

## **“Diverse Relationships” Panel**

Panelists: EC; Sarah & Ducky  
[moderated by Iris/Sebastian]

- **Diverse relationships panel**

- This panel will explore the variety of ways that ace and/or arospec people understand and pursue relationships-- what do people's important relationships look like and what do they want from them? This panel will include panelists with a variety of different relationship styles-- non-romantic, romantic and otherwise.

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### **Prepared Questions:**

**Note:** these prepared answers are incomplete and panelists elaborated on their responses and responded to questions to which they did not prepare answers. This document is therefore an incomplete record of the panel session.

- **Introduction of panelists- name, pronouns, maybe ace/aro identities.**

**Sarah-** they/she, queer asexual. Don't really id my aro-ness, but i would say i'm arospec.

**Ducky-** they/them, queer asexual. aro/ariospec.

**EC** – He/Him, Homoromantic asexual

- **What is your approach to relationships?**

**Sarah-** more friendship oriented, would not be opposed to romantic relationships, but don't seek them out. In general, I believe that we should not rely on one person to fulfill every need we have and that it is better to build yourself a small community.

**Ducky-** friendships and QP relationships, have never enjoyed nor felt comfortable in romantic relationships. (also basically never going about relationships in a way that is 'the norm', not feeling the need to define many relationships, etc)

**EC** – I am very much open to romantic relationships. Usually, I inform potential partners about my identity. If certain prerequisites are not met I will not proceed. Prerequisites such as: respecting my asexual identity; able to be intimate and express love in non-sexual ways along with being consistently honest and open.

- **What are the challenges you come across with regards to how you approach relationships?**

**Sarah-** This is a bit of a challenge because society is set up for monogamous nuclear families and many people are working to build that and don't seem to put the same amount of energy as I would/do into a friendship because it is seen as a secondary/less important relationship.

**Ducky-** pressure from society isn't as much of an issue for me personally, but being judged by family and friends for the way I approach/go about relationships is (QP, specifically. And not wanting to be in a romantic relationship.) Also, many people do not want to put the same amount of effort/energy into relationships that I do, or don't value them as highly/give them as much weight or importance. Finding the right balance can be hard.

**EC** – This is always a challenge for me. This is because potential partners seem to always have a hidden agenda to convert me to an allosexual. Most of these men usually back out when they realize sex will not be happening ever in the relationship. They eventually blame me for the downfall of the relationship.

- **What would your ideal relationship look like?**

**Sarah-** Cooperative living type situation with multiple people living in the same house. Relationship would probably more or less resemble a QPR, poly. Perhaps raising children. Core group that could be opened to other people if necessary.

**Ducky-** I enjoy having many friendships and QP relationships, all of which are different and important. I would like this to continue and to expand- I'd like to live with or close to some of these people, or speak to them/see them regularly. I like the idea of a chosen family and feel I have some of this in my life, and I am interested in a QPR poly relationship- however I do not have experience with this (yet- would like to). Basically, lots of significant relationships, whether they all connect to each other or not.

**EC** – Externally it would look like the typical gay relationship. Internally we would look like very close friends who are lovers minus the sex..

- **How do you communicate with your person/people about what you want and need out of relationship(s)?**

**Sarah-** I struggle with this. I don't know how to properly communicate to others my wants and needs out of a relationship. And because my people are friendships, and other people have other prioritized relationships, I feel like it's selfish to demand time from them.

**Ducky-** I often struggle with communication, but have gotten better over the last year. I feel part of this is because I've found many great people who are looking for the same kinds of friendships and relationships as me, but also because I've learned a lot about the importance of communication and making sure everyone is comfortable and gets what they need. (Talking about boundaries and comfort levels, the importance of honesty and having safe and honest conversations, etc)

**EC** – I am currently single. However, with regards to my former partners I was very straightforward with what I wanted or did not want. I was always open with my partners and listened to them as well.

- **Thoughts on marriage?**

**Sarah-** indifferent. If I found myself in a relationship where marriage felt like the right thing to do, sure, but I don't think marriage is an end goal or necessary for a committed relationship.

**Ducky-** not for me, never felt it was. Don't see myself ever being romantic (at least not in that fashion), or monogamous for that matter so it wouldn't be a thing I want. (Unless it was for convenience/safety reasons- finances, living situation, personal safety etc.)

**EC** – If I found a guy who is tried, tested and proven based on being in a relationship with me for a few years; he is an action man and not a promise man I definitely would marry him. Once he understands and respect my wishes for never wanting to have sex I would marry him.

**Other questions addressed (mostly without prepared answers):**

- **General navigating dating as an ace and/or aro? How do you navigate your person/people's needs if they are not also ace and/or aro?**

**EC** – I believe in always maintaining good communication. As a result we consistently discuss our needs and wants. Sometimes a relationship may be terminated due to irreconcilable differences with regards to our needs and wants. I rather doing this than fighting.

- **Is it important to define a QP relationship? How do you start a conversation about that, and communicate with that person/those people to define the relationship? Do you think communicating about it is important?**

**Ducky-** Everyone's relationships and approach to them will be different, but from my experience it's helpful (and important) to have some sort of conversation, or at least a communication of the 'are we on the same page?' variety. I've had relationships where we had a full conversation about our boundaries and feelings as well as regular check ins, and I've had relationships where we just made sure (initially and whenever needed) that we were both understanding each other and the relationship and that was fine for us. There's lots of ways to approach talking about this- I think the main thing is just to make sure each person involved understands each other, and their boundaries and needs.

And yes, I find it important that each person feels safe/welcome to communicate about the relationship throughout.

- **Do you/when to come out?**
- **Is anyone navigating a poly relationship- maybe a question about that somehow, or if someone made a mono relationship poly how they went about that?**
- **A question about QP relationships, and what they're like for you personally? There's lots of different experiences to do with this, it could be worthwhile to talk about if we have the time**
- **Open Q&A / conversation with audience.**