

- Ask a bisexual speaker or speakers to do a workshop or speaking engagement for your group, so that you can meet and learn more about bisexual people.
- Provide opportunities to discuss sex and relationships not only between women and women and between men and men, but also between women and men, still as people who value relationships with members of the same gender.

Points to Remember:

- Like some gay men, some lesbians and some straight women and men, some bisexuals are in monogamous relationships. Some are in a monogamous relationship with a member of the same gender. Others are in a monogamous relationship with a member of the other gender.
- Like some lesbians, gay men and straight women and men, some bisexuals are not in monogamous relationships.
- People who have relationships with both women and men may, or may not, identify as heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual.
- People who identify as heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual may have relationships with both women and men, regardless of their sexual identity.

SF Bay Area Resources

BABN - Bay Area Bisexual Network (SF)
(415) 865-5628
info@babn.org • <http://babn.org>

SoBOA (San Jose/South Bay)
(408) 793-5131
info@soboa.org • <http://soboa.org>

Bi-Friendly Santa Cruz and Women's Bi-Net (Santa Cruz/Monterey)
(831) 427-4556

Publications of Interest

Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out
ed. By Lani Ka'ahumanu and Loraine Hutchins.
Alyson Publications, Boston MA, USA. 1990.

Bisexuality: A Reader and Source Book
ed. by Thomas Geller
Times Change Press, Ojai California, USA. 1990.

Closer To Home: Bisexuality & Feminism
ed. by Beth Weise. Seal Press, 1992.

Two Lives to Lead: Bisexuality in Men and Women
ed. by Fritz Klein and Timothy J. Wolf.
Harrington Park Press, New York, USA. 1985.

Bisexual Lives
Off Pink Publishing, London, England. 1988.

Bisexual Resource Guide by Robyn Ochs
Book available from the
BRC - Bisexual Resource Center
(617) 424-9595
brc@biresource.org • <http://biresource.org>

Bi Women newsletter
published bi-monthly by the
Boston Bisexual Women's Network
PO Box 1026, Boston, MA 02117
(617) 424-9595

North Bi Northwest newsletter
published quarterly by the
Seattle Bisexual Women's Network
(206) 517-7767, email SBWN@hotmail.com



Why would
Lesbian
& Gay
Organizations
include Bisexuals?

Internal divisions of the LBG community often obscure what we have in common. How did these divisions come about, and what can be done about them?

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Oppression and Community

Oppression is the systematic, societally-condoned mistreatment of people, simply because they are believed to belong to a particular group. This mistreatment includes both direct mistreatment of individuals and the propagation of misinformation about the group and its members. The direct mistreatment of individuals ranges from name calling and threats of violence through hanging or beating people to death. An example of misinformation is "Faggots are out to molest our children and convert them to their abominable lifestyle."

Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual women and men are targets of the same oppression, excused on the basis that we value sexual and affectional relationships with members of the same gender. The experience of this oppression is part of the formation of a "sexual identity", a label which represents, to that person, her or his relationship to the rest of the world in terms of sex, gender, and relationship roles.

In all cases of oppression, people develop a concept of themselves, an identity, as people who are in some way separate or different from the rest of society. Those who think of themselves (self-identify) as members of a particular group which is targeted by the oppression come together to support one another and fight the oppression.

For example, people who think of themselves as valuing relationships with members of the same gender come together to support one another against that oppression. In this society, the oppression of people who value relationships with members of the same gender has led to the development of the Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay (LBG) community.

Internalized Oppression and Creation of Subcommunities

Internalized oppression means feeling bad about and mistreating ourselves and members of our own group in ways which reflect our oppression. It is a characteristic effect of oppressions on members of an oppressed group. As with all people who are targets of oppression, lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men have at some level internalized this oppression. At some level, we have come to believe the misinformation about us and to feel badly about ourselves because of it. We mistreat ourselves and other members of our group, duplicating the mistreatment of the oppression.

Internalized oppression often takes the form of mistreatment of and misinformation about one subgroup, by another subgroup of the community. The misinformation often takes the form, "You are not a real/good enough member of this community to be recognized and honored." This "you are not good enough" and "we will ignore you" treatment (along with the operation of other oppressions) tends to divide the community. In the LBG community, messages like "you are not good enough" and "you should be in the kitchen instead of at the political strategy planning table" divided lesbians from gay men. Lesbians formed a separate identity and demanded that their name, their issues and they themselves be included in the agenda and life of the larger LBG community.

Internalized oppression has also divided LBG members of the "leather", the "S/M", and other overlapping groups from the rest of the LBG community. Each of these groups has developed a separate identity and has asked for that identity to be recognized and honored.

In the same way, "you are not good enough" and "you don't really exist" internalized oppression are directed toward members of the overlapping bisexual community from lesbians and gay men. This has divided bisexual women and men from lesbians and gay men. Bisexuals who are involved in the LBG community and liberation movement

have developed an identity separate from "lesbian" or "gay", and have developed a partially separate, partially overlapping bisexual community like the gay men's community, the lesbian community, the leather community, etc.

Where Do We Go From Here?

What can be done about the division between bisexuals and the lesbian and gay men's communities?

Some Ways to be Inclusive:

- Include the word "bisexual" in your literature and programs wherever you use both "lesbian" and "gay." Just as many lesbians do not feel included by the term "gay" (since it is often used to mean gay men), many bisexual women do not feel included by the term "lesbian" and many bisexual men do not feel included by the term "gay" because each has often been explicitly defined as **not including** bisexuals. If your organization is dedicated to supporting all people who value sexual and affectional relationships with members of the same gender, this change will make that support clear.
- Acknowledge the role of bisexual people in the gay liberation movement. Bisexual-identified people have been involved in the gay community and in organizing and running many historic gay liberation organizations. Among these are the Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Speakers Bureau in Boston, Boston's first Pride Day, and the first officially recognized student homophile organization in the country, at Cornell. We know of these particular instances, because we know the Bisexual people who helped organize them.
- Encourage everyone to take pride in their sexual identity and themselves, whether lesbian, bisexual, gay, straight, or other.