

What does it mean to be bi?

Bisexuals are people who are attracted to more than one sex. Everything else you've heard is just myths and stereotypes. It isn't necessary to be equally attracted to men and women, to be involved in multiple relationships, or to be obsessed with sex. You can be celibate and still be bisexual. It's all a matter of who you find attractive.

How do I know if I'm bisexual?

You may not know what to call your sexual feelings or whether you feel sufficiently attracted to multiple sexes to consider yourself bisexual. You don't have to rush and decide how to label yourself right now. Our sexual identities develop over time.

How you see yourself is the key to a sexual identity. Many people engage in sexual activity with both females and males, yet do not identify as bisexual. Other people engage in sexual relations with only one sex, or do not have sex at all, yet consider themselves bisexual. There is no behavioral "test" to determine whether or not one is bisexual.

During adolescence, most young men and women become aware of sexual feelings and take an interest in dating. Most females are attracted to males and vice versa. Some also find the same sex attractive. These people are probably bisexual.

Suppose you notice that you are attracted to several guys each day, but then this one special woman comes along who challenges all of your assumptions about your sexuality. This is not uncommon. Nor is it anything to worry about.

You might go to a movie and find yourself attracted to both the male and female leads. Don't panic. This happens. It may be confusing at first, but over time you'll grow to enjoy it.

Am I normal?

Yes, you are normal. It is perfectly natural for people to be attracted to more than one sex. When Dr. Alfred Kinsey studied sexuality in the U.S., he discovered that nearly half of the people he interviewed had a history of sex with both females and males during their lifetime.

Many people push away their attraction to one sex due to societal or peer pressure. They present the appearance of being homosexual or heterosexual despite their multiple attractions.

It's normal and healthy to be yourself, whether you're bisexual, gay or straight. What really matters is that we learn to like ourselves the way we are.

What's it like to be bisexual?

There is no "right" way or "wrong" way to be bisexual. Because of society's stereotypes about bisexuals that we've all grown up with, you might think that you have to be a certain way to be a bisexual. But bisexuals come in all shapes and sizes, from all occupations, and with all levels of educational, racial, and cultural background.

Because of homophobia and prejudice, some people don't accept bisexuals. Bisexuals suffer from discrimination and violence, just like gays and lesbians. That's why so many gay and lesbian organizations now include bisexuals in their work for civil rights.

Unfortunately, you may also experience some prejudice from lesbians and gays, based on old

myths and stereotypes about bisexuals being unreliable, sex-crazy, not queer enough, or whatever. Just do your best to educate them the way you would with any person who is judging people from a position of ignorance.

What about AIDS?

All sexually active people need to be aware of AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Being bisexual or gay does not give you AIDS, but certain sexual practices and certain drug use behaviors can put you at risk for catching the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS is incurable, but it is preventable.

Here's how to reduce your risk of AIDS:

- Never share your works, or to reduce the risk, clean thoroughly with bleach. Sharing needles is the most dangerous behavior in terms of getting AIDS.
- Use a fresh, undamaged latex condom every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex.
- Use a dental dam or Saran Wrap for oral-vaginal or oral-anal licking.
- Use surgical gloves when sticking fingers into your partner's vagina or anus, especially if you have even tiny cuts or rashes on your hands.
- Choose activities that do not involve intercourse or exchanging bodily fluids: hugging, kissing, talking, massaging, or masturbating.

Learning to like yourself

All people have a right to feel good about themselves. We're all valuable human beings. Developing self-esteem is very important for young people. It can be hard

for bisexual, lesbian, and gay youth to feel good about ourselves because all around us are people who believe that we're sick, or perverted, or destined to live very unhappy lives.

It can help to say to yourself every day, "I'm bisexual and I'm OK." And try to find someone who is bi-positive to talk to. Remember, it's normal and natural to be bisexual, just like it's normal and natural for some people to be homosexual or heterosexual.

How can I meet other bi people?

There are many bisexual people around you, but you don't know that they're bisexual, just as they don't know you are. Don't lose hope. Eventually you'll meet some.

- Join or start a local bisexual or bi-inclusive group.
- Become a member of BiNet USA.
- Attend a bisexual conference.
- Read the usenet gay/lesbian/bi youth newsgroup.
- Look for local bi-inclusive newspapers at your local bookstore or health food store.
- Contact the resources listed on the back page of this pamphlet.

Who should I tell?

Coming out is the process of accepting yourself as bisexual and deciding how open you want to be about your sexual orientation.

The first step in coming out is to tell yourself that you are bisexual and say, "That's OK." Later you may want to tell someone else - someone you trust to be understanding and sympathetic. You might choose a friend or an adult. You will probably want to meet other

bisexual, lesbian, or gay young people for friendship, support, and more intimate relationships.

Some bisexual youth are able to come out to their families. You need to decide whether or not to tell your family, and to choose the right time. Lots of people, including parents, simply don't understand bisexuality and are difficult to come out to. In the beginning, be cautious about whom you tell.

But it is crucial to be honest with yourself. Just as self-denial costs you, coming out pays off. Most kids who accept their sexuality say they feel calmer, happier, and more confident.

Resources

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

BiNet U.S.A. 4201 Wilson Blvd. #110-311
Arlington, VA 22203 U.S.A. <http://www.binetusa.org>

Trevor Helpline: 24-hour toll-free US helpline for GLBT youth, with trained counselors: (800)850-8078

GLB Youth Usenet Group: Moderated GLB youth newsgroup (no spam or homophobes):
soc.support.youth.gay-lesbian-bi

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) 121 W. 27th St. Suite 804 New York, NY 10001 USA (212)727-0135 <http://www.glsen.org>

Bisexual Resource Guide
Available for \$13.95 from the Bisexual Resource Center in Boston (see above).

Bisexual Book Store
<http://www.biresource.org/bookstore>

I Think I Might Be Bi (now what do I do?)

A Pamphlet for Young People Questioning Their Sexuality

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adapted from material by the
Campaign to End Homophobia



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

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