



A Guide to Bisexual, Pansexual, & Fluid Etiquette & Inclusion

Adapted for UC Berkeley from 2018 Creating Change Manual

In 1990, “The Bisexual Manifesto” was published in Bay Area Bisexual Network’s national magazine, Anything That Moves. It reads in part:



“Bisexuality is a whole, fluid identity. Do not assume that bisexuality is binary or duogamous in nature: that we have “two” sides or that we must be involved simultaneously with both genders to be fulfilled human beings. In fact, don’t assume that there are only two genders. Do not mistake our fluidity for confusion, irresponsibility, or an inability to commit. Do not equate promiscuity, infidelity, or unsafe sexual behavior with bisexuality. Those are human traits that cross all sexual orientations. Nothing should be assumed about anyone’s sexuality, including your own.”

In 1991, black bisexual theorist and poet June Jordan called the bisexual movement a “mandate for revolutionary Americans planning to make it into the twenty-first century on the basis of the heart, on the basis of an honest human body, consecrated to every struggle for justice, every struggle for equality, every struggle for freedom.”

The bisexual movement has a history that is erased as often as our identity is. We have political theorists and cultural workers like Jordan and others who have asserted our unique perspective within the context of social justice and have placed our sexual orientation at the center of our political analysis.

Another significant aspect of the bi community is how people choose different personal identity labels to identify themselves within the bisexual spectrum, including these commonly used terms: pansexual, fluid, queer, multisexual, non-monosexual, omnisexual, and polysexual. In fact, there are some who prefer no labels. Personal identity labels can vary depending on the region, generation, and/ or cultural background and can also be used to indicate a particular approach to critical theories on race, gender and sexuality. The term bisexual can be used both as a political identity and a label for the entire community as in “The B in LGBTQ.”



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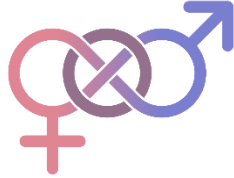
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Do's and Don'ts to Supporting Bisexual Communities

Being openly supportive of the bisexual community helps create a space where we can all be our full selves during the conference. To that end here are some pointers on being an ally to the B in LGBT:

- Use inclusive language, instead of “gay rights” or “gay marriage” try “equal rights” and “marriage equality.”
- Question the negativity associated with bisexual stereotypes.
- Recognize that bisexuality is often invisibilized/delegitimized, so bi/pan/fluid people usually have to come out over and over, sometimes to the same people.
- Respect people’s privacy and boundaries. Take a moment before asking questions and look into the assumptions behind them.
- Recognize that bisexual people often face similar discrimination and obstacles as gays and lesbians with regard to job security, healthcare, marriage, immigration, custody, visitation and adoption of children.
- Question your assumption of “bisexual privilege” and realize that research has shown bisexuals report much higher rates of stigma surrounding their sexuality than gay and lesbian counterparts.
- Recognize that research shows that bisexual people have the highest level of sexual assault of all sexual orientations, a higher level of poverty, and higher mental and physical health disparities than their gay, lesbian and heterosexual counterparts.
- Keep in mind that bisexual transgender individuals can experience intersections between biphobia and transphobia and also report higher levels of violence, poverty and poorer health in their lifetimes.
- Recognize the way that specific relationships function is entirely independent of sexual orientation.
- Do not insist that a gender nonconforming/ trans person or their partners must discard their bisexual identity label and use another label.
- Do not accuse someone of being transphobic or noninclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people for using the label bisexual. This harms and erases trans/gender nonconforming bisexuals.
- Recognize the way that specific relationships function is entirely independent of sexual orientation. Be positive about all relationships – monogamous, polyamorous, or anything else.
- Accept you might never fully understand someone else’s sexuality, and that it’s okay not to.



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