



**IN FOCUS**

# Reporting on the Bisexual Community

A resource for journalists and media professionals

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BiNet USA



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FROM THE DESK OF  
**Sarah Kate Ellis**  
GLAAD PRESIDENT & CEO

**T**HE PAST FEW YEARS have seen a surge of acceptance for the LGBT community, but acceptance for bisexual people continues to lag behind. Despite making up a large portion of the LGBT community as a whole, the bisexual community and the issues bi people face are often under- and misreported.

GLAAD's 2015 *Accelerating Acceptance* report revealed that, while the LGBT community is experiencing historic achievements in the movement for legal equality, cultural acceptance for LGBT people is trailing behind nationwide. The ongoing study, now in its second year and conducted in partnership with The Harris Poll, finds Americans' often experience discomfort around LGBT people in everyday situations, like seeing a same-sex couple holding hands or learning a family member is LGBT. The report also reveals that Americans are growing increasingly apathetic about LGBT acceptance. Today, the bi community finds itself particularly caught in the crosshairs of this gap between advancing legislative achievements and hurdles getting through day-to-day life.

Bi people have been at the forefront of LGBT civil rights throughout history—actively helping to lead the Stonewall uprisings, organizing some of the first Pride events in the United States, and lobbying for LGBT-affirming legislation — but are still too often left out of the conversation about equality, misunderstood, or erased altogether.<sup>1 2</sup> GLAAD's 2015-2016 *Where We Are On TV* report finds that, while the year was marked by a surge in bi representation on television, harmful tropes are still intertwined with many of those portrayals. That's why GLAAD works year-round to ensure representations that reflect the diverse experiences, triumphs, and challenges of the bi community.

In 2014, GLAAD teamed up with the leading national organization working on behalf of the bisexual community, BiNet USA, to co-found the digital campaign, #BiWeek, which drew unprecedented attention to the experiences and public policy concerns facing bisexual, pansexual, fluid, and queer people. As part of the second annual #BiWeek in 2015, GLAAD joined leading bi advocates from around the country at the White House for a first-of-its-kind bisexual community policy briefing. Gaining attention from leading news media and policymakers, as well as trending nationally on social media, #BiWeek has become a valuable opportunity to close the acceptance gap and combat the issues that disproportionately plague the bi community.

Despite the many challenges that accompany inequality and lagging acceptance, people in the bi community display indefatigable resiliency. Transgender advocate and *Transparent* actor Ian Harvie, Oregon Governor Kate Brown, trans advocate and *I Am Jazz* star Jazz Jennings, musician Angel Haze, and leading advocates on the ground raise awareness about the important public policy priorities for bi people. In partnership with many bi community leaders, GLAAD amplifies and celebrates these voices and many others for their work to raise cultural awareness about bi people and their lives.

No one should have to hide their identity out of fear of discrimination, rejection, or isolation. All members of the LGBT community should be heard. This reference guide will be a useful resource to help amplify those voices.



**SARAH KATE ELLIS**  
GLAAD, President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Kate Ellis".

# Getting Started

**THE BI COMMUNITY** and its wide-ranging experiences are often under-reported or poorly reported by mainstream and LGBT media, leading many who are bisexual to feel misunderstood, isolated, and depressed. Research studies have shown that people who identify as bisexual are more likely to binge drink, engage in self-harm, and have suicidal thoughts than gay, lesbian, or non-LGBT people.<sup>3</sup>

Members of the bisexual community face alarmingly high risks of both physical and mental illness and are more likely to be the targets of sexual and intimate partner abuse.<sup>4</sup> Bisexuals are six times as likely to hide their sexual orientation and are all too often erased from LGBT community conversations, even on the vital issues that affect them.<sup>4</sup>

A 2013 Pew Research Center report showed only 28% of bisexuals said most or all of the important people in their lives knew about their sexual orientation, compared to 71% of lesbians and 77% of gay men. Among bisexual men, only 12% said they were out. At work, only 11% of bisexual people polled by Pew said most of their closest coworkers knew about their sexual orientation, compared to 48% of gay men and 50% of lesbians.<sup>5</sup>

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, bisexual people reported they "avoided coming out because they didn't want to deal with misconceptions that bisexuals were indecisive or incapable of monogamy — stereotypes that exist among straights, gays and lesbians alike."

By being more cognizant of the realities facing bisexual people and committing to report on the bi community responsibly and accurately, the media can help eliminate some of the misconceptions and damaging stereotypes bisexual people face on a daily basis. This resource guide is meant to equip media professionals to cover bi people and their experiences thoroughly, authentically, and in an impactful way.

# Terms & Definitions

**BISEXUAL, BI** A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Do not use a hyphen in the word "bisexual," and only capitalize bisexual when used at the beginning of a sentence.

**BI ERASURE** A pervasive problem in which the existence or legitimacy of bisexuality (either in regard to an individual or as an identity) is questioned or denied outright. For example, if two women are married and one is bisexual, others may insist she can't really be bisexual or that her orientation doesn't matter/has changed now that she is partnered.

**BIPHOBIA** Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. *Bias* or *prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

**BISEXUAL UMBRELLA, BI+** An encompassing term for people with the capacity to be attracted to more than once gender. Includes people who identify as bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer, and more.

**PANSEXUAL, PAN** A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of any or all genders. Pansexual people are typically considered part of the bisexual community.

**QUEER** Once considered a pejorative term, *queer* is now used by many LGBT people to describe themselves. However, it is not universally accepted within the LGBT community. When Q is seen at the end of "LGBT," it typically means queer.

**SAME-SEX COUPLE** A romantic pairing involving two people of the same sex or gender. The individuals involved may identify with various sexual orientations including gay, lesbian, and bisexual.

**DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLE** A romantic pairing involving two people of different sexes or genders. The individuals involved may identify with any sexual orientation.

**MISORIENTATION** Occurs when bisexual people are identified incorrectly as gay, lesbian, or straight based on current or previous relationship status instead of personal identification. When one or both members of a featured same-sex couple are bisexual, be sure to correctly identify them as such. Misorienting bi people can lead to unnecessary and harmful mental stress by perpetuating the misconception that bi people don't exist. Avoid "opposite-sex couple," "straight couple," "heterosexual couple," "gay couple," and "lesbian couple," unless appropriate.

**MIXED-ORIENTATION MARRIAGE** A marriage between partners of differing sexual orientations and can describe a bi person's marriage **if married to someone who isn't bi**. Mixed-orientation marriages can have same-sex/gender or different-sex/gender partners but the bisexuals involved remain bisexual.

**COMING OUT** People forge a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out.

**GAY** The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., *gay man*, *gay people*). Sometimes *lesbian* (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals," an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.

**GENDER NON-CONFORMING** A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. **Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming.** Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional - that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

**HETEROSEXUAL** An adjective used to

describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also *straight*.

**HOMOSEXUAL** (see *Offensive Terms to Avoid*) Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gay and lesbian people. The Associated Press, *New York Times* and *Washington Post* restrict usage of the term. Gay and/or lesbian accurately describe those who are attracted to people of the same sex.

**HOMOPHOBIA** Fear of lesbians and gay men. *Bias* or *prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBT people.

**INTERSEX** "Intersex is an umbrella term describing people born with variations of internal and/or external sex anatomy resulting in bodies that can't be classified as the typical male or female,"<sup>6</sup> according to InterAct, an intersex advocacy organization. "Potential causes include genetic mutations, changes in number of sex chromosomes, atypical gonads, exposure to unusual levels of sex hormones, or atypical response to hormones."<sup>7</sup>

**ASEXUAL** Someone who doesn't experience sexual attraction. Asexual people fall under what's known as the asexual umbrella, which also includes aromantic, demisexual, and grey-asexual identities, and more.

**AGENDER** People who have no gender identity or have a gender identity that is neutral. An agender identity falls under the nonbinary and transgender umbrellas.

**AROMANTIC** - People who do not experience romantic attraction. There are also people of any sexual orientation, including bisexuality, who are aromantic.

**LESBIAN** A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as a gay woman. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals," a derogatory term (see *Offensive Terms to Avoid*).

**LGBT / GLBT** Acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender." LGBT and/or GLBT are often used because they are more inclusive of the diversity of the community. Care should be taken to ensure that audiences are not confused by their use. Ensure that the acronym is spelled out on first usage.

**LIFESTYLE** Inaccurate term used by anti-LGBT activists to denigrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lives. As there is no one "straight lifestyle", there is no one lesbian,

gay, bisexual, or transgender lifestyle.

**MARRIAGE** Because a key section of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed by the federal government in 1996, was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2013, legally married couples became recognized by the federal government. Furthermore, in June 2015, the Supreme Court's historic ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* determined that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right for someone to marry the person they love. Bisexuals and many other LGBT people may prefer to honor and recognize their relationship status with other ceremonies or ways than marriage. Seek to honor committed relationships no matter the sex or gender.

**OPENLY BISEXUAL** Also *openly lesbian*, *openly gay*, *openly transgender*. While accurate and commonly used, the phrase still implies a confessional aspect to publicly acknowledging one's sexual orientation or gender identity. See *out* below as a preferred alternative.

**OUT** A person who self-identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. For example: *Raúl Esparza is an out stage and television actor, singer, and voice artist*. Preferred to *openly bisexual*.

**OUTING** The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a vast portion of the LGBT community.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and therefore "curable." People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

**GENDER IDENTITY** One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit

neatly into one of those two choices. Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

**TRANSGENDER (ADJ.)** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms – including *transgender*. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well, but not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures.

**TRANS** Used as shorthand to mean *transgender* or *transsexual* - or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means. Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term's meaning in the context of your story.

**TRANSGENDER MAN** People who were assigned female at birth but identify and live as a man may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to *trans man*. (Note: *trans man*, not "transman.") Some may also use *FTM*, an abbreviation for female-to-male. Some may prefer to simply be called men, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

**TRANSGENDER WOMAN** People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten to *trans woman*. (Note: *trans woman*, not "transwoman.") Some may also use *MTF*, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called women, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

**TRANSITION** Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one's family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. **Avoid the phrase "sex change."**



# Terms to Avoid

**OFFENSIVE:** "sexual preference"

**PREFERRED:** "sexual orientation" or "orientation"

The term "sexual preference" is typically used to suggest that being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured." *Sexual orientation* is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, as well as straight men and women (see *AP & New York Times Style*).

**OFFENSIVE:** "special rights"

**PREFERRED:** "equal rights" or "equal protection"

Anti-LGBT activists frequently characterize equal protection of the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as "special rights" to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive non-discrimination laws (see *AP & New York Times Style*).

**OFFENSIVE:** "deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," "destructive" and similar descriptions

The notion that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as "deviant," "diseased," and "disordered" often are used to portray LGBT people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about the LGBT community. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that clearly reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

**OFFENSIVE:** Associating gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest

Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender is neither synonymous with, nor indicative of, any tendency toward pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery, and/or incest. Such claims, innuendoes, and associations often are used to insinuate that LGBT people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such assertions and insinuations are defamatory and should be avoided, except in direct quotes that clearly reveal the bias of the person quoted.

**OFFENSIVE:** "Chris Jones, who currently identifies as bisexual," "Chris Jones, a self-avowed bisexual."

**PREFERRED:** "Chris Jones, a bisexual man from Chicago..." or "Chris Jones, a bisexual mom of two."

Suggesting bisexual people are going through a phase or describing their identity as transitory reinforces the harmful misconception that bisexuality is not a real or fixed part of the person's identity.

**OFFENSIVE:** "fence-sitter," "breeder," "bi-curious," "lesbian until graduation," "bisexual until graduation," "college lesbian," "gay for pay," "buy-sexual," "half-gay," "swinger," "Bi now, gay later," "half-straight," "Bi-Sexual," "bar-sexual," "down low," "switch-hitter," "try-sexual," "Part-time Gay," "Goes Both Ways," "Swings Both Ways," "Down Low"

The bisexual orientation is an integral, valid, and permanent part of a person's identity. Characterizing bisexual people as "passing," "confused," "indecisive," "lying" to other people, or as "pretending" to be bisexual is defamatory, as it seeks to undermine bisexuality's existence and generalizes bi people according to harmful tropes. Such descriptions are defamatory and insulting, and should only be used when discussing and explaining such negative stereotypes.

**OFFENSIVE:** "hot sexy bi babe," "bi babes," "only hot because s/he's bi," "double your chances on a Saturday night"

Avoid any term that equates a bisexual person's desirability to their bisexuality. Do not imply that being bisexual makes one more desirable as a sexual partner. Doing so reduces a bi person's identity and contributes to the high rates of sexual victimization bisexuals experience.

# IN FOCUS #BiWeek

**IN SEPTEMBER OF 2014**, GLAAD and BiNet USA, in collaboration with other bisexual and LGBT advocacy groups, launched an annual digital campaign known as Bisexual Awareness Week (#BiWeek). #BiWeek seeks to accelerate acceptance of the bi community by drawing attention to public policy concerns, while also celebrating and acknowledging the experiences of the bi community. Resonating with bi people and engaging a wide-reaching array of allies, #BiWeek is considered to be the first bisexuality-specific advocacy campaign to trend nationally on social media.

During #BiWeek, bisexual people around the world share their stories and speak to the community's diverse experiences, which are, in turn, amplified in mainstream and LGBT media outlets around the world.

In addition to leaving its mark in the digital world, #BiWeek has also proved a prime opportunity for on-the-ground advocacy. Several events are held around the country each year, from panels to gatherings with White House staff. #BiWeek, at its heart, is an educational campaign dedicated to celebrating the rich and diverse history of the bisexual community, in addition to furthering awareness and acceptance for bisexual people.

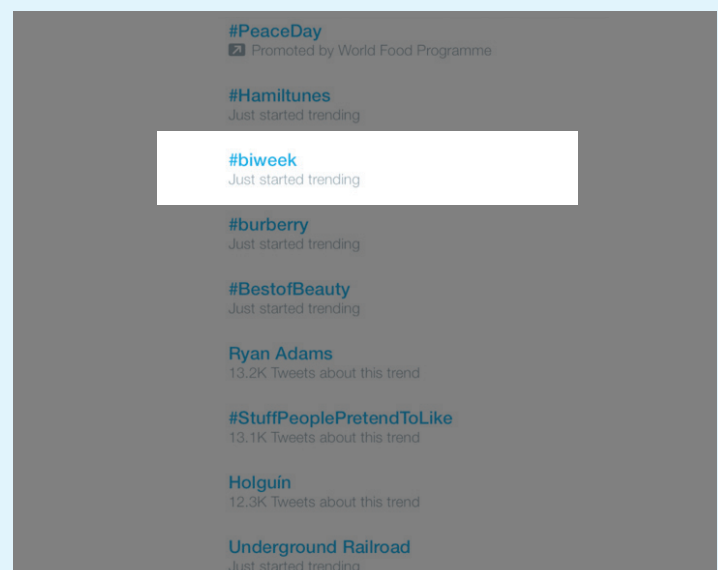
Bi Awareness Week takes place annually during the week of Celebrate Bisexuality Day, which has been marked on September 23 since 1999.



Bisexual advocates at the White House Bisexual Community Policy Briefing on September 21, 2015



#BiWeek engaged more than 1.5 million social media users through GLAAD's channels.



# Pitfalls to Avoid

## Avoid calling bisexual people gay/straight

If someone clearly states that they identify as bisexual, do not identify them as gay or lesbian instead. Simply because a person is currently in a same-sex relationship, that does not negate one's bisexual orientation. Similarly, if a person is in what appears to be a heterosexual relationship, it does not negate one's bisexual orientation.

## Avoid forcing bisexuals to "prove" their bisexuality

A person does not need to have had sexual or romantic history with people of multiple genders to identify as bisexual. Someone may have had relationships with people of the same gender or a different gender exclusively, and still identify as bisexual because they feel attraction to people of multiple genders. Relationship history does not define a bisexual person's identity.

## Avoid minimizing the advocacy efforts of the bi community in the LGBT movement

Bi advocates have been everywhere from the forefront to behind the scenes in the LGBT movement since its beginning. Acknowledge bi people's contributions to accelerating cultural acceptance and legal equality over time and in present day.

## Avoid referring to an out bisexual person as an "ally"

Often, when a notable person comes out as bisexual, they are referred to as an "ally" to the LGBT community. This erases their sexual orientation, as it suggests they are not part of the LGBT community; leaving them to be seen as an outsider. When a person comes out as bisexual, they should be referred to as part of the LGBT community.

## Avoid claiming bisexuality doesn't exist

Bisexuality is a sexual orientation with a long history and a large population. In fact, more than half of people who are not straight identify as bisexual.<sup>3</sup> Bisexuals often have their identities erased by people outside and inside the LGBT community who claim being bi is a phase, not a distinct identity, or changes depending one's relationship status. The

assertion that bisexuality is a fake identity is actively harmful and often results in bi people being excluded from services or social spaces, or feeling unsafe in disclosing their identity. People in same-sex relationships can be still bisexual, and people in different-sex relationships can be still bisexual.

## Avoid suggesting bisexuality is a phase

Do not imply that being bisexual is a phase and that bisexuals are "on their way" to being gay or lesbian. People who self-identify as bisexual are not confused, indecisive, or lying. Studies consistently show that bisexuality is a distinct sexual orientation and not an experimental or transitional stage.

## Avoid calling bisexuals promiscuous

A common stereotype is that all bisexual people do not want to be, or cannot be, monogamous. This is simply not true. Bisexual people are just as capable of forming monogamous relationships as straight, gay, and lesbian people. It is inaccurate and harmful to imply that bisexual people are more "promiscuous" than others. Since the 1990s, there has been a tendency to blame "promiscuous" bisexual people for spreading HIV and other diseases to the "general population." This is a blatantly false and harmful stereotype. One's type of relationship or sexual activity do not relate to sexual orientation, and heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people may choose to be non-monogamous for various reasons over their life.

## Avoid ignoring or erasing other identities under the bi umbrella

Some people who have the capacity to be attracted to people of any gender choose other words to describe their sexual orientation such as: pansexual, polysexual, omnisexual, fluid, multisexual, non-monosexual, or queer. Some people prefer to avoid any label at all. Given the lack of understanding of even the word bisexual, it's best to only use alternate words if someone specifically self-identifies that way and asks for their preferred term to be used.

## Avoid equating bisexuality with transphobia

A common misconception is that bisexual means "only attracted to men and women." As a result, many people assume that the term is transphobic and exclusionary towards those who fall outside the gender binary. However, despite its prefix, the term has been adapted by bisexual communities as far back as 1990 to explicitly include non-binary people, and is now defined to mean attracted to multiple genders. Just because someone identifies as bisexual doesn't mean that they are inherently transphobic. As noted genderqueer and trans\* advocate Kate Bornstein wrote in 2013, "Bisexual movements don't get enough credit for breaking the either/or of sexual orientation. And they did it long before gender scholars, activists, and radicals came on the scene."

## Avoid only speaking to non-bisexual people or anti-LGBT activists about bisexuality

When the media acts as a non-partisan conduit of people's stories, cultural acceptance becomes much more attainable. Bi people's experiences are often distinct and unique from those of people who are not bisexual, even if they are also members of the LGBT community.

## Avoid pitting people of faith against bisexual people

Being a person of faith and being bisexual are not mutually exclusive. Do not presume or imply people who identify as LGBT are not also people of faith.

## Avoid the use of outdated or pejorative terminology

See "Terms to Avoid."



# Best Practices in Media Coverage

## Include voices of people who identify as bisexual

Often, news coverage silences the community by covering anti-LGBT legislation and social groups without including the diverse voices of those who are most affected. Hearing from LGBT-identified people - not just allies or advocates - is critically important. This is particularly relevant for bi people, who are often left out of or erased from the conversation, but are equally impacted by LGBT-related legislation. Positive change is made when marginalized persons and groups are humanized in the media.

## Use a personal lens in your reporting

Ask for personal stories, including both the positive experiences and challenges of being bisexual. Ask about relationships and networks of support.

## Identify individuals accurately

If someone clearly states that they identify as bisexual, do not identify them as gay or lesbian instead. Simply because a person is currently in a same-sex relationship, that does not necessarily negate their bisexual orientation. Similarly, if a person is in what appears to be a heterosexual relationship, that also does not negate their bisexual orientation.

## Identifying couples accurately

When writing about two people of the same sex in a relationship, consider referring to them as a same-sex couple. Do not assume they are a gay couple or a lesbian couple until you know for certain that both people in the couple identify as gay or lesbian. See misorientation.

## Explore the intersection of bisexuality with other identities

Bi people do not live in a vacuum, but rather approach the world with other identities, including race, gender, ability, and class. To isolate out a bi identity from the rest of the person is to make them one-dimensional. Ask questions that can talk about the challenges and privileges that come with various aspects of one's identity.

# IN FOCUS Bisexual People and the LGB Community

There are over nine million LGBT people in the United States and more than half of all gay, lesbian, and bisexual people identify as bisexual. These findings were released in the 2014 report, "Understanding Issues Facing Bisexual Americans," by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), BiNet USA, and the Bisexual Resource Center. The report shows that, while bisexuals make up the majority of the LGB community, they also experience disproportionately high disadvantages, from health issues, to poverty, and more, and are often under-served by resources for the LGBT community.

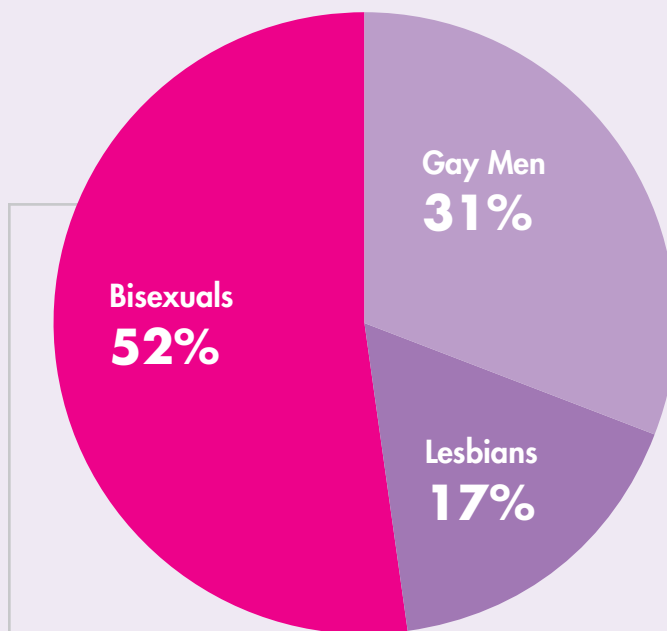


Fig 1: Percentage of LGB community

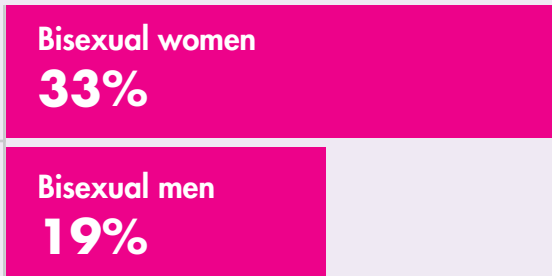


Fig 2: Bisexual percentage breakdown

Data via the Williams Institute, "How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender?"

# Story Ideas

## People of different orientations under the bi umbrella

There are a wide array of identities under the LGBT umbrella. Identities like pansexual, polysexual, omniseual, fluid, and queer share similarities with bisexuality, but there are a vast array of reasons why people may identify with any number of different labels, or forgo labeling themselves at all. Talk to people of all different identities attracted to more than one gender. Give them the chance to share their experiences with different identities and why they identify the way that they do.

## Low number of bisexual people that are "out"

Nearly half of bisexual people report that they are not out to any of their coworkers (49%), compared to just 24% of lesbian and gay people.<sup>8</sup> Talk to bisexual people about the unique challenges that they face in coming out, and why there is added pressure on bisexual people to conceal their identities compared to other sexual orientations.

## Bi-inclusive legislation

Cover how nondiscrimination ordinances and other LGBT-inclusive laws protect bi people. Include issues that bi people face and how legal equality would be beneficial. Be sure to include bi people's voices in stories on LGBT-affirming legislation.

## Employment discrimination against bisexual people

20% of bisexual people report experiencing a negative employment decision based on their identity, and almost 60% of bisexual people report hearing anti-bisexual jokes and comments on the job.<sup>9</sup> 28 states currently lack explicit state level workplace protections for LGBT employees. This makes LGBT people anxious about the consequences of being openly LGBT or perceived as LGBT in the workplace. This disproportionately affects bisexual people in particular, who are less likely to be out at work.<sup>10</sup>

## Faith and bisexuality

Though the media occasionally portrays them in opposition, faith communities and the LGBT community often overlap in positive and interesting ways. Several faith leaders identify as bisexual. Speak to bisexual people about their faith journeys, allies of faith about their journeys to LGBT acceptance, and faith leaders who minister to the LGBT community.

## Advocacy and experiences of bisexual people of color

The experiences and advocacy of communities of color are often underreported. Be sure to celebrate the excellence in bi people of color. There are vibrant bi communities of color and

their experiences and work are integral to coverage about equality and acceptance. Many people of color identify as bisexual, and people of color have long served as critical leaders in the bisexual community.

## Bisexual voices on marriage

Married bisexual people often have their identities erased, as they are presumed to be either straight, gay, or lesbian. There is also a harmful stereotype of bisexual people as inherently promiscuous or incapable of monogamy. Talk to married bisexual people about the unique struggles they face, as well as their families' joyful experiences. Many bisexual people form families in diverse ways, whether that's blended families, or families with one or more parents.

## Bisexual youth

Bisexual youth are less likely to come out than youth of other orientations out of fear of exclusion and alienation. Explore the effects of bullying, family rejection, and exclusion by focusing on the experiences of bisexual youth. Compare the coming out experiences of bisexual youth to gay and lesbian youth.

## Physical and mental health disparities among bisexuals

Bisexual people have high rates of poor physical and mental health. Physical disparities include higher rates of hypertension, cancer, poor or fair physical health, smoking, and risky drinking than non-LGB people, lesbians, or gay men. Despite these disparities, and perhaps compounding them, bisexual people are less likely than gay men or lesbians to be out to their health care providers.

## High rates of abuse of bisexual people

Bisexual people experience higher rates of sexual and intimate partner violence, including rape, than gay, lesbian, and straight people.<sup>3</sup> Speak to bisexual survivors of abuse about their experiences and access to resources, which are often available only to straight, gay, or lesbian people.

## Intersecting advocacies of bi and trans people

The transgender community is prolific in advocacy and it is important to highlight both the accomplishments it's achieved and the struggles it continues to face. Transgender people have compelling stories of family relationships, public challenges, and hopes for the future. A significant number of transgender people, particularly transgender people of color, also continue to face violence and discrimination on a regular basis. Talk to transgender advocates who identify as bisexual, and the ways their identities intersect.

## Intersex people who identify as bi

Many intersex people's sexual orientation

falls under the bisexual umbrella. Celebrate Bisexuality Day, the national bisexual Pride day, was even co-founded by Gigi Raven Wilbur, a leading intersex advocacy pioneer.<sup>11</sup>

## Asexual people who identify as bi

Some asexual people feel romantic attraction to people of multiple genders, and may identify as members of the bi+ community. Amplify the voices of people who are both asexual and bi.

## Bisexual-specific advocacy campaigns

Bi advocates have created numerous grassroots events and digital campaigns that amplify diverse bi voices and both engage and educate allies. The BECAUSE Conference (sponsored by the Bisexual Organizing Project), #BiWeek (sponsored by BiNet USA), and Bisexual Health Awareness Month (#BHAM, sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center), occur annually, and digital conversations like #StillBisexual are ongoing. Speak with the organizers of these campaigns and additional bi spokespeople, cover the surrounding events, and promote the ever-unfolding dialogues they inspire.

## Bi advocacy and contributions to the LGBT movement

During the 1960s, bisexual groups organized alongside with, as well as separately from, the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights and Liberation Movement--from Stonewall to the first Pride march and beyond--which helped to launch the many advancements towards full LGBT equality and acceptance that have been gained since then. Today, advocacy for bi equality and acceptance has grown to a worldwide movement that honors the many nuances and diversities of bisexual people's experiences. Honor the invaluable ways bi people have contributed to the LGBT movement over the years and cover the ongoing efforts to accelerate bi acceptance. An extensive timeline is available at [binetusa.org/bi-history](http://binetusa.org/bi-history)

## Explore the experiences of bisexual individuals who are HIV-positive

HIV and AIDS are commonly misunderstood, falsely portrayed, or ignored altogether in the media, as are the people they impact every day. Speak with bi people who are HIV-positive about their daily experiences, including challenges and how they work to overcome them. The criminalization of HIV and AIDS also complicates the experiences of HIV-positive members of the LGBT community, and bisexual people living with HIV may be left out of the conversation or lack access to necessary resources. Tell their stories in a way that is humanizing and raises awareness about the discrimination that they face.

# Organizations

For an expansive list of bi-focused organizations in the United States, visit

[binetusa.org/bi-groups-in-the-us](http://binetusa.org/bi-groups-in-the-us)

For a global online listing of bi organizations, visit

[biresource.net/bisexualgroups.shtml](http://biresource.net/bisexualgroups.shtml)

**American Institute of Bisexuality**  
[americaninstituteofbisexuality.org](http://americaninstituteofbisexuality.org)

**BiNet USA**  
[binetusa.org](http://binetusa.org)

**Bisexual Organizing Project**  
[bisexualorganizingproject.org](http://bisexualorganizingproject.org)

**Bisexual Resource Center**  
[biresource.net](http://biresource.net)

**Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago**  
[bqachicago.org](http://bqachicago.org)

**Los Angeles Bi Task Force**  
[labicenter.org](http://labicenter.org)

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# Acknowledgements

## Partners

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Bisexual Resource Center

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Zeke Stokes *Vice President of Programs*

For more information, help, and guidance, please contact GLAAD. We can put you in contact with organizations and spokespeople, and provide resources, facts, and ideas to tell the stories of bisexual people. For journalists interesting in speaking to any of these experts, please contact Matt Goodman, Associate Director of Communications, at [mgoodman@glaad.org](mailto:mgoodman@glaad.org)

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[9] Ibid

[10] Ibid

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GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBT acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

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