

Polyamory refers to a relationship structure that includes platonic, romantic, or sexual partnerships involving more than two people.

Ethical **non-monogamy** refers to a relationship practice whereby every individual involved in a romantic or sexual relationship fully consents to and understands that the relationships involve non-monogamy.

When people are referencing polyamory or ethical non-monogamy, they are generally not including behaviour such as cheating, where one partner might not know that their partner is having relationships with others.



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all about POLYAMOROUS & NON-MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIPS

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Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Developed by Jacq Brasseur, with support from
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2SLGBTQIPA+ Northerners in 2021/2022.

AMATONORMATIVITY

Coined by researcher Elizabeth Brake, amatonormativity refers to the ways that a society (or the people within it) assume that a central, exclusive, amorous relationship is normal, universally desired, and that this central relationship should be aimed at in preference to other relationship types.¹

This normative way of viewing marriage, love and relationships often intersects with other normative ways of being or thinking such as heteronormativity or gender binarism.

Examples of amatonormativity include:

- the idea that only men should propose
- the idea that a couple has to have sex in order to “consumate” their marriage
- the idea that a married couple need to live together or spend all their time together
- the idea that divorce is a failure

While amatonormativity is a driving force behind why polyamorous and non-monogamous relationships are stigmatized or discounted in society, amatonormativity impacts all people and all relationships.

¹ Brake, E. (2012). *Minimizing Marriage: Marriage, Morality, and the Law*. Oxford University Press.

POLYAMORY FAQs

Isn't it unhealthy to have relationships with more than one person?

When we think about what makes a relationship healthy, words like honesty, respect, love, gratitude, trust, compassion may come to mind.

Healthy relationships are not necessarily dependent on whether they are monogamous or not. In the same way that monogamous relationships are not automatically healthy, polyamorous or non-monogamous relationships are not automatically unhealthy.

Don't polyamorous people get jealous?

Jealousy is a human emotion! Polyamorous people, just like any other person, can experience jealousy. Polyamorous relationships involve a lot of openness and communication about jealousy and the root causes of jealousy.

Isn't non-monogamy illegal?

While it is true that polygamy (multiple marriages) is illegal, having multiple consensual relationships is not illegal.

Do polyamorous and non-monogamous people experience discrimination?

Polyamorous and non-monogamous people can experience discrimination based on their choices to have these types of relationships.

Polyamory and non-monogamy are not protected grounds in Canada or the NWT, which means that human rights legislation do not protect people against discrimination on this basis.

AM I POLYAMOROUS?

Polyamory and non-monogamy are a bit different than genders or sexualities. This is less about an identity, and more about what things make you happy or make you feel good.

If you're thinking about polyamory, it could be worth it to explore this relationship style by reading some books or learning more online.

If you are a polyamorous or non-monogamous person in the NWT looking for support or community, reach out to us.

STIGMA AGAINST POLYAMORY

Polyamorous and non-monogamous people experience **stigma** often. This is because there's a large misunderstanding about polyamory and non-monogamy in mainstream culture.

Because of this stigma, and because it is not illegal to discriminate against polyamorous people, a lot of people are not open about their experiences or choices to be polyamorous or non-monogamous.

If you are looking to learn more about polyamory, ethical non-monogamy or alternative relationship styles, talk to us about our workshops!

You can also check out the Canadian Polyamory Advocacy Association online:

<https://polyadvocacy.ca/>