

- Bisexual marginalisation, failing to engage with bisexual people/groups in policy and practice, or prioritising lesbian and gay issues over bisexual ones.
- Negative stereotypes, assuming that bisexual people are promiscuous, spreaders of disease, incapable of monogamy, a threat to relationships/families or sexually available to anyone.

### Bisexual health

Of all the larger sexual identity groups, bisexual people have the worst mental health problems, including high rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidality this is attributed to experiences of biphobia and bisexual invisibility. While there has been little research into bisexual people's physical health, links between mental and physical health suggest that bisexual people should also be considered more at risk of physical health problems

### Specifics of bisexual experience

Bisexuality has been acknowledged to be an 'invisible', 'excluded' or 'silent' sexuality within several domains including: lesbian and gay communities, sex research Psychology and psychotherapy, It has been argued that bisexual invisibility is the main problem confronting bisexual people accessing services.

### Experience:

"I've discovered an amazing group of people who also identify as Bi and now i feel part of a community for the first time in my life I can support other people who are just making the first tentative steps towards bi-identity. I've become very involved"(20 yr. woman in wakiso)

"For 26 years I have been called names, and I wanted to kill myself, but when I met with a counselor, he told me I should not be scared, I met with a group of other Bisexuals and now is happy and I talk to people about my sexuality it feels good to be out."(28yr woman in Maska)

### Coming out

As with lesbian and gay people, issues of coming out and self-disclosure are likely to be of relevance to bisexual people, with people coming to different decisions about who to tell about their bisexuality and when and how to do this. Clearly, for bisexual people, this process is greatly impacted by bisexual invisibility, stereotypical and biphobia, and therefore bisexual people may have specific concerns about how they will be viewed by others if or when they do come out. They may also feel pressure to come out as gay or lesbian rather than bisexual due to the popular binary perception of sexuality, and the greater visibility of lesbian and gay communities.

### Damaging Myths.

Bisexuality has long been misunderstood and marginalized, leading to many damaging. Here are some truths.

Bisexuality is real; it is not a delusion and it is not necessarily a phase. Although a bisexuality identity is claimed by some people during a period of transition or exploration in their lives, the idea that Bisexuality is inherently a phase is rooted in the myth that everyone is" really" only attracted to one gender.

# promoting BI VISIBILITY in Uganda



**I've been with  
guys and girls  
before, but am I  
really bisexual?**

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## A note on terminology

The term “LGBTI” is commonly used as shorthand for Lesbian, gay, Bisexual, Transgender community. It is important to note that many communities have terms to mean LGBTI in Uganda “Kuchu” is commonly used.

The terms Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual refer to someone’s sexual orientation,

**TRANSGENDER:** is a term related to gender identity, or someone’s sense of being a man or woman, boy or girl. Transgender people are heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual.

**GAY:** refers to a man who is romantically and emotionally attracted to other men.

**LESBIAN:** Refers to a woman who is romantically and emotionally attracted to other women.

**Bisexual:** refers to someone who is romantically and emotionally attracted to men and women. Being bisexual does not necessarily mean someone is involved in multiple relationships at once.

**Note:** Some men and women may engage in same-sex behavior yet still identify as heterosexual, and some lesbian or gay people may have sexual relationships with people of the other sex. It is important not to make assumptions or judge people when it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity.

- Bisexual people’s experiences differ in important ways from those of heterosexual people, and from those of lesbian and gay people.
- Biphobia is distinct from homophobia.
- Bisexual people often face discrimination and prejudice from within heterosexual, and lesbian and gay, communities. This can be obscured by LGBT amalgamation.
- Bisexual populations have significantly higher levels of distress and mental health difficulties than equivalent heterosexual or lesbian/gay populations.

### Definition.

Bisexuality generally refers to having attraction to more than one gender. It is a broad term which may include the following groups and more:

- People who see themselves as attracted to ‘both men and women’
- People who are mostly attracted to one gender but recognise this is not exclusive.
- People who dispute the idea that there are only two genders and that people are attracted to one, the other, or both. Not everybody who is attracted to more than one gender describes themselves as bisexual. There are many reasons for this including:

- *common prejudices against bisexuality*
- *Different cultural understandings of sexuality.*
- *Desire to fit in with lesbian, gay or heterosexual communities.*

## Biphobia

Biphobia refers to negative attitudes, behaviors and structures specifically directed towards bisexual people or anyone who is attracted to more than one gender. Attitudes to bisexual people are often found to be even more negative than those towards other minority groups.

### Common forms of biphobia include.

#### ***Bisexual denial***

Questioning the existence of genuinely bisexual men, or seeing bisexual people as ‘confused’ about their sexuality.

#### ***Bisexual invisibility***

Assuming that people are either heterosexual or lesbian/gay, or assuming people’s sexuality on the basis of their current partner.

- Bisexual exclusion claiming to speak for LGB or LGBT people but then neglecting bisexual specific issues, or including bisexual people in research but amalgamating their responses with those of lesbians and gay men.