

Biphobia

The Facts

- Attitudes towards bisexual people are more negative than towards lesbians, gay men, and many other groups.
- Negative stereotypes are pervasive and reinforced by media representations of greedy untrustworthy bisexual people.
- There is a history of double discrimination of bisexual people from heterosexual, and lesbian & gay communities.
- Doubt is raised over the reality of bisexual identity in a way it is not over other groups.

The Experience

"I don't think we'd do it again. They threw stones at us. Lots of shouting, very graphic. What we need, what would fix us, what they think we do to kids. Sick. Horrible. Then the police said as we were a man and a woman it wasn't homophobic. I kept saying "we're bisexuals" but I don't think he had a box for that. When I say I don't think we'd do it again, I mean reporting it. What's the point?"



The Recommendations

- Inform yourself about bisexuality and avoid perpetuating stereotypes.
- Separate biphobia out from homophobia recognising the specific issues facing bisexual people.
- Recognise the role of biphobia and bisexual invisibility in negative outcomes for bisexual people (see health).
- Support events and spaces for bisexual people.
- Record and address biphobic and bisexual-specific experience of hate crime and domestic violence.

The Workplace

The Facts

- Despite inclusion in equality legislation, bisexual people in the workplace report discrimination.
- Bisexual employees are least comfortable being 'out'.

The Experience

"Ever since I told my boss I was going to a bi event she seems to treat me as a flake. She makes comments all the time about how I can't stick at things, how I'm not a team player. One time she told me not to apply for a promotion because they wanted 'someone loyal, who could commit'. I think I'd have got that one too. I wish I'd never mentioned it now"



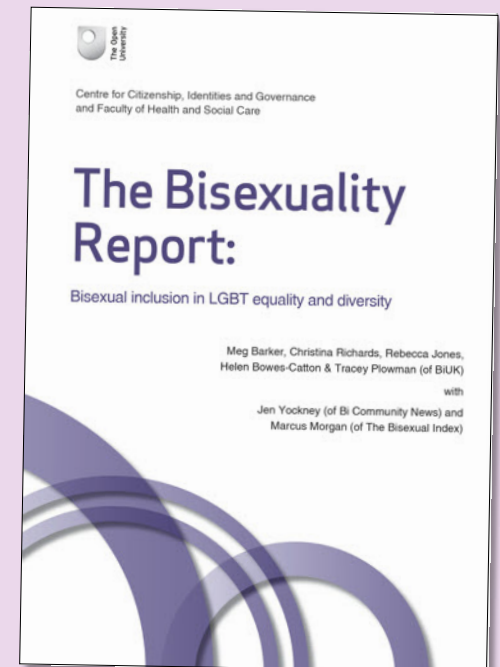
The Recommendations

- Consult and support bisexual staff and provide training for all as recommended in Stonewall report.

Report endorsed by:



The Bisexuality Report Summary Flyer



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Full report downloadable from:
www.biuk.org

Bisexual Visibility

The Facts

- ☞ Bisexual people's experiences differ in important ways from those of heterosexual, and lesbian & gay, people.
- ☞ Bisexuality is attraction to more than one gender, and encompasses many groups.
- ☞ Bisexual-identified people are often estimated to be the largest group within LGB populations, and many more people report attraction to more than one gender.
- ☞ Bisexuality intersects with other aspects such as race, culture, gender, ability, class, location, religion, and age, to produce a diversity of bisexual experiences.
- ☞ Invisibility of bisexuality is a key issue because wider culture assumes sexuality to be binary (heterosexual/homosexual).

The Experience



"Other people's assumptions really annoy me. People tend to think I'm gay unless they know I'm with an opposite-sex partner, and then they assume I'm straight, which makes me feel invisible. But then, when I say I'm bi, they assume I'm into threesomes and have open relationships. When they realize that's not the case, they sometimes seem to think my sexuality's irrelevant since I'm not 'doing anything about it', and I should stop 'going on about it'"

The Recommendations


- ☞ Don't drop the 'B' in LGBT.
- ☞ Ensure bisexual inclusion in relevant groups, events, policy, and practice.
- ☞ Don't assume one unified bisexual experience.
- ☞ Liaise with bisexual communities.
- ☞ Improve media representation of bisexual people.

Health

The Facts

- ☞ Bisexual people have the worst mental health of all the larger sexual identity groups, including high rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide.
- ☞ This is linked to experiences of biphobia and bisexual invisibility.
- ☞ Bisexual people more at risk of physical health problems and less likely to seek help due to marginalisation and biphobia from health providers.

The Experience



"A psychiatric nurse asked me what I'd done at the weekend and I mentioned I'd been at a bisexual event, and as a result came out as bisexual. He seemed fine at the time but when I came to see my counsellor, I found out that my referral letter said that I had unresolved issues with my sexuality. I hadn't said anything like that! I felt so betrayed, knowing that he'd secretly been judging me like that."

The Recommendations


- ☞ Target support and services towards bisexual people both in and outside LGBT communities.
- ☞ Increase bisexual awareness of practitioners.
- ☞ Make sexual health promotion literature inclusive of a range of sexual practices.

Education

The Facts

- ☞ Two thirds of young LGB people experience bullying and all hear LGB insults. 2 in 5 teachers feel uncomfortable discussing LGB issues.
- ☞ Bisexual students report biphobic stereotypes and marginalisation.
- ☞ Young bisexual people have higher identity confusion and lower self-disclosure and community involvement than LG peers due to stigma.
- ☞ Young bisexual people are at high risk in terms of educational progress and general well-being.

The Experience



"If someone [at school] points out a pretty girl and I turn round, they all crow at me not to look 'cos I'm supposed to be gay. I'm fed up. It's all gay this and queer that. I don't know how they know, I never told no-one. There isn't a word for people like me, so I guess I'm on my own. I'd say I was bisexual, but you have to be 50-50, right?"

The Recommendations

- ☞ Ensure that everyone leaves school with a good knowledge about bisexuality and sexual diversity.
- ☞ Tackle biphobia in schools specifically, separated out from homophobia.
- ☞ Ensure that teaching training and anti-bullying campaigns include bisexual-specific issues.