

STONEWALL SCOTLAND WORKPLACE CONFERENCE

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE (EICC)
23 NOVEMBER 2018

B5 | Recognising and supporting bi identities

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UNDERSTANDING IDENTITIES AND DISCRIMINATION

Terminology
Research
Discrimination



BI EXPERIENCES AND BI INCLUSION WORK

Yemisi Ilesanmi
Calum Shepherd



TACKLING BI EXCLUSION

Identifying and tackling
exclusion exercise
Q&A

In a 2015 YouGov survey, when asked to plot themselves on a sexuality scale:

19% of British people chose something other than 100% straight or gay/lesbian

This figure rises to **43%** amongst 18 – 24 year old's. **3%** of these respondents identified as bisexual.

Bi

An umbrella term used to describe a person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards people of more than one gender



Terminology

Not everyone who is attracted to people of more than one gender describes themselves as bi

Understanding the meaning of terms people might use to describe their identity will help you better support bi people

EXERCISE: Speaking to the person next to you, try to match the terms on the left hand side of the next slide with the definitions on the right hand side. Are there any terms you haven't heard before or are unsure about?

PAN/PANSEXUAL

Traditionally used to describe people with an emotional, romantic and or sexual attraction to people of two genders. This term is now often used to describe people with an attraction to people of more than one gender or as an umbrella term.

POLYSEXUAL

In the context of sexual orientation this term is often used by LGBT people to mean their attraction to people of more than one gender but can be used by people who are attracted to people of one gender but don't identify with traditional categories of gay or lesbian. In the past this was considered a derogatory term.

QUEER

Describes people who are usually lesbian, gay or heterosexual and who recognize this might not fully describe their sexual orientation or those who are interested in exploring their attraction to people of other genders than those they are predominantly attracted to.

BI/BISEXUAL

Refers to someone whose emotional, romantic and or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.

BICURIOS

Attraction, whether romantic, emotional and/or sexual, towards people of various genders which changes or might change over time.

FLUID

Someone who experiences emotional, romantic and or sexual attraction to people of multiple genders but not all.

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Education

35% of LGBT pupils who describe themselves as bi are bullied at school for being LGBT.

36% of LGBT pupils hear biphobic language frequently or often at school

76% of LGBT students have never learnt about bisexuality at school

34% of bi university students say their were excluded by other students due to their sexual orientation, compared to 18% of lesbian and gay students.

47% of bi university students hide or disguise their sexual orientation due to fear of discrimination, compared to 29% of gay and lesbian students

“

I've heard a lot of gossip and horrible stuff people say about bisexuals (they're greedy, it doesn't make sense, pick one and pick the right one, etc.). There seems to be a lot of misunderstanding surrounding bisexuality in general (it's a phase,

”

it's not real, etc). *Chris, 16, private single-sex secondary school (South East)*

Everyday life

32% of bi people aren't open about their sexual orientation to anyone in their family

27% of bi men and **18%** of bi women have experienced poor treatment from others in their local LGBT community because of their sexual orientation

19% of bi people say that their religious community isn't welcoming towards LGBT people.

1 in 5 LGBT people (19%) aren't out to any healthcare professionals about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care. This number rises to **40%** of bi men and **29%** of bi women.

Bi people are more likely to have thought about taking their own life than lesbian or gay people – **41%** compared to 28% of lesbian and gay people

“ Being bisexual means finding yourself excluded by gay people and straight people in social settings. I only tell my friends about my sexuality, meaning it is hidden from my family and my work colleagues. Bisexuality is a hidden sexuality through people's lack of acceptance. *Kendra, 32 (Scotland)* ”

Work

38% of bi people aren't out to anyone at work – **49%** of bi men and **34%** of bi women, compared to 7% of gay men and 4% of lesbians

23% of bi people surveyed had ever seen a visible bi role model in their workplace

5% of organisations offered training that specifically covered issues faced by bi people

Of those with LGBT network groups, **37%** held an event, activity or initiative specific to bi people or experiences

“ My employer is generally very supportive but doesn't have a specific LGBT discrimination section in their policies or procedures should discrimination occur. So, if discrimination or harassment does occur - and it does - then they don't effectively handle things and the LGBT person is blamed for causing problems and being over sensitive. *Mollie, 51 (Yorkshire and the Humber)* ”

BARRIERS TO BI INCLUSION

DENIAL

STEREOTYPING

EXCLUSION

ERASURE

BI DENIAL

- Questioning the existence of bi identities or of certain groups of bi people (e.g. bi men, bi people of colour, bi trans people).
- Believing that bi people need to 'make up their minds' or 'stop sitting on the fence'
- Viewing bi people as confused about their sexual orientation or on their way to another identity
- Questioning the need for bi-specific work and expecting bi people to make do with gay and lesbian work



Boy George ✓
@BoyGeorge



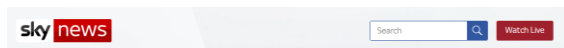
Ok. 'My computer got hacked' is like 'I'm bisexual' or 'I'm sniffing because I have allergies!'

The New York Times Magazine

The Scientific Quest to Prove Bisexuality Exists

BI STEREOTYPING

- Viewing bi people as greedy, promiscuous or incapable of monogamy
- Thinking that bi people will always leave their partners for someone of another gender
- Viewing bi people's sexual orientation as performative and attention seeking
- Believing bi people to be manipulative or duplicitous



Biggins 'Sorry' For Bisexual AIDS Remark

Producers remove the Celebrity Big Brother contestant for voicing his belief that bisexual individuals helped spread AIDS.

Straight people think bisexual women are more promiscuous and neurotic, study finds

Josh Jackman

4th April 2018, 12:42 PM



h
@halsey

Follow

So if I'm dating a guy I'm straight, and if I date a woman, I'm a lesbian. The only way to be a #True bisexual is to date 2 people at once.

8:36 PM - 18 Dec 2017

27,089 Retweets 92,627 Likes



BI EXCLUSION

- Providing no bi-specific services or resources and expecting bi people to be covered by heterosexual and gey/lesbian services and resources
- Claiming to speak for LGBT people and failing to include bi in the name or mission statement of the group
- Creating lists or setting up panels on LGBT issues with minimal or no bi representation
- Questioning whether bi people with opposite gender partners should be allowed in LGBT spaces

Gay Men's Clinic - Balham

BALHAM HEALTH CENTRE, 120-124 BEDFORD HILL, BALHAM, SW12 9HS

STI and HIV Sexual Health Clinic

There won't be any bisexual groups marching at London Pride



Charles White Tuesday 30 May 2017 7:01 pm



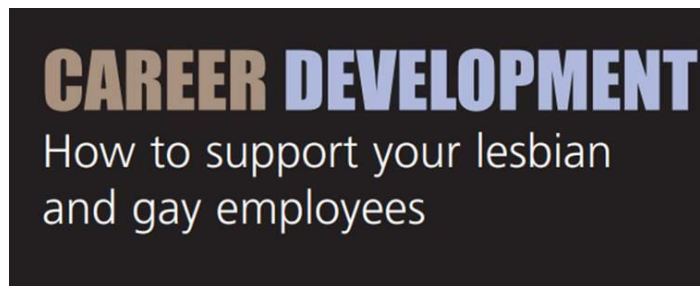
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Orange Is the New Black

Everyone's favorite Netflix show has become a phenomenon by depicting trans and lesbian storylines with an authenticity missing from other TV representations. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the bisexual character Piper. The word "bi" comes up just once in the two seasons of the show, and Piper is even referred to as a "former lesbian."

BI ERASURE

- Assuming that everyone is either heterosexual or lesbian/gay
- Referring to homophobia or homophobia and transphobia rather than homophobia, biphobia and transphobia when discussing anti-LGBT attitudes, behaviours and structures
- Assuming someone's sexual orientation based on the gender of their current partner
- Failing to notice or believe biphobia or call out the invisibility of bi people within LGBT work



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EXERCISE: identifying and tackling exclusion

Your group will be given an example of a key area of work that contains bi-exclusionary practices. These examples are fictitious situations in which bi-exclusionary practices have occurred usually accidentally or unknowingly.

You have 15 minutes in your group to work through the scenario and grid provided.

- 1, We'd like to you to identify what about the activity described is bi-exclusionary?
- 2, What immediate fixes could the organization put in place to make some of their activities bi-inclusive?
- 3, What longer term cultural fixes would you suggest to ensure this area of work is bi-inclusive?

Please share your ideas and experience with your group, think about good practice you've seen in your organisation and elsewhere as well as considering the discussions we've had in this session.

Be ready to feed back short term and long term ideas to the group.

1 | RECRUITMENT

Ensuring that recruitment work is LGBT inclusive is vital in order to attract the best talent. Organisation A recognises this and has taken a number of steps to make their recruitment work more inclusive.

Including the following statement on their recruitment pages 'we are an equal opportunities employer and offer employment regardless of sexual orientation, race, disability, faith or gender'.

Asking monitoring questions at recruitment stage including: 'What is your sexual orientation? Please choose from heterosexual/straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual.'

Training their recruiters on reducing discrimination in the recruitment process. The training includes a section on LGBT which explores stereotyping around the gay and lesbian community and suggests ways that staff could prevent these from clouding their judgement when considering whether someone would be a good fit for the team.

The organisation has produced a guide for LGBT-inclusive recruitment. One of the suggestions is that if a man mentions his husband you might like to speak to him about the organisation's great gay network group.

2 | INDUCTION

The induction process is the perfect time to demonstrate to new starters that your organisation is a welcoming and inclusive place to work. Organisation B has taken steps to embed their LGBT inclusion work in their induction process.

During the induction presentation there is a slide detailing that the organisation has an LGBT network.

The bullying and harassment policy explicitly bans bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and explains ‘an example of this could be ostracising or excluding a colleague because they are gay and have a partner of the same gender by being unwilling to work with them or not wishing to speak to them.’

All employees are required to undertake mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training during their first week. This takes the form of an online learning course. There is a specific section of the course that provides employees with examples of stereotypes commonly used against the LGBT community which will not be tolerated at this organisation. These include;

- All lesbians are aggressive and hate men
- All gay men are promiscuous and physically weak
- Gay and lesbian people fancy everyone of the same gender as them

The organisation’s inclusive family policies are explained to new starters and they are explicitly told that they are inclusive of heterosexual or lesbian/gay couples.

3 | ALL STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

LGBT inclusion should not just be the responsibility of LGBT staff and engaging and educating everyone in an organisation is crucial to driving this forward. Organisation D have recognised this and are working to bring everyone on board.

The CEO of the organisation has uploaded a photo of himself at an IDAHOT event to the intranet with a caption “Our organisation is a welcoming and inclusive place for all gay and trans staff and I’m pleased to be attending this event to mark International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia”.

All staff who sign up as allies in the organisation receive a desk tent which says “I will always tackle homophobia and transphobia in the workplace”.

All staff in the organisation receive an invitation to sign up to march in a local pride parade, the text is as follows “on Saturday we’ll be marching in our local gay pride parade and everyone is invited to join us. There will be free breakfast in the office at 10am before the parade starts at 11”.

The organisation regularly profiles it’s LGBT staff as it’s a great opportunity to tell personal stories. This year they have spoken to Mary about being a gay parent, George about being an openly gay BAME man, Ella about her experience as a trans person and Alicia about being a lesbian with mental health issues. All profiles have been uploaded onto the intranet.

4 | LGBT NETWORK GROUPS

LGBT network groups provide a vital source of support for LGBT people in an organisation and can also act as a consultative function for the organisation. Organisation E has a growing LGBT network.

The network group has a steering committee made up of a lesbian rep, a trans rep, a gay rep and their senior sponsor. They have over 50 members spread around the country.

They have clearly defined terms of reference which set out the groups goal to advance the inclusion of LGBT people in the organisation. They're called gays, lesbians and friends at Organisation E.

The network group has done a survey to understand the identities of it's members. It is made up of 70% gay men, 22% lesbians/gay women, 4% bi people and 4% trans people.

The network groups meets up once a week after work to go to the gay bar round the corner from the office for drinks.

During LGBT history month the network group puts on six events; a staff network group brunch, a film screening of God's Own Country, a panel discussion on trans experiences in the workplace, an in conversation session with the most senior lesbian role model in the organisation, a performance from a local gay men's choir and an event looking at the experiences of LGBT people in India.

Q&A