There is no single path to living as your true gender. You get to decide if transitioning is something that is important to you and/or how it looks for your gender, your body, and your life.

What Is Sexual Orientation?

Some people say that sexual orientation is this:

Others say sexual orientation is this:

Just like gender, sexual orientation is more expansive too.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation includes different forms of attraction, behaviors, and identities. For a long time, many people saw all forms of attraction as the same thing. As language has expanded, more and more people have come to understand that different forms of attraction can be parsed out and talked about as distinct categories.

Sexual, physical, romantic, and emotional attraction are four major ways that people have differentiated forms of desire. While these are the most commonly talked about categories describing attraction, there are other types as well, including mental, sensual, and aesthetic.

In our society, it is often assumed that each person is heterosexual (meaning they only are attracted to people of a different gender). It is also assumed that we all experience sexual/physical, romantic, and emotional attraction as the same thing. While some people find that their sexual orientation matches up with these expectations, some folks do not. It is very normal to find ourselves questioning our sexual orientation. Despite what we may have been taught, attraction can look so many amazing, unique ways. Whether you experience all of the categories of attraction as the same, or feel varying amounts of each, or no attraction at all, there are lots of other people out there feeling the same way. You also might experience attraction towards just one gender, multiple genders, or different genders of people at different times in your life. You are never too young or too old to question your sexual orientation. Your sexual orientation is real and legitimate no matter what.

Let's explore the different types of attraction in more depth below:

Sexual Attraction

Sexual Attraction is typically the first thing that comes to mind when people think about sexual orientation or attraction in general. This type of attraction is characterized by the desire to be sexually intimate with other people. Physical attraction is often considered a piece of sexual attraction. It can be described as who you find physically attractive.

Am I interested in being sexually intimate with others?

Who am I interested in being sexually intimate with?

Who do I find physically attractive?

How often do I experience feelings of sexual/physical attraction?

Feel free to mark below with how you experience sexual/physical attraction. You can use the guiding questions above to get you thinking about where you might land on the map.

Attracted to Women

Attracted to Men

No Sexual Attraction

Attracted to Non-Binary People
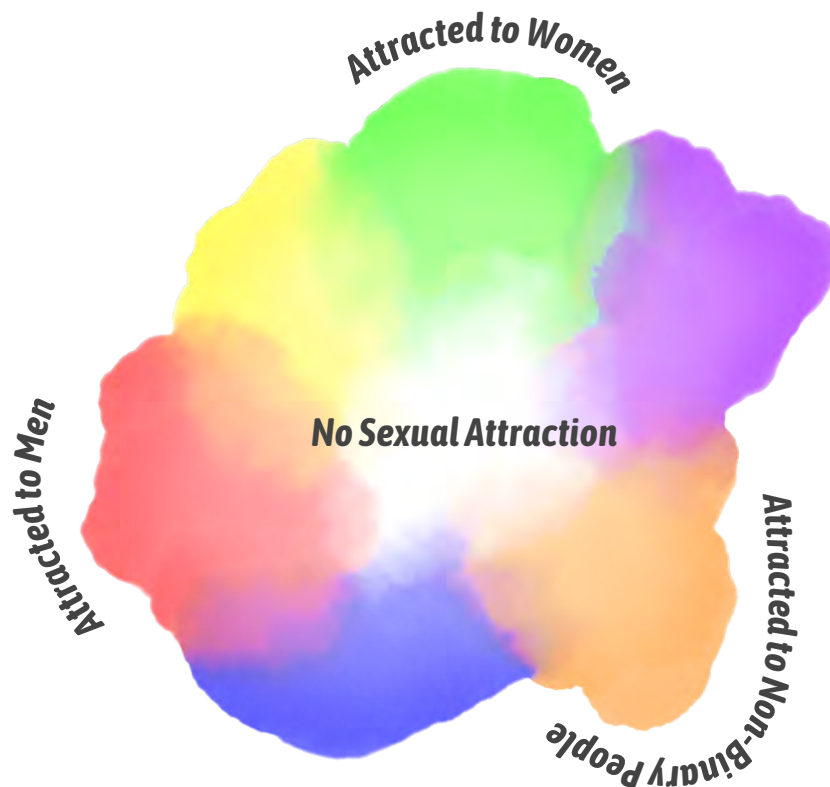
Romantic Attraction

Romantic Attraction is often described as the desire for romantic intimacy or romantic relationships with others. For some, this could mean wanting to hold hands, go on dates, kissing and/or cuddling. The list goes on, and it's all about how you personally feel around each of these expressions of romance.
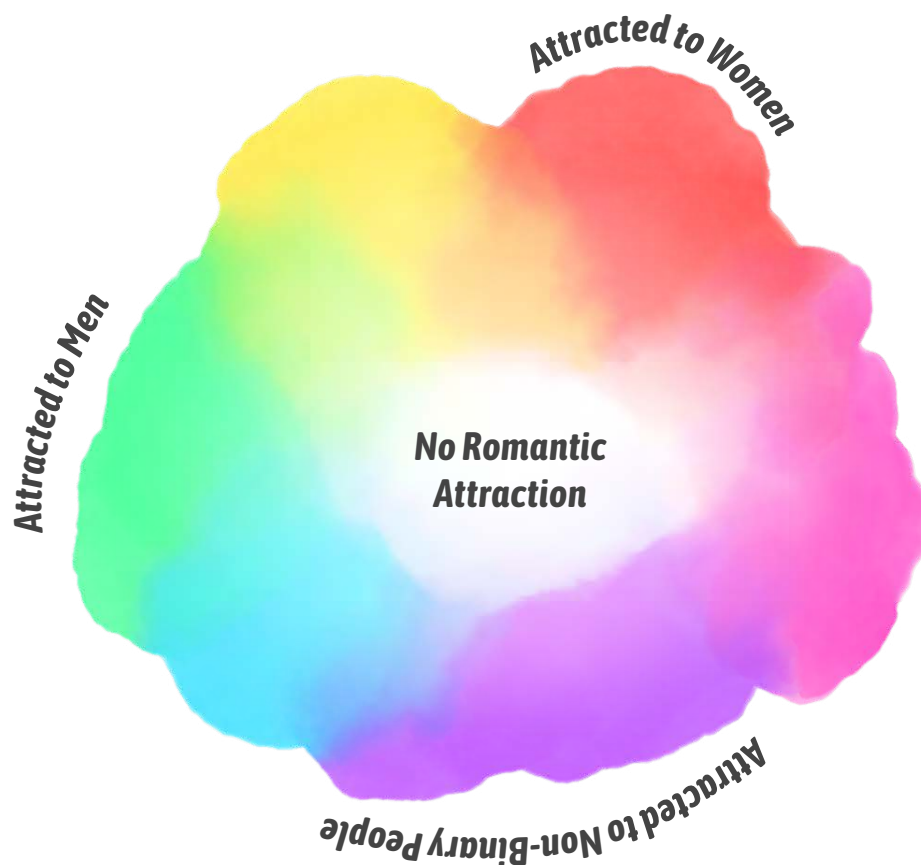
Have I ever had a crush on someone before?

Who have I had crushes on?

Who do I want to experience romantic behaviors with?

Who do I want to experience romantic relationships with?

How do you experience romantic attraction? Mark below on the Romantic Attraction Map with the ways in which you do or do not feel romantic attraction.

Emotional Attraction

Emotional Attraction is characterized by the desire to connect with others on a deep emotional level. This could look like wanting to become best friends with someone or feeling emotionally "drawn" to someone based on their personality.

Who do I have strong desires to be emotionally close to?

Who do I feel an emotional bond towards?

Who do I want to get to know better?

We encourage you to plot out how emotional attraction looks for you below. Where do you find yourself?