



BiNet USA

Welcome to BiNet USA. As America's umbrella organization and voice for bisexual, pansexual, fluid and all other of us "somewhere in between" people as well as their lesbian, gay, transgender, "straight but not narrow" and questioning friends and allies, BiNet USA facilitates the development of a cohesive network of independent bisexual and bi-friendly communities; promotes bisexual, pansexual and bi-inclusive visibility; and collects and distribute educational information regarding sexual orientation and gender identity with an emphasis on the bisexual and pansexual and allied communities.

*"This above all — to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."*

~ Shakespeare (Hamlet Act I, Scene III)

How Do I Know If I'm Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-identified?

There is a lot of confusion at first. Society teaches that people can only be one way or the other [gay or straight] or that bisexuality is a stage or a phase, and one doesn't stay there for very long. But once past the confusion, you'll know you are bisexual as surely as your pal knows she's straight and your other pal knows he's

gay. ~ Eric, Colorado, age 24



I always knew I was attracted to women, but I felt a pull towards men as well. ~ Suzanna, Maryland, age 17

Because of ignorance, outdated cultural norms and a lot of harmful misinformation, coming to an understanding of your sexuality can be highly confusing. People often feel a

lot of pressure to choose - to define themselves as being gay or straight or lesbian.

But you might feel that you do not fit **any** of these categories, you may notice that you have sexual and romantic feelings about people of your own and the other

genders.

These feelings may indicate you are fluid, pansexual, bisexual or in some ways queer-identified. Keep in mind, however, that you do not have to 'prove' your sexual-identity to anyone, there will be no End-Of-Semester Final Exam, no Job Performance Evaluation, it is strictly about you and getting to know your own heart.

Being bisexual/pansexual is part of who you are, of what makes you "uniquely you", but it does not dictate that you must then follow the crowd or what some people say about how "people like you" should live your life.

Many pansexual/bisexual people may have one committed relationship that lasts for decades while others may have many different kinds of relationships with different people. Some bisexual/pansexual people have no sexual relationships or they may have relationships with people of only one gender; yet, they still consider themselves to be bisexual/pansexual. On the other hand many people may have relationships with people of their own and the other gender, and yet they self-identify as Gay, Lesbian or Straight.

Also don't worry about not knowing for sure right away. Sexuality and self-knowledge develops over time, and you should feel no pressure to identify in any particular way to please other people. Follow your own heart, it all comes down to what makes you feel most comfortable and what you perceive yourself to be.

Bisexual? Pansexual? Fluid? Queer-identified? Say What?

Back in the day no one knew that much about sexuality and gender and "Bisexual" was the ONLY word anyone had to even come close to explaining that they really, really, really weren't 100% straight or 100% gay/lesbian. But now know that both Sexuality and Gender are a continuum not neat fixed little boxes into which everyone can be stuffed. We've all taken a look at the [Kinsey scale](#) and [Klein Sexual Orientation Grid](#). We know that that science has now shown that [Gender is far more Fluid than first suspected](#). We know people who are Transgender, Intersex and Genderqueer.

As people came out of the closet and became more comfortable with all of this, people who once would just call themselves "Bisexual", which is a scientific word "assigned" to people like us in 1892 and frankly has more to do with flowers and plants than people, began to realize that we to came in "flavors". While like the article says "[We are all somewhere between straight and gay](#)", it seems the way we each experience our sexual, affectional and romantic feelings can take a lot of different forms. So on their own [our Community](#) began to develop [different words](#) to describe who we are.

him, I fell in love with a woman once. He smiled and said, What a coincidence. Me too. ~ Tess, Virginia, age 25

Coming to terms with your own sexuality can be difficult. In fact, the hardest person you may ever have to tell is yourself!

Only tell others when you feel you are ready. It's not always easy. Some people might be very receptive, while others might not be able to handle the information as well as you had hoped they would. Sometimes it might be easier to talk about your sexuality with someone you know will understand, such as a friend, sibling, parent, guidance counselor or other trusted adult. You may also find someone to talk with through the Internet or at youth groups. Reaching out can help ensure you have support as you talk about your sexuality. You might be surprised at the relief you will feel when you know others understand you.

How Can I Meet Other People Like Me and Who Will Like Me?

If you decide to come out openly, you may find some bisexuals walking right up to you! ~ Steven, age 20

Currently, I am a member of a community queer youth group in my area, and it is a great way to meet people. ~ Suzanna, Maryland, age 17

It may be difficult to believe, but bisexual, fluid, pansexual, queer-identified not to mention friendly and inclusive Gay, Lesbian and "Straight But Not Narrow" people are all around you!



Learn what it means to be bisexual. Make an effort to meet other bisexuals - they can be a valuable resource to build your self-confidence.

Just remember that there are lots bisexual people **wherever** you are. Sooner or later you will meet someone who feels some of the same things you do and has had similar experiences. Realizing that you are not the only bisexual person will make liking yourself a lot easier.

What Is It Like to Be Young and Bisexual, Pansexual or Queer-identified?

I find a lot of pleasure in my sexuality. It's a natural part of me and not hiding or changing it gives me a real sense of freedom to be myself. ~ Yvette, Australia, age 24

It is hard to be a bisexual youth. Most people don't give us enough credit - they think we are too young to know, or that we are going through a phase. ~ Todd, South Carolina, age 20

It really isn't any different from any other life except you get to have a slightly more interesting wide-ranging life, you have to learn how to be your own person and think for yourself and you must become emotionally mature enough to put up with the disapproval of small minded and weak minded people. Other than that your sexual orientation does **not** determine who you are or what you do.

There is no particular lifestyle attached to identifying as bisexual, fluid, pansexual or Queer-identified. Bisexual/Pansexual people come from every gender, every race and ethnicity, all religious backgrounds, in all shapes and sizes, their political views range from conservative to liberal they can have any sort of occupations and have many levels of education. Contrary to some gossip you may have heard they are no more or less slutty or sexually promiscuous than anyone else. People who identify as Pansexual/Bisexuals may or may not be in a relationship.

Whom Should I Tell?

It's a good idea not to come out until you are comfortable with your bisexuality. Don't come out because you feel you must, because people are pressuring you, or because you want to be cool and make an impression. Come to think of it, those are also not good reasons to stay in the closet. Just take it at your own pace. This isn't about other people, only you. ~ Steven, age 20

I find coming out less difficult the more you do it. The first time is really hard, but it gets easier. It is also very liberating. ~ Maia, North Carolina, age 20

The first person I told I was bisexual was a new boyfriend. I wanted to be completely honest with him about myself and let him get to know the real me. I told

So Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual, Omnisexual, Hetro/Homo-flexible Queer-identified or "no boxes please, I'm just me", think about it and come [join the discussions](#), what do YOU call yourself and why?

So What Does It Actually Mean to Be Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-identified?

Being bisexual means we have the potential to be attracted to either sex. Some bisexuals, like me, may be attracted to each sex in a different way; but basically, we are capable of loving people of either sex. ~ Mikey, United Kingdom, age 14

You might find that you like both sexes equally, or you might like one sex more than the other. It depends on you. ~ Irene, Ireland, age 19

Identifying as Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer simply means that you were born with the capacity to be attracted to people regardless of someone's sexual or gender identity.

It does **not** define either one's lifestyle or sexual behavior. It does **not** mean you are promiscuous, a fence-sitter, a slut, a nympho, in the closet, unable to commit, trying to claim heterosexual privileges or whatever. Bisexual and pansexual people can monogamous or abstinent. They may have multiple sexual partners or be married/partnered for life. In other words, lives of bisexual/pansexual people are pretty much identical as those who identify as lesbian, straight or gay except that you have the capacity to like people of more than one gender.

Many people are pansexual/bisexual and it cuts across all distinctions of culture, race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, ability, religious affiliation and any other thing you might think of. Over time in life, you might feel equally attracted to people of various genders or to one gender in preference to the other and the strength of these attractions may change over time. This attraction can take many forms such as physical, sexual and emotional attraction or all or some of them all mixed up together. But however you find it happening, it is inborn, innate and what is just right for you.

Sadly however, it would be silly not mention that you need to be aware that Bisexual/Pansexual people may still, even in this day and age, suffer discrimination because of misperceptions and prejudice from people who identify as straight, gay



or lesbian. Most frequently scientists tell us this is because the person or persons who are causing the trouble are worried and confused about their own sexual or gender identification. So instead of doing something constructive about (*the way you are*) they let their confusion and negative emotions overwhelm them and strike out.

This is why organizations work for bisexual rights and to alleviate misperceptions about bisexual people.

How Can I Avoid HIV, Other STI's/STD's and Involvement in Unwanted Pregnancy?

The sexual identity you claim will neither protect you from pregnancy or STD's/STI's or cause you to get them. Sexual or gender identity do **not** cause STD's/STI's, **germs and viruses** do.

You can still get just as pregnant if you call yourself a Lesbian but are having unprotected sex with men on the down-low. You can be the most macho man on the block but you can still get AIDS if you are having unprotected anal intercourse with other men. It's not what you call yourself, it's what's you do. So ALWAYS be safe rather than sorry.

Many people who find themselves attracted to each other choose **not** to jump right into bed (*I know . . . a novel idea but still . . .*) and instead spend some time getting to know each other and doing things other than sex to show mutual affection, such as talking, hanging out together, hugging, kissing and just enjoying each other's company. However, when you do choose to have sexual intercourse, be responsible and protect yourself and your partner. Depending on the gender(s) of the people involved in the relationship, there are several things you should consider:

- **Woman & Woman** - Use a barrier (such as a dental dam, latex gloves, or plastic wrap) to reduce the risk of HIV/STD transmission.
- **Woman & Man** - Use a condom at every act of anal, oral, or vaginal intercourse to reduce the risk of HIV transmission and prevent pregnancy. For best results, use another form of birth control and a condom.
- **Man & Man** - Use a condom and plenty of lubricant for anal intercourse. Use a condom for oral intercourse.
- **Any Sexual Relationship** - Remember to use lubricants with condoms. Oil based lubricants can break down latex condoms. Remember that blood-to-blood transmission.
- **Sharing equipment** - Avoid sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment used for piercing or tattooing.

used equipment or needles. Always use new needles and other equipment or else clean the needles/equipment by rinsing several times with bleach, then with water

Am I Normal?

You are normal. Sexuality is just another part of what makes each person an individual. ~ Scott, Louisiana, age 16

Absolutely! Being bisexual is very natural. It's a part of who I am. How can loving people be unnatural? ~ Heather, Massachusetts, age 20

Yes, it is perfectly natural for some people to be bisexual and to feel attracted to people regardless of their gender. Sexual feelings towards women and men are perfectly natural and normal for bisexual people. What is **NOT** normal is pretending that doesn't exist. What is **NOT** natural is denying something that is intrinsic to your nature and what make you a special and unique human being.

Right now in the United States, many parts of society do not encourage bisexuality, and that can make accepting your bisexuality more difficult. However, denial is **NOT** just a river in Egypt and living a lie can make you sick and miserable, not a good way to be.

So yes, absolutely just like lesbians, gays, and straight people, you are exactly who you are meant to be and are **perfectly normal**.

How Do I Learn to Like Myself?

Know that you are special, you are not an anomaly. Surround yourself with supportive people. ~ Maia, North Carolina, age 20

The only way you will like yourself is to be yourself. Don't let other people's bigotry make you feel bad about who you are. ~ Scott, Louisiana, age 16

Coming to terms with your bisexuality can be difficult. However, lots of people have difficulty learning to like themselves, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Some people also have difficulty understanding bisexuality, and some bisexual people may try to hide their bisexuality. In an effort to numb the effects of societal stigma, people may turn to drugs and alcohol and may even attempt suicide because their situation seems unbearable. However the vast majority of other bisexual people - just like you - lead successful, happy lives and you can too.

It helps to be informed and to know that you aren't alone. Read about bisexuality.