

- Assuming a bisexual person would want to fulfill your sexual fantasies or curiosities.
- Assuming bisexuals would be willing to "pass" as anything other than bisexual.
- Feeling that bisexual people are too outspoken and pushy about their visibility and rights.
- Automatically assuming romantic couplings of two women are lesbian, or two men are gay, or a man and a woman are heterosexual.
- Expecting bisexual people to get services, information and education from heterosexual service agencies for their "heterosexual side" (sic) and then go to gay and/or lesbian service agencies for their "homosexual side" (sic).
- Feeling bisexuals just want to have their cake and eat it too.
- Believing that bisexual women spread AIDS/HIV and other STDs to lesbians.
- Using the terms "phase" or "stage" or "confused" or "fence-sitter" or "bisexual" or "AC/DC" or "switchhitter" as slurs or in an accusatory way.
- Thinking bisexuals only have committed relationships with "opposite" sex/gender partners.
- Looking at a bisexual person and automatically thinking of their sexuality rather than seeing them as a whole, complete person.
- Believing bisexuals are confused about their sexuality.
- Assuming that bisexuals, if given the choice, would prefer to be within an "opposite" gender/sex coupling to reap the social benefits of a "heterosexual" pairing.
- Not confronting a biphobic remark or joke for fear of being identified as bisexual.

- Assuming bisexual means "available."
- Thinking that bisexual people will have their rights when lesbian and gay people win theirs.
- Being gay or lesbian and asking your bisexual friend about their lover only when that lover is the same sex/gender.
- Feeling that you can't trust a bisexual because they aren't really gay or lesbian, or aren't really heterosexual.
- Thinking that people identify as bisexual because it's "trendy".
- Expecting a bisexual to identify as gay or lesbian when coupled with the "same" sex/gender.
- Expecting bisexual activists and organizers to minimize bisexual issues (i.e. HIV/AIDS, violence, basic civil rights, fighting the Right, military, same sex marriage, child custody, adoption, etc.) and to prioritize the visibility of "lesbian and/or gay" issues.
- Avoid mentioning to friends that you are involved with a bisexual or working with a bisexual group because you are afraid they will think you are a bisexual.

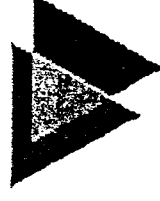
This pamphlet (hardcopy version last updated 2000 Dec 13) is published by the Bisexual Resource Center. You are welcome to reproduce and distribute it with your own group's contact number at the bottom of this page. Please send a \$10 donation to BRC for each flier that you reproduce, to support the development and publication of new literature. Additional donations to support the work of the BRC will be enthusiastically welcomed. [See our order form for more information; pamphlets are available folded or flat and ready for copying.] For more information and literature, write, call or visit our website:

Bisexual Resource Center
 P.O. Box 1026 Boston, MA 02117-1026, USA.
 Phone 617-424-9595
 Email: brc@biresource.org
 URL: <http://www.biresource.org>

What Does Biphobia Look Like?

Lani Ka'ahumanu and Rob Yaeger
 from conversations with Gerard Palmeri,
 Danielle Raymond, Loraine Hutchins, and
 Cianna Stewart

Portions adapted from material by the Rape
 Crisis Center of West Contra Costa County,
 CA; the Boston Lesbian Task Force; and
 Building Bridges



Bisexual Resource Center
Boston, MA USA
<http://www.biresource.org>

What is Bisexuality?

Bisexuality is the capacity for emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction to more than one gender/sex. A person who self identifies as bisexual affirms this complexity and acknowledges a reality beyond the either/or dualities of heterosexism.

What is Bisexual identity?

A bisexual identity speaks to the potential, not the requirement, for involvement with more than one gender/sex. This involvement may mean sexually, emotionally, in reality, or in fantasy. Monogamy and non-monogamy are relationship choices made independently of sexual identity. Some bisexuals are monogamous, some may have concurrent partners, others may relate to different genders/sexes during different times of their lives. Most bisexuals do not have to be involved with more than one person at a time in order to feel fulfilled.

Identity has nothing to do with sexual behavior or experience. Bisexuals, despite the sexually insatiable stereotype, may or may not be sexually active, may or may not have been sexual with more than one person, or may never have been sexual at all. As with all sexual identities, whom one is, or is not having sex with, or whether one is being sexual or not, has nothing to do with the validity of a self professed identity (i.e. a lesbian is still a lesbian, a gay man is still a gay man, and a heterosexual remains a heterosexual whether they are being, or have ever been sexual, or not).

What is Heterosexism?

The institution of heterosexism is based on a mutually exclusive heterosexual/homosexual framework. This heterosexist paradigm posits two sexual orientations on either side of a "fence" that draws the line where privilege begins and ends. Heterosexuals are on the "normal/good" side and homosexuals are on the "abnormal/evil" side. The line separates and protects "us" from "them," while it assures members of each side of what they are not. This line also effectively marginalizes lesbians and gay men as "other" and is the core of homophobia.

Furthermore, lesbian, gay, and heterosexual people are invested, and find a sense of security in being the "other" to each other, and unite in the fact that they are only attracted to either the "same" or the "opposite" gender/sex. This sets up another "us" vs. "them" dynamic which effectively marginalizes bisexual people as "other." Integral to this dynamic is the automatic assumption people can be defined by the gender/sex of their current or potential romantic interest. For example: two women are assumed to be lesbians in a "lesbian" relationship; two men are assumed to be gay in a "gay" relationship; and a man and woman are assumed to be heterosexual in a "heterosexual" relationship. However, any, or all of these people could be bisexual. And depending upon monogamy and non-monogamy agreements and choices, any, or all of these folks could have sexual behavior with more than one gender/sex whether they identify as bisexual or not.

What is Biphobia?

Bisexual women and men cannot be defined by their partner or potential partner, so are rendered

invisible within the either/or heterosexist framework. This invisibility (biphobia) is one of the most challenging aspects of a bisexual identity. Living in a society that is based and thrives on opposition, on the reassurances and "balanced" polarities of dichotomy affects how we see the world, and how we negotiate our own, and other peoples lives to fit "reality."

Most people are unaware of their homosexual or heterosexual assumptions until a bisexual speaks up/comes out and challenges the assumption. Very often bisexuals are then dismissed, and told they are "confused" and "simply have to make up their mind and choose." For bisexually identified people to maintain their integrity in a homo-hating heterosexist society they must have a strong sense of self, and the courage and conviction to live their lives in defiance of what passes for "normal."

What Does Biphobia Look Like?

- Assuming that everyone you meet is either heterosexual or homosexual.
- Supporting and understanding a bisexual identity for young people because you identified "that way" before you came to your "real" lesbian/gay/heterosexual identity.
- Expecting a bisexual to identify as heterosexual when coupled with the "opposite" gender/sex.
- Believing bisexual men spread AIDS/HIV and other STDs to heterosexuals.
- Thinking bisexual people haven't made up their minds.