

BACKGROUND POINTS FOR OUR FRIENDS IN THE MEDIA (and elsewhere)

when they are talking/writing about bisexual people

1. Unlearn binary thinking. To quote Alfred Kinsey, the world is not divided into sheep and goats. Further, if you consider it homophobic when straight folks erase homosexuality and assume everyone around them is – or should be – heterosexual; then acknowledge that it is biphobic when you erase bisexuality and assume everyone around you is – or should be – gay or straight.
2. Do not assume “gay and lesbian” is a sufficient descriptor for the LGBT community any more than you would assume using the word “gay” is sufficient to make lesbians feel included, or that white queer cultures are a sufficient representation of queer cultures worldwide.
3. Just as some women use both “gay” and “lesbian” to describe themselves, yet others use both “lesbian” and “bisexual” to describe themselves. If in doubt about who identifies as what, assume there are bisexuals present in every group of queers. We often are.
4. The sexual orientation of people cannot be inferred by the sex/gender of their partner. Just as a person may be gay/lesbian and single, a person may be bisexual and in a same-sex relationship, bisexual and single, or bisexual and in an other-sex relationship. Thus a “lesbian” relationship may include women of whom one or both are bisexually identified and/or oriented.
5. As an addendum to the above point, usage of the term “same-sex relationship” is preferable to “gay/lesbian relationship” because the latter has come to imply that both partners are gay/lesbian while in reality that may not be the case. Ditto for other-sex relationships, in which one or both partners may be bisexual.
6. Bisexuals are not the latest pesky addition to a bestiary of sexuality minorities clamoring for greater inclusion. We have been around as long as homosexuals, and have been part of queer culture whether or not we have chosen to identify ourselves as bi.
7. Naming and honoring bi- and trans- sexualities is not merely a matter of political correctness or minding one’s P’s and Q’s. It is about us queers showing the same regard for diversity and complexity that we demand – and rightfully so – from our communities of origin, and from the world at large.

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