

Self-Care Tips

Bisexuals can also improve their mental health by practicing self-care. Here are some self-care suggestions:

- Celebrate bisexuality through relevant movies, books, culture, and history.
- Wear bi+-pride colors or incorporate them into your lifestyle, whether through home decorations, car bumper stickers, or office furnishings.
- Reach out to other members of the bi+ community, whether online or in person.
- Find some quiet time by taking mindful walks, practicing meditation, or doing yoga.
- Express yourself through writing stories, poetry, journal entries, and creating visual and musical art.
- Boost your self-esteem with positive, daily affirmations (“I am bisexual and proud!”).
- Practice healthy habits, such as eating nutritious meals, regularly exercising, and limiting the intake of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

References

San Francisco Human Rights Commission. (2011). “Bisexual Invisibility: Impacts and Recommendations.” <http://sf-hrc.org/reports-research-investigations>

The Open University. (2012). “The Bisexuality Report: Bisexual Inclusion in LGBT Equality and Diversity.” <http://www.open.ac.uk/>

National Resources

Bisexuality-Aware Professionals Directory
<http://www.bizone.org/bap/>

BiNet USA
800-585-9368
www.binetusa.org

The GLBT National Help Center Hotline
1-888-843-4564

The Trevor Project Lifeline (for youth ages 13-24)
1-866-488-7386

What is Bi+?

The BRC uses “bisexual” and “bi+” as umbrella terms for people who recognize and honor their potential for sexual and emotional attraction to more than one gender (bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, fluid, queer, asexual, and other free-identifiers). We celebrate and affirm the diversity of identity and expression regardless of labels.

How to Support Us

The BRC is primarily funded through the generosity of our donors. There are many ways you can give.

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mental health
in the bi+
community

bi+ antagonism,
bi+ erasure, and
getting help

brc 
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Why are mental health issues important to bi+ people?

Research suggests that bisexuals suffer worse mental health outcomes than heterosexuals, lesbians, and gay men. These outcomes include:

- Higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders
- Higher reporting of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts
- Lower levels of social support
- Being less likely to be comfortable with their sexuality or be “out” to friends and family compared to lesbians and gay men
- Higher rates of substance use, including cigarette smoking and heavy drinking

What causes these poor mental health outcomes?

While the exact reasons may differ from person-to-person, research suggests that there are two common elements involved:

- Bi+ antagonism (or biphobia*)
- Bisexual erasure or invisibility

**The BRC uses “bi+ antagonism” instead of “biphobia” in this brochure to limit abelist language and disassociate folks with clinical phobias with folks with antagonist viewpoints.*

Bi+ Antagonism

Bi+ antagonism is the fear of, hatred towards, or discrimination against bisexuality. Common stereotypes associated with bi+ antagonism include:

- Bisexuals are sexually greedy, promiscuous, and carriers of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Bisexuals are untrustworthy or traitors to the LGBTQ community, because they can take advantage of “heterosexual privilege.”
- Bisexuals cannot be monogamous because they are attracted to everyone.
- Bisexual women only aim to seek sexual attention from heterosexual men.
- Bisexual men are too afraid to fully “come out” and therefore are “really just gay.”

Bi+ antagonism isolates bisexuals from both heterosexual and LGBTQ communities. It also prevents bisexuals from feeling positive and open about their sexuality, which in turn contributes to the higher reporting of anxiety, depression, and self-harm, as well as lower reporting of coming out.

Bisexual Erasure or Invisibility

Bisexual erasure or invisibility is ignoring, removing, or re-explaining the evidence of bisexuality. Common examples associated with bisexual erasure or invisibility include:

- Denying that bisexuality exists as a real orientation, such as stating that it’s “just a phase” or simply for experimental purposes as one “eventually” labels oneself as gay/lesbian or heterosexual.

- Assuming that a bisexual person is heterosexual if paired with partner of a different gender, or gay/lesbian if paired a partner of the same gender.
- An organization claiming it is LGBTQ-inclusive, but not offering bi-specific programs and resources.
- Mislabeling bisexuals as lesbian/gay or heterosexual even when they are openly “out” as bisexual.
- Using phrases like “lesbian and gay” or “lesbian, gay, and trans” in place of LGBTQ.

Like bi+ antagonism, bisexual erasure or invisibility has profound effects on mental health in that it also invalidates and isolates bisexuals.

Seeking Help and Support

Talk to someone: It is important for bisexuals who are experiencing anxiety, depression, and/or suicidal thoughts to seek professional help as soon as possible. Locating a bi-positive mental health provider may take time, but they are out there. The end of this brochure provides some resources that can help.

Find a bi+ community: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Ontario, Canada discovered that bisexuals associate positive mental health outcomes with social support, self-acceptance, volunteering, and belonging in a bisexual community. You can locate a group near you at www.biresource.org/find-a-bi-group/. More information about mental health and bisexuality can also be found at www.bihealthmonth.org.