

What is Biphobia?

Biphobia

The fear, hatred or intolerance of bisexual men and women by heterosexuals, gay men, and lesbians, or by bisexuals themselves (internalized biphobia).

Bisexual Relationships

Bisexuals, like all people, have a wide variety of relationship styles. Contrary to common myth, a bisexual person does not need to be sexually involved with both a man and a woman simultaneously. In fact, some people who identify as bisexual never engage in sexual activity with one or the other (or either) gender. As is the case for heterosexuals and gay men and lesbians, attraction does not involve acting on every desire. Like many heterosexuals and gay people, many bisexuals choose to be sexually active with one partner only and have long-term, monogamous relationships. It is important to have the freedom to choose the type of sexual and emotional relationships that are right for the people involved whatever their sexual orientation.

Bisexuals and AIDS

AIDS has had a major effect on the bisexual community. Bisexual men are often scapegoated as the agents of transmission of AIDS from the gay to the heterosexual population, and bisexual women may be scapegoated as transmitters of AIDS to lesbians. However, it is behavior, rather than sexual orientation, that puts people at risk for acquiring the virus that causes AIDS. Activities that involve the exchange of bodily fluids, notably semen, blood, and vaginal fluid, are dangerous. Bisexuals, as well as homosexuals and heterosexuals, must educate themselves about safer sex practices, such as the use of condoms and dental dams. Safer sex guidelines can be obtained from health centers and AIDS education and action groups. Bisexuals are joining with gay people and other affected groups in all effort to fight AIDS by calling for an increase in research and education, better treatments, and an end to discrimination against people with AIDS and those perceived to be at risk for AIDS.

Examples of Biphobia:

- Assuming that everyone you meet is either heterosexual or lesbian/gay .
- Assuming that bisexuals are confused or indecisive about their sexuality.
- Assuming that bisexuals are promiscuous or cannot live monogamously.
- Assuming that bisexuals are attracted to everyone. Assuming that people who identify as bisexual are "really" lesbian or gay, but are in denial.
- Assuming that bisexuals, if given the choice, would prefer to be with someone of a different gender than themselves to gain some of the privileges of being perceived as heterosexual.
- Believing that people who are bisexual spread HIV/AIDS.
- Automatically assuming that two women together are lesbians, that two men together are gay, or that a man and a woman together are heterosexual.
- Not wanting to date someone who is bisexual because you assume that the person will eventually leave you for someone of another gender.

- Thinking of people who are bisexual only in terms of their sexuality, rather than as whole, complex persons.

Adapted from the Bisexual Resource Center (1998)