



Putting the B in LGBTTQIA+

What is Bisexuality?

Bisexuality broadly describes people who experience physical, emotional, sexual, and romantic attraction to people of more than one gender, i.e. attracted to people of a different gender as well as their own. The term can also be used as an umbrella for a few different orientations, including pansexual, omnisexual and sexually fluid, however we see Pan and Omni now more commonly being called out on their own unique identity.

How common is Bisexuality?

Bisexual communities make up the largest group in the Rainbow. Recent studies show that approx. 9% of Gen Zs identify as bisexual.

Bisexuality is still not accepted. What's going on?

Bisexual people in New Zealand and globally experience significantly higher levels of anxiety than any other group, as well as lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness.

Several other studies also show that being bisexual still has a greater stigma than being lesbian or gay, with many associating the bisexual identity with promiscuity or being “confused” – and many doubting its existence at all.

Bisexual people are also more likely to be closeted in our workplaces than gay and lesbian people and face Bi-erasure and Biphobia

Bi-erasure is the incorrect belief that bisexuality isn't a real thing. A lot of people, from both the straight and LGBTQIA+ communities, can get caught up in the myths we've outline below. Bisexual people can sometimes feel that when they're in a relationship, their attraction to other genders is questioned or ignored.

Biphobia refers to general discrimination against anyone who is bisexual. Even though they represent the largest group within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, bisexual people experience high rates of discrimination by both the straight and queer communities. This discrimination could be obvious, in the form of biphobic comments, or it may be less obvious, such as feeling you're being left out of communities because of your partner's gender.





WHAT IS BISEXUALITY? RAINBOW DEFINITIONS

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Here's some basic advice to support our Bi communities to thrive, be healthy and visible...

Bisexuality isn't 'just a phase'

While your sexual identity may change over the course of your life, nothing is ever 'just a phase'. Labelling it that way just makes it seem like it's not real and takes away from your experience. Sexual identities aren't fixed, and if who you're attracted changes doesn't erase who you were before.

Bisexual people aren't just indecisive

Identifying as bisexual doesn't mean you can't decide whether you're gay, lesbian or straight. You wouldn't accuse someone who likes both ice cream and pizza of being indecisive, so why should it be any different for sexuality?

Bisexuality isn't easier than being gay or lesbian

The challenges that face the bisexual community are unique. But while they're different from those faced by other parts of the queer community, they're no better or worse.

Bisexual people don't become straight or homosexual when they're in a relationship

If you identify as bisexual and you're in a same-sex relationship, that doesn't make you homosexual. The same goes for being in a heterosexual relationship: it doesn't make you straight. You can still be bisexual either way. Your family and friends and lovers might assume your sexuality based on the gender of your partner, but those assumptions will be wrong.

Don't make assumptions

Don't assume someone is lesbian, gay, or straight because of their partner – being “re-categorised” into one of these groups is a real worry for many bisexual people. To be bi is a continual series of coming-out moments... Bi people have to come out again and again and again - so be understanding, supportive and embrace our fabulous bi communities.

Make LGBTTQIA+ spaces as inclusive as possible

Try to make Rainbow events and spaces as bi-inclusive as possible and fully understand the complexity and intersectionality reflected within our Rainbow communities.

