

# Bi-101: some basics about bisexuality

“What attracts me most to the bisexual community is not sexual identity, but my respect for the honesty and openness I find there. More than anywhere else, I encounter people who understand the value of knowing yourself well, realizing why you choose what you do, and of making those choices openly.” —Kevin McCulloch, *Anything That Moves*, Summer 1998

## A BASIC DEFINITION OF BISEXUALITY:

*Bisexual persons are sexually and/or affectionally attracted to people without regard to gender.*

Perhaps, like Kevin McCulloch noted (above), the distinguishing characteristic of bisexual people in general is that they are more overtly open and honest about the fluidity of their sexuality. Bisexual persons recognize that they are attracted not only to persons of a particular gender, but that they are open to the potential for intimate, affectionate, romantic and/or sexual relationships with persons of any gender.

**EACH BISEXUAL INDIVIDUAL IS UNIQUE, AS IS EACH ASEXUAL, AUTOSEXUAL, HETEROSEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL OR OTHER PERSON. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE UNIVERSAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ‘LIFESTYLE’ OF BISEXUALS IN GENERAL.**

- Into which category(ies) do *you* fit?
- Can you make a blanket statement which describes your individual lifestyle and which is accurate for everyone else who fits into the same category(ies) that you do?

**BISEXUAL PERSONS CAN HAVE COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS FOUNDED ON FIDELITY AND TRUST.** A person who identifies as homosexual or heterosexual and is in a committed, monogamous relationship may acknowledge that a person with whom s/he is not partnered is attractive, but does not engage in sexual (or otherwise intimate) behavior with that person. Similarly, bisexual persons may be in committed relationships with persons of any gender and still acknowledge that they could have been in relationship with someone(s) of different gender(s).

**BISEXUAL PERSONS DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE MULTIPLE PARTNERS.** Perhaps the foremost myth about bisexuals is the belief that they necessarily have multiple partners—that they ‘require’ sexual relationships with persons of each gender in order to be satisfied. Instead, it is important to recognize the distinction between sexual attraction and sexual activity. A bisexual person may have more than one partner promiscuously, s/he may be in a committed, faithful multiple-partner relationship, or s/he may be monogamous.

**BISEXUALITY IS LEGITIMATE.** Non-bisexual persons sometimes assume that bisexuals are “really heterosexual” or “really homosexual” and cannot make up their minds, or that bisexual persons are merely curious. Though this phenomenon may be true for some, it is not a necessary or typical characteristic of bisexual people.

“Bisexuals have chosen consciously not to box themselves into an external standard, but instead recognize the fluidity of their attractions to other people despite the societal expectation that romantic attraction is based strictly on genitalia.” —Paige Getty, UUA