

LEARNING ABOUT THE “B” IN LGBT¹

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize various aspects of bisexuality.
2. Examine bisexuality in relationship to health disparities, research, culture, and biphobia.
3. Identify resources for more information about bisexuality.

Audience

High School, College, or Adult

Rationale

Bisexuality has been acknowledged to be an “invisible”, excluded, or “silenced” sexual orientation in several domains, including mainstream media, lesbian and gay communities, sex research, psychology and psychotherapy, and policy and legislation.² Further, Wikipedia includes an entry for “bisexual erasure”. This activity increases awareness about bisexuality and bisexual individuals and provides the participants with suggestions for finding resources for further information.

Materials

- 5” X 8” file cards
- Pens/pencils
- Match cards
- Educator Resource: Bisexuality Match Cards
- Handout: TITLE (*if needed; this is something the STUDENT would receive*)

¹ This lesson was developed by Terri Clark, Prevention Services Coordinator, ActionAIDS, Philadelphia, PA.

² Barker, M. and Langdrige, D. (2008). Bisexuality: Working with a Silenced Sexuality. *Feminism and Psychology*, 18(3), 389-394.

Procedure

1. Explain that bisexual individuals are often invisible, experiencing high rates of being ignored, discriminated against, and seen as invisible by both the heterosexual world and the lesbian and gay communities. Explain further that bisexuals are often branded as invalid, confused, and incapable of monogamy. Despite years of activism, the needs of bisexuals still go unaddressed and their very existence is still called into question. This workshop is designed to give you a chance to learn about bisexuality and to think about people who identify as bisexual.
2. Tell participants that the first activity will be a way to learn about different aspects of bisexuality and that they will be using match cards. Some of the cards have words or phrases on them. The other cards have definitions or explanations.
3. Randomly distribute the cards to participants. Depending on the size of the group, some participants may get more than one card. Tell them that their task is to find the matching card, and that they should move around the room, sharing the information on their card in order to find their match. Once they find their match, have one of the participants keep both of the cards.
4. After call cards have been matched, using the following discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

- a. In general, what was the activity like? (difficult, easy, confusing). Explain.
 - b. Were you surprised by any information? Explain.
 - c. Name something you learned about bisexuality or bisexual people.
 - d. Name something you would like to learn more about? How will you find that information?
 - e. What can you do to help educate others about bisexual people and bisexuality?
5. Tell the participants that they will now take a look at some of the messages they received about bisexual people.

6. Distribute a 5" X 8" card to each participant. Explain that what they write on the card is confidential. They will not need to show the card to anyone unless they choose to do so. They will answer some questions on the card and will then have a chance to talk about the questions. They will talk only if they wish to and only about what they themselves choose to discuss.
7. Read the following questions. Suggest they answer quickly. The first ideas that come to their minds are the ones that best reflect their real feelings. Watch for students to finish writing their answers on their cards before reading the next questions.
 - a. What are the first three words that come to your mind when you hear the word bisexual?
 - b. Think back as far as you can. What were the *major messages* you received about bisexual individuals? Can you remember any particular experiences?
 - c. What are three ways you think life is different for people who are bisexual?
 - d. What are three major concerns you would have if someone close to you confided that they were bisexual?
 - e. What are three ways people who are, or believe they may be, bisexual, can find support?
8. Divide participants, at random, into groups of four or five. Explain that they will have 10 minutes to discuss any parts of the exercise they choose. Remind them that no one has to talk unless they wish to, everyone should have a chance to speak, and listen actively to each other.
9. After 10 minutes, call participants back together to the large group.
10. Write "I learned that..." on the board and ask participants to turn their cards over and complete the sentence three times by writing what they learned.
11. Ask for volunteers to read one of their "I learned" statements. Explain that there will be no discussion of their responses.
12. Ask for ways people who are bisexual can find support. List the suggestions on the board. Ask participants which of these resources they think would be most helpful and why.

MATCH CARDS

Type each word/concept and definition/explanation on separate 8-1/2" X 11" paper or alternatively, write on large index cards.

Word/Concepts	Defintion/Explanation
Bisexuality Redefined	Someone who is capable of feeling romantic, spiritual, and/or sexual attraction for two or more genders.
Bisexuality Redefined	The capacity for emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction to more than one sex or gender. That capacity for attraction may or may not manifest itself in terms of sexual interaction.
Bisexuality Redefined	Bisexuality is a SO in which an individual experiences a combination of sexual and affectional attraction to members of all sexes/genders; engages in varying degrees of sexual activities with them; and self-identifies as bisexual in a way that is consonant with personal, social, political, and lifestyle preferences.
Bisexual People Might Also Use Different Words To Identify Themselves	People may use different words that a similar to "bisexual" to identify. Words such as pansexual, omnisexual, queer, heteroflexible, and homoflexible. Language is always evolving. Important to respect the terms people use to identify themselves.

Example of Biphobia	Bisexual individuals often experience discrimination from heterosexual people for not being “straight” and from the lesbian/gay community for not being gay.
Example of Biphobia	Assuming that everyone you meet is either heterosexual or gay/lesbian
Example of Biphobia	Thinking bisexual people haven’t made up their minds and they are confused.
Example of Biphobia	Assuming a bisexual person would want to fulfill your sexual fantasies or curiosities.
Example of Biphobia	Feeling that you can’t trust a bisexual to be monogamous
Example of Biphobia	Avoid mentioning to a friend that you are involved with a bisexual or working with a bisexual group because you are afraid they will think you are a bisexual.
Alfred Kinsey	This researcher from the 1950’s created a scale, graduated between heterosexuality and homosexuality, to

Reprinted with permission from Clark, T., Gilbert, T. & Rayne, K. (2016). *Orientation: Teaching about Identity, Attraction, and Behavior*. Morristown, NJ: The Center for Sex Education. Copyright © 2016 by The Center for Sex Education.

	rate individuals on actual experiences and psychological reactions.
The American Institute of Bisexuality	This organization encourages, supports and assists research and education about bisexuality, through programs likely to make a material difference and enhance public knowledge, awareness and understanding about bisexuality and publishes the Journal of Bisexuality.
Fritz Klein	This person was a pioneering bisexual rights activist, who was an important figure in the modern LGBT rights movement, and founded the first bisexual support group called the Bisexual Forum and developed the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, building on Alfred Kinsey's work.
Example of health disparities affecting bisexual people	According to Healthy People 2020, Bisexual have higher rate of tobacco use, compared to lesbians, gays, and heterosexuals; and have higher rates of anxiety or mood disorder compared to heterosexuals, lesbians and gays.
Example of health disparities affecting bisexual people	According to Healthy People 2020, bisexual women are the most likely to have <u>never had</u> a cancer screening (mammogram or pap test) compared to heterosexuals or lesbians and bisexual women have more risk factors for

	heart disease compared to heterosexuals or lesbians.
Movies that depict bisexual characters	Brokeback Mountain, Rocky Horror Picture Show, and Chasing Amy.
Kate Brown	Oregon's first openly bisexual governor, elected in 2014.
September 23	Bisexual Awareness Day
The Month of March	Bisexual Health Awareness Month
Being a Bi Ally might include some of these actions	Believing that bisexual people exist; celebrating bisexual awareness day; ask about same-sex and other sex relationships; helping to education about bisexual individuals.
The meaning of the three colors of the bisexual flag	The deep pink or rose stripe at the top of the flag represents the possibility of same gender attraction; the royal blue stripe at the bottom of the flag represents the possibility of opposite gender attraction and the stripes overlap in the middle part of the flag to form a deep shade of lavender or purple, represents the possibility of attraction anywhere along the gender spectrum.

Reprinted with permission from Clark, T., Gilbert, T. & Rayne, K. (2016). *Orientation: Teaching about Identity, Attraction, and Behavior*. Morristown, NJ: The Center for Sex Education. Copyright © 2016 by The Center for Sex Education.

Examples of resources to learn more about bisexuality.	Bisexual Resource Center, BiNet USA, American Institute on Bisexuality and the Journal of Bisexuality, Human Rights Campaign – “Supporting and Caring for our Bisexual Youth”
--	---

DRAFT