unsuccessful and she described him wanting children while she did not, and also cited cultural differences. (S4, various)

Salma described being upset by her family's lack of acceptance, even without having explicitly come out to them as asexual:

"...also my family forced me many time to get married but I had to say no and gave excuses, and suffer because I got insulted by my family , they asked me what's wrong with me at first they think I'm not okay and they keep forced me to get married, so I have to find always excuses..."

-Salma (Morocco)

Salma specifically referred to cultural and religious attitudes as contributing to her experiences of shaming and coercion. She also described being coerced into sending nudes online. This is one of two instances of coercion to send nudes provided by respondents in the write-in field. This was interpreted by the survey authors as having interest for future research, as many asexuals describe feeling a pressure to compromise their personal boundaries.

Expressions of Pride (Section 5)

Both Salma and Olivia reported that they are members of online (but not offline) asexual social, pride or advocacy groups. (S5.1.) Olivia owns a small asexual pride pin. (S5.2.) Salma did not answer the questions about expressing pride at all.

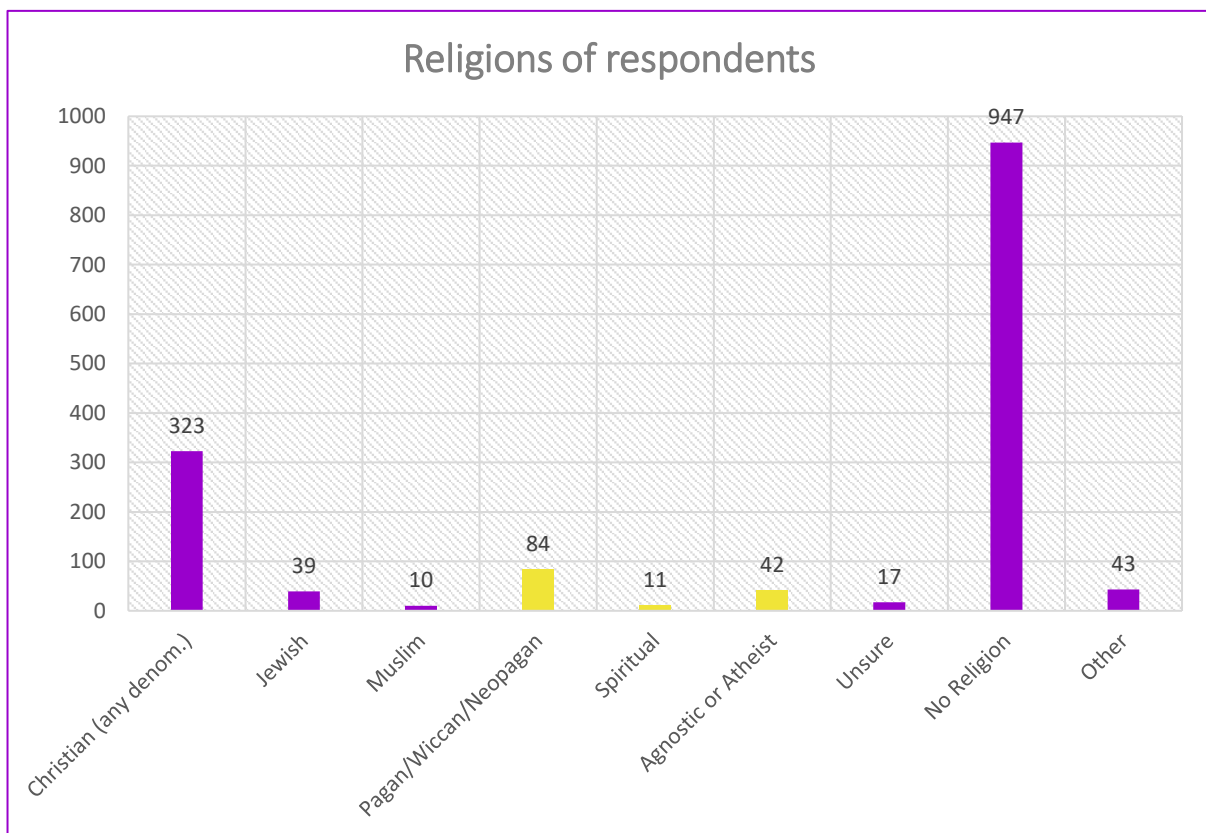
"...it's not a sickness, it's a feeling that you grow up with."

-Salma (Morocco)

1.6. Religion

Data on religion was collected through a combination checkbox list and write-in option. As with Gender, the write-in option resulted in many different responses which then had to be collated. Where two responses were given, through checkboxes, write-in or combination, both were counted. 83 respondents gave no answer, 1464 gave one and 48 gave two responses.

By far the largest group was those who identified as having no religion. Those identifying as Agnostic or Atheist were grouped together into a separate category, as they had chosen to use the write-in option to identify in one of these specific ways, rather than tick “No Religion”. Many respondents checked “No Religion” in addition to one of the religion boxes; like those who chose two religions, this group was counted under both. 2 of the original checkbox options (Buddhist and Hindu) accounted for fewer than 10 respondents. This is less than the three grouped write-in categories (shown in yellow).



The largest religion was Christian (any denomination). Faiths included are Catholic, Church of England, Mormon, Uniting Church and the large number of unspecified denominations described by the respondent as Christian.

There are 84 faiths included under “Pagan/Wiccan/Neopagan”. As the survey authors were not familiar with all faiths, some may have been mistakenly miscategorised. Additional data can be provided on request.

Included under Other are:

- 8 x people practicing a form of Polytheism (eg. 3 x Hellenistic Pantheists)
- 8 x Buddhists
- 8 x Unitarian Universalists
- 7 x Hindus
- 4 x Satanists
- 3 x people describing themselves as having personal belief systems
- 1 x person practising an Indigenous Canadian Religion
- 1 x Humanist
- 1 x Scientologist
- 1 x person practising Witchcraft (not Wiccan)
- 1 x person believing in Altruism
- 1 x believer in Mysticism

1.6.1. Religious Discrimination

In the write-in option of Section 4 of the survey, six participants used the “Tell a Story” spaces to recount incidents of religious discrimination, or discrimination with a religious element:

- Amara, a Muslim woman from the USA
- Susan; and
- Dorothy, both non-religious women with a Christian background, from the USA
- Emma, a Christian woman from the USA
- Bailey, a demigirl with no religion and a Christian background, from the USA
- Blair, a genderqueer Christian, who did not give their location. Blair stated that they are perceived as female and experience oppression as a woman.

The Muslim and practising Christian respondents all described fearing or experiencing religious discrimination. This included being ostracised from a social circle and denial of access to places of worship. Some respondents also expressed concern about threats of harm or violence.

The six respondents feel pressure from their religious communities in different ways. Broadly, there were two categories of oppression. The first was a lack of acceptance of queer identities, including both asexuality as such a queer identity and where it intersects with a non-hetero romantic orientation. Four of the six described experiencing this type of oppression.

Amara, a lithsexual, aromantic Muslim woman, shared the ways in which her identities intersect to make her feel isolated:

Asexuals are often excluded from LGBTIA+ spaces that insist that a is ally as well as exclusion on the grounds that I'm a face-veil wearing Muslim. In addition, my identity in this fashion as well as being homoplatic is largely frowned upon and excludes me from my religious institution which has be distanced from my community. God favors women praying at home so it's not a big loss spiritually but I'd rather wish I could interact with my community. Being lith/akoi often has me discriminated against in ACE communities. No matter where I turn I lack any real acceptance for my identity as it fully stands.

-Amara (USA)

The other of the two categories of oppression is specific to asexual AFAB (assigned female at birth) people. Three respondents described being told by family, peers, or figures of religious authority that it is their responsibility “as a woman” to get married and have children, and that asexuality is therefore sinful or bad.

As the survey did not specifically ask about religious discrimination, there may be more people in the asexual community – those of faith and those with religious upbringings – who would share their own experiences, if prompted. Refer to [Section 4.1.3. Religious Exclusion \(pg. 49\)](#).

Emma, a biromantic, asexual Christian woman, described being harassed by authority figures because of her asexuality:

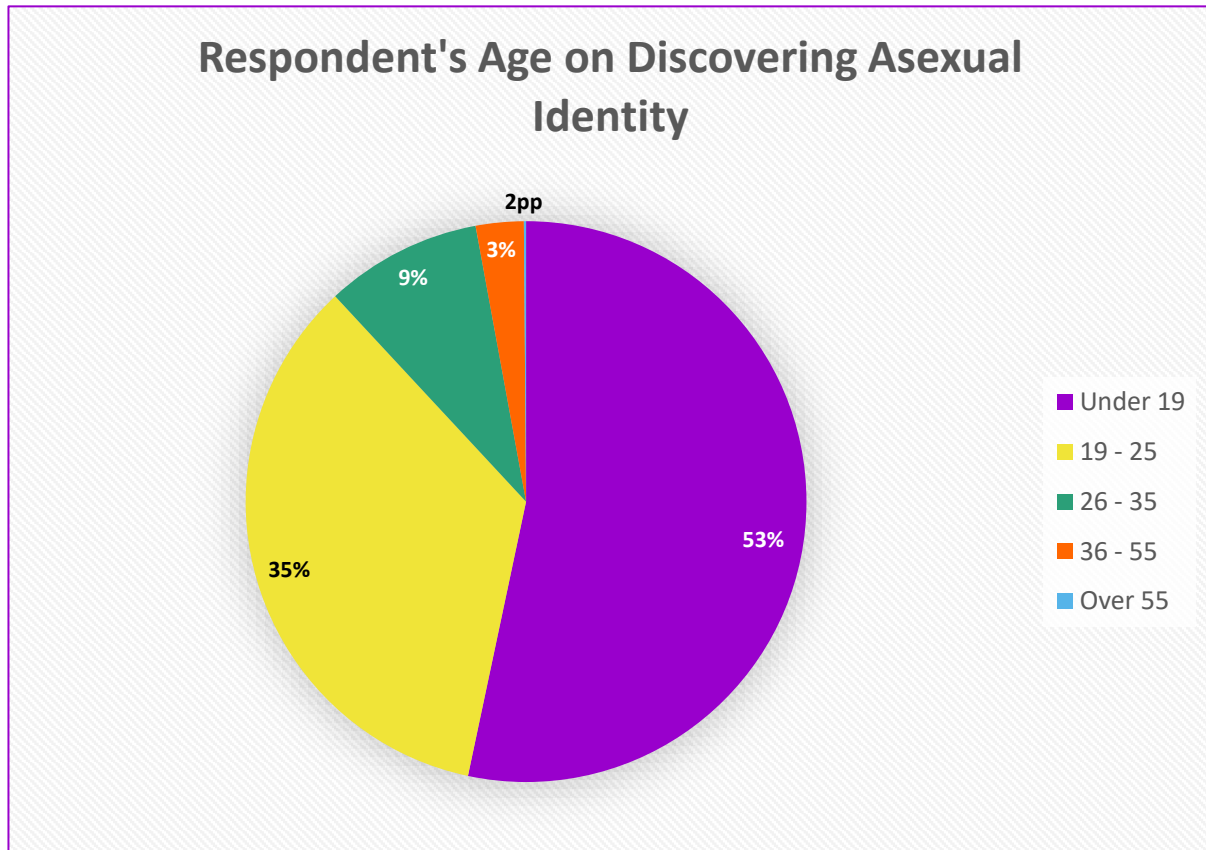
I came out as ace at a christian summer camp (during the topic of purity) and for the rest of the week, constantly was puled aside and told to repent for not being straight (they dont know im also biromantic) and was constantly told that its my job as a women to please my man and bare his children

-Emma (USA)

Section 2: Discovering Asexual Identity

2.1. Age on Discovering Asexual Identity

Only 3% of survey respondents were over the age of 35 when first discovering their asexuality. This may be because the youngest two age brackets are overrepresented in the data. Another possible reason is that these younger age brackets correspond with the emergence of asexuality as a publicly discussed sexual orientation.



A person who **identifies** asexual is, by this survey's definition, someone who has uses this word (or another identity under the Asexual Umbrella) to define themselves. This can be limited to use only privately, in their own thoughts, or they might refer to themselves as asexual publicly.

A person who is **out** as asexual uses the word publicly to describe themselves. A person may come out many times in their life, as they become more comfortable, as they meet new people, as attitudes change and they begin to feel safer.

53% of respondents were under 19 years of age when they first **identified** as asexual. A total of 88% were aged younger than 26, compared to 12% aged 26 and older. It may be of interest to compare these numbers with other similar surveys which measure age and how it relates to queer identity.

One hypothesis is that the increasing visibility of asexuality has a causal link with individuals identifying as and coming out as asexual. This may be indicated by the older age at which older respondents first identified as asexual. It may also have been valuable to ask respondents at what age they came **out**, to understand that element of the personal journey.

As the survey was not written with the original intention of comparing respondents' current age with their age at first identifying as asexual, the age groups used in the two questions overlap with one another.

2.1. Age at First Realisation of Asexuality

Recommendation for Future Survey 5: All questions relating to age should include the same age brackets, or at least avoid overlapping brackets.

Recommendation for Future Survey 6: Collect data about the age respondents came out as asexual.

2.2. Previous Identities/Orientations

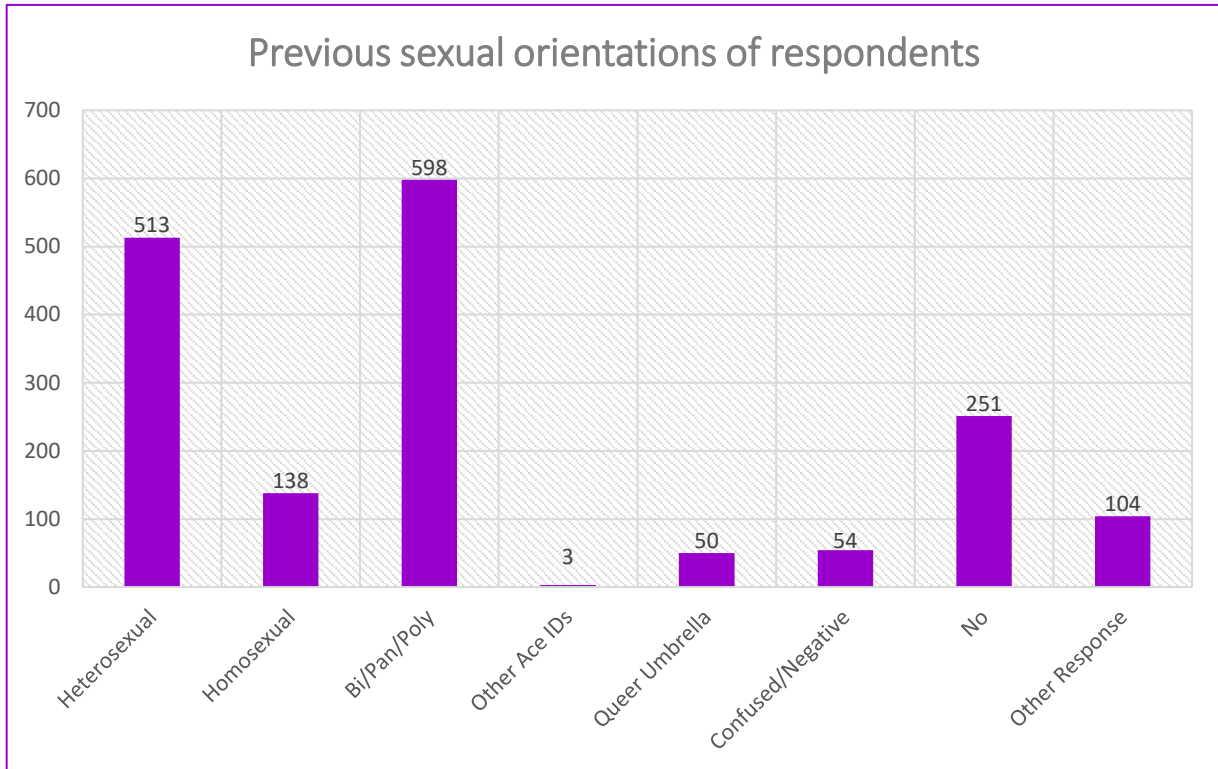
The survey text acknowledged that many people experiment with labels and identifying words before they come to identify as asexual. This optional question gave respondents the opportunity to either select or write-in any previously chosen labels.

Collating this data represented a problem in separating bisexual and pansexual responses. The data obtained included responses where both the bisexual and pansexual boxes had been checked, and write-in responses with a variety of subtle differences, such as "bi/pan", "bi and pan", "bi, pan" and "bi or pan". Some respondents wrote lists of several orientations, in which both were included. There were also write-in responses for "polysexual" and "multisexual" that did not specify which possible definition was intended. It was therefore not always possible to tell if a person used both identities in a fluid way at the same time, or if they at separate times used the two separate words with separate meanings.

To simplify the chart, the results for bisexual, pansexual and other related labels have been grouped together, but this does not suggest that they are equivalent. The result is likely somewhat inflated, as there were some respondents who have been counted twice, despite using both labels at the same time. Overall, more than a third of respondents reported that they previously identified as non-monosexual.

Total respondents previously identifying as: Bisexual (409), Pansexual (185), Polysexual (3), Multisexual (1).⁷

⁷As the meanings were not specified, the more common meaning of attractions to multiple genders was assumed.



“Straight by Default”

Of the 513 respondents who previously identified as Heterosexual, 176 (34%), gave a word or qualifying explanation about assuming or believing this because it was all they knew about, or what everyone is, unless they are something else. 42 respondents independently chose some variation of the same word:

“Default”

Some respondents listed up to 6 previous identities/labels. The above figures therefore represent the number of respondents, rather than the percentage. Examples of responses under Other include:

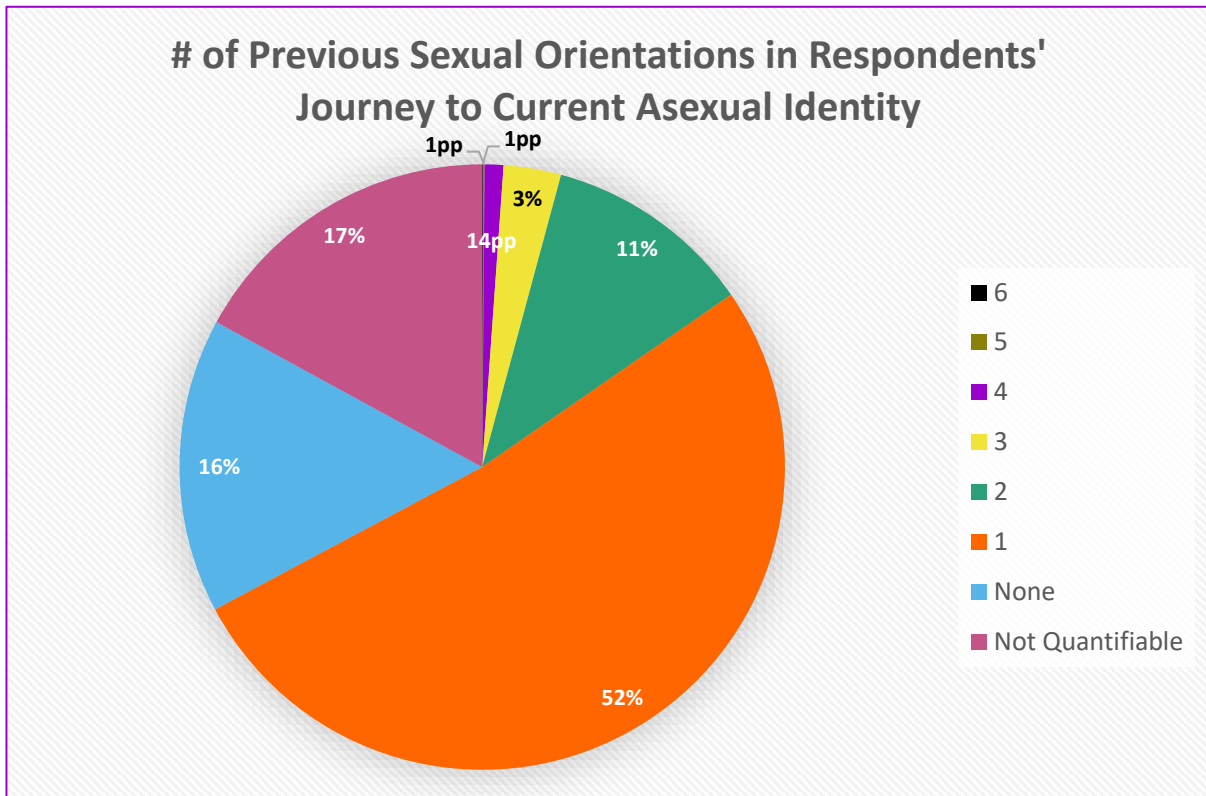
- 27 x “Questioning”, “Unsure” or similar term.
- 14 x “Yes”
- 12 x long and/or complex stories that could not be reduced to a list of identities
- 3 x “Allosexual”

Answers categorised as Queer Umbrella included 24 respondents who wrote “Queer” and/or a version of the “LGBT+” acronym (sometimes both), 9 who wrote “Not Straight” and 5 who wrote “Heteroflexible”.

37 respondents wrote that while using another label, they had been confusing romantic and sexual attraction and that they now identify with the equivalent romantic orientation, and a sexual orientation under the Asexual Umbrella. Looking purely at the responses as written:

Of the 796 respondents identifying as *heteroromantic*, *homoromantic*, *biromantic* or *panromantic* (in the earlier question about romantic orientations), 39% have at some point previously identified as the equivalent sexual orientation. This result provides an interesting angle for future research around the Split Attraction Model and how asexual people build their identities.

14% of respondents said that they had used previously used 2 or more labels. The highest number of labels used by an individual was 6. This respondent wrote a detailed account of their dating history and questions about both their orientation and their gender. As their gender identity developed (a common thread among respondents), their sexual orientation changed also. They belonged to the under-19 age bracket.



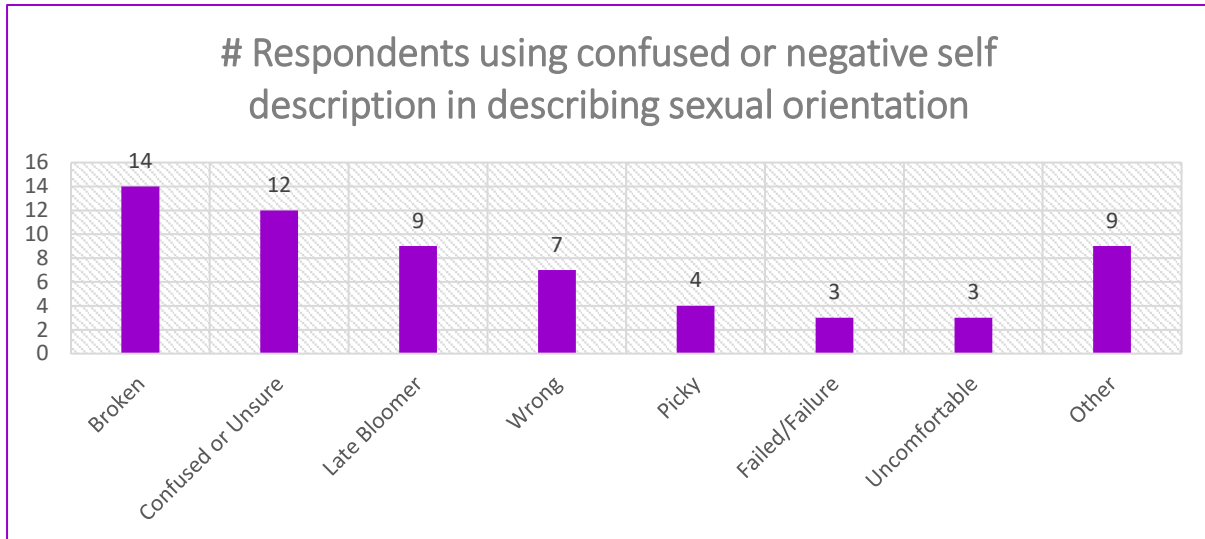
One respondent, in the 26-35 age bracket, is genderfluid and has used five previous labels for their sexual orientation. While in terms of numbers these two are outliers out of nearly 1600, they might be seen to support the hypothesis that younger generations in the West are seeing increased access to information and decreasing stigma around sex and gender to experiment freely in their journey of self-expression and self-discovery.

2.2. Previous Identities/Orientations

Recommendation for Future Survey 7: Structure questions that consider whether respondents feel they have ever confused sexual and romantic orientations in the past.

2.2.1. Confusion and Negative Self Labels

Where respondents could write their own response, there were 54 instances of words describing confusion, or which were disparaging, negative labels. Some respondents used more than one term, amounting to 61 terms in total.



The words and phrases included under “Other” are:

- Frigid
- Freak
- Weird
- In heavy denial
- “Straight, just hated everything about it”
- “insecure about my body”
- “looking from the outside in”

These terms were sometimes used in a witty or sarcastic manner. They were also used earnestly. This kind of language appears frequently all throughout the written responses describing interactions with friends, family, partners, colleagues, religious leaders and other individuals. This indicates that the language and ideas in the above chart could have been internalized from negative forces in the respondent’s social environment.

Negative Self Description: Examples

straight but like really bad at it

-Kieran (Germany)

Everyone assumed I was straight, so I just ran with it. Never really identified as being attracted to men, but it was easier than admitting that I thought I was broken.

-Madison (Location Not Given)

Heterosexual, but doing it wrong (Because in the absence of clear attraction, I went with "the default" and assumed I was just really bad at the actual experiencing attraction part of it)

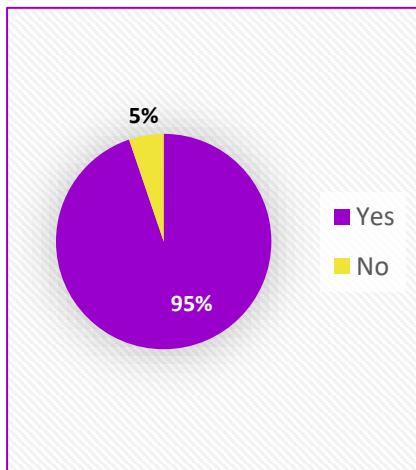
-Helen (USA)

No, had always identified as heterosexual. Just thought I was frigid or had sexual anxiety and poor self image, resulting in never being able to relax enough to get into the mood.

-Rose (Australia)

Bisexual, until I realized my feelings weren't sexual and it didn't encompass everything. Then I just felt lost, because I still hadn't heard of asexuality.

-Jane (USA)



2.3. Out Status

The intention of this question was to learn how many respondents were open and “out” as asexual people.

This question was worded:

“Have you ever told anyone else that you are asexual?”

Some answers to following questions showed that people who answered “Yes” to this question had only told a single person, while specifying that they were otherwise not out. In a future study, more useful questions might be:

“Are you out to your friends/family/community?” etc

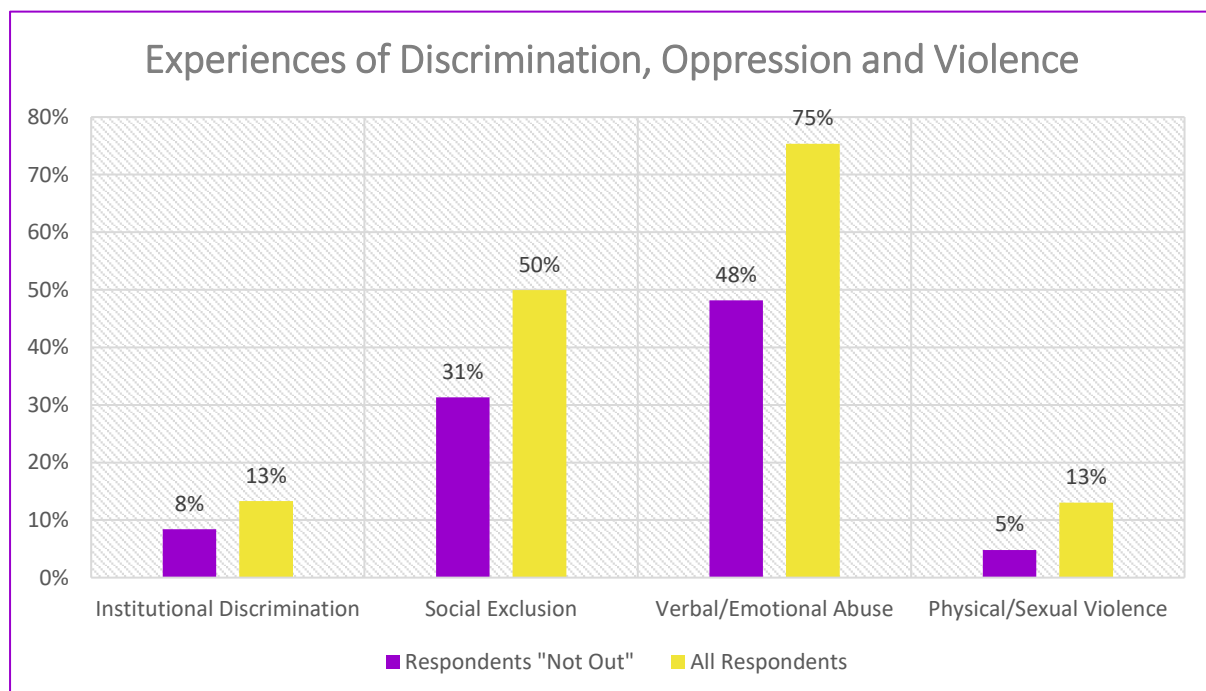
2.3. Out Status

Recommendation for Future Survey 8: Structure questions according to who asexual people are out to in the world.

2.3.1. Links to Data on Discrimination, Oppression and Violence

Seeing this figure of 5% of respondents reporting that they had not told anybody that they are asexual, the survey authors then asked the question of whether these respondents might share any similarities that could shed some light on when and why people come out, and what makes them feel safe. On cross-referencing the data, there were no readily apparent patterns or commonalities linked to whether or not individual asexual people have disclosed their asexual status.

However, among those respondents who said that they had never told anyone they are asexual (Respondents “Not Out”), there were fewer reported incidents of discrimination, oppression and violence. Twice as many respondents in this group (33%) reported never experiencing any of these incidents. In the entire cohort this percentage drops to 16% (see [Section 4: Discrimination, Oppression and Violence, pg. 46](#)).



8% of the “Not Out” group specified in their write-in comments that they believed their lack of negative experiences was that their orientation was not known to others. The only forms of violence and abuse in which the “not out” group reported experiences at a similar rate to the entire cohort were those categories indicative of relationship violence or verbal abuse by a partner.

These results are especially suggestive of how and why asexual people experience oppression.

Anecdotally, ACT Aces is aware that asexual people who talk about their experiences are sometimes told that their sexual orientation is not a factor in the abuse. As an example, asexual women have reported to us that their experiences were invalidated by being told that the violence is purely misogynistic and that their asexuality was irrelevant to the incident. This is often used as a way of dismissing the possibility that asexual people experience oppression.

The results as a whole are incomplete and ought to be approached with sensitivity and caution. The “Not Out” group makes up only 5% of the total cohort. For the other 95%, except for where they have volunteered additional information, there is no way of knowing when those who experienced

discrimination, oppression and violence had those experiences, and whether they were openly asexual at the time, or to whom they were out. A future study could ask that question.

For many individuals, their experiences of oppression occurred before they identified as asexual but in a context which appears to highlight their asexuality. One young woman invested in sex therapy for years in an attempt to “fix” what had been diagnosed as a medical problem, before discovering and joining the asexual community. The therapy was at the behest of her partner, who felt slighted by her discomfort with sex.

I underwent regular physical corrective therapy, which involved doctors and physiotherapists putting their fingers and medical training dildos into my body to "teach" my body how to respond. It was painful, and it was humiliating, and I often cried after these sessions from the shame and the lingering pain.

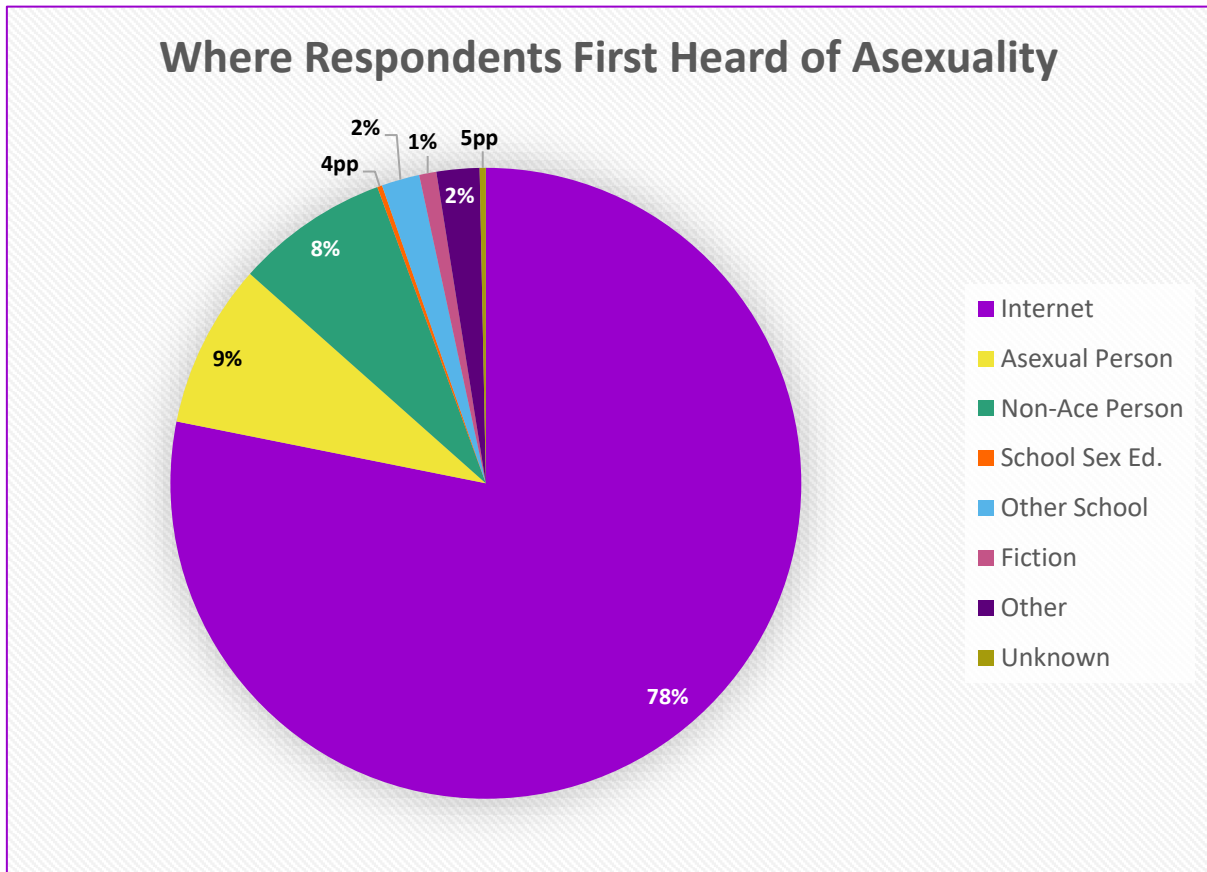
-Lily (Australia)

2.3.1. Out Status: Link to Discrimination, Oppression and Violence

Recommendation for Future Survey 9: Questions relating to discrimination, oppression and violence could gather information about whether the respondent was known by the perpetrator to be asexual.

2.4. First Knowledge of Asexuality

This question offered a list of checkboxes and a write-in option. Most of the write-in answers could be categorised under the original checkboxes. Some responses required a new category, such as “Documentary” and “Fiction”. As noted in the Introduction, the number of respondents who first learned about asexuality in online fanfiction (5) was greater than the number who learned about it in sex education (4).



Included under “Other”:

- 9 x In the News
- 9 x Non-Fiction
- 5 x Documentary
- 5 x Always had a general awareness
- 3 x Queer Society/Support Group
- 1 x Convention
- 1 x Pride Event
- 1 x Poster
- 1 x “Created” the word independently for themselves

5 respondents could not remember where they first heard about asexuality or provided an answer that was too incomprehensible/vague to categorise. These are grouped under “Unknown”.

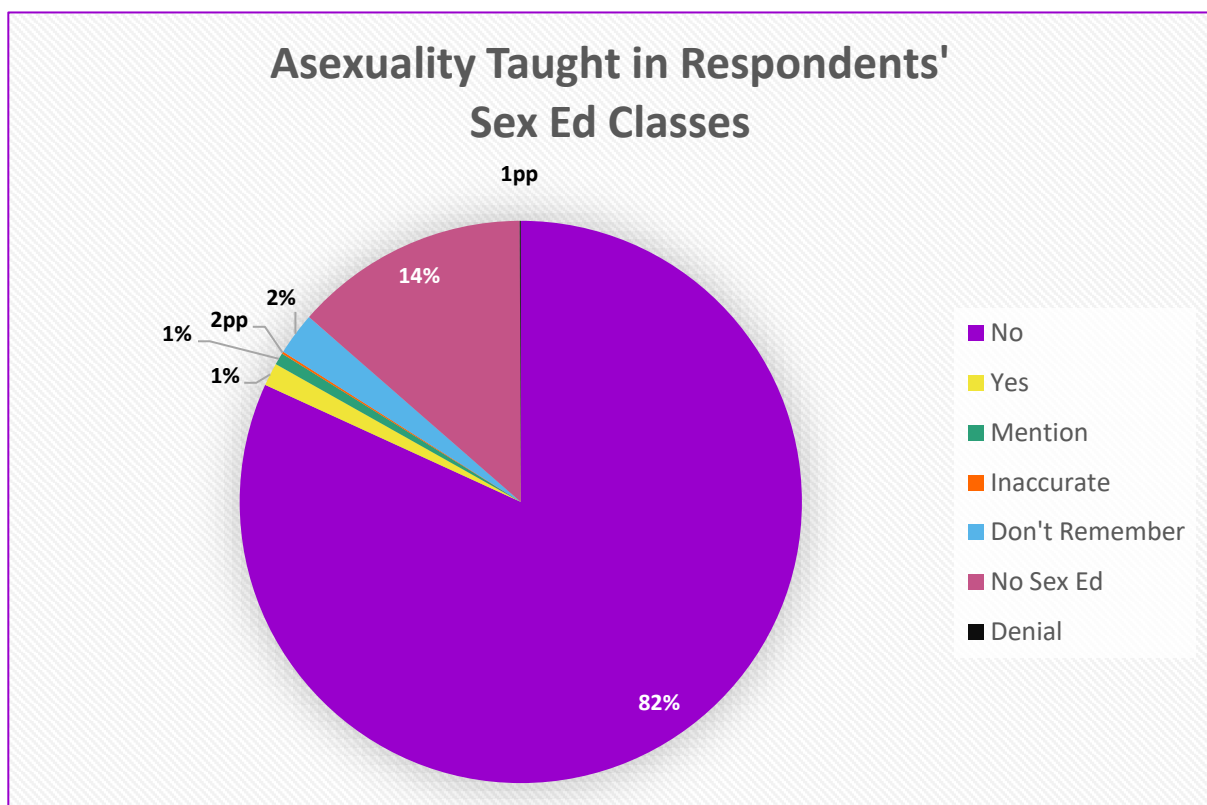
The number of people who described discovering asexuality through another person is split roughly equally between instances where that other person was also asexual or was allosexual. Further

information on the conversation and whether the word was used in a positive or negative context is unavailable in most cases.

Overwhelmingly, the internet was the most common place where respondents first heard about asexuality. Combined with the responses in *Section 2.6. Sources of Information about Asexuality (pg. 31)*, this supports what we know from advocacy and working within the community: the internet is a vital resource that connects asexual people with one another and with information about asexuality.

2.5. Asexuality in Sex Education

Included in the survey was a question about whether asexuality was mentioned in sex education classes. As predicted, the number of Yes answers was low; only 1% of respondents encountered asexuality in sex education.



Of those 23 people who checked Yes, 22 were under 19, and the other belonged to the 19-25 age group. Those categorised under Mention gave write-in answers that could not be firmly placed in Yes. For example, several said that asexuality was part of a list of orientations, with no further information given. Another said that the teacher, upon being prompted by a student, simply acknowledged that asexuality exists and moved on, again without further information.

The age of the Yes respondents suggests that asexuality is only just appearing in sex education. Locally, the percentage scaled proportionally. Given the small sample size it is difficult to gauge the value of the comparison. Out of 172 Australia/NZ respondents, only 2 responded Yes. One responded that it was mentioned. All 3 are from Australia.

Two respondents said asexuality was taught inaccurately. In one case, the teacher gave asexuality a definition more appropriate for agender. The other respondent, an Australian, reported that their teacher described asexuality as a choice and not an orientation.

One respondent’s teacher both denied the existence of asexuality and pathologised it.

14% of the respondents took no sex education. Among those, some had not reached the age where sex education is taught at their school and some attended religious schools that did not teach sex education. The majority of the 14% were American and attended home schooling. Only 3% of Australia/New Zealand respondents did not receive sex education.

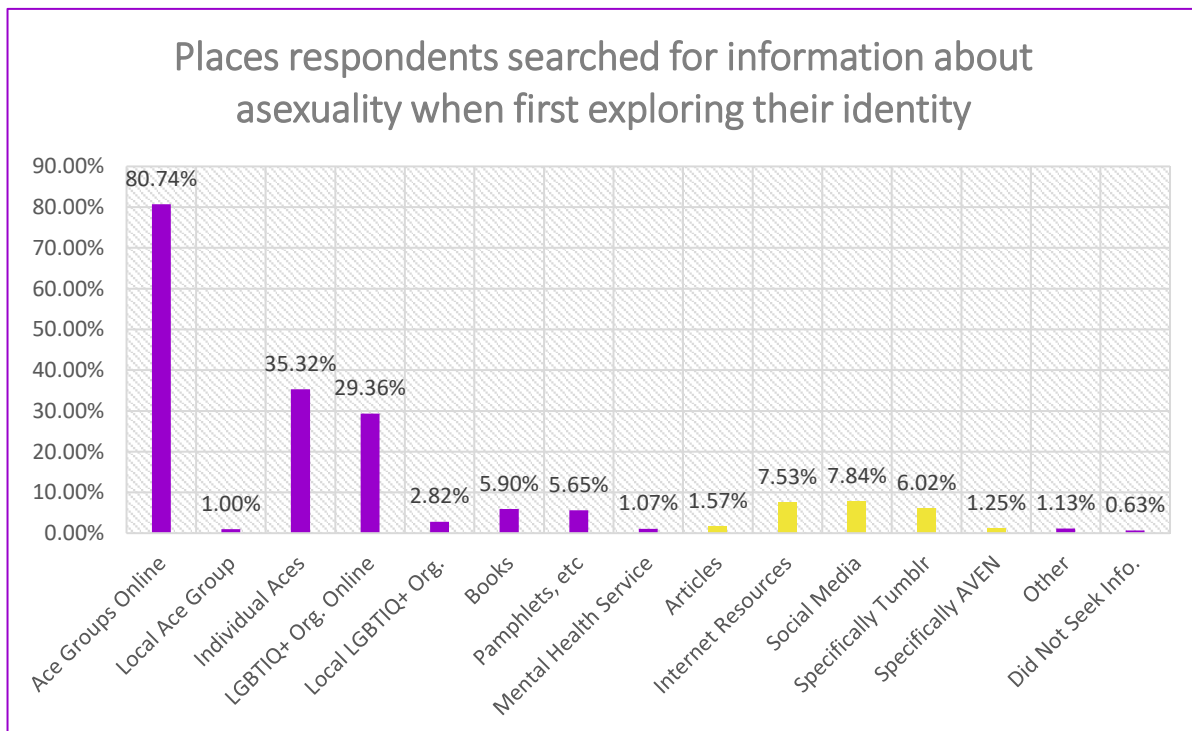
A single respondent opted not to receive sex education *because* they are asexual.

I got my mom’s permission to skip sex ed classes because I knew I just wasn’t interested

-Alexis (Location Not Given)

2.6. Sources of Information about Asexuality

When first searching for information about asexuality, just over 80% of respondents used asexual groups online. By contrast only 1% looked to a *local* asexual organisation. ACT Aces suspects that our type of group, which offers opportunities for asexual people to socialise in person, is rare. These figures would appear to support that suspicion.



35% of respondents looked to individual asexual people for information, but the question did not specify whether this person was online or someone in person. 87% of respondents sought information from either an online asexual group, an individual asexual person or both. To put it

another way, the vast majority of asexual people surveyed sought out other asexuals when seeking information about themselves and their identity. That contrastingly low figure of 1% locally therefore does not demonstrate a lack of interest in connecting with other asexuals.

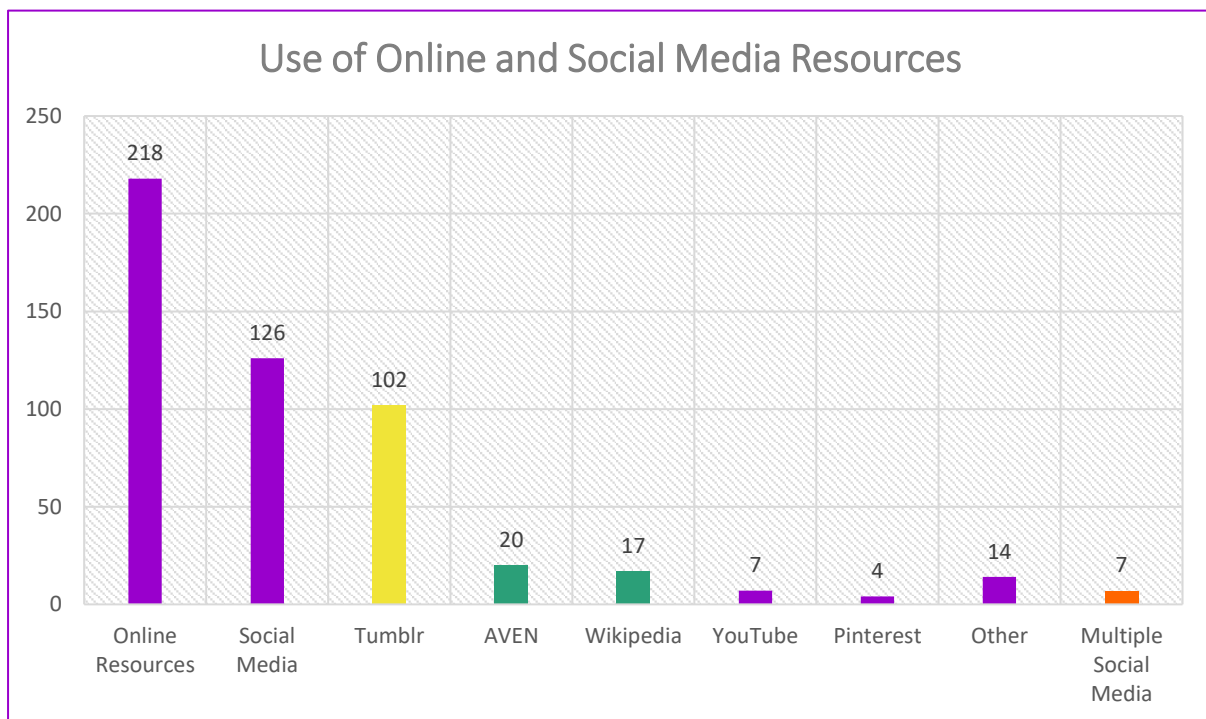
The Other category primarily included academia, allosexual friends who knew about asexuality, and fiction. 10 respondents said that they never did any research or exploration of their identity:

I didn't explore it I just accepted it as reality and ignored it. Why do I need to dwell on it if I am not interested?

-Sam (Australia)

Bars in yellow represent responses that were all write-ins and not original options on the survey. A number of internet resources and social media sites were write-ins. Of these, the chart includes only Tumblr and the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) specifically.

The second chart, below, shows the social media platform write-ins by respondents. Social media use was not a separate question, and so these figures only represent respondents who provided this information in the write-in section. These people were engaged with the survey more generally, providing longer and more detailed answers.



All Social Media responses are also included as Online Resources responses. AVEN and Wikipedia are included despite not being social media, for comparison, since they are also online resources.

Tumblr (in yellow) may be over-represented because of the likely proliferation and traffic to the survey from that platform. Despite being large platforms, Instagram was mentioned only 3 times, and Facebook and Twitter only once each. They have been grouped under Other for this reason.

The survey was originally posted to Australian asexual Facebook groups from the ACT Aces Facebook page, and it was of interest to the survey authors that only one survey respondent said that when originally searching for information and support, they used Facebook.

The short orange bar represents people who listed more than one specific Social Media site. Of 126 respondents, only seven said that they chose more than one site for their research and exploration. Whether this is accurate or a quirk of how the survey was written or interpreted is unclear. This has implications for engagement and how a community group or social advocacy movement might interact with people and form a follower base – if people choose to stick to using just one social platform, efforts at engagement need to focus on multiple platforms to reach more people.

2.6. Sources of Information about Asexuality

Recommendation for Future Survey 10: Include questions about the specific platforms of social media used to connect with other asexual people.

CASE STUDY:
Charlotte (Canada)

Charlotte is an AroAce woman aged between 46 and 60. She was randomly selected from all the respondents in her age group who told at least one story about their experiences.

Online Connections

Although she is among the 5% of respondents who replied “No” to whether they have told anyone that they are asexual (S2.3.), she also responded to the following questions about different people someone might disclose to, and reported that she *has* told “Online Friends”. (S2.4.)

In response to the questions relating to where she has learned about asexuality and explored her own identity, the internet again features prominently in Charlotte’s responses. Like everyone in her age group, she received no teaching about asexuality in school. (S2.5.) Charlotte first heard about asexuality on the internet (S2.4.), and she ticked only the “Asexual Groups Online” checkbox in answer to the question about where she sought more information. (S2.6.) Over 80% of respondents chose this resource, but Charlotte is also one of 491 respondents (31%) for whom asexual groups online were the *only* information source.

Charlotte is a member of an online asexual advocacy or support group. (S5.1.)

Relationships and Experiences

It is a misconception that AroAce people do not want or have relationships. 8.5% of AroAce respondents stated that they are currently in some form of committed relationship. (S3.1.)

In the past, Charlotte has casually dated and she has been in more than one monogamous relationship. (S3.3.) She referred to a previous marriage and she has children. (S3.4.1.)

Charlotte checked boxes under almost every category of discrimination, oppression and violence in Section 4 of the survey.

CASE STUDY, cont:
Charlotte (Canada)

She also checked the following boxes describing, but not directly named as, emotional abuse by a partner:

- “Being shamed by a partner because of your asexuality”
- “Being told by a partner that relationship problems are caused by your asexuality”

Under verbal abuse, Charlotte described the end of her marriage and the role played by her asexuality:

I didnt know i was asexual when married and he was so mean. And tried so hard to please him sexually. He eventually left but told me i was the reason women were raped and that i deserved to be raped and i was not fulfilling my duty

-Charlotte (Canada)

At the end of the survey, Charlotte wrote that she wears a homemade pride bracelet. She is one of 5.7% of respondents who described making their own pride objects. (S5.2.)

Aged in her late 40s or 50s, Charlotte has been through an abusive marriage, raised children and had her identity erased or invalidated. She has found herself through the internet, and appears to have found a community online, where she tells others that she is asexual, that she does not have in her local world.

Like many other survey respondents and members of ACT Aces, finding the language to convey her feelings allowed her to find community and give a voice to her experience. However, gaining a stronger understanding and acceptance of the self does not always equate to undoing the harm caused by discrimination and abuse.

This is evident in her answer to the final question of the survey:

What is the best thing about being asexual?

I still feel broken

-Charlotte (Canada)

Section 3: Relationships and Family

3.1. Relationship Status

The questions in this section of the survey covered relationship history, including current relationships. All questions were optional.

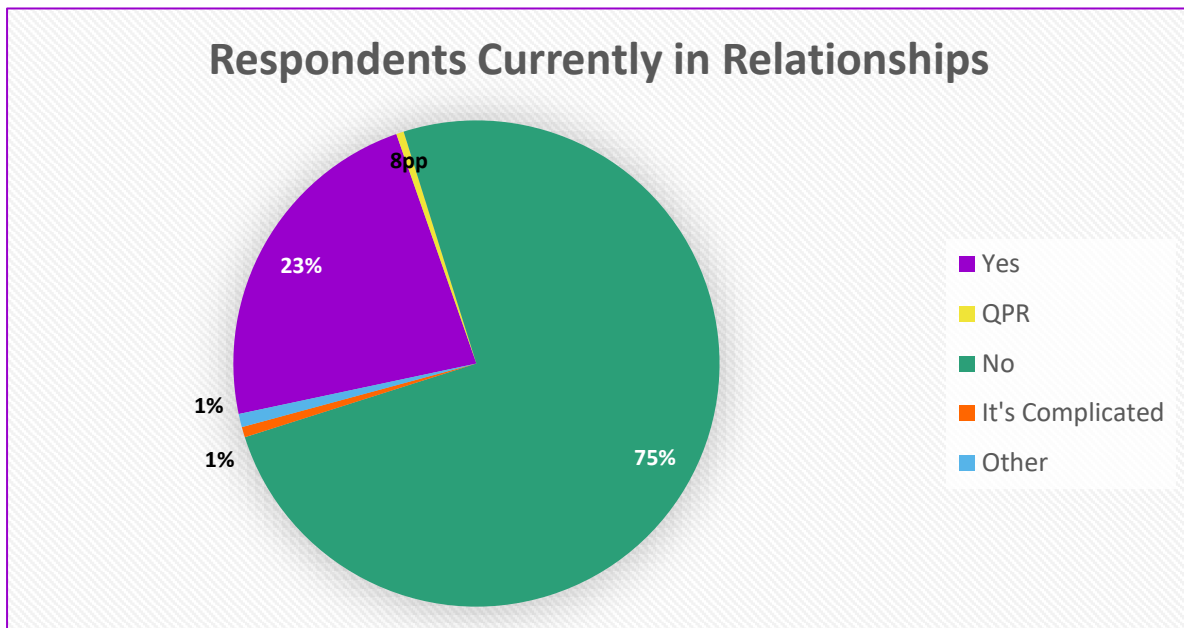
The first provided a list of checkboxes and a write-in option with respondents asked to select only one. The language used to convey the question was deliberately inclusive and open-ended and avoided use of the term “romantic”. The question read:

Are you currently in a committed relationship?

“Committed relationship” means whatever YOU think it should mean. Commitment means different things to different people and all relationships are different.

Of the checkbox options provided, three were “Yes” (“Monogamous”, “Polyamorous” or “Open” Relationship) and two were “No” (“No by choice” and “No but open to relationships”).

8 respondents provided Queer Platonic Relationship (QPR) as a write-in response. QPR as a term can reflect a rich variety of committed relationships, and a future study should include this option. Its omission from this survey was an oversight, and may have resulted in respondents in a QPR selecting a “No”.



All but three respondents shared their current relationship status. Most answered using a checkbox and the majority of the write-ins could be categorised into an existing group.

“It’s Complicated” represents the write-in answers where this exact phrase was used, where the respondent was in the middle of a break-up, unsure about the nature of their relationship, or in other complicated circumstances.

23% of respondents were in either a monogamous, polyamorous or open relationship. Because only one option could be selected, no answer included both a QPR and another type of relationship. Only

1% of answers were “Other”. These were either unclear, or involved personal circumstances not provided in the checkboxes.

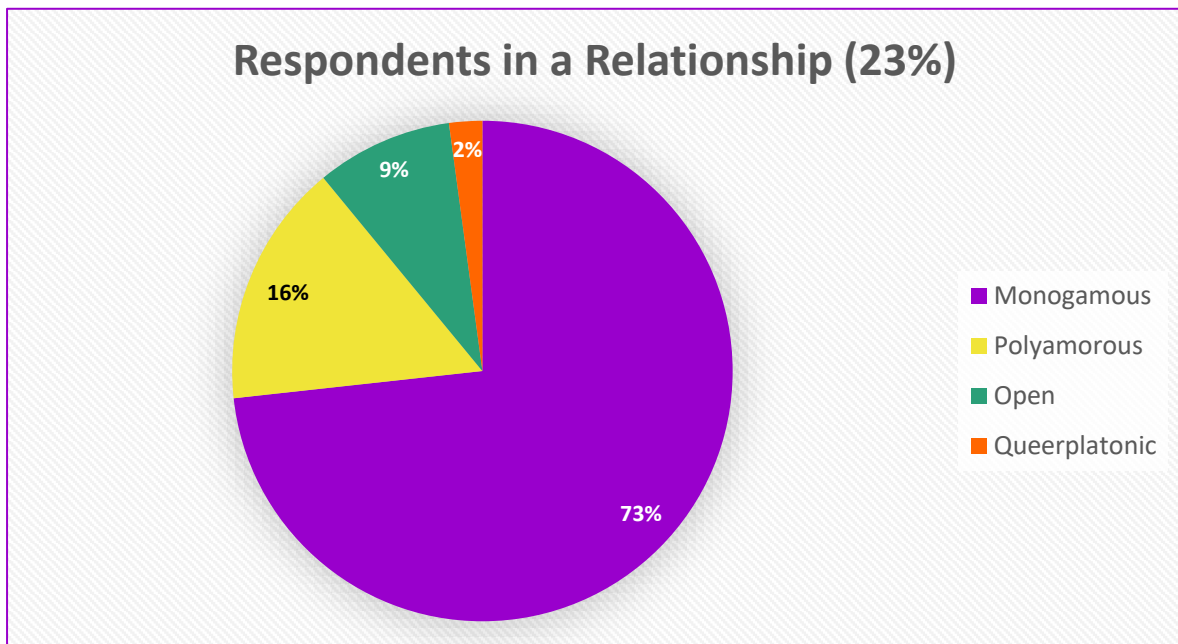
Some examples from “Other” include:

- Not in a relationship for mental health reasons
- A person who felt unsafe dating as an asexual
- An aromantic person for whom being single was not a choice but “just who I am.”

3.1. Relationship Status

Recommendation for Future Survey 11: Queer Platonic Relationship should be included as an option in questions about committed relationships/partnerships.

3.1.1. Respondents in Relationships



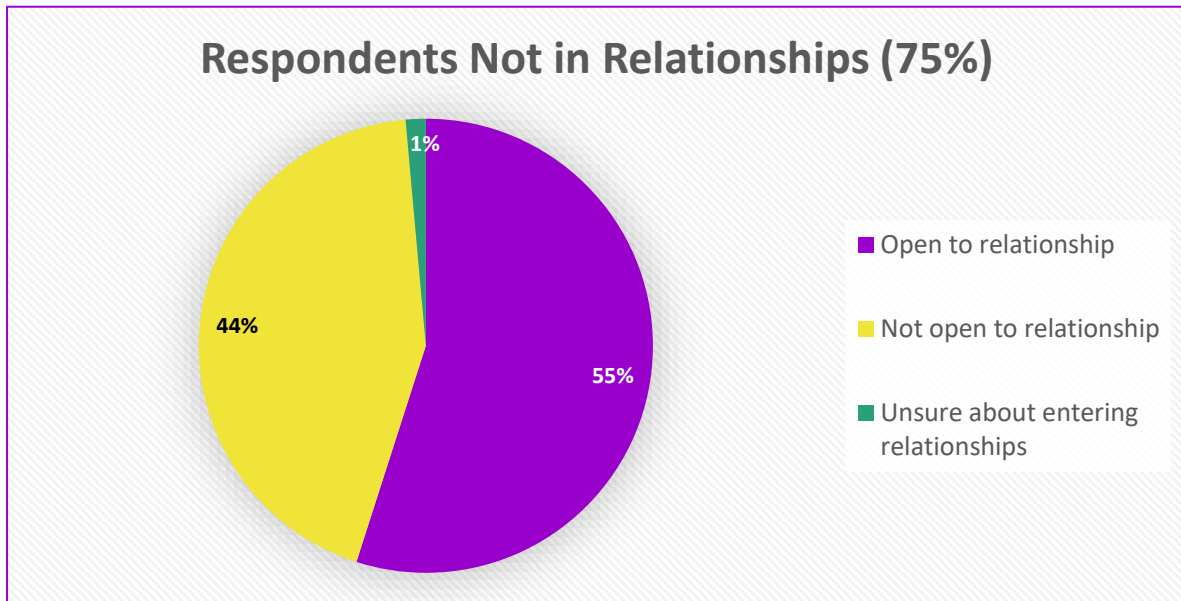
Of the 23% of respondents currently in a relationship, 73% of these were monogamous. The 8 QPRs amount to 2% of the total. 25% stated that they were in polyamorous or open relationships.

Because neither term was strictly defined in the survey text, defining “polyamorous” or “open” was left up to the respondents. There was no option to describe a relationship as both polyamorous *and* open, or to give an answer of two polyamorous relationships, and this may have led to incomplete data.

3.1.1. Relationship Status: Respondents in Relationships

Recommendation for Future Survey 12: Terms such as “open” and “polyamorous” should be defined.

3.1.2. Respondents Not in Relationships



Of the 75% of respondents who are not currently in a committed relationship, more than half (55%) said that they were open to one. Some wrote responses that set out specific conditions that would be necessary, such as that the other person also be asexual, or only if it were polyamorous. These were still categorised as “Open” to committed relationships, despite the caveats included.

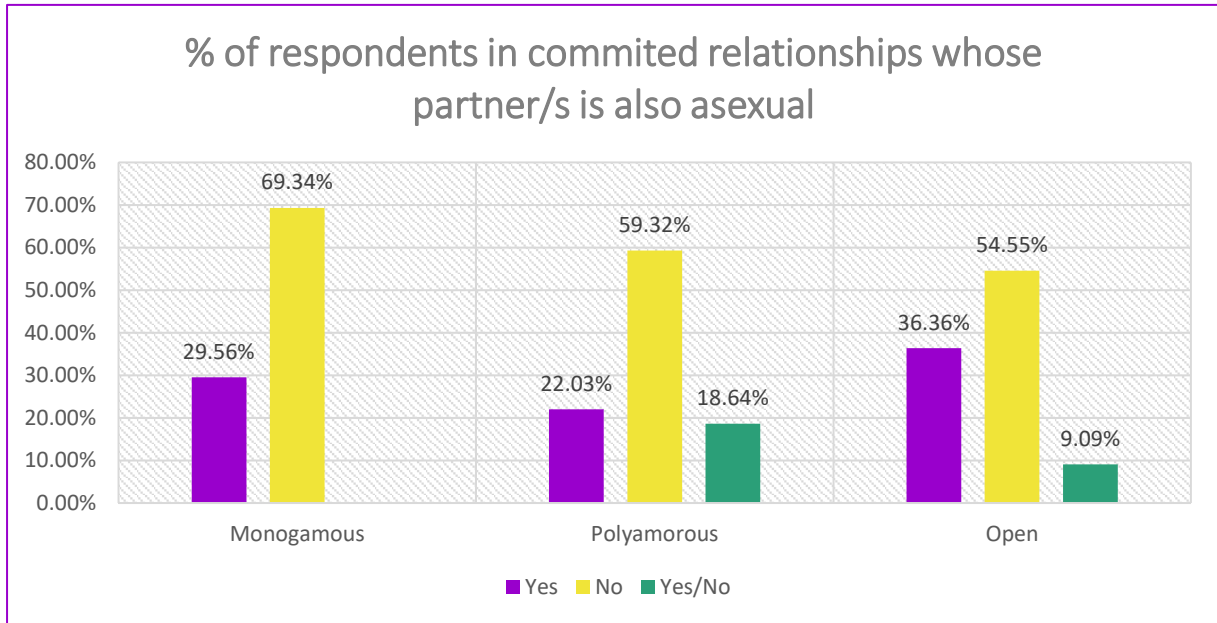
Of the 44% of respondents who chose not to be in a relationship, the few that used the write-in box almost all gave being aromantic as their reason.

Only 1% of the respondents not in relationships were not definitively in one category or the other.

3.2. Asexual Partners

After eliminating respondents that are not currently in a committed relationship, and, due to the small sample size, those in QPRs, 374 respondents remain. Three of these did not respond to the question about whether their partner was also asexual.

Among the remainder, 29% responded that their partner/s were also asexual. 67% said that their partner/s were not asexual. The smaller numbers in the chart below represent those whose relationships involve multiple individuals, where both asexual and allosexual partners are included.



Once again, due to the lack of consistency around how individuals use the terms “open” and “polyamorous”, this data set has limited use.

It is a common assumption that asexual/allosexual couples are more likely to choose an open relationship or become polyamorous for the benefit of the allosexual partner. However, the opposite was true among respondents to the survey. Only 30% of monogamous respondents said they had an asexual partner, less than the 36% of asexual/asexual open relationships.

There is scope to interrogate this subject matter further. One possible avenue could be more in-depth research on relationship make-up, in a similar process to the one this survey used for stories about discrimination, oppression and violence.

3.3. Previous Relationships

This question invited respondents to describe their previous relationships. The problem of terminology appeared again in these statistics, as the following terms: *Monogamy*, *Open Relationships*, *Exclusive Polyamory* and *Casual Dating*, were not defined. Based on write-in answers it appears that what some respondents regard as a casual dating relationship, others consider monogamous.

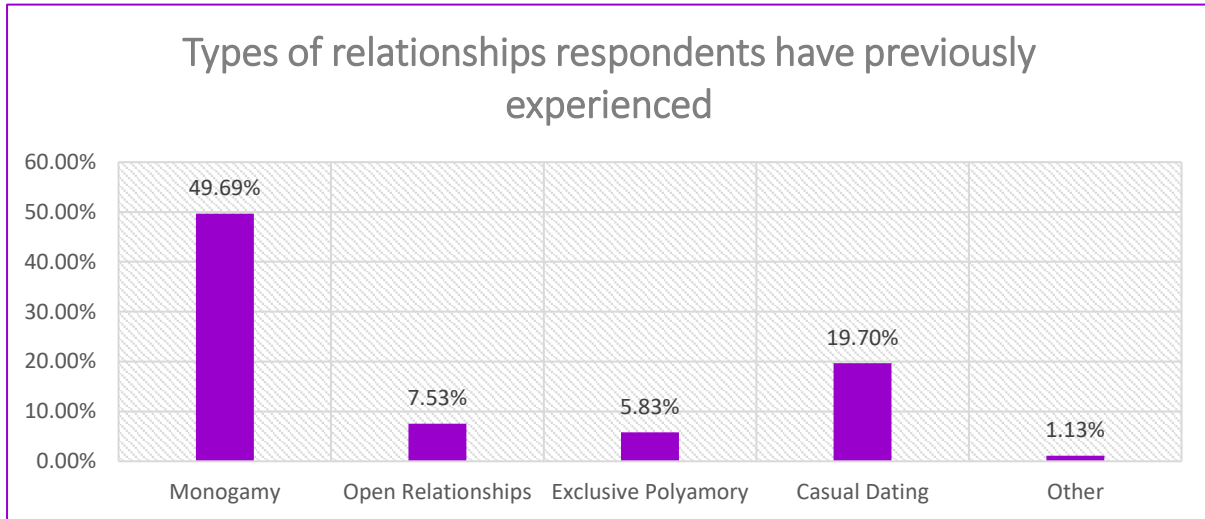
There are further problems because relationships themselves can often be difficult to categorise, even when a definition is clear.

I used to have a semi friends with benefits relationship? I don't know if that's the right description for it but she and I would kiss (nothing more); however, never we never put a label on it.

-Jamie (USA)

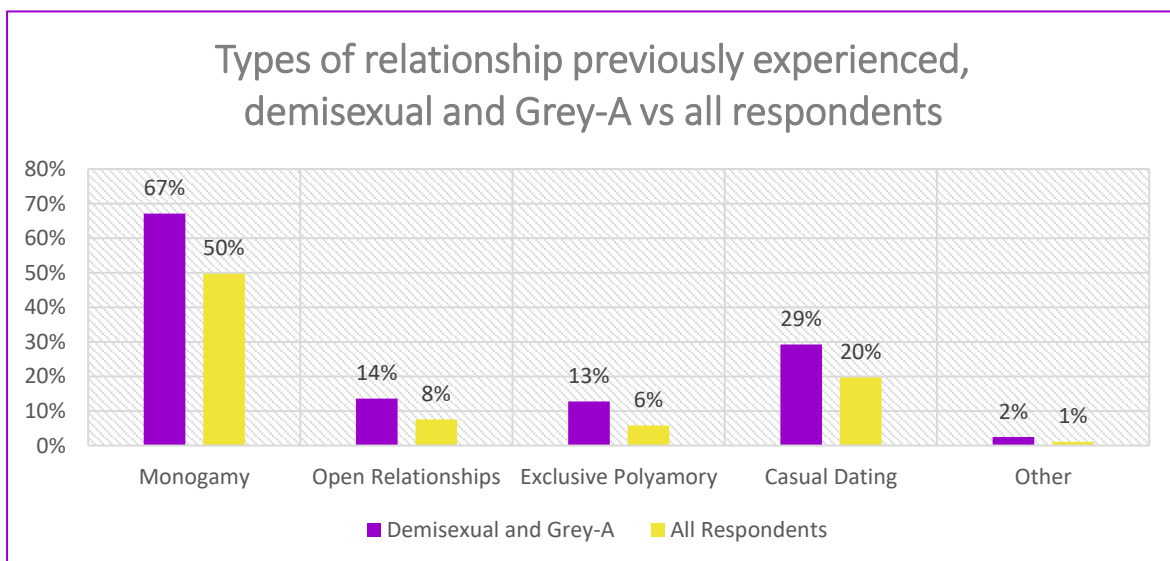
The above quote from Jamie demonstrates this problem of quantifying human bonds. It also provides a poignant example of a person under the Asexual Umbrella engaging in physical intimacy without a romantic element.

Two other respondents used the term “Friends with Benefits” to describe a previous relationship. All three currently identify as Grey-A, and one is also aromantic.



An additional problem with interpreting these results is chronology. Various age groups are represented in the above chart, and one might assume that the older a person is, the more experiences they are likely to accumulate. Other variables such as geography and religion would need to be taken into account before a researcher could attempt to compare asexual relationship histories to those of allosexual people.

However, the data is still useful, as it provides a means to compare subgroups under the Asexual Umbrella.



Grey-A and demisexual respondents returned similar results to each other while differing notably from the full cohort, in that they experienced the listed forms of relationships at higher rates. The

exception to this was “Open Relationships”, for which demisexual respondents made up 11% and Grey-As 16%, averaging to 14%.

With only the numbers, and no option given for respondents to write about their relationship history in any detail, any attempt to explain this difference would only be speculation. Both Grey-A and demisexual people do, by definition, experience sexual attraction under particular conditions. Those conditions, however, vary between individuals and are not an accurate predictor of behaviour or attraction. This poses many potential research questions about whether there is something internal to the individual demisexual or Grey-A person that influences their choice to enter into relationships. It also poses questions about how these orientations are viewed by others, and whether potential partners hold a different view that makes them more willing to enter a relationship than they would be with an asexual person.

These are questions that suggest ample space for further study into asexual relationships, which could encompass Grey-A and demisexual people and whether these results would be repeated and if so, what the reasons might be.

3.3. Previous Relationships

Recommendation for Future Survey 13: Terms such as “Casual Dating” and “Monogamy” should be defined.

3.4. Children

For questions relating to children, all respondents aged 21 and younger were removed. This reduced the sample size to just over half (824).

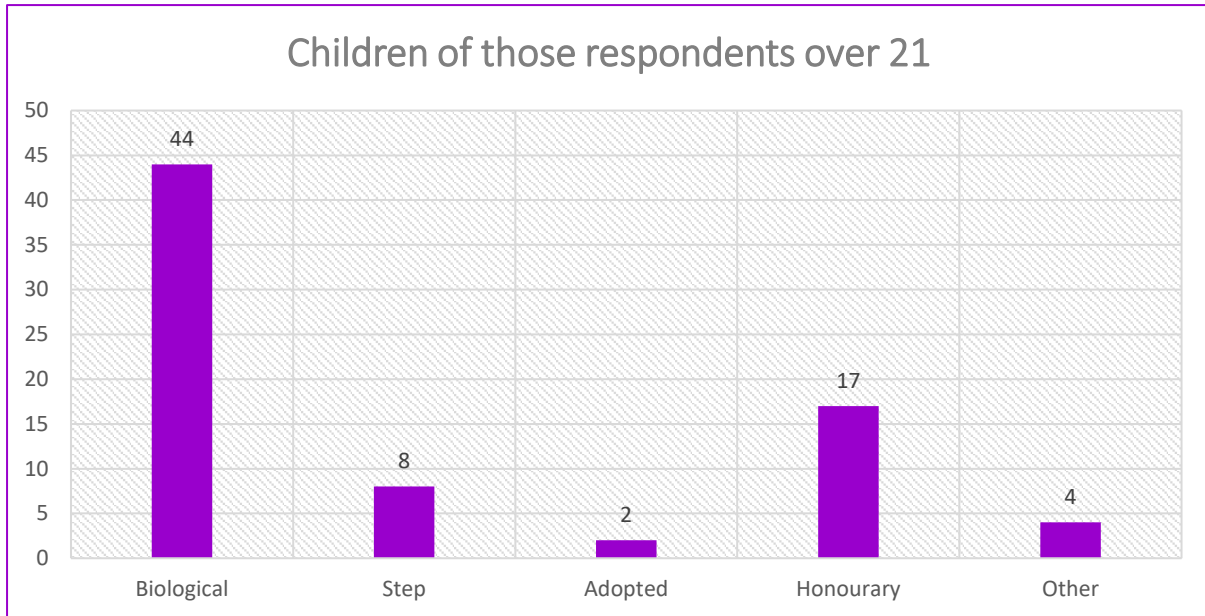
This was done out of pragmatism. Many responses from teenagers reflected ambivalence or uncertainty, and when answering questions about barriers to having children, the reasons were readily apparent (still in school, living with parents, etc). Removing this age group became necessary to achieve the purpose of this section of the survey, which was to identify the barriers faced by asexual people for whom having children was a relevant and immediate concern.

Before this decision was made, the 19-21 group was searched for existing parents. Only one parent under the age of 22 was found, and her circumstances were specific and unique enough to be considered an outlier.

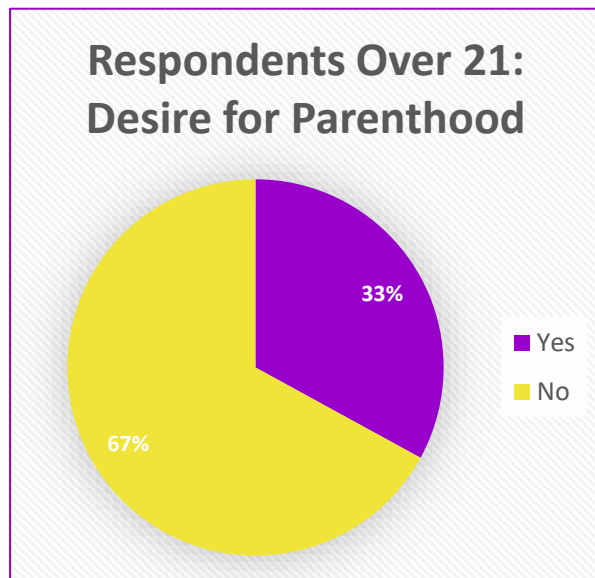
Starting with the age of 22, respondents begin to indicate obstacles to parenthood that are not solely based on their youth.

3.4.1 Current Children

In total, 808 respondents over 21 do not have children and 71 do. There is overlap due to some respondents checking more than one box. The 71 respondents ticked a total of 75 boxes and were grouped into the following five categories based on how they came to have children.



“Honourary” children included siblings’ children, children of friends, or children within polyamorous families. The “Other” category consisted of three biological parents whose children were adopted by new families and one person currently pregnant through IVF and donor sperm.



3.4.2. Desire for Parenthood

A total of 822 people (over the age of 21) answered the question of whether or not they wanted children. Most were not already parents. 32.8% said that they wanted children, which corresponds precisely with the full cohort. This may indicate that age is not a factor in desire for children.

However, as noted above, the answers provided about obstacles to parenthood show significant change at around the age of 22.

3.4.3. Obstacles to Parenthood

The intention behind asking about obstacles to parenthood was to discover the common reasons for why asexual people who want children do not have them.

Responses were initially sought from the 33% of respondents who wanted children. Once the data was gathered, it became clear that many respondents outside of this group were providing answers, sometimes through the write-in box, to this question.

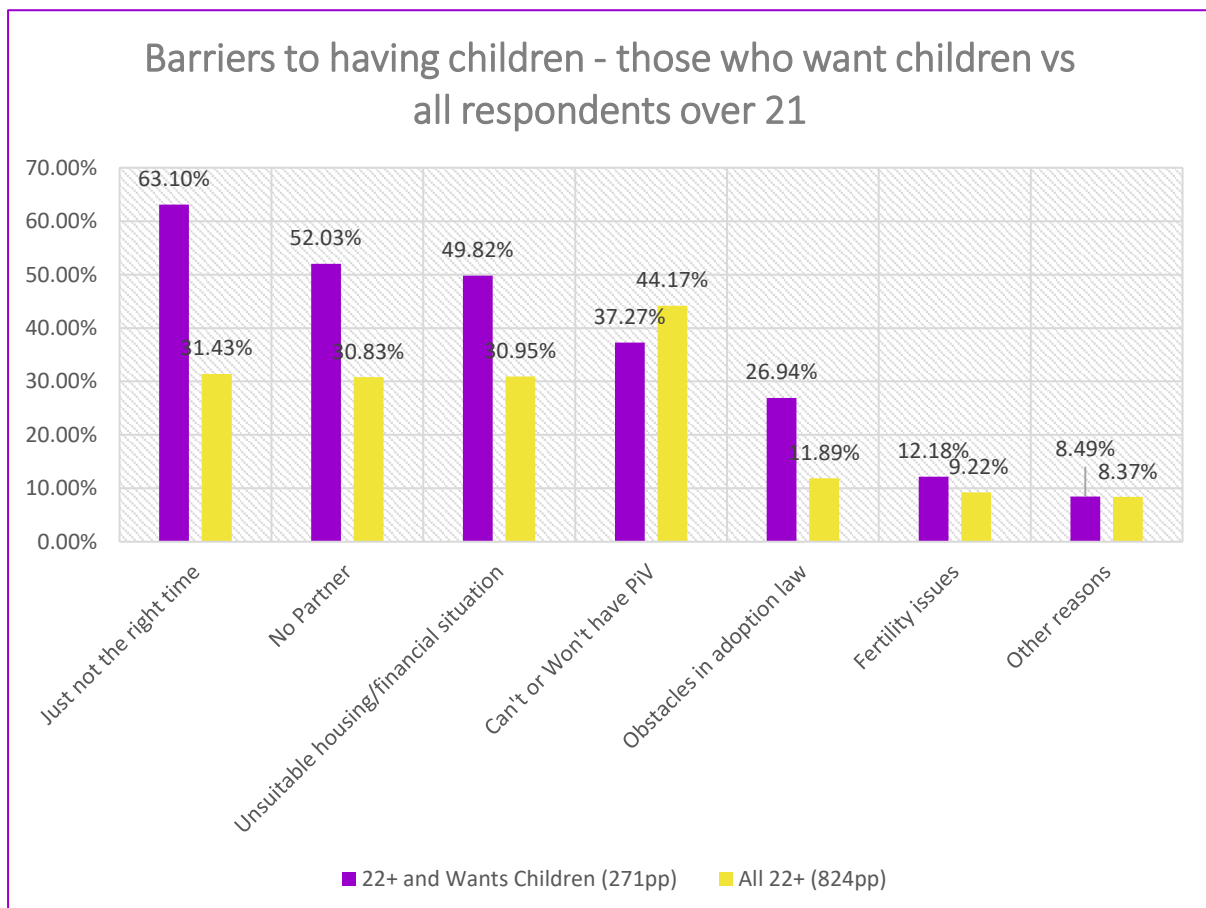
One of the survey authors raised this in discussion:

I considered that rather than seeing themselves in the way that I personally do (someone who very much wants children and has obstacles to overcome), there may be some people who see obstacles, and those obstacles make them not want to have children.

-Survey Author Lucy

Informed by this perspective, the answers from those who stated that they want children were examined separately, as well as compared to those of all respondents in the over 21 age group.

With each of the given reasons expressed as a percentage of the group, results can be compared both within each group and relative to one another.



The Top 3 reasons for those who desire children are also the second, third and fourth for the larger group, and they are all issues that can be viewed as having little to no relation to asexuality: “Just not the right time”, “No partner” and “Unsuitable housing/financial situation”.

An unwillingness to have penis in vagina (PiV) intercourse is the fourth most common barrier to those who want children (32%). It is the most common barrier chosen by the 22+ age group as a whole (44%). This raises the question of sex as an obstacle.

Some respondents may want biological children but feel obstructed by the perceived need to have sex. This would be an issue especially in cases where sex is the only economically viable option. Other respondents expressed in written responses that they do not want children *because* they view sex as a hard limit.

It may also be that those in the latter group are genuinely disinterested in parenthood and would not have associated this with a lack of desire for PiV intercourse without being prompted by a questionnaire.

Adoption law represents an issue for more than 25% of respondents who do want children. Although laws differ by jurisdiction, the problem of adoption law remains a consistent theme.

The “Other” category contains a range of diverse reasons provided by both those who stated they did and did not want children. They are listed here from most to least common:

- Health/Medical reasons
- Tokophobia (a fear of pregnancy or childbirth)
- Social Conscience/Climate Anxiety
- Career
- Dysphoria (distress caused by a disconnect between gender identity and perceived gender)
- Difficulty finding sperm donor
- Polyamorous relationship
- Anticipation of problems
- Body image issue
- Cost of adoption
- Antinatalism (morally opposed to reproduction)
- Too old
- Intersex
- Past trauma

Barriers to Parenthood: Write-in Examples

Respondents who want to have children

"I want to raise kids but i dont want to make them and i dont want to be in a romantic relationship either" -Chloé (France), Female, 26-35 yo.

"My fiancée and I both presumably produce eggs and will have to adopt or find sperm donors at some point" -River (USA), Nonbinary, aged 26-35 yo.

"A pregnancy is my personal nightmare and would be traumatizing" -Mila (Germany), Female, 26-35 yo.

"I'm still fairly young, but I am also afraid that I won't find a partner willing to adopt, and won't be able to adopt as single." -Valeska (Poland), Gender Unknown, 22-25 yo.

Respondents who do not want children

"Don't believe I'd be a good parent, and dread the thought that any child who is like me might experience bullying encouraged by teachers as I did" -Michael (UK), Male, 46-60 yo.

"I'm pretty ambivalent to sex which is its own barrier but I REALLY don't want to be pregnant. It's the only concept that makes me feel really gross about my body. Is that an ace thing? a nonbinary thing? I don't know, but it's the source of body horror for me. Not a magical miracle. HORRIFYING."
-Casey (USA), Nonbinary, 26-35 yo.

"I hate children and I don't want to spread my bad genes." -Riley (USA), Nonbinary, 22-25 yo.

"We're all heading for a potential apocalypse and it doesn't seem like a stable political climate to bring a child into." -Liam (USA), Male, 22-25 yo.

Section 4: Discrimination, Oppression and Violence

The questions in this section were split into three categories: Discrimination, Verbal/Emotional Abuse and Physical/Sexual Violence. In each category, the respondent could check any number of boxes to describe common experiences, or write-in an answer. At the end of each section the respondent was invited to “Tell a Story”, with the following text appearing:

If you would like to tell a story about _____, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

In total, we received 713 stories from 609 respondents. The highest number of stories (289) were about incidents of discrimination, and the lowest (8) were about physical violence. Because the nature of violence and abuse can be complex and difficult to define, these categories are not absolutes – many stories told in “Emotional Abuse” could also have been shared under “Relationship Abuse”, for example. For the purposes of reporting and analysis, all stories were kept under the category in which they were written.

There were many instances in which the checkboxes checked by the respondent did not match the stories they told:

Though unintentional, it hurts when my sister spoke about my lack of sexual attraction as something to be "fixed"

-Harley (USA)

Harley wrote about their sister in the box to tell a story about emotional abuse. They specifically used the word “fixed” but did not check the box for “Being told you need to be “cured” or “fixed””. In this and in similar cases, the appropriate box was checked by the researcher, with a note made. The exception to this was with sexual assault, and the reasons for this are discussed in that section ([S4.4. \(pg. 57\)](#))

“Much Worse Stories”

It is significant in itself that so many respondents chose not to tick clearly relevant boxes because they did not think their experience was “serious enough”.

Many write-in responses began with phrases such as: “So I don’t know if this counts, but...” or “I know other people have had worse stuff...”

I have been catcalled, have had my ass grabbed, and had unsolicited nude photos sent to my phone, i luckily have been only minorly harassed but it still is valid and traumatic and I feel so much empathy for those who have that sexual abuse trauma.

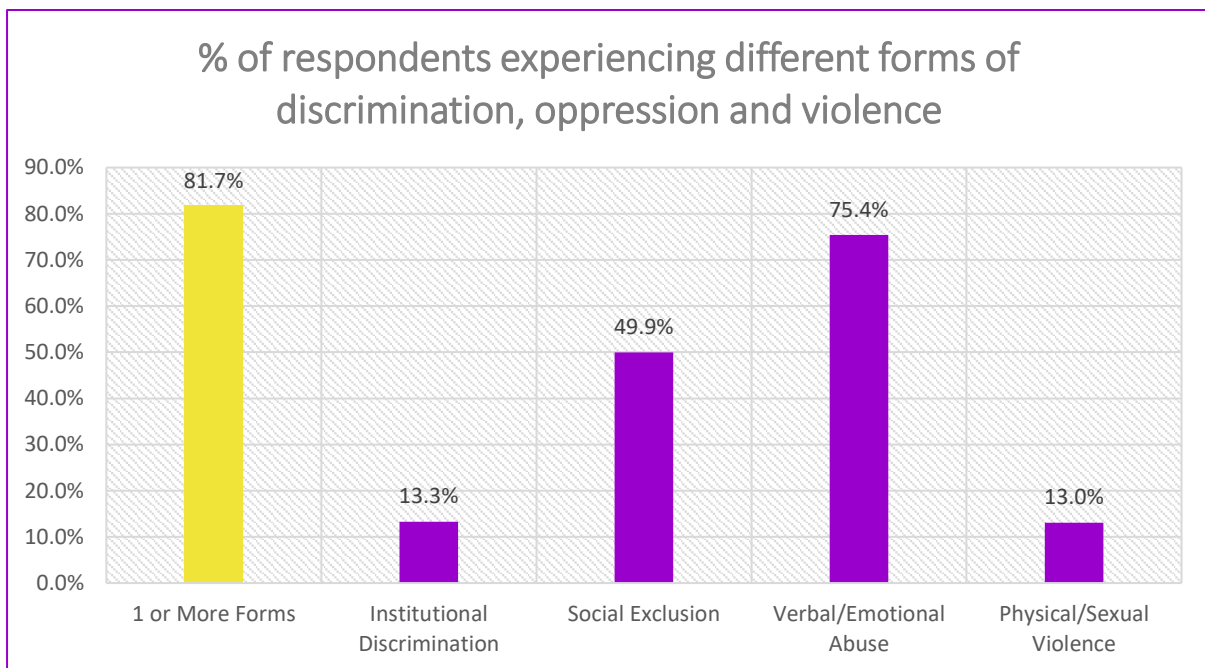
-Taylor (Location Not Given)

Taylor describes having their “ass grabbed” and being sent nude photos without consent, actions which amount to criminal assaults in many jurisdictions. They describe this as being “only minorly harassed” and express compassion for the suffering of others, in part by subordinating their own trauma.

This attitude is representative of many respondents, each claiming others have been through more trauma than themselves, while they seem to want to justify talking at all about their own feelings, even as they diminished them by comparing their trauma to the that of the unnamed and unspecified “others”.

...I know other people have much worse stories about the discrimination and abuse they've faced, but this has severely impacted the way I talk about this with my family.
-Ava (USA)

4.0. Summary of Statistics



81.7% of all respondents reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination, oppression or violence. As the write-in answers led to new forms of abuse being added to each of the three original categories, the final results were consolidated into four new groups.

13.3% of respondents experienced some form of Institutional Discrimination. This primarily covers medical and workplace incidents, but also occasionally schools or religious institutions.

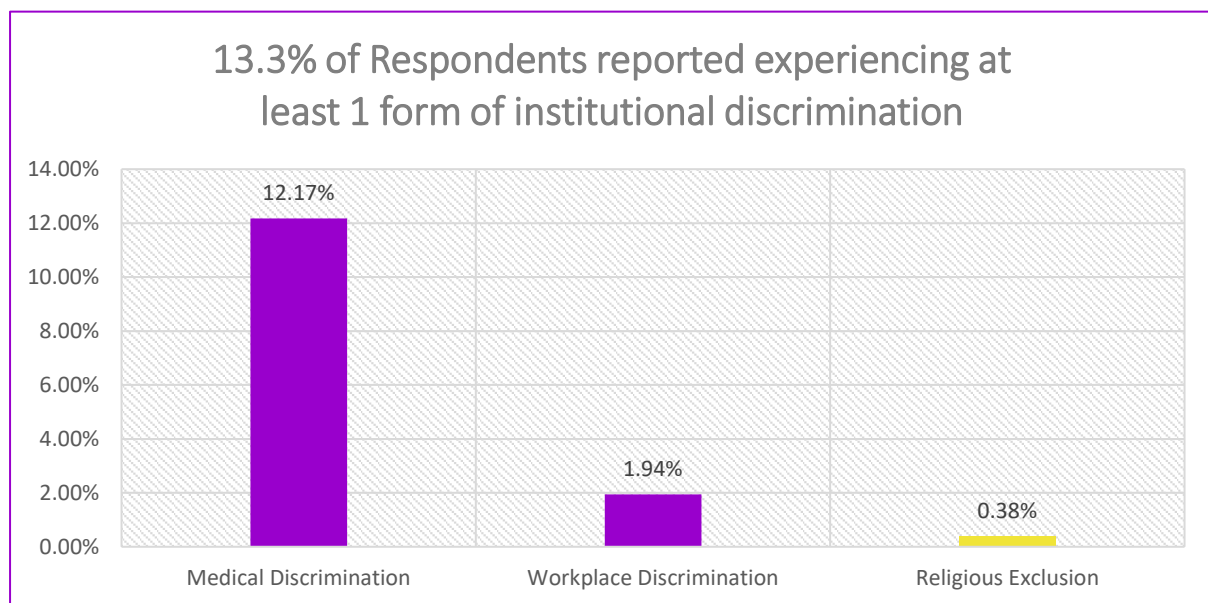
49.9% of respondents either told stories about, or ticked the boxes “Social exclusion” or “Exclusion from LGBTQIA+ spaces”. This also includes a small number of write-in stories that weren’t about specific acts of deliberate exclusion but about feeling excluded by the world in general.

Verbal/Emotional Abuse received the highest number of responses, at 75.4%. This category covers insults, acephobic rhetoric, shaming, and many instances of relationship abuse.

The Physical/Sexual Violence category contains a small number of cases of physical violence, and a larger number of experiences of sexual violence, from unwanted touching to rape. 13.0% of respondents experienced some form of violence.

4.1. Institutional Discrimination

Two of the original forms of discrimination asked about in the survey fit under this category: Medical and Workplace Discrimination. The third category is Religious Discrimination, which has been added due to several write-in responses. More people may have included similar incidents or told stories if prompted, and this is a form of discrimination that was overlooked by the survey.



4.1.1. Medical Discrimination (12.2%)

The majority of these stories were about doctors refusing to believe patients about their own sexual history or engaging in unethical, unprofessional or discriminatory behaviour.

There are some stories of doctors refusing to prescribe medication, provide emergency care or discuss issues unrelated to sex as a result of medical professionals fixating on “the libido problem”. Both medical doctors and mental health professionals such as counsellors and therapists appeared in these stories.

I suffer from major depression, complex ptsd and various other diagnoses, when my doctor asked me about my sex life I briefly said that it wasn't relevant because of my asexuality. The doctor then wanted to take me off of my meds that I needed, because he felt that my low libido was worse than me having suicidal thoughts. He kept saying it was my meds that caused it; despite me knowing and telling him that I've been identifying as asexual since I was 15 which was before I'd gotten on those medications. He wouldn't listen. I ended up in the e.r later because I got so depressed and was close

to taking my own life. I had to switch doctors and I haven't told my current one about my asexuality because I'm scared that they'll take me off my meds again. –Lore (Sweden)

I went to urgent care for the third time after I couldn't get a UTI to heal with the antibiotics they gave me and the female doctor flat out was like, "This is an STD and I won't give you anymore meds unless you ADMIT you're sexually active because you're 26 and 26 year olds have sex. You are not a virgin and you are hurting yourself with your lies." It was really scarring. –Isabella (USA)

4.1.2. Workplace Discrimination (1.9%)

This was less common than medical abuse, but there were more “Yes” responses than the survey authors expected. Some of the workplace discrimination involved being harassed at work, including sexually harassed. There was one story about being asked deeply personal questions by a boss during a one on one management conversation, and another about being left harassing pamphlets by coworkers.

I had a shift lead who continuously made sexual jokes and asked sexual questions about my life. After telling him im ace, he's consistuantly made fun of me and encouraged others to make the same jokes and ask me the same questions. He's also let me go from work early several times because "i cant pull the 'sell them with sex' approach with people" (its a pizza shop why the fuck do we have to use sex to sell it???) –Emma (USA)

4.1.3. Religious Exclusion (0.4%)

Write-in answers identified six cases of religious exclusion. These stories primarily related to disapproval of the person’s romantic orientation and insistence on the importance of marriage. These incidents are discussed in more detail in [Section 1.6. Religion \(pg.18\)](#).

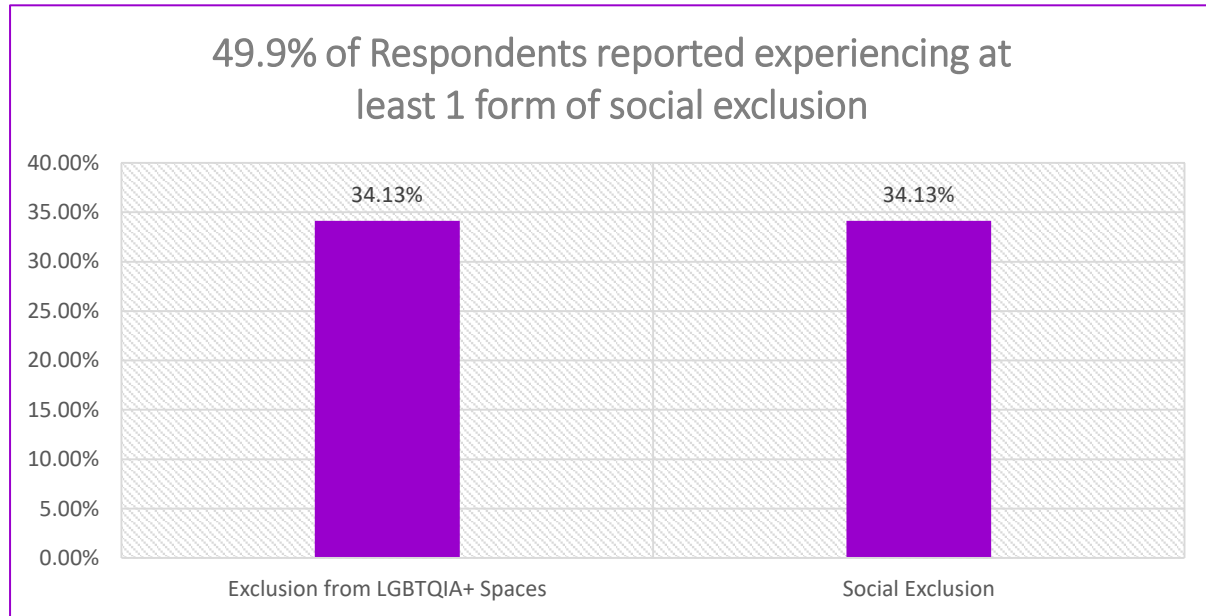
My parents are strictly against anything to do with the LBGT+ community. They do not know of my orientation and may never know, but they talk about the community like a plague. And though I still find myself (romantically) attracted to the opposite gender, if they where to find out they would contact the church and be in despair for days. And though I'm unsure if I where to be kicked out, I know I would be shunned. -Sophie (USA)

4.1. Institutional Discrimination

Recommendation for Future Survey 14: Questions about discrimination could include the subject of religious discrimination or exclusion.

4.2. Social Exclusion

The survey asked about two kinds of social exclusion – exclusion in general and from LGBTQIA+ spaces specifically. The end results amounted to exactly the same percentage for both categories (34.1%) – but this is pure coincidence. The two groups were not made up of exactly the same people.



4.2.1. Exclusion from LGBTQIA+ Spaces (34.1%)

A lot of write-ins described this as being an issue on the internet – referring specifically to Tumblr and the so-called “discourse” acephobia that has been a repeating issue on that social media site.

Others were told online and/or in person that they weren’t welcome at Pride events or in community groups. Some of these people described being excluded because they are asexual – despite also being part of the community for another reason. One trans respondent wrote that they were perfectly welcome in their online chat group until they came out as asexual. Others said their LGB&T friends welcomed them in their spaces as an ally – but not as an asexual.

I once went to the LGBT parade in Melbourne and it was fun, exciting even. Loved the atmosphere, until I visited a flag shop. I told them how happy I was they had the pansexual flag, but disappointed that there was no Asexual flag.

A drag queen that just so happened to be there scoffed at me, "we don't celebrate special snowflakes or their made up sexuality. Go somewhere else, like the trash!"

That ruined my day. Never went again. -Jordan (Australia)

I tried anonymously submitting a story of how I realized who I am to an online positivity blog for LGBT people. The comments called me a “fucking cishet snowflake” “trying to intrude on the community” and other things like that. -Jonas (Germany)

I have two bisexual friends and we sometimes talked about LGBT+ topics. When they both assumed I was straight (and one of them identified as straight) they had no quarrels with me taking part. However, now that they know I'm asexual, whenever I speak a word about the LGBT+ community I'm shut down immediately. They'd rather have straight people talking about it than an asexual person. -Martina (Spain)

4.2.2. Social Exclusion (34.1%)

Many people described being bullied, outed, and deliberately excluded; left out of social situations and communities, or not invited, etc. But there were also a lot of stories talking about how respondents were not necessarily being left out in a malicious way. These people reported feeling excluded when the conversation turns to sex, at drinking parties where sexual situations arise, or just that they were uncomfortable in certain social settings.

When I never ended up experiencing sexual attraction in high school my friends alienated me claiming I wouldn't have wanted to be involved in the conversations anyways because they usually references sex or made sexual jokes. Still, to this day, when i come out to a friend they exclude me and refuse to discuss their romantic involvements because they associate my asexuality with me not wanting to hear about their love lives. Last year my best friend didn't even tell me she had a boyfriend until they'd been dating for a year, and everyone else knew but me. -Aria (Canada)

Allo people in cultures around me (like college and gamer communities) like to treat aces like we're aliens or something, refuse to hang out with us, or become friends with us. Because I'm not into all the nonstop sexual jokes, they think I'm a buzzkill and won't acknowledge me as a part of the group. -Mia (USA)

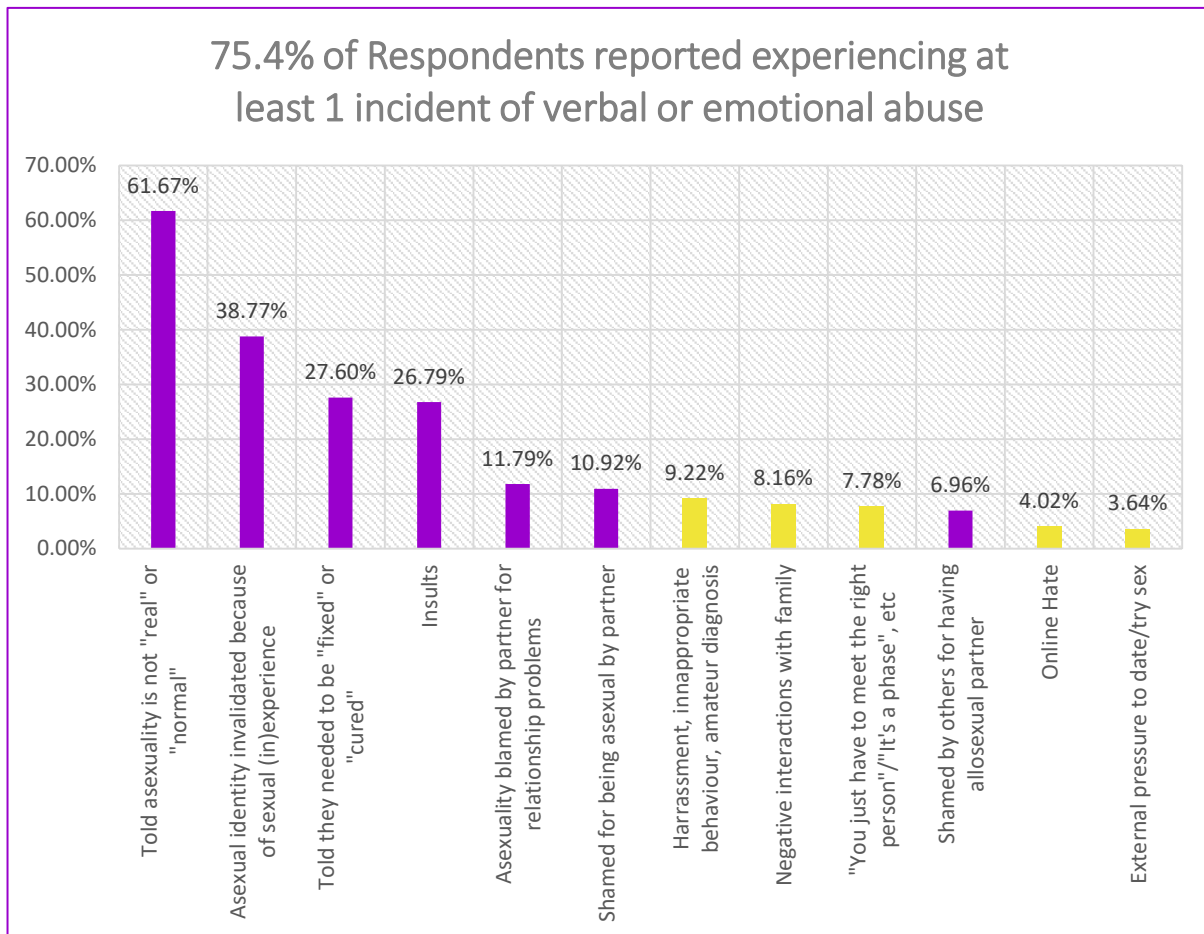
It's not really active discrimination, it's just that so many social interactions rely on coupledness and not dating someone, flirting with someone, crushing on someone, planning a future with someone, automatically isolates you. -Emilia (Chile)

4.3. Verbal/Emotional Abuse

Initially, seven forms of verbal or emotional abuse were included as checkboxes in this section of the survey. Five additional categories were added based on write-in responses (in yellow). These categories are recommended for any future survey.

The largest category, more than three quarters of respondents overall reported experiencing some form of verbal or emotional abuse. Quantitative data about relationship abuse was not collected, but there was an opportunity to tell a story on that theme: 77 respondents did so. (Several also told stories under sexual violence that also fit this category).

The most frequent offender in the area of relationship abuse was “Asexuality blamed by partner for relationship problems”. 11.79% of respondents checked this box.



4.3.1. Told asexuality is not "real" or "normal" (61.7%)

Of all forms of discrimination, oppression and violence, this form alone received a response rate over 50%. Perpetrators included family, friends, doctors and therapists, teachers and strangers.

4.3.2. Asexual identity invalidated because of sexual (in)experience (38.8%)

This category included both people who described being told they cannot be/know that they are asexual if they have never had sex and those who have been told they cannot be asexual because they *have* had sex, or because they enjoy sex. The example below illustrates this especially well, with the one person being told both of these things.

people acted like my relationships werent valid or healthy because I'm ace and some people I dated werent. it was "something i just needed to work through" or "get over" because there was clearly something "wrong" with me for not having sexual attraction. And before i had a sexual experiance it was "you just need to try it" and after it was "I thought you were ace" as if it changed. -Blake (USA)

4.3.3. Told they needed to be "fixed" or "cured" (27.6%)

These accounts ranged from pathologisation by professionals through misguided concern from loved ones to hate speech online and in person.

I had a guy that was interested in me and we hung out once and then he kept calling me and asking me what turned me on about him and when I explained I was asexual he just laughed and kept telling me that's because I'd never been with HIM and how he was going to fix me. It was a long drawn out deal that has left me messed up ever since. -Isabella (USA)

My partner at the time pressured me into having sex with them because, maybe that would "fix my attitude" towards it. -Dakota (Australia)

4.3.4. Insults (26.8%)

These are the standard slurs and insults that most asexual people would be familiar with. Words included “freak” and “broken” as well as common homophobic slurs. Many reported dehumanising comparisons designed to turn asexuality itself into an insult in the biological sense: “amoeba”, “plant person”, “alien”. Others were more left-of-field, such as “pervert” and “paedophile”.

4.3.5. Asexuality blamed for relationship problems (11.8%)

Partners (or most usually ex-partners) of respondents blamed asexuality for a vast array of problems, most often the partner’s own decisions, including cheating, dumping, and domestic violence and abuse.

Other stories described otherwise loving partnerships that ended for complex reasons, but which still involved the allosexual partner making a scapegoat of their partner’s asexuality to avoid any blame or self-examination.

Many of the stories yielded in this category are clear examples of gaslighting and emotional manipulation.

When I came out to my partner, he told me he should've known and that there was a reason he cheated on me. He yelled at me about lying -Evelyn (USA)

I was in a relationship with someone who would tel me that it was my fault he was depressed because I wouldn't have sex with him. If I was feeling shy about our relationship (or touch adverse sometimes) he would make me feel bad. -Alex (USA)

4.3.6. Shamed for being asexual by partner (10.9%)

This group was set apart by the one above by intention and variety. Partners described in the personal accounts may blame asexuality for relationship problems, and also purposefully belittle and harass in a way designed to instigate a certain response. The respondents in these stories described the erosion of their self-worth and increased feelings of shame and distress about their asexual identity.

There was significant overlap between this group and those who described physical and sexual assaults by a partner. One survey author, a domestic abuse survivor and former peer educator,

identified several responses that she things are potential instances of calculated abuse. The opinion of the survey authors is that asexuality itself is not necessarily the locus of abuse; an abuser will use any tool available to exert control and erode a victim's self-perception⁸. It's very possible that victims of abuse in this section were not targeted because of their asexuality, rather that their relationship was inherently abusive.

It should be noted too that while asexuality may not be the "cause" of abuse, it should not be dismissed as incidental. Abusers commonly target people whom they perceive as emotionally vulnerable, including those with a previous history of abuse, mental illness and low self-esteem – if being asexual is a factor in any of these things (the survey authors do not favour or dispute this complex and contentious argument), then it is part of a cycle of trauma. Studies have found that bisexual women experience higher rates of abuse than heterosexual or homosexual women, and that stereotypes about their bisexuality are a factor⁹. There is scope for a deeper study into the similarities.

Regardless of the motives of the abuser, this behaviour is obviously distressing and damaging to the victim, and its prevalence and expression in the survey highlights the importance of asexual visibility, acceptance and inclusion in community campaigning.

In the past I have felt that I was broken, insufficient or selfish because I wasn't able to fulfil my partners' sexual 'needs'. This left to a situation in a previous relationship my partner was able to emotionally and physically coorce me into having sex, by playing on those feelings of guilt. 6 years later and I still have difficulty recognising that I am not to blame for what happened. -Ashley (Australia)

4.3.7. Harassment, Inappropriate Behaviour, Amateur Diagnosis (9.2%)

Descriptions of these three behaviours were too common to be lumped under "Other". Due to the high degree of crossover they have been grouped as their own category.

"Harassment" covers both verbal and sexual examples. Numerous younger respondents and especially teenagers described being followed around and asked out constantly in attempts to wear them down. More broadly, individuals had their asexuality treated as a game or a challenge. Other instances of harassment described were of a bullying nature, usually among teenagers but sometimes in adults as well.

In high school, a group of boys spent months harassing me because I wouldn't date one of their friends. They would not take no for an answer, and when I told them that I wasn't interested in dating, they kept telling me that the answer can't just be "no" and that I needed a better explanation than that. They would grab me and taunt me, and eventually they spent a whole evening chasing me around town with a truck full of their friends to try and help their friend ask me to prom. -Abigail (USA)

⁸ Lundy Bancroft's *Why Does He Do That: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* (Penguin 2002) describes this throughout. See Chapter 5 "The Abusive Man in Relationships". Bancroft's work is about men specifically, but he notes that this does not mean the behaviours described cannot or do not apply to other abusive people.

⁹ For example, the UK Office for National Statistics found that in England and Wales, bisexual women reported domestic assaults at twice the rate of straight and lesbian women. ("Women most at risk of experiencing partner abuse in England and Wales: years ending March 2015 to 2017", available on their website, ons.gov.uk)

Inappropriate behaviour generally refers to the behaviours immediately after someone came out or met a new person and was open about their asexuality. This inappropriate behaviour took the form of personal questions – “do you masturbate?”, “were you sexually abused?”, verbal sexual advances or breaches of personal space all the way up to unwanted sexualised touching.

Acquaintances, family, and classmates have asked me sexual questions, ask about my sexual experiences, and have even asked if I have working genitalia. This has even happened when we are in public spaces. I have also been told I wouldn't be asexual if I had sex with the "right person". -Jude (USA)

“Amateur diagnosis” took a variety of forms, such as insisting that the asexual person “get their hormones checked”, or that their asexuality must be caused by some health factor. Among the broad range of suggested causes were: autism, antidepressants, obesity, OCD, trauma, chronic immaturity, or some unknown mental illness.

4.3.8. Negative interaction with family (8.2%)

This was a theme that ran through all write-in fields. “Negative interaction with family” covers a broad range of incidents, from one unpleasant conversation to being disowned.

At a rough count, parents were mentioned the most frequently, with mothers mentioned more than fathers.

Siblings were referred to often, sometimes with a sense of disappointment. Negative reactions were often expected from parents, while a number of respondents described anticipating support and help from a sibling (sometimes an LGBTQIA+ sibling) only to be let down.

My mom told me that “calling myself” asexual would make people not want to love me, questioned how I would “show my husband I love him” without sex, later excused my asexuality as just “an autism thing,” recently told me that I’m possessed by a demonic spirit that’s making me asexual and is praying it’ll leave me (thankfully she doesn’t believe in exorcisms).

My dad laughed. -Drew (USA)

When I came out to my mom, she was upset with me because I won't be able to give her children and she thought I was being selfish. She would complain about this to every person she knew in front of me. When this information went to my sister, she told me to stay open minded that I'm actually bi or gay even though I was about 18 at the time. I'm usually used to ignorant comments like that because no one wakes up woke, but what hurt me the most was that I was always there to support her when she came out as bisexual even though mom was prejudice and abusive towards her about it, but she couldn't be there to support me when I needed her. -Mary (USA)

4.3.9. “You just have to meet the right person”/“It’s a phase”, etc (7.8%)

Variations on these two phrases and others, such as “You’ll grow out of it”, constituted the most commonly reported rejections of asexuality. This occurred when it was the orientation itself, rather than the person, that was rejected.

Age doesn’t seem to be a factor, as people aged 36-45 reported that they still get this reaction. Such comments came from family, friends, medical professionals and again, total strangers. A few women and non-binary people reported being told by men that they “just need to meet/have sex with/get f*cked by the right man”. Many felt threatened by the tone or delivery of the sentiment.

I would have people tell me that it's "not natural" and that I'll grow out of it. I would also have people harass me and say they can "fix" me or "change" that.

-Jenny (USA)

4.3.10. Shamed by others for having allosexual partner (7%)

Respondents describing this kind of abuse fell roughly into two groups. The survey authors have informally categorised these as “harmful ignorance” and “deliberately being mean”.

Some of the abuse was clearly acephobic vitriol intended to be hurtful. The rest was also harmful but it was not clear that there was deliberate cruelty behind it.

A small number of stories existed where intention was unclear.

When I came out to my mother, she ... asked me how my partner feels about my asexuality (he's perfectly fine with it) and told me not to limit myself and not to tell anyone I'm ace. -Aubrey (Australia)

When I told my parents they didn't take it well. I was in a relationship at the time and my mom said I should force myself to have sex with him or he would leave me. When we (much later) broke up she said it was because I wouldn't put out(it wasn't).

-Morgan (Location Not Given)

4.3.11. Online Hate (4%)

In some cases, the hate-speech was public and the respondent saw it – sometimes they said that it didn’t bother them or that it doesn’t count because it wasn’t directed at them specifically. Much of it referred to Tumblr again, but there were also incidents reported on Facebook and Twitter. Online Hate also included private messaging, some of which was just insults, but also extended to death or rape threats, or inciting to suicide. (Threats and incitement to suicide have been categorised under [S4.4. Physical and Sexual Violence \(pg. \[57\]\)](#)).

I've received insults, threats, and mockery from groups of non-asexual/aromantic people who are LGBTQIA+ in online spaces. They mockingly use patronizing tones, as if I am a child. They have given me death and rape threats and wishes. -Zoey (Canada)

4.3.12. External pressure to date/try sex (3.6%)

As with most other categories, this pressure came from all corners. Sometimes respondents framed this pressure as probably well-intentioned. Many described it as being particularly oppressive because it tends to be ongoing and relentless.

Pressure to date or try sex was typically, but not in all cases, mentioned alongside encounters where a person was told that they need to be “cured” or “just haven’t met the right person”.

A « friend » bought me condoms, telling me that I should loosen up and have sex
-Adele (France)

Another instance is when I was told by a clinical psychologist that I should date a fireman...His response was that I needed to go out and have sex with a fireman in particular because that would somehow 'fix' me. I did not return to that psychologist again. -Emily (Australia)

It is appropriate here to also revisit the experience of “Salma” (*Section 1. Case Study (pg. 16)*), who was coerced into sending nude pictures of herself to a partner, a form of “compromise” experienced by many asexual people that sees them doing something they don’t want to in order to avoid or put-off a more violating sexual encounter. The survey did not ask about sending intimate images, and this was an omission.

4.3. Verbal/Emotional Abuse

Recommendation for Future Survey 15: Questions about harassment, inappropriate behaviour and amateur diagnosis should be included.

Recommendation for Future Survey 16: Questions negative interactions with family members should be included.

Recommendation for Future Survey 17: “You just haven’t met the right person” and “It’s a phase” should be among the specific phrases included among a list of options.

Recommendation for Future Survey 18: Questions about Online Hate should be included, potentially differentiating between general and targeted abuse.

Recommendation for Future Survey 19: Questions about being pressured to try dating or having sex should be included.

Recommendation for Future Survey 20: Questions about sending or being sent intimate images without consent or due to coercion should be included.

4.4. Physical and Sexual Violence

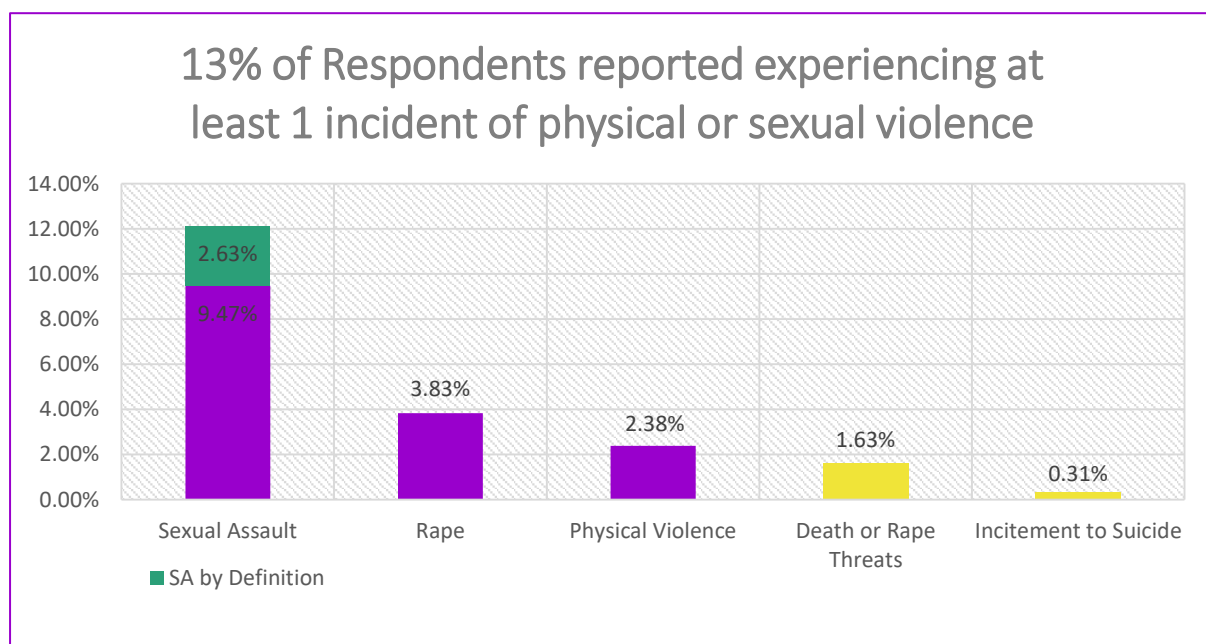
This section included three original categories: Physical Violence, Sexual Assault and Rape. Two additional categories were added during data collation to account for write-ins. These were Threats, and Incitement to Suicide (sometimes referred to as “suicide baiting”).

The survey authors did not feel it appropriate to define someone else’s experience as sexual assault or rape if the person did not categorise it in this way for themselves. However, there were a

significant number of write-in stories that described rape or sexual assault, and those boxes were not checked.

In these cases, if the respondent used the terms “rape”, “sexual assault” or “sexual abuse”, their write-in was counted as such and a note made. If they did not use these terms, they were added to a new category: “Sexual Assault by Definition”. The definition used was: *any sexual activity - intercourse, groping, kissing - without clear, positive consent, including sexual intercourse of any kind where consent was obtained through coercion or fear.*

In some cases, where a box was ticked, the respondent noted that while they had been assaulted, their asexuality was not a factor. In these cases, they were not counted. It is therefore important to note that these figures are intended to represent not experiences of physical and sexual assaults among asexual people, but assaults committed *because* the victim is asexual.



**Although the respondent did not always tick both boxes, all cases of rape were also recorded as sexual assaults.*

13% of respondents reported at least 1 incident of physical or sexual violence.

The nature of the stories provided by respondents are in many cases potentially distressing. Included below are some representative examples, and readers are advised to read with caution and be mindful of self-care.

My best friend assaulted me when I said i did not want to join her and her boyfriend for a threesome. She threw me on the ground and beat me up, grabbed my hair and held my head back while her boyfriend poured rum down my throat -Linda (USA)

In fear of either being raped, physically or mentally abused by someone, I chose to have sex even though I didnt want to. -Quinn (Location Not Given)

My now ex-husband required that I provide him with at least two intimate sexual acts each week. Ten years ago he told me that the reason he had an affair and contemplated ending our marriage was because I was not providing sufficient intimate sexual acts. That threat was held over my head for ten years. Under that duress, I have engaged in sexual acts that I did not want to be a part of at least twice a week for ten years. And it still wasn't enough - throughout that 10 year period he had multiple affairs and has left me for his most recent sexual partner. -Ruby (Australia)

My ex forced himself on me because of my lack of interest in sex and sexual activity. And made me feel extreme guilt because he said I didn't love him because I wasn't interested in having sex with him -Lore (Sweden)

The first friend I ever told about my asexuality told me I was "too cute to be asexual". He later took me out for drinks on my birthday, drugged me, and raped me in my own home. He tried to justify it later by saying that I didn't know my own secret wants.

-Barbara (USA)

He raped me many times to try and convince me that I wasn't asexual, and once time while trying to force my mouth open for oral sex he pulled the bottom bracket off of my braces. If I spoke about being uncomfortable with sex, he would suggest the idea of me drinking to get through it. -Aadya (India)

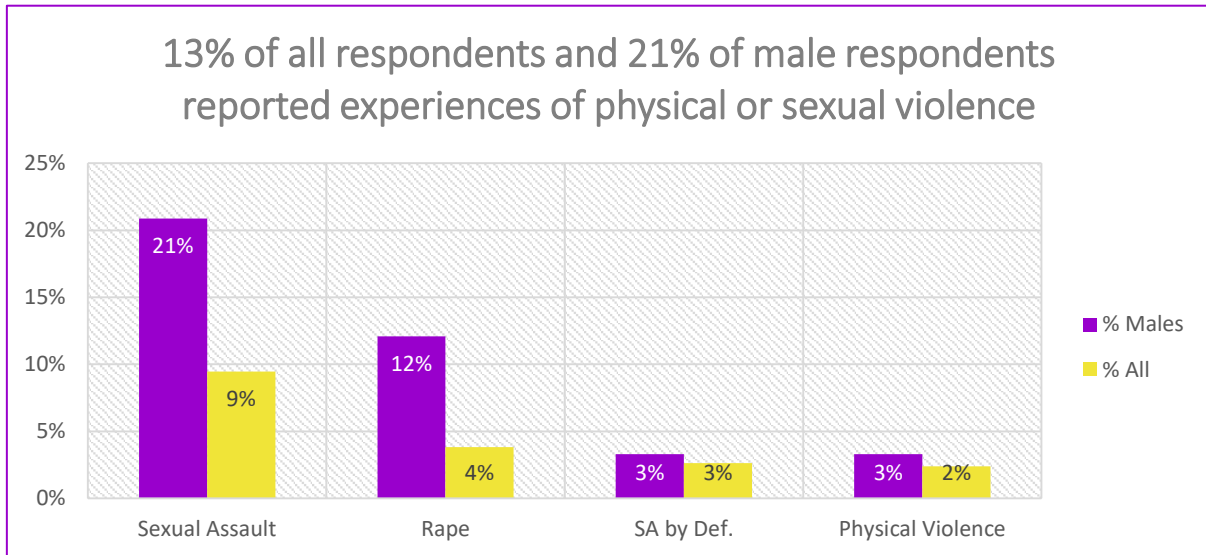
4.4. Physical and Sexual Violence

Recommendation for Future Survey 21: Questions about violence should include threats of violence, such as death or rape threats, as well as incitement to suicide

4.5. Men as Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence

While it is difficult to compare the results of the full cohort (1595 respondents) with that of males only (91 respondents), this one statistic was sufficiently dramatic to warrant discussion.

The percentage of total respondents reporting rape and sexual assault is 4% and 9% respectively. For male-identifying respondents, the figures are much higher: 12% reported rape and 21% reported sexual assault (including the “Sexual Assault by Definition” category).



Male respondents who ticked the boxes for sexual assault and rape were less likely to share their story than female and non-binary respondents. Conversely, men who described sexual assaults in their stories were less likely to have checked the corresponding boxes. In many instances they seemed unaware that what they have described is sexual assault or rape. This raises questions about what men know about consent and their rights to bodily autonomy - whether they are asexual or not.

A reminder must also be added here that the survey authors were unable to identify, except where that information was given, whether a respondent is transgender.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Oliver (Australia)

One man who did tell his personal story about sexual violence is Oliver, who gave his gender as “Trans ftm” and identifies as “Religious”. He is a Panromantic Grey-Ace. Oliver’s story stands out because of its format – where other respondents wrote a paragraph or two, Oliver submitted something more akin to blank verse. It contains references to self-harm.

I didn't realise it was assault at first, or even really rape.

I didn't tell her I was asexual when we first started dating. She was my first ever partner, and I was excited and terrified and afraid.

Whenever we hung out with my friends, they would make ace jokes around me. They all knew, and they had been supportive of me for years. I hoped that she would pick up on that, that if she had any issues, she would bring it up. She never said anything, so I assumed it was all fine.

It didn't feel like pressure at first. I had never had sex before, so I at least wanted to try it out, even if I had never felt sexual attraction. It was fine, even if I liked touching her more than I liked being touched.

After a while, after telling her that I didn't want to be touched, but was happy to touch her, she would get standoffish. She would mope and begin to cry. At first, she would 'blame herself'. She wasn't pretty enough. She wasn't sexy enough.

When I told her she was, she said I needed to prove it.

She told me she had self-harmed because of me before.

I didn't feel like I had a choice.

I didn't say no.

The first and only time my asexuality was explicitly brought up, she cried. She got angry. She told me I had lied to her, that I should have told her when we first started dating. That I tricked her into this relationship. That I didn't love her.

I told her I still loved her. She said if I loved her, then I would be attracted to her.

She never brought up my sexuality again.

The threats were never implicit, but the threat of her cutting herself continuously loomed over our relationship. If I said no, she wanted me to leave, and I would see her later with new scars and bandaged thighs. She never said anything, but she would stare.

"You did this," her eyes said.

"You did this, because you told me no."

So I stopped saying no.

I stopped saying anything.

She stopped asking.

-Oliver (Australia)

Section 5: Pride and Social Experiences

The survey was structured to end in a positive way. The previous questions were geared toward gathering information about negative experiences so that we could identify the urgent issues faced by the community. Those individuals who were willing to share their stories in Section 4 were asked to recall memories that could be distressing, and while contact details for various mental health services were linked, a buffer of some kind was needed.

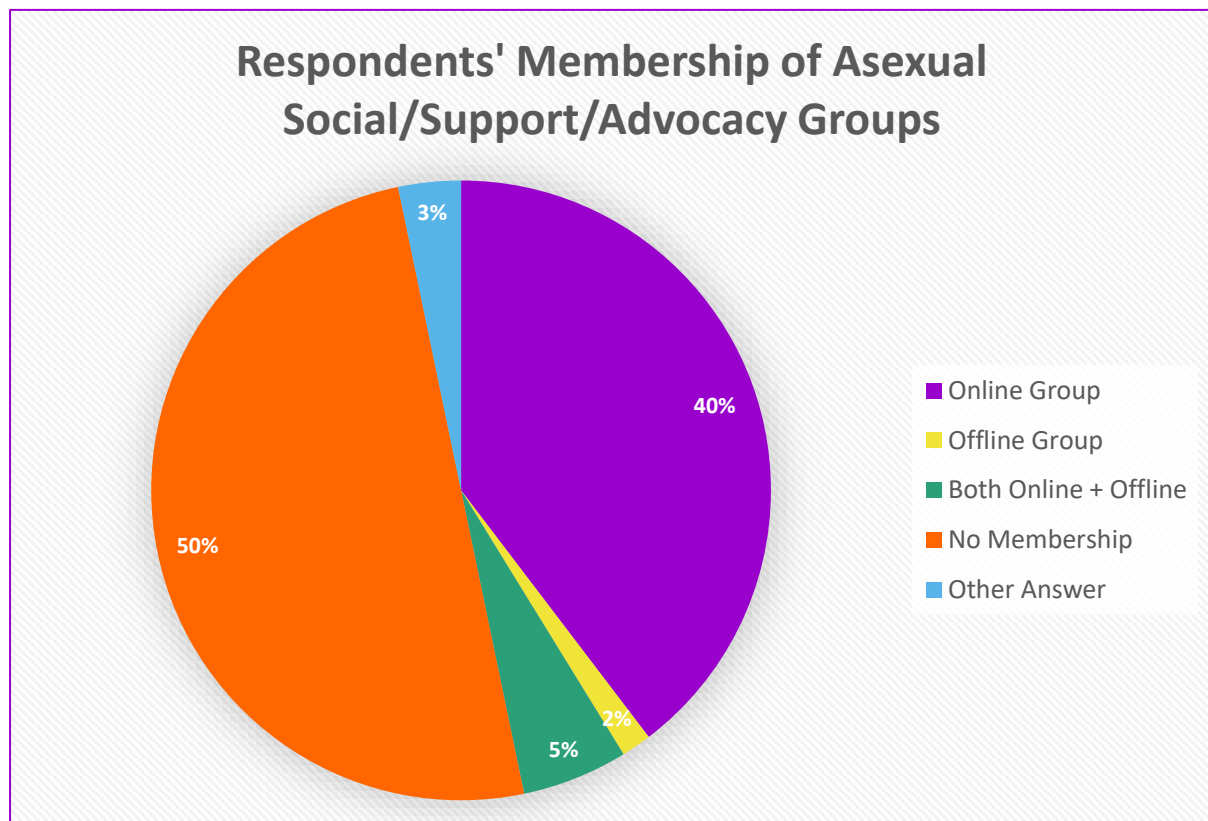
Section 5 asked respondents to reflect on what parts of their identity they enjoyed and celebrated. This not only gave respondents some breathing space from the previous section, but also provided fuller insight into how respondents felt about being under the Asexual Umbrella.

The stories here reveal a whole continuum of attitudes, from those who barely think about their asexuality, to those who see it as an absolutely core part of their identity.

5.1. Membership of Social or Advocacy Groups

ACT Aces is one of few asexuality groups operating offline that provides social opportunities as well as advocacy and activism (although it also operates online). This lack of offline support was discussed in [5.2.6. Sources of Information about Asexuality \(pg. 31\)](#), where we found that 80.7% of respondents sought information from an online asexuality group while only 1% approached a local group.

In terms of actual membership, 45.2% of respondents were members of online groups, while only 7.1% were members of offline groups.

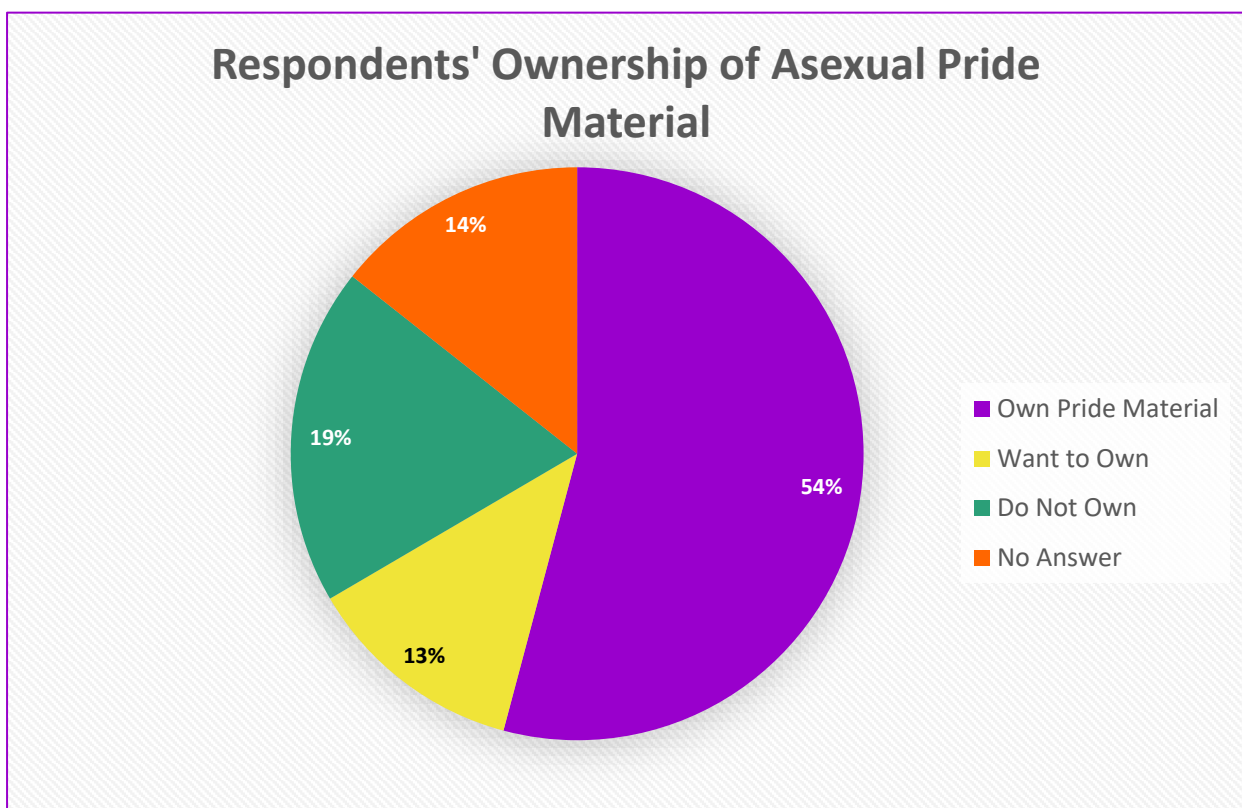


Answers under “Other” included past group membership, or lapsed membership (such as a disused AVEN forum username). A small number were actively seeking groups to join.

No further explanation was given by the 50% of respondents who were not members of a group and did not plan to join one. It is unfortunate for ACT Aces that this information was not collected, as it might provide some insights into how and why people choose to join such groups and where a group should be promoting itself to potential membership. However the data may still be useful to researchers studying community and the individual in queer studies.

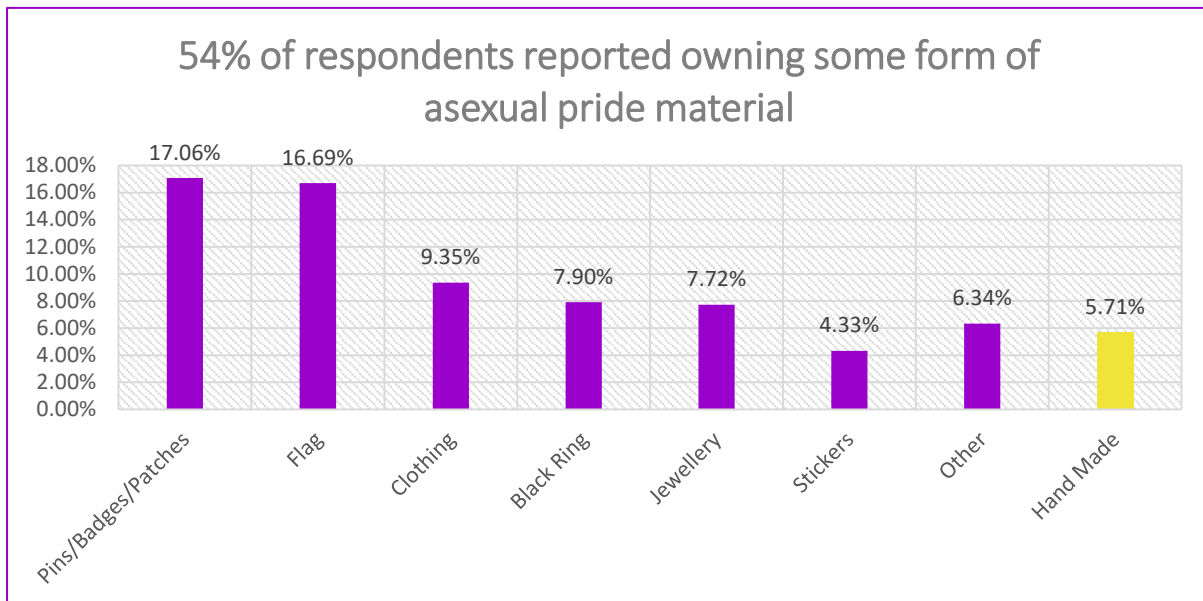
5.2. Ownership of Pride Merchandise

This question was provided as a list of checkboxes and a write-in option and it generated a range of inventive responses.



54% of respondents already own some form of Asexual (sometimes Demisexual or Grey-A) Pride material. A further 13% said that they want to but currently don't. Reasons given for this included financial restraints, only recently coming out, being unable to find any, and unstable or unsafe living situations, such as queerphobic housemates or family members.

Among the most unexpected responses for pride-coloured objects were a wig, a homemade candle and a birdhouse. 5.7% of respondents noted that they made their own materials, most commonly something knitted, but also jewellery, clothing and pins or badges. One creative respondent hand-decorated their own shoes, while others tie-dyed t-shirts.



There were language and dialect barriers in the interpretation of write-in responses – “button”, “pin” and “badge” can all mean the same thing, depending on dialect, but could also mean very different objects. The decision was made to assume that “Pin” and “Button” both mean what an Australian would refer to as a “Badge” (although “pin” is increasing in popularity here). This meaning seemed to the authors as more likely than the alternatives in Australian dialect. To avoid inaccuracy, they were grouped together. As a result, badges, patches and other symbols worn on clothing or bags narrowly represent the most common owned item. Flags were a close second, comprising both small flags for waving and large flags for wearing or hanging.

7.9% of respondents specified that they owned a black ring. Black rings worn on the middle finger are a symbol of asexual identity that first appeared in the asexual community almost a decade ago. Some Grey-Aces use a grey or silver ring, and were included under the same category. Some respondents wrote only that they owned a ring. As they weren’t specific, these were categorised under “Jewellery”, but it should be noted that some or all of this group likely belongs under the “Black Ring” category.

Included under “Other” are:

- 33 x Accessories (such as the wig, key-rings, lanyard)
- 24 x Homewares (such as the birdhouse and candle, pillows, blankets)
- 17 x Artworks
- 9 x Make-Up and Tattoos
- 7 x Digital (such as desktop or phone backgrounds)
- 13 x Ungrouped (including plush toys and dice)

Overall, 54% of respondents own some form of pride material. Only 17% of respondents wore pins, badges or patches, and these were the most common, indicating that the kinds of pride material owned are varied with individuals choosing to show their pride in diverse and highly personalized ways.

5.3. Asexual Positivity

The final two questions (aside from the additional comment box) invited respondents to comment positively about asexuality, their own relationship with it and their experiences. The questions were “*What's your favourite way of showing asexuality pride?*” and “*What's the best thing about being asexual?*”

The responses are not something that can be assessed through any quantitative analysis. Broadly, the respondents who wrote in these boxes fall into three categories: those who gave a positive response, those who could see no positives, and those who rejected the question as pointless or stupid.

A few representative responses are presented here.

Positive Responses

Sometimes these responses are inspiring and moving. In other cases they are written with humour – Each style shows a kind of pride and acceptance.

Challenging allonormativity and amatonormativity¹⁰ and watching people flounder because they don't know how to respond when you say "No, the baby isn't flirting with you, they're learning emotions. Calm down Karen."

And mostly just existing. -Madison (Location Not Given)

Educating people. I'm studying to become a psychologist and there are too many health care professionals who don't know about asexuality and in my opinion it's important my classmates know in case it comes up with a patient.

-Hanna (Germany)

No horniness to cloud my thoughts. Being horny sounds like such a chore honestly.

-Elizabeth (USA)

Not being on the lookout for a potential partner, being afraid of never finding someone and of the biological clock ticking. Knowing I'm good enough as I am, not looking for validation in a partner. Not feeling the pressure to look a certain way for people to find you physically attractive. When I decide to dress up, I'm doing it for me. Not feeling the pressure to find the right person to share your life with. Knowing I'm not some unfinished work waiting to be completed by someone. -Ida (Denmark)

Knowing I'm not some unfinished work waiting to be completed by someone.

¹⁰ A concept named by feminist philosopher Prof. Elizabeth Brake, who describes it as “the widespread assumption that everyone is better off in an exclusive, romantic, long-term coupled relationship, and that everyone is seeking such a relationship”. Brake’s book “Minimizing Marriage” (OUP, 2012) elaborates on amatonormativity and the ways devalues other kinds of relationships.

Negative Responses

A number of respondents struggled with the final two questions, and especially with naming the “best thing about being asexual”. These people have no demographics in common, and have a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

The recent "discourse" over asexuality online and the numerous times I hang out with friends and find myself feeling very excluded from the conversation have kind of stripped me of all of the pride I used to have about it. I'm not exactly proud.

-Reese (Location Not Given)

Nothing. I feel so isolated all the time because of my own body. And the moment I find something good about it, someone reminds me how jealous they are of my sexuality, like it hasn't caused me so much pain and loneliness. -Maria (USA)

I don't feel there is anything "good" about being asexual. It's so heavily stigmatised in our society. The only good thing about it is that it's part of who I am, and therefore it's something that makes me up -Grace (UK)

Rejecting Responses

A small minority of respondents rejected the questions. For the most part, these people described their asexuality as not important or something they never think about. Most of these respondents also do not own pride objects and are not members of social/support/advocacy groups.

This is, in my opinion, a dumb question. There's no ups or downs to an identity. It's just a part of someone. It's like asking someone the best thing about being left handed (Which spoiler alert, there aren't any, I've looked for good things about being left handed). -Rowan (Location Not Given)

Idk, it doesn't really affect my life that much. My aromanticism definitely affects me more day to day -Skye (USA)

Despite the brusqueness of some of these answers, there was something beautiful in the wholesale rejection of pride. Pride is deeply important and even functions as a kind of self-defence. However, it exists so often as a response to negativity that for some people, including asexuals, it then becomes associated with and difficult to separate from that negativity.

If we want to risk conjecture one final time, we might say that this matter-of-factness is the attitude that equality strives to achieve. No need to buffer our injuries. No need to advocate or come out. No need to explain why we should like ourselves: Just pride, in the form of deadpan self-acceptance.

Conclusion

We acknowledge the limitations of this preliminary research, but emphasise the strength of the stories we have uncovered. As the first step to further qualitative research, the stories told by ace people in this report aim to complement the approaches established in research into queer communities by broadening the definitions of what it means to be non-heterosexual and/or non-heteroromantic.

It is unknown how representative our demographic findings are of asexual communities as a whole, but there are generational cohort effects apparent in our results. The experiences of asexual people are not universal and more research is needed to properly capture the different intersections of identity. Respondents of different genders, religions and ages each reported their own concerns. Asexuality needs to be included as a sexual orientation in health research, in census data, and in any research that seeks to understand the demographics, experiences, health and concerns of queer communities.

The responses to questions surrounding asexual identity, the exploration of that identity and the journey of both internal self-identification and coming out present a narrative that is particular to our community. Asexuality is often something personally felt, communally explored (frequently through online communities) and then coming out publicly, usually repeatedly. This challenges the dominant allonormative queer narrative of queerness as one closet reveal, where there is already an understanding of what “queer” is. This is an experience shared with many bisexual and pansexual people, where coming out is daily, and accompanied by the ongoing emotional labour of educating others. There is scope for a great deal of social research into the asexual experience, as its own unique part of the queer community, and in the elements it shares with others and what we can therefore learn from one another.

While asexual and aromantic people are stereotyped as being alone or incapable of relationships, our respondents told us about a rich variety of relationships. The majority of committed relationships were monogamous, but there were also many that were open and polyamorous – and not for the benefit of an allosexual partner.

A third of the respondents want to have children, many of them can't and the information about the barriers they are experiencing are valuable from the viewpoint of activism, support and social change, but are also interesting from a research perspective. There is already an interest in the diversity of queer families and their makeup, and any research in that area must include asexual parents and their parenting roles, and the different ways in which they came to have children.

The questions on the experiences of discrimination, oppression and violence detail the often horrific reality of allonormativity as a corrective force impacting the autonomy of many asexual people. The recommendations emphasise the acute need to broaden how we consider gendered violence in queer relationships to include the intersection of asexuality and violence. Many of the stories highlight the need for education, not just about asexuality and the rights and bodily autonomy of asexual people. Everybody has the right to abstain from sex, to refuse sexual advances or romantic relationships and pushing or ignoring an asexual's boundaries is symptomatic of poor understanding of, or respect, for consent in general. There is a lot to consider how we measure and sensitively ask about violence and the threat of violence, and how we research queer men's experiences of violence in ways that includes asexual status as a motivator or excuse for violence.

The findings on pride and social experiences give a preliminary understanding of asexual communities and cultures and their symbols and meanings. We would like to emphasise the specific experience of online ace communities and their importance to asexual people in this generation of younger queer people going forward. More research is needed to understand the cultural meanings of asexual symbols and their relationship to visible and invisible shared pride, given their meanings are often derived from online settings.

We present our rich descriptions and preliminary hypotheses here to spark deeper investigation into the barriers asexual people face to living full and healthy lives. Stemming from questions framed, analysed and presented for and by ace people, our recommendations present important considerations for describing and analysing the real world experiences of asexual people with thoroughness, respect and sensitivity.

We challenge queer researchers to broaden their reach and include asexuality in mainstream queer research, in order to more fully explore and analyse queer identity, relationships, discrimination, health and pride.

Recommendations for Future Survey

Across the five sections of the report, the survey authors found a number of ways in which a similar future survey, or one that covers any part of the same material, might be improved. In total, there are 21 recommendations.

Section 1.2. Romantic Orientation

Recommendation 1: If allosexual aromantics are to be included in research, this should be considered in the writing of the survey, ideally with input from a member of that community.

See Page 10

Section 1.3. Gender

Recommendation 2: Provide gender question as a multiple choice format, but include the write-in option to retain the capture of descriptions of gender that are meaningful to the individual.

Recommendation 3: Collect data regarding respondents' transgender status.

Recommendation 4: Include a separate optional question asking if respondents are intersex.

See Page 12

Section 2.1. Age at First Realisation of Asexuality

Recommendation 5: All questions relating to age should include the same age brackets, or at least avoid overlapping brackets.

Recommendation 6: Collect data about the age respondents came out as asexual.

See Page 21

Section 2.2. Previous Identities/Orientations

Recommendation 7: Structure questions that consider whether respondents feel they have ever confused sexual and romantic orientations in the past.

See Page 23

Section 2.3. Out Status

Recommendation 8: Structure questions according to who asexual people are out to in the world.

See Page 25

Section 2.3.1. Out Status: Link to Discrimination, Oppression and Violence

Recommendation 9: Questions relating to discrimination, oppression and violence could gather information about whether the respondent was known by the perpetrator to be asexual.

See Page 27

Section 2.6. Sources of Information about Asexuality

Recommendation 10: Include questions about the specific platforms of social media used to connect with other asexual people.

See Page 32

Section 3.1. Relationship Status

Recommendation 11: Queer Platonic Relationship should be included as an option in questions about committed relationships/partnerships.

See Page 36

Section 3.1.1. Relationship Status: Respondents in Relationships

Recommendation 12: Terms such as “open” and “polyamorous” should be defined.

See Page 36

Section 3.3. Previous Relationships

Recommendation 13: Terms such as “Casual Dating” and “Monogamy” should be defined.

See Page 40

Section 4.1. Institutional Discrimination

Recommendation 14: Questions about discrimination could include the subject of religious discrimination or exclusion

See Page 49

Section 4.3. Verbal/Emotional Abuse

Recommendation 15: Questions about harassment, inappropriate behaviour and amateur diagnosis should be included.

Recommendation 16: Questions negative interactions with family members should be included.

Recommendation 17: “You just haven’t met the right person” and “It’s a phase” should be among the specific phrases included among a list of options.

Recommendation 18: Questions about Online Hate should be included, potentially differentiating between general and targeted abuse.

Recommendation 19: Questions about being pressured to try dating or having sex should be included.

Recommendation 20: Questions about sending or being sent intimate images without consent or due to coercion should be included

See Page 57

Section 4.4. Physical and Sexual Violence

Recommendation 21: Questions about violence should include threats of violence, such as death or rape threats, as well as incitement to suicide

See Page 59

Appendix A

Survey Questions

Section 1: Demographic Information

This section asks a few questions about your orientation, age, gender and other basic information, so that we can understand more about the kinds of people responding to the survey. None of the information will identify who you are or be shared with anyone.

What is your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Demisexual
- Grey-A
- Unsure/Questioning, under Ace Umbrella
- Other:

What is your romantic orientation?

- Aromantic
- Biromantic
- Demiromantic
- Grey-Romantic
- Heteromantic
- Homoromantic
- Panromantic
- Other:

What is your gender identity? (Optional)

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-60
- 61-70
- 71 +

What country do you live in? (optional)

What is your religion? (optional)

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- No Religion
- Other:

Section 2: Coming out and learning about asexuality

These questions are about your experiences learning about what asexuality is, discovering your own identity and coming out to others as asexual. It's ok not to answer these questions if they make you uncomfortable.

How old were you when you realised that you are asexual?

- Under 19
- 19 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 55
- Over 55

Did you previously identify with any other sexual orientation/s before asexuality?

Some people change their sexual orientation over time, but that does not mean their previous orientation was not valid. Other people search for the right words to describe their feelings, and may take some time to find them. If you want to just write the orientation you once identified with, that's ok. If you want to tell a detailed story, there is room for that here too.

Have you ever told anyone else that you are asexual?

- Yes
- No

Coming out as asexual can often mean telling different people at different times. There are options below for types of people you may have confided in - tick all that apply to you.

- Partner
- Parent/s
- Children
- Sibling/s
- Extended Family (Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents...)
- Friend/s
- Online Friend/s
- Mental Health Professional/s (Counsellor, Psychologist, Psychiatrist...)
- Other Medical Practitioner/s (Family GP, Specialists...)
- Religious/Spiritual Advisor/s (Priest, Rabbi, Imam...)
- Other:

Where did you first hear about asexuality as a sexual orientation?

If you cannot remember, you can choose a place you DO remember hearing about it, or you can skip the question.

- School Sexual Education classes
- School, but not in Sex Ed
- An asexual person
- Another person, not an asexual
- On the internet
- In the news
- Other:

Did your school Sex Education classes include information about asexuality?

- Yes
- No
- I don't remember
- I did not have school Sex Education classes
- Other:

When exploring your identity as an asexual person, where did you find information about asexuality?

- Asexual groups online
- A local asexual organisation
- An LGBTQPIA+ organisation online
- A local LGBTQPIA+ organisation
- Individual asexual people
- A counsellor, therapist or other mental health service
- Pamphlets or other written information
- Books
- Other:

Section 3: Relationships, Family and Children

This section asks questions about your current and former relationships, your family and your thoughts, feelings and experiences about relationships and children. All of the questions are optional and if any of the questions make you uncomfortable, you can just skip them and move on to the next section.

Are you currently in a committed relationship?

"Committed relationship" means whatever YOU think it should mean. Commitment means different things to different people and all relationships are different.

- Yes - a monogamous relationship
- Yes - a polyamorous relationship
- Yes - an open relationship
- No - but I am open to relationships
- No - I choose not to be in a relationship
- Other:

Is your partner/s asexual?

This includes any orientation under the asexual umbrella, including demisexual and Grey-A. (If your partner is asexual, please ask them to take this survey too!)

- Yes
- No
- Multiple partners - Yes and No

Have you ever been in any of these types of relationship?

Check any that apply, or none at all.

- Monogamous relationship
- Exclusive polyamorous relationship
- Open relationship
- Casual dating
- Other:

Do you have any children?

Check any that apply

- No children
- Biological children
- Legally adopted children
- Step-children
- Foster children
- Children you embrace within your family without legal recognition
- Other:

If you have no children, would you like to have them?

- Yes
- No

What barriers (if any) have prevented you from being able to have children, or might prevent you in the future?

- No partner
- Don't want to/Can't have sex
- Fertility issues
- Obstacles in adoption law
- Unsuitable financial or housing situation
- Just not the right time
- Other:

Section 4: Experiences of Oppression, Discrimination and Violence

This section of the survey asks questions about your experiences of abuse, discrimination, violence and other acts of oppression. If these questions are confronting or upsetting, it's okay to skip to the end.

For each question you have three options: you can check the boxes describing forms of oppression; you can skip the question; or you can check "Choose not to answer". After each list there is an opportunity for you to write a story about an experience that you have had.

If you are comfortable doing so, you may choose to opt in to participation by telling us your story to use in future work. If we use your story, your words will not be altered. Stories will remain completely intact and anonymous, and may be quoted in research or in material that we publish or present. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences to help build an understanding of asexual experiences. If you specify that you do not give us permission, we will not use your responses.

(This was followed by information about counselling services)

Have you ever experienced discrimination in any of the following forms, because of your asexual identity?

Tick any that apply. In the next question, you will be given the chance to give more details if you want to.

- Discriminatory treatment by a medical professional
- Discrimination by an employer
- Social exclusion
- Exclusion from LGBTQIA+ spaces
- Choose not to say
- Other:

Discrimination: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about asexual discrimination, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Have you ever experienced verbal and/or emotional abuse in any of the following forms, because of your asexual identity?

Tick any that apply. In the next questions, you will be given the chance to give more details if you want to. There will be space to write individually about Verbal Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Relationship abuse.

- Insults
- Being told your orientation is not "real" or "normal"
- Being told you need to be "cured" or "fixed"
- Being told your orientation is not valid because of your sexual history or lack thereof
- Being shamed by a partner because of your asexuality
- Being shamed by someone else for having a partner who is not asexual
- Being told by a partner that relationship problems are caused by your asexuality
- Choose not to say
- Other:

Verbal Abuse: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about verbal abuse, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Emotional Abuse: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about emotional abuse, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Relationship Abuse: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about relationship abuse, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Have you ever experienced physical or sexual violence because of your asexual identity?

Tick any that apply. In the next questions, you will be given the chance to give more details if you want to.

- Physical violence
- Sexual assault
- Rape
- Choose not to say
- Other:

Physical Violence: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about physical violence, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Sexual Violence: Tell a Story

If you would like to tell a story about sexual violence, use this space to describe what happened in your own words. We may print the stories, publish them online or read them to audiences, to help build an understanding of the experiences asexual people have of oppression, discrimination and violence. By sharing your story with us, you are giving your consent for it to be used anonymously by us for that purpose.

Is there anything else you would like to add about this subject?

Section 5: Asexual Pride and Positivity

This section is about your positive feelings about being asexual, the ways you express asexual pride and how you interact with other asexual people.

Are you a member of any asexuality social, pride or advocacy groups?

- Yes - Online
- Yes - Offline
- Yes - Both Online and Offline
- No
- Other:

Do you own any asexuality pride decorations or merchandise?

What's your favourite way of showing asexuality pride?

What's the best thing about being asexual?

Is there anything else you want to say about yourself, asexuality or being an asexual?