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Addressing the Needs of Bisexual Individuals

A Provider's Introduction to Substance Abuse
Treatment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and
Transgender Individuals

Second Edition

Learning Objectives:

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

- *Describe biphobia and describe one form of biphobia.*
- *Outline one health challenge faced by older bisexual people.*
- *Identify two ways service providers can create affirming and welcoming environments for bisexual people.*





Bisexuality



Bisexuality:

There can be some confusion about what “bisexuality” means, therefore it is important to discuss some key terms:

- Bisexuality:
 - *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.*

(Miller, Andre, Ebin & Bessonova, 2007)



Bisexuality:

Key terms cont.:

- Bisexual:

- *A person who reports attraction in similar proportions towards people of same and opposite sex.*

(Campo-Arias, 2010)

- *Researchers such as Rodriguez-Rust describe bisexual identity as a 'mature state of identity flux' rather than a fixed identity.*

(Rodriguez-Rust, 2007)



Bisexuality:

Key terms cont.:

- Sexual Fluidity:
 - *Situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness, regardless of sexual orientation.*
(Diamond, 2008)
- Biphobia:
 - *Having fear or hatred towards bisexual people.*
(Miller et al, 2007)
- Bi-invisibility:
 - *The lack of acknowledgement and ignoring of the clear evidence that bisexual people exist.*
(Miller et al, 2007)



Bisexuality:

Poll Question: Are you aware of services specifically for bisexual people in your community?



Bisexuality:

- According to several studies, self-identified bisexual individuals make up the largest single population within the LGBT community in the United States.
- In each study, more women identified as bisexual than lesbian, and fewer men identified as bisexual than gay. Indicates gender differences in bisexual identity.



Bisexuality:

- Example: A study published in 2010 by the Journal of Sexual Medicine
(Herbenick, et al., 2010)

<i>Out of 5, 042 Adults:</i>	
<i>Self-Identified Bisexual</i>	<i>Self-Identified Gay/Lesbian</i>
3.1%	2.5%



Bisexuality:

- Another example: Data from the 2005 National Survey of Family Growth.

(Mosher, Chandra & Jones, 2005)

<i>Describe themselves Bisexual</i>	<i>Describe themselves Gay/Lesbian</i>
<i>1.8% men</i>	<i>2.3% men</i>
<i>2.8% women</i>	<i>1.3% women</i>



Bisexuality:

- Example: A study published in 2013 by the National Health Statistics Reports on Sexual Orientation and Health Among U.S. Adults

(Brian, W. W., et al., 2014)

<i>Out of 34,557 Adults:</i>	
<i>Self-Identified Bisexual</i>	<i>Self-Identified Gay/Lesbian</i>
<i>0.7%</i>	<i>1.6%</i>



Bisexuality:

It is important to remember:

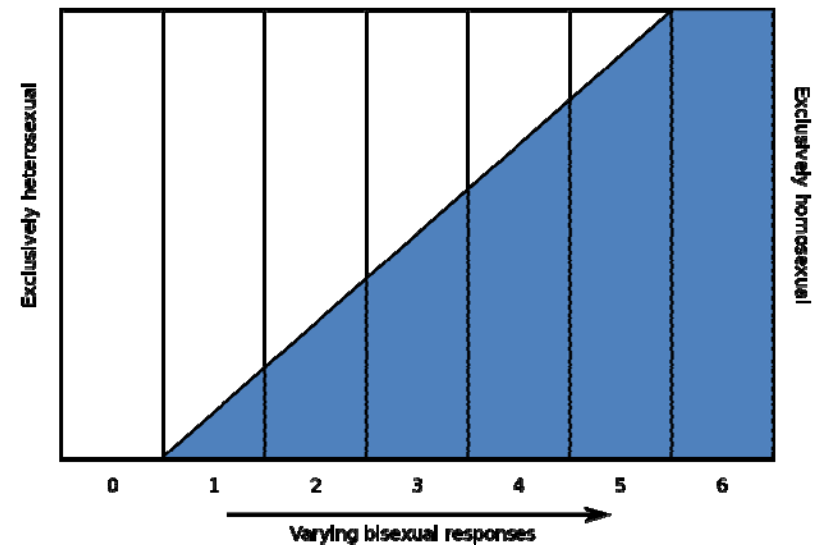
- *Individuals who do not feel compelled to self-label are not captured accurately in research data.*
- *Historical measurement and conceptualization of sexual identity, in particular, bisexual identity have predominantly focused on the Kinsey scale and the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid.*



Bisexuality:

- Alfred Kinsey was one of the first researchers to include bisexual behavior as a component of sexual orientation. His scale measured sexual orientation on a seven-point scale.

(Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953)



Bisexuality:

Kinsey-type:

- *Kinsey did not focus on questions of sexual identity but on how people behave and on their feelings and desires.*
- *When discussing bisexuality, it is important to consider behaviors, feelings, and desires as Kinsey did.*





The Klein Sexuality Grid

- *Fritz Klein further developed Kinsey's work with his Sexual Orientation Grid (Klein, 1993).*
- *To fill it in, you put a Kinsey-type number into each box in the grid shown.*

Variable	Past	Present	Ideal
A Sexual Attraction			
B Sexual Behavior			
C Sexual Fantasies			
D Emotional Preference			
E Social Preference			
F Heterosexual/Homosexual Lifestyle			
G Self Identification			

For Variables A to E:

- 1 = Other sex only
- 2 = Other sex mostly
- 3 = Other sex somewhat more
- 4 = Both sexes
- 5 = Same sex somewhat more
- 6 = Same sex mostly
- 7 = Same sex only

For Variables F and G:

- 1 = Heterosexual only
- 2 = Heterosexual mostly
- 3 = Heterosexual somewhat more
- 4 = Hetero/Gay-Lesbian equally
- 5 = Gay/Lesbian somewhat more
- 6 = Gay/Lesbian mostly
- 7 = Gay/Lesbian only

Bisexuality:

- Klein himself acknowledges, any measurement is unlikely to be exact because sexual orientation is complex and can change over time.
- Important to note, Klein's grid complicates the question of what makes up a person's sexual identity.
- Klein's grid explicitly includes the person's self-identification, as well as their behaviors and desires.



Bisexuality:

Furthermore, Klein (1993), identified 4 main types of bisexual people:

– ***Transitional Bisexuals:***

- *Individuals moving from a heterosexual identity to a lesbian or gay one, or, less commonly, from a lesbian or gay identity to a heterosexual one.*

– ***Historical Bisexuals:***

- *Those who are now either homosexual or heterosexual but whose pasts include bisexual relationships.*



Bisexuality:

Klein's 4 main types cont.:

- **Sequential Bisexuals:**
 - *Those who have had partners of different sexes at different times in their life.*
- **Concurrent Bisexuals:**
 - *Those who are sexually active with both men and women in the same time period.*

(Rust & Paula C. Rodriguez, 2002)





*Related Health
Issues for Bisexual
Individuals*



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

- Bisexual people experience greater health disparities than the broader population, including a greater likelihood of suffering from depression and other mood or anxiety disorders.

*(Kerr, Santurri & Peters, 2013;
Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013)*



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

- When bisexual individuals do not disclose their sexual orientation, this can result in receiving incomplete health information.
 - *Example: safer sex practices with both male and female partners.*
- Unfortunately, most HIV and STI prevention programs don't adequately address the health needs of bisexual people.
 - *Examples: Bisexual men are often lumped together with gay men.*



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

There have been challenges to addressing health issues for bisexual individuals:

– *In the 1980s and 1990s, bisexuals were blamed for the spread of HIV among heterosexuals, even though the virus was primarily spread via sharing used syringes and unprotected anal sex.*

(Vladimir L. K., 1995)

– *This might be one reason why the health needs of people who are bisexual have not been adequately addressed.*

- *Individuals may not want to disclose bisexual behaviors for fear of shaming and blame.*



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Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

- Important to note, a 1994 study of data from San Francisco found bisexually identified MSMW (men who have sex with men and women) were not a “common ‘bridge’ for spreading HIV from male partners to female partners.”
- This is due to high rates of using barrier protection and extremely low rates of risky behaviors.



(Ekstrand, et al., 1994)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

- Furthermore, in the 2008 San Francisco Department of Public Health HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Annual Report, MSMWs are not mentioned at all:
 - *Their data most likely absorbed into information about MSMs.*
 - *The only time the word “bisexual” appears is as an infection source for heterosexual women.*

(San Francisco DPH, 2009)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

HIV/AIDS:

- According to CDC, in 2010, gay and bisexual men in the US, accounted for 63% of estimated new HIV infections in the United States and 78% of infections among all newly infected men.
- In 2013, Gay and bisexual men accounted for 81% of the 37,887 estimated HIV diagnoses among all males aged 13 years and older, and 65% of the 47,352 estimated diagnoses among all persons receiving an HIV diagnosis that year

(CDC, 2012; CDC, 2015)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

Estimates of HIV infections among gay and bisexual men in the US by race:

38%

- In 2010, White gay and bisexual men accounted for 38% of new HIV infection in the US. Of the 38%, Individuals aged 25 to 34 accounted for 29% of new infection
- *CDC, 2011; CDC, 2012*

36%

- In 2010, Black/African American gay and bisexual men accounted for 35% of new HIV infections in the US. Of the 36%, Individuals aged 13 to 24 accounted for 45% of new infections
- *CDC, 2011; CDC, 2012*

22%

- In 2010, Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men accounted for 22% of new HIV infection in 2010. Of the 22%, Individuals aged 25 to 34 accounted for 39% of new infection
- *CDC, 2011; CDC, 2012*



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Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

HIV/AIDS cont.:

- *In 2013, gay and bisexual men accounted for 55% of the estimated number of persons diagnosed with AIDS among all adults and adolescents in the United States.*
- *Of the estimated gay and bisexual men diagnosed with AIDS, 40% were Black/African American, 32% were White, and 23% were Hispanic/Latino.*

(CDC, 2011; CDC, 2012; CDC, 2015; Purcell, et al., 2012)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

HIV/AIDS cont.:

- *As at 2011, an estimated 311,087 gay and bisexual men with AIDS had died in the United States since the beginning of the epidemic. This represents 47% of all deaths of persons with AIDS.*

(CDC, 2011; CDC, 2012)

- *Little is known about the prevalence of female-to-female sexual transmission of HIV. However, bisexual women who have sex with men are at a greater risk of contracting HIV than those who do not.*



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

Below are the top 10 bisexual health issues based on research that explicitly includes bisexual people as their own category:

- 1. Substance use*
- 2. Alcohol use*
- 3. Sexual health*
- 4. Tobacco use*
- 5. Cancer*
- 6. Nutrition, fitness and weight*
- 7. Heart Health*
- 8. Depression and anxiety*
- 9. Social support, general emotional well-being and quality of life*
- 10. Self-harm and suicide attempts*

(Miller, et al, 2007)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

There are health considerations for older bisexual individuals:

- *Older bisexual people might be at higher risk for isolation from their community, which may eventually lead to depression.*

(Rogers et al., 2013)

- *Older bisexual people may have identified as heterosexual or homosexual for a long time and may find it difficult to engage with the rest of the bisexual community.*

(San Francisco Human Rights Commission, 2010)



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

For older bisexual individuals cont.:

- Existing social groups and coming out groups often times focus on younger people and gay men/lesbians.
 - *Possibly leaving the aging bisexual population out of their programming.*



Related Health Issues for Bisexual Individuals:

For older bisexual individuals cont.:

- There may be increased invisibility due to assumptions that older people are no longer sexual.
- While there is a growing body of research into the impact of aging on LGBT people in general, there is limited research on aging bisexual individuals specifically.

(Fredricksen-Goldstein et al., 2013)





*Biphobia
in Society*



Biphobia in Society:

- Bisexual Denial:

- *Questioning the existence of bisexuality in certain groups (e.g. bisexual men, bisexual people of color).*

- *Believing that bisexual people should ‘make their mind up’ or ‘stop sitting on the fence’.*

- *Seeing bisexual people as ‘confused’ about their sexuality.*

(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)



Biphobia in Society:

- Bisexual Invisibility:
 - *Assuming that people will either be heterosexual or lesbian/gay.*
 - *Using the term ‘homophobia’ when speaking of negative attitudes, behaviors and structures in relation to LGB people.*
 - *Assuming attraction to more than one gender is a phase to a heterosexual or lesbian/gay identity.*

(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)



Biphobia in Society:

- Bisexual Exclusion:
 - *Providing no bisexual-specific services and expecting bisexual people to use a combination of heterosexual and lesbian/gay services.*
 - *Claiming to speak for LGB, or LGBT people, and then failing to include 'B' in the name or mission statement of a group, neglecting bisexual-specific issues, and/or dropping the 'B' within materials.*



(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)



Biphobia in Society:

- Bisexual Marginalization:
 - *Allowing biphobic comments to go unchallenged when homophobic comments would be challenged.*
 - *Assuming that bisexuality is an acceptable topic for humor in a way that lesbian/gay sexualities are not.*
 - *Asking lots of questions about a person's bisexuality in ways which would be offensive to heterosexual, lesbian or gay sexuality.*

(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)



Biphobia in Society:

- Negative stereotypes:
 - *Viewing bisexual people as greedy, or wanting to 'have their cake and eat it too'.*
 - *Assuming that bisexual people are promiscuous or incapable of monogamy.*
 - *Assuming that bisexual people will be sexually interested in 'anything that moves'.*

(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)





Provider Considerations



Provider Considerations:

Disclosure of one's sexual orientation can be an important component for one's overall health and wellness:

- *All clients, including bisexual clients, have a desire to be seen as a whole person, with sexuality being part of their life.*
- *Disclosure can improve client/provider relationship, therefore can increase in trust.*



Provider Considerations:

Disclosure cont.:

- *When a client is able to disclose to a provider, that provider can respond with more sensitivity to the issues faced, and provide appropriate resources referrals.*
- *Disclosure can improve mental health and emotional wellness on behalf of the client.*

(Dobinson, et al., 2005)



Provider Considerations:

Stigma management for clients may be an on-going process:

- *Stigma management has to do with the continuous process of “coming out” to different people, in different situations and contexts.*
- *Stigma management is a strategy that should be discussed with clients in order to assist them with day to day transgressions over identity disclosure across the lifespan.*



Provider Considerations:

Stigma management cont.:

- *Providers are encouraged to discuss the ramifications of coming out to people who may not be ready to accept either their bisexual identities or substance use history.*



Provider Considerations:

Here are some recommendations for creating an affirming and welcoming environment for bisexual clients:

- *Liaise with bisexual communities on issues of equality and diversity in the same way that you liaise with lesbian, gay and trans communities.*
- *Ensure bisexual people are included amongst the speakers on panels and forums relating to LGBT communities.*
- *Include bisexual representation in all relevant working groups and initiatives.*



Provider Considerations:

Further recommendations:

- *Include bisexuality in all policies and procedures, explicitly within the diversity implications section of every document and policy.*
- *Separate biphobia out from homophobia, recognizing that there are specific issues facing bisexual people.*
 - *Examples: lack of validation of their existence, stereotypes of promiscuity, and pressure to be either gay or straight.*



Provider Considerations:

Further recommendations cont.:

- *Recognize how biphobia and bisexual invisibility can creating negative outcomes for bisexual people.*
- *Be clear, when talking about bisexual people, whether you are defining bisexuality by attraction, behavior and/or identity.*
- *Address bisexual-specific experiences of domestic violence given evidence that bisexual people in ‘same-gender’ relationships are at risk.*

(The Bisexuality Report, 2012)

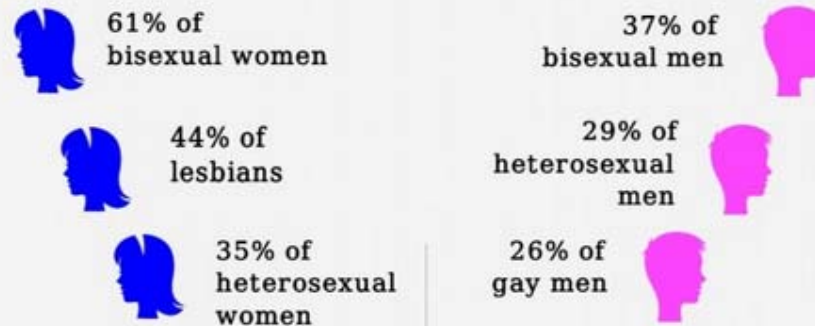




Provider Considerations:

High Rate of Violence Against Bisexuals *A Community at Risk*

Percentage of women and men who report experiencing rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner*



*The National Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence Survey: 2010

<http://www.bisexualweek.com/publicpolicypriorities/>

Provider Considerations:

Interventions proven to be effective:

Intervention Title	Targeted Concern (s)	Description
CBFT with bisexual couples (Deacon, Reinke, & Viers, 2007).	Addressing behaviors, cognitions, and emotions specific to bisexual couple.	Bisexuals are faced with bias and discrimination and therapists need to understand the challenges and strengths to be able to help bisexual couples. Focus on behaviors, cognitions, and emotional issues specific to bisexual couples. This can include: communication training, emotional expressiveness training and cognitive restructuring.
Developmental counseling and therapy (Pope, Mobley & Myers, 2010)	Sexual orientation conflicts	An approach that can effectively address sexual orientation conflicts with clients while exploring and valuing the various aspects of clients' selves.





*Questions and
Comments?*



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Resources:

- BiNet USA: <http://www.binetusa.org/>
- The Bisexual Resource Center: www.biresource.net
- Bisexual.com: www.bisexual.com
- Shybi.com: www.shybi.com (women), www.shybi-guys.com (men)
- American Institute of Bisexuality: www.bisexual.org
- Journal of Bisexuality: www.tandfonline.com/toc/wjbi20/current



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