

Who is bisexual?

Bisexuality (sometimes shortened to bi) refers to the possibility of being attracted to both men and women. There are many variations of how one may express their bisexuality. Some bisexuals are equally attracted to both women and men, others may experience different degrees of attraction that may change throughout their lifetime. Identifying as bisexual does not mandate that one is sexually active with both men and women. Some people who are sexually active with both women and men may not identify as bisexual since sexual activity does not necessarily define one's sexual orientation (see GenEq's *Sexual Orientation Info Sheet*).

Aren't bisexuals just confused?

Often it is assumed that bisexuality is just a phase or a sexual experiment. We are taught to believe that sexual orientation is static, but in reality, sexual feelings can change throughout one's lifetime. For example a woman may first identify as a lesbian, later identify as bisexual, and even later identify as queer; others may identify as bisexual for their entire lifetime. The fluidity of sexual orientation does not make one's feelings a result of being confused. Bisexuality is a valid sexual orientation with which many people identify.

What are some of the obstacles that bisexuals face?

We are usually categorized as either straight, gay, or lesbian. Because of these assumptions, many bisexuals are rendered invisible in both queer and straight communities. Another obstacle that bisexuals face is identifying with the term *bisexual*. The prefix *bi* refers to sexual feeling for two genders; however many bisexuals recognize that there are more than two genders (see GenEq's *Transgender Info Sheet*).

How can I be respectful of bisexual people?

- Educate yourself further about bisexual people and issues important to bisexual communities.
- It is important to avoid making assumptions about the sexual orientation of others.
- Seek awareness of your sexual orientation and the things you may have always taken for granted about it, particularly if you've always considered yours to be "the norm" (see GenEq's *Heterosexuality Questionnaire*).
- Respect the confidentiality of bisexual people. Seek consent with an individual before revealing their sexual orientation to others - you could be "outing" them to a person or community does not know that they are bisexual.

Where can I find more information?

- Most libraries have extensive sections dedicated to LGBTQ communities, histories, and issues.
- Search out your local LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer) center and inquire about what they are working on regarding bisexual issues in your area, ask them questions, and use their resources.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Programs and Services

Gender Equity Resource Center
202 Cesar Chavez
<http://geneq.berkeley.edu>
(look for *LGBT Programs & Services*)

Pacific Center (Berkeley)

(510) 548-8283
2712 Telegraph Avenue
www.pacificcenter.org

Bisexual.org

www.bisexual.org

Bisexual Resource Center

www.biresource.org

Bi.org

www.bi.org

San Francisco LGBT Center

(415) 865-5555
1800 Market Street
www.sfcenter.org

Bi Net USA

www.binetusa.org