

# Bisexual Crime Victims: Least Visible, Most at Risk

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Loree Cook-Daniels and michael munson  
July 2019

# Thank you OVC !

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# Welcome & Housekeeping



- Take care of yourself
- PPTs

# FORGE Webinar Leads

**Loree Cook-Daniels**

Policy & Program Director



**michael munson**

Executive Director



# FORGE's Role in Resource Center

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- One of eight population groups
- FORGE leads the LGBTQ working group
- National transgender anti-violence group
- Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin



FORGE.trans

Facebook



@FORGEforward

Twitter



@FORGE\_forward

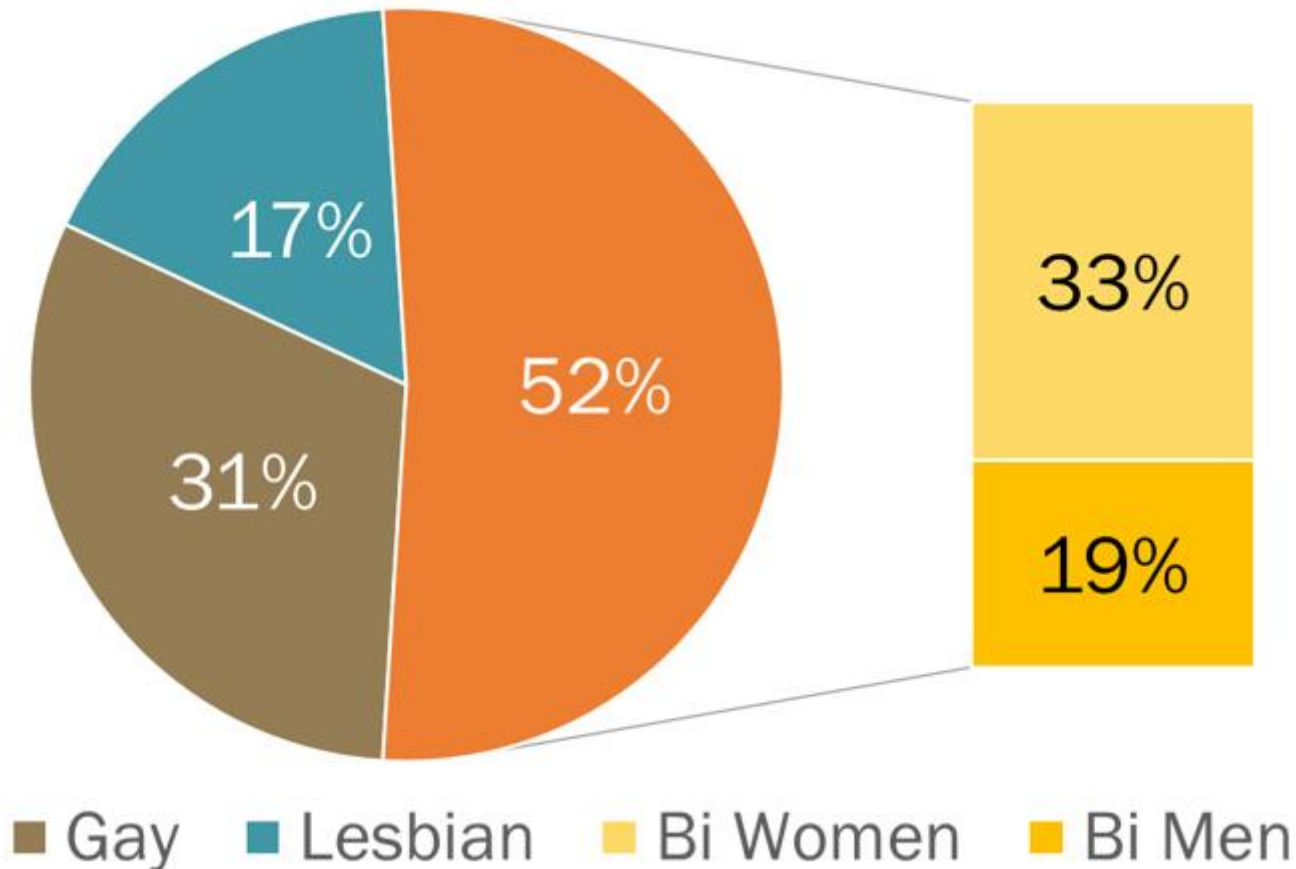
Instagram

# Agenda

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- Makeup of the LGBTQ community
- Bisexuality: Definitions and Data
- Invisibility
- Disparities (victimization, health, other)
- Best or worst of both worlds?
- Service provider barriers
- What providers can do to help
- Take home messages

# Makeup of U.S. LGBT Community







# 2015 White House Bisexual Community Policy Briefing



# Definitions and Data


# What about trans people and gender diversity?



# Our definition of bisexual

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A person who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender and to individuals of other genders.



*“I call myself bisexual because I acknowledge that I have in myself the potential to be attracted – romantically and/or sexually – to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.”*

# U.S. Bisexual more female, POC

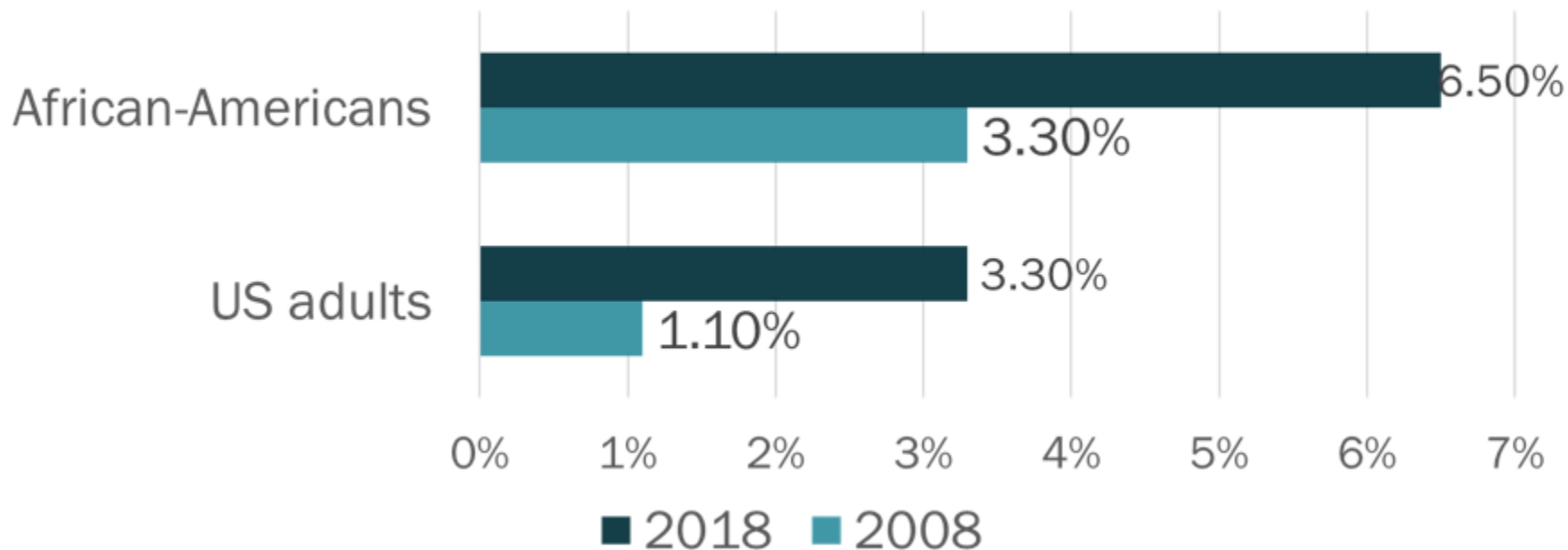
Latest (2018) U.S. data on bisexuals

- By gender:
  - 5.6% of women identify as bisexual
  - 0.6% of men
- By race (selected):
  - 2.5% of white individuals
  - 6.5% of African-American individuals

## LGBT Map: Invisible Majority

# % of bisexuals is growing (1 of 2)

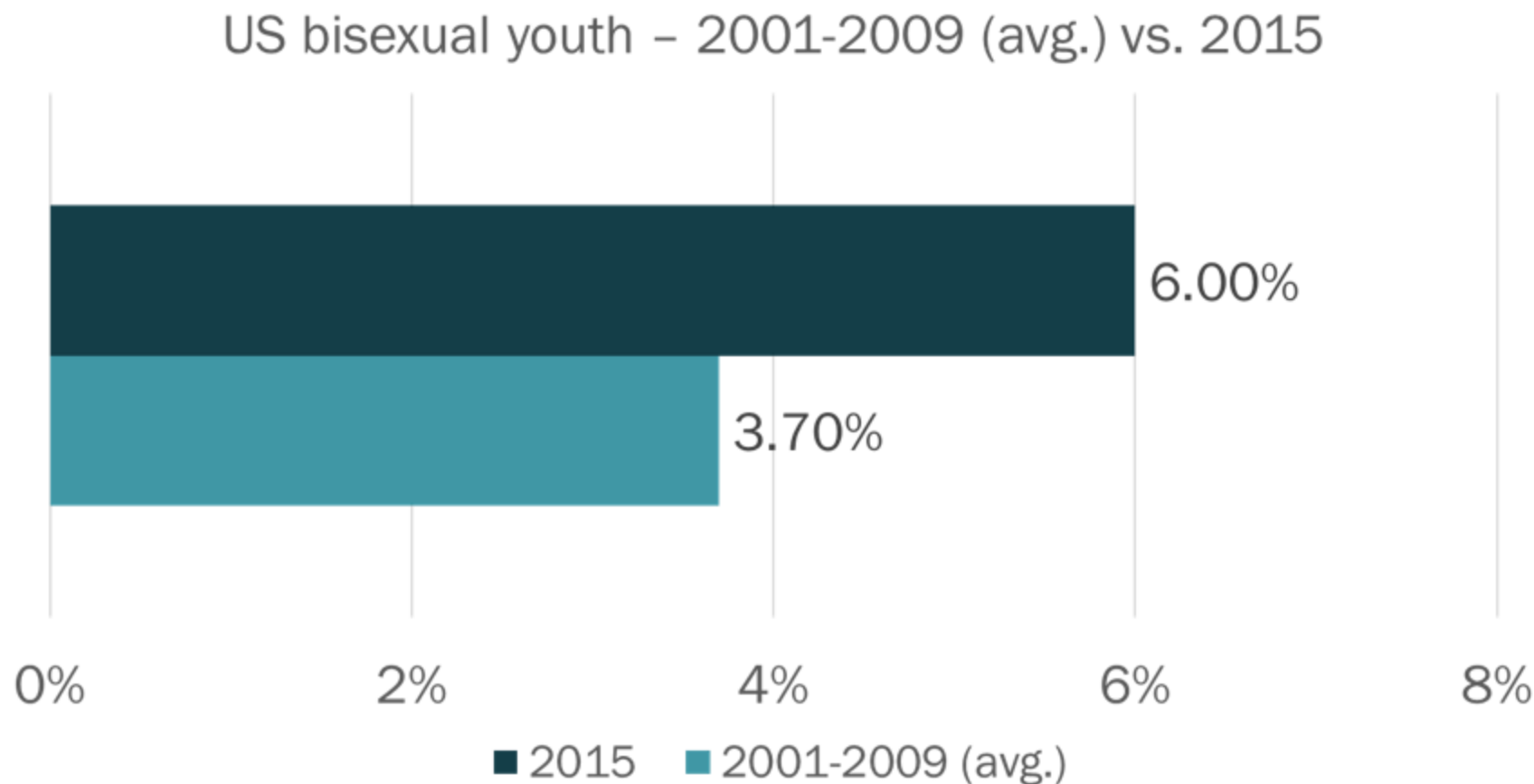
US bisexuals – 2008 vs. 2018



## 2018 NORC Survey Results



# % of bisexuals is growing (2 of 2)



# More likely to have opposite-sex partners

- 84% bisexuals in a committed relationship are involved with someone of the opposite sex
- 4% have trans partner/spouse (in addition to 84%)

*Why?*

- Most of the population is heterosexual, so they would be more likely to choose an opposite-sex partner (bisexual or not)

## LGBT Map: Invisible Majority



Faith  
Cheltenham,  
  
Bisexual  
Activist

# Invisibility

“

*I'm a bisexual woman married to a straight man, so I often get made to feel like I don't belong in LGBT communities because we look like a straight couple...*



*...Also, I'm disabled and usually need my husband with me to access any community events, so I don't have the option of hiding."*



# Invisibility:

## Superpower or Slowly Killing Many of Us?



- TEDxOshkosh talk on bisexuality invisibility by Misty Gedlinske

[youtube.com/watch?v=Oa6AnOCQD50](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Oa6AnOCQD50)



## Pansexual community members

# Disparities

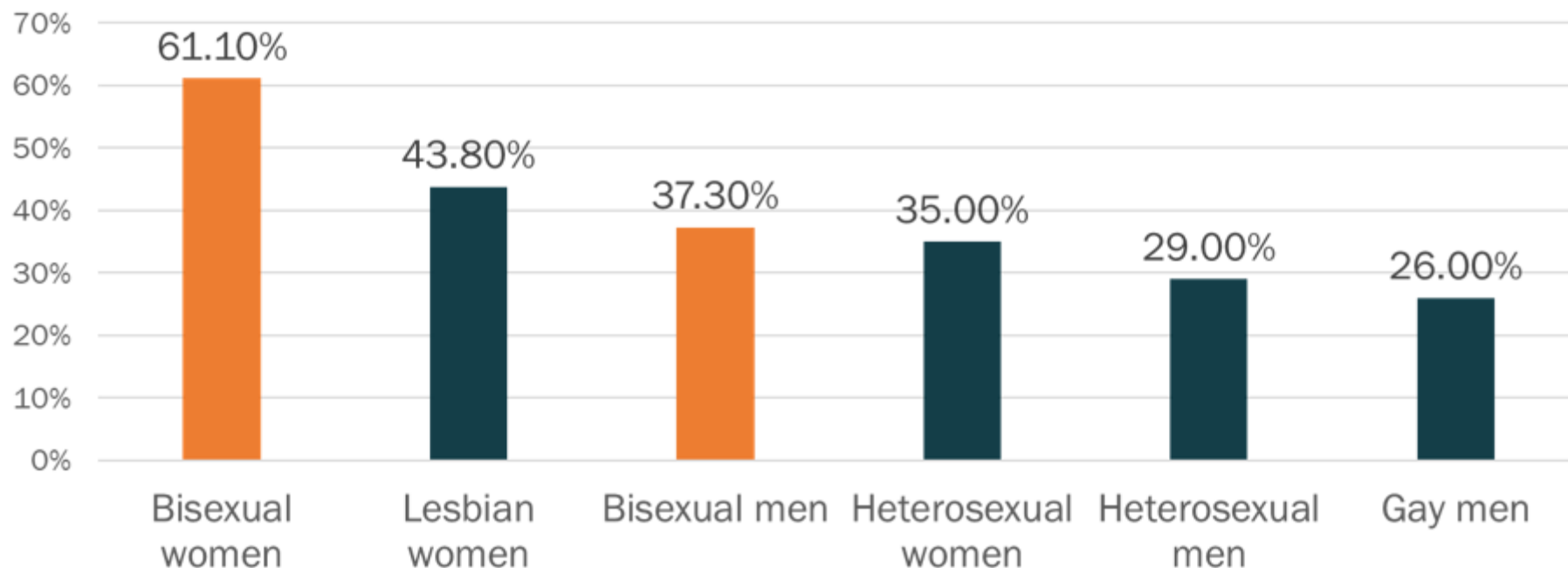
# Victimization disparities

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- Hate crimes *may* be lower (due to invisibility)
- We will look mostly at interpersonal violence by known perpetrators
- What we *do not* know (yet) is whether such violence is higher if the perpetrator knows the victim identifies as bisexual or has relationships with both men and women
- But the disparities are interesting.....

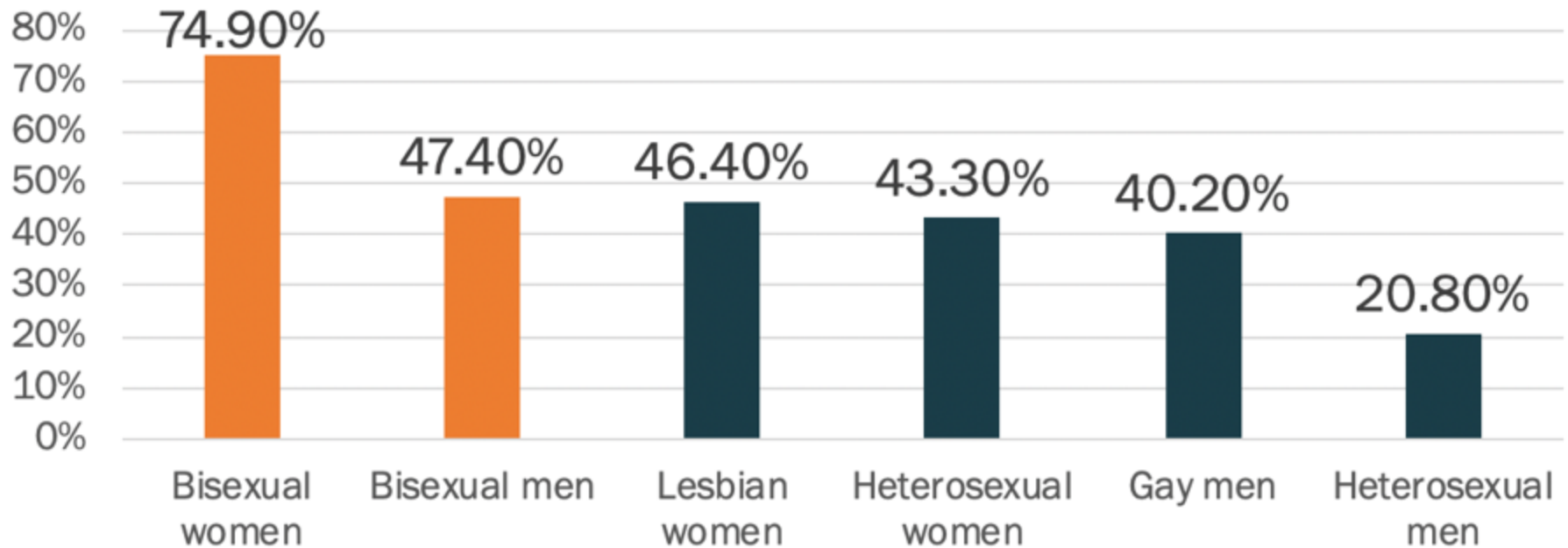
# Intimate Partner Violence

(Rape, Physical Violence, Stalking -- Lifetime)



2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

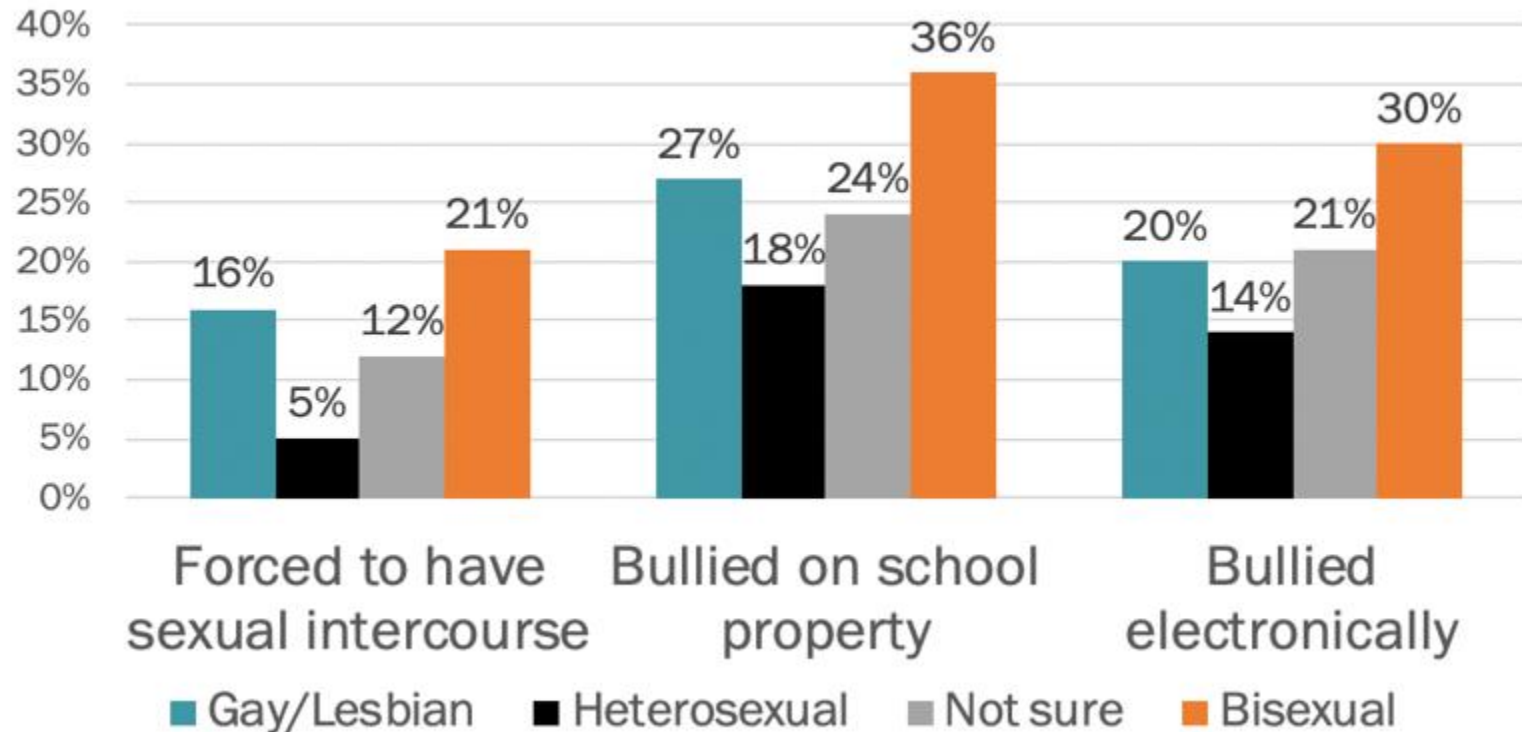
# Sexual violence other than rape (Lifetime)



2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey



# Victimization among youth by sexual orientation



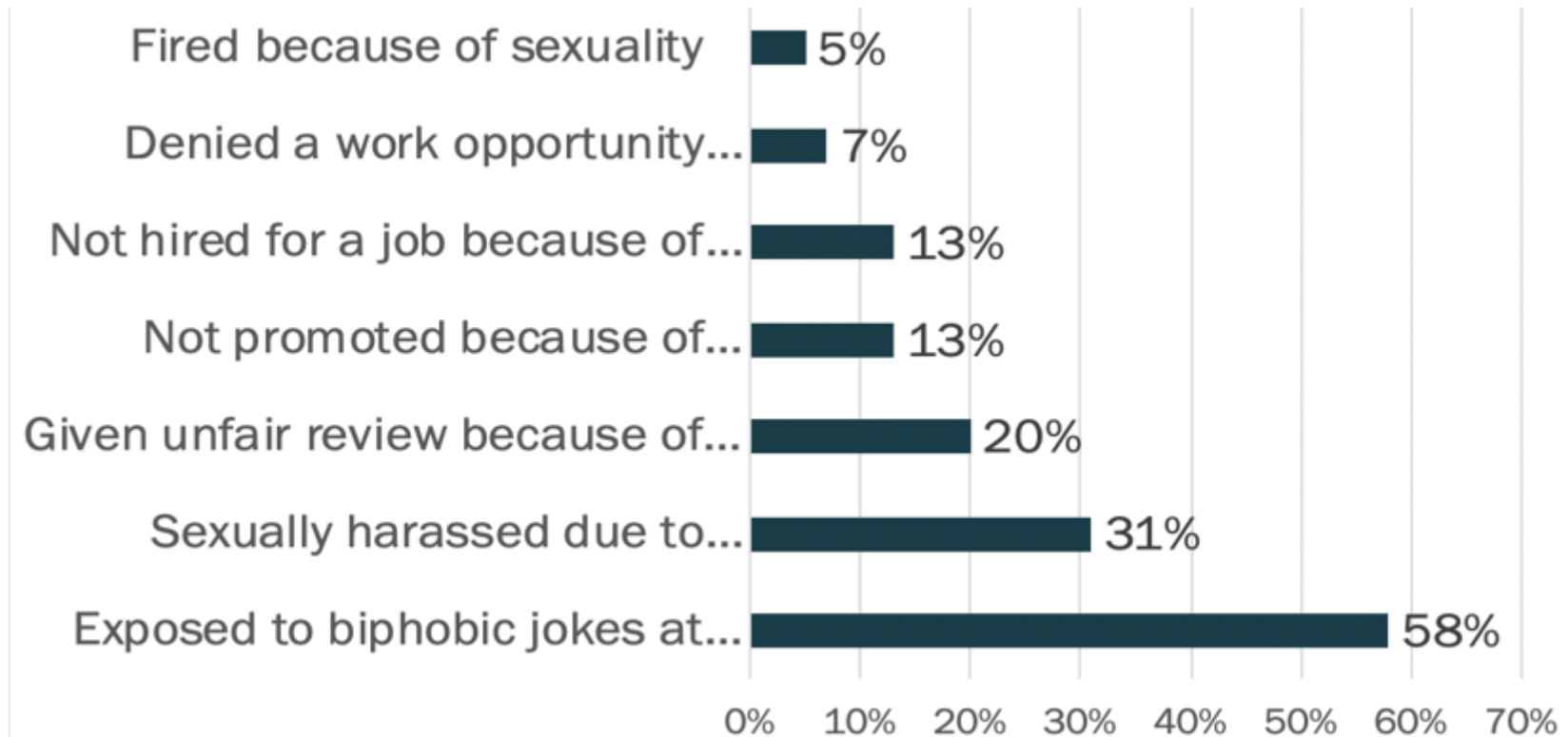
## Research Brief: Bisexual Youth Experience



*I got thrown down stairs, punched, and threatened with rape by boys for coming out as bi. They said raping me would take away the lesbian parts. I'd tried several times to complain to the principal. I reported what these guys were doing...*

“*...but all he said was that since I'd done this foolish thing and come out, he could guarantee no protection, I'd brought it on myself. So when these losers saw my complaining wasn't getting me anywhere and they weren't getting in trouble, they got worse and worse.*”

# Employment problems



## Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them

*Nearly every single time I've come out as a bisexual woman in the workplace, I've experienced severe sexual harassment. Coworkers have made inappropriate jokes, made sexual advances, and shown me sexually graphic photos. I've had several jobs where I felt unsafe....*

*“...Early in my career, I brought such concerns to my employers’ human resources departments, but received little, if any, support. One told me that I brought harassment upon myself simply because I was out. Another said that my experience didn’t qualify as sexual harassment because I am bisexual....”*

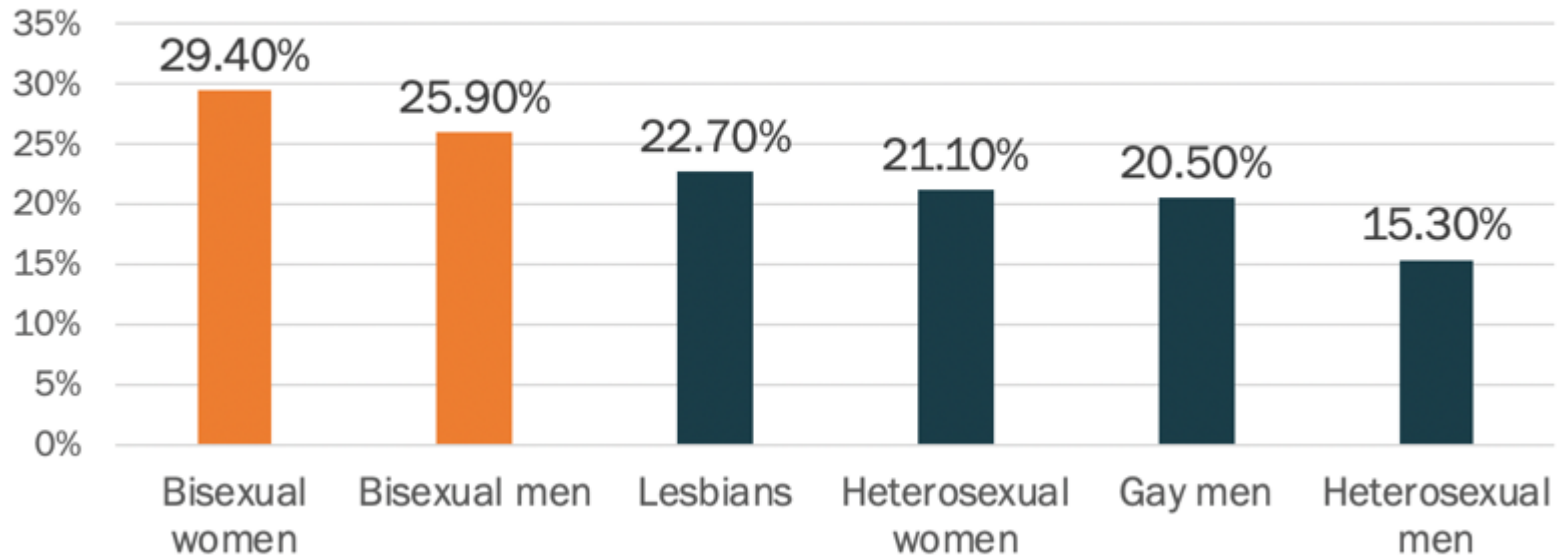


*...I'm a good worker, an excellent worker, but at times when I've asked for fair treatment, I've been denied. It's unfair to have to choose between being visible and being safe at work. I shouldn't have to choose between being employed and being open about who I am.*



# Poverty Rates

% Americans aged 18-44 below federal poverty level



## New Patterns of Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community

# Lack Health Insurance:

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- 22.5% of bisexuals
- 16.0% of lesbians/gay men
- 16.5% of heterosexuals

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Physical and Mental Health Disparities (1 of 2)

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- Higher rates of hypertension and cardiovascular disease
- Higher rates of some cancers
- Higher rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Higher rates of poor or fair physical health

# Physical and Mental Health Disparities (2 of 2)

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- Higher rates of substance use, smoking, and risky drinking
- Many times higher rates of lifetime mood disorder
- Higher rates of suicidality for bi men, bi women, and bi youth



Bisexual  
community  
members

# Best or worst of both worlds?

# Feel part of a community?

UK bisexuals:

- Feel part of the LGBT community:
  - 66% said “a little” or “not at all”
- Feel part of the straight community:
  - 69% said “a little” or “not at all”

The Bisexuality Report: Bisexual inclusion in LGBT equality and diversity



*Being bi has never really been an issue for me or those close to me, but other people's assumptions really annoy me. People tend to think I'm gay unless they know I'm with an opposite-sex partner, and then they assume I'm straight, which makes me feel invisible....*



*...But then, when I say I'm bi, they assume I'm into threesomes and have open relationships. When they realize that's not the case, they sometimes seem to think my sexuality's irrelevant since I'm not 'doing anything about it', and that I should stop 'going on about it.'*

# Can access “LGBT” resources?

- US LGBs who have ever attended a Pride event:
  - 33% of bisexuals
  - 72% of gay men
  - 61% of lesbians
- Bisexual youth are less aware of GSAs in their schools and LGBT community centers in their localities

## Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them

# Being out?

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- 25% of bisexuals have never told anyone they are bi, compared to 4% of gay men and lesbians
- 59% of bisexuals are not out to any co-workers, compared to 24% of gay men and lesbians
- Youth out to schoolmates:
  - 54% of bisexual youth
  - 72% of lesbian/gay youth

# Results...

*“And not coming out results in isolation, loneliness, and poor mental health outcomes. The cycle is clear, and vicious. Without solid community support and targeted services, bisexual [people] are left with no good choices.”*

# Service provider barriers

# Question #1: Do I come out?

In the US, many people do not come out to their physicians:

- 39% of bisexual men
- 33% of bisexual women
- 13% of lesbian women
- 10% of gay men

Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People  
and How to Remedy Them

# Q #2: Who do I come out as?

In the UK, to access services...

- 66% of bisexuals said they need to pass as straight, and
- 42% said they needed to pass as gay or lesbian.

Bisexual people's experiences of and ideas for improving services



# Encountering biphobia

(UK stats) While accessing services, 48% of respondents stated they had experienced biphobic comments and 38% had experienced unwanted sexual comments about them being bisexual. Biphobic threats had been experienced by 7%. Physical assault and sexual assault while accessing a service had each affected 3% of respondents.

Bisexual people's experiences of  
and ideas for improving services

*“A nurse refused to treat me due to being bisexual. My mother overheard him saying to the senior nurse, ‘I refuse to treat her, she’s not normal and just a greedy bitch, she needs to decide what gender she loves, it’s unnatural to love both.’”*

“

*“I was lectured by a general practitioner [doctor] about how by being bisexual I was exposing myself to all kinds of STD’s and that I was inviting sexual assault.”*



## Bisexual community members

# Master status / stereotyping

Over a quarter of therapists seen by bisexual clients in the U.S. erroneously assumed that sexual identity was relevant to the goal of therapy when the client didn't agree, and around a sixth saw bisexuality as being part of an illness. 7% attempted conversion to heterosexuality and 4% to being lesbian or gay.

The Bisexuality Report: Bisexual inclusion in LGBT equality and diversity



*Mental health professionals diagnose people based on biphobic assumptions (for example bisexual = confused and promiscuous, so perhaps the patient is bipolar or has borderline personality disorder). I know this is a very common, therefore I have never come out to a mental health professional.*

“  
*A psychiatric nurse asked me what I'd done at the weekend and I mentioned I'd been at a bisexual event, and as a result came out as bisexual. He seemed fine at the time but when I came to see my counselor...*



*...I found out that my referral letter said that I had unresolved issues with my sexuality. I hadn't said anything like that! I felt so betrayed, knowing that he'd secretly been judging me like that."*



# Fear of trying again


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“As happens with other marginalized groups, lower confidence levels in accessing services, combined with isolation from communities, can become a downward spiral of deteriorating mental health and wellbeing.”

# “Even” LGBTQ services have barriers

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“I have been referred to as a weird hybrid, told that I can decide whether I’m gay or straight. Told how lucky I am to be. Told that if I don’t want abuse I need to pick one and it will keep happening till I do (‘cos being bisexual means I deserve abuse, right?). This was just from one service, at the time the only service in my area.”



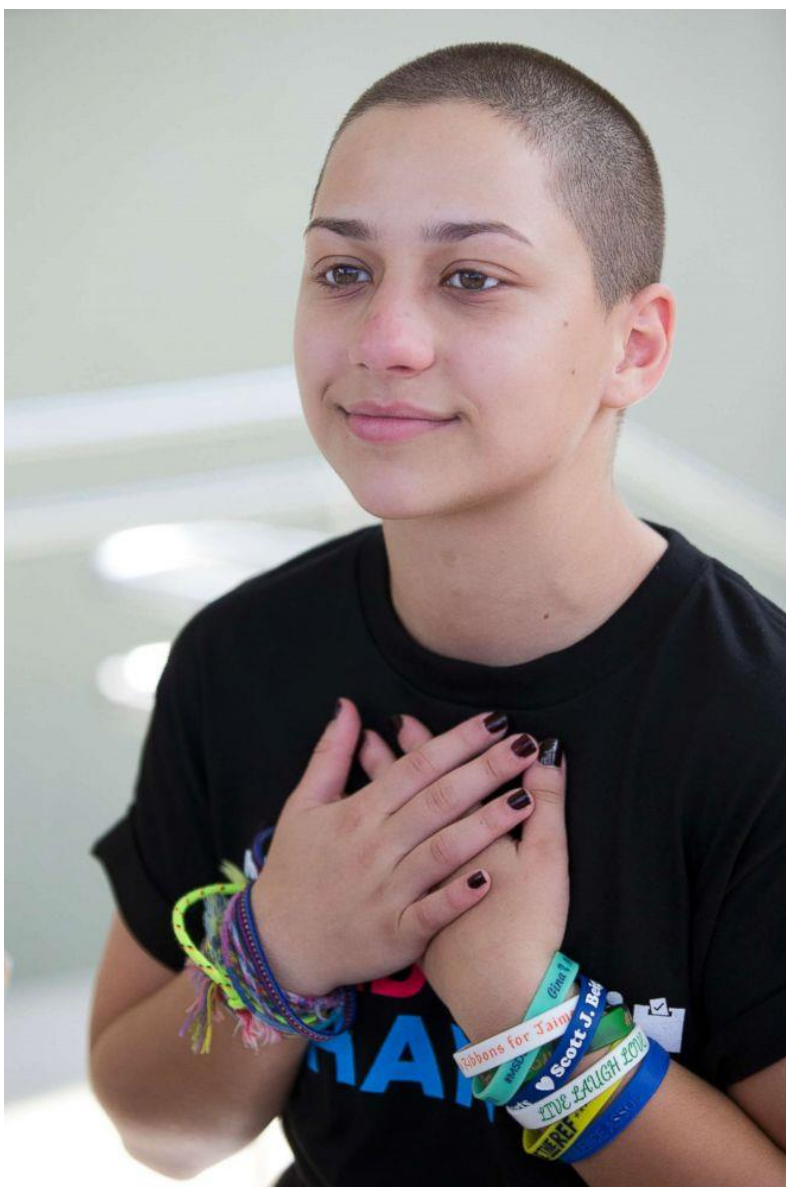
*“Being told that if I want support I should access resources for straight people as I ‘don’t count’ or I have ‘passing straight privilege’ and therefore resources can be allocated to people who ‘actually need it’.”*



# Loraine Hutchins and ABilly Jones-Hennin

# What providers can do to help





Emma  
Gonzalez

*Gun control activist*

# Make bisexuality visible (1 of 2)

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- Make “bisexual” an available option on your intake forms
- When you do “LGBT” presentations, include a bisexual person and/or bisexual case studies
- Display bi-specific materials in your waiting rooms and offices

# Make bisexuality visible (2 of 2)

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- Observe Bi Visibility Day (every September 23<sup>rd</sup>) and Bisexual Awareness Week (week around 9/23)
- When appropriate, use openly bisexual people and quotes in your social media



# Make bisexuality audible

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- If you ask about sexual orientation, make sure you include “bisexual” (instead of just LGBT)
- In public presentations, always include “biphobia” along with “homophobia” and “transphobia”
- Ask about bisexual issues in public discussions just to raise awareness

# Make bisexuality safe

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- Immediately address bisexual “jokes” and any biased statements by staff or clients
- If there is a local bi group in your area, ask them to come train or hold a roundtable discussion

# Do NOT

- Use “gay and transgender” – instead, spell out Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
- Use “gay or straight” when discussing couples – instead, use “different-sex” and “same-sex” to make space for bisexuals
- Over-apologize if you fail to accurately label someone; apologize once and try to do better



# Resources

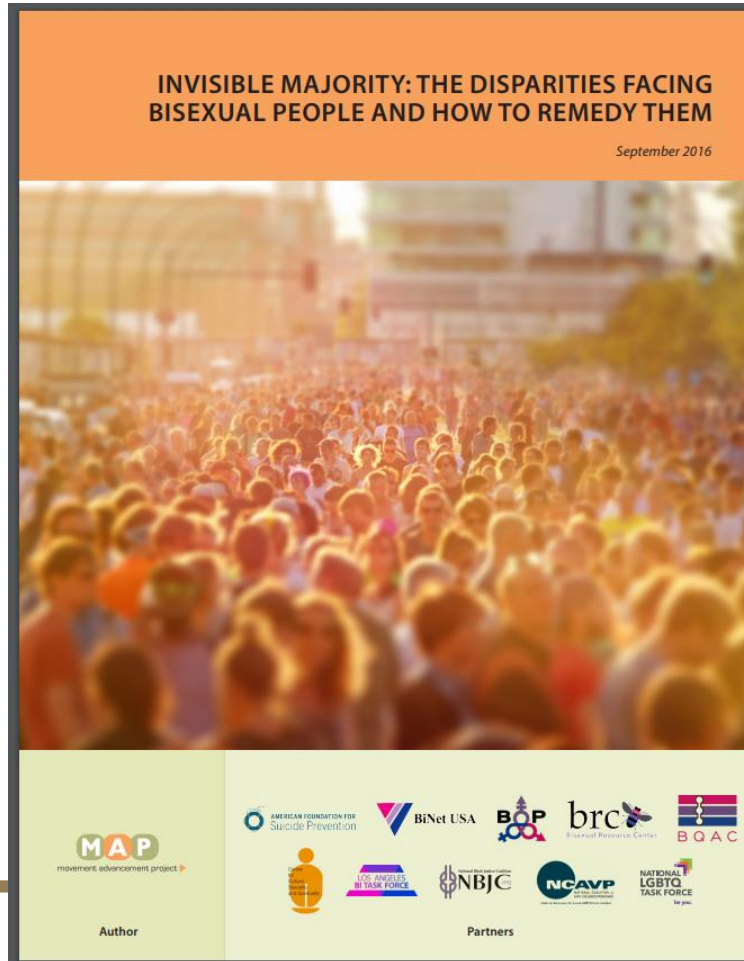


Robyn Ochs

*Bisexual Activist*  
[robynochs.com](http://robynochs.com)

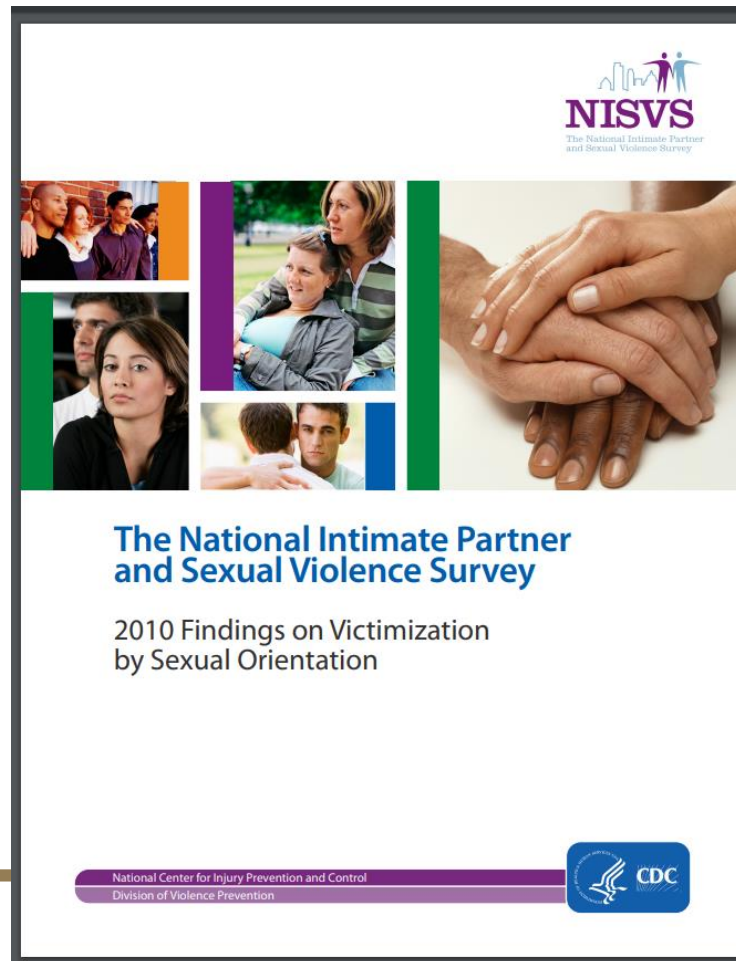
# Resource: Invisible Majority

## MAP: Invisibility Report



# Resource: NISVS

## CDC: NISVS Study



# Resource: Trevor Project

## Trevor Project: Bisexual Research Brief



### The Trevor Project Research Brief: Bisexual Youth Experience

March 2019

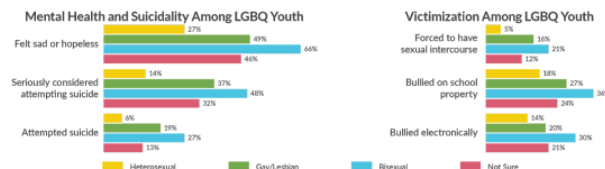
#### Summary

This March marks the 6th Annual Bisexual Health Awareness Month. Bisexual youth comprise a substantial proportion of youth who are part of the LGBTQ community. An analysis of national data from the 2015–2017 Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that 7% of youth identified as bisexual, compared to 2% as gay or lesbian and 4% as not sure. Bisexual youth may be exposed to more stigma from both the majority population, for not being heterosexual, and by the gay and lesbian communities for not having exclusive same-gender relationships and attractions. Despite the prevalence of bisexual identities among youth, there is currently a lack of information on outcomes specific to bisexual youth in the United States. This research brief focuses on understanding mental health and victimization associated with bisexual youth using national data from the YRBS.

#### Results

**Mental health disparities exist for bisexual youth, with almost half seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months.** Nearly 2 in 3, (66%) of bisexual youth felt sad and hopeless for two or more weeks in a row in the past 12 months, compared to 27% heterosexually-identified youth, 49% gay and lesbian youth, and 46% of youth who were not sure of their sexual identity. Further, 48% of bisexual youth seriously considered suicide, 40% have made a plan for how they would attempt suicide, and 27% have attempted suicide.

**More than one in three bisexual youth reported being bullied at school, and one in five reported being forced to have sexual intercourse.** Among bisexual youth, 21% (24% female and 8% male) reported having been forced to have sexual intercourse. This is compared to 5% of heterosexually-identified youth (9% female and 2% male), 16% gay and lesbian (15% female and 17% male), and 12% youth who were not sure of their sexual identity (11% female and 13% male). Additionally, 36% and 30% of bisexual youth reported having been bullied on school property and electronically bullied, respectively, in the past 12 months.





# Resource: Williams Institute - Poverty

## Williams Institute: LGB Poverty Update

### New Patterns of Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community



M.V. Lee Badgett, Laura E. Durso, & Alyssa Schneebaum

June 2013

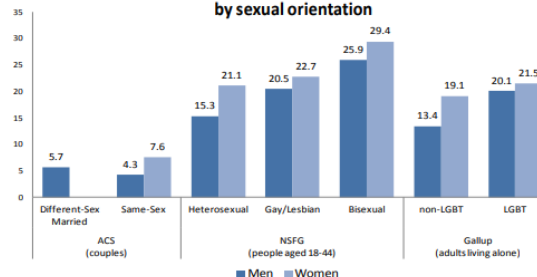
#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A severe global recession has brought heightened attention to poverty in the United States as the poverty rate rose over time, leveling off at 15.0% in 2011. Recent U.S. Census Bureau data demonstrates the persistence of higher poverty rates for African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, children, single mothers, people with disabilities, and other groups, for example. An earlier Williams Institute study and other research showed that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people were also more vulnerable to being poor, and this study updates and extends that earlier report.

This study draws on recent data from four datasets to estimate recent poverty rates for LGB people in all walks of life: same-sex couples (2010 American Community Survey), LGB people aged 18-44 (2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth), LGB adults in California (2007-2009 California Health Interview Survey) and single LGBT-identified adults (2012 Gallup Daily Tracking Poll). We compare the LGB or LGBT (including transgender people) rates to poverty rates for heterosexual people.

Data on couples suggests that same-sex couples are more vulnerable to poverty in general than are different-sex married couples.

Summary of poverty rates from national surveys  
by sexual orientation



1

# Resource: SFHRC–LGBT Advisory Committee

## HRC: Bisexual Invisibility



San Francisco  
Human Rights  
Commission  
LGBT Advisory Committee

### **Bisexual Invisibility: Impacts and Recommendations**

25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 252-2500  
[www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights](http://www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights)



# Resource: MAP

## MAP: Bisexual Transgender People

### A CLOSER LOOK: BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

September 2017



movement advancement project

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



#### INTRODUCTION

There is little data on the experiences of bisexual transgender\* people. Research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is growing, but when the data are disaggregated to look at the disparities or resilience of particular groups under the LGBT umbrella, the sample size is often too small to analyze with confidence.

The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey,<sup>1</sup> conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality offers a unique opportunity to examine the lives, experiences, disparities, and resilience of bisexual transgender people. This report analyzes data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, documents disparities for bisexual people and offers recommendations for remedying those disparities.

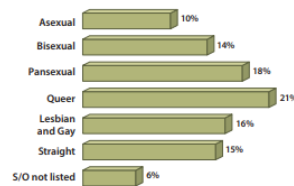
#### Who Are Bisexual Transgender People?

One-third of respondents to the survey (32%) identified as bisexual or pansexual,<sup>2</sup> as shown in Figure 1, compared to 16% who identified as lesbian or gay,<sup>3</sup> 21% who identified as queer, and 15% who identified as heterosexual.<sup>2</sup> Transgender women were more likely to identify as bisexual than were transgender men (20% vs. 12%), while there was little gender difference in the respondents who identified as pansexual.<sup>3</sup>

Younger people were also more likely to identify as bisexual or pansexual compared to older respondents; 36% of transgender people 18-24 identified as bisexual or pansexual, compared to 31% of people ages 25-44, 31% of people ages 45-64, and 26% of people ages 65 and older.<sup>4</sup>

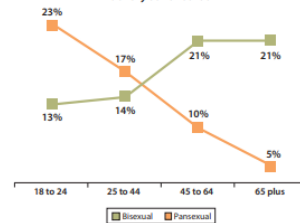
Younger bisexual and pansexual transgender people were more likely to identify as pansexual, while older bisexual and pansexual transgender people were more likely to identify as bisexual (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1: One-Third of Respondents Identified as Bisexual or Pansexual



Source: Sandy James, et al., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016, <http://www.usatranssurvey.org/report>

Figure 2: Younger Transgender People Are More Likely to Identify as Pansexual



Source: Original analysis by the Movement Advancement Project of data from the U.S. Transgender Survey, administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

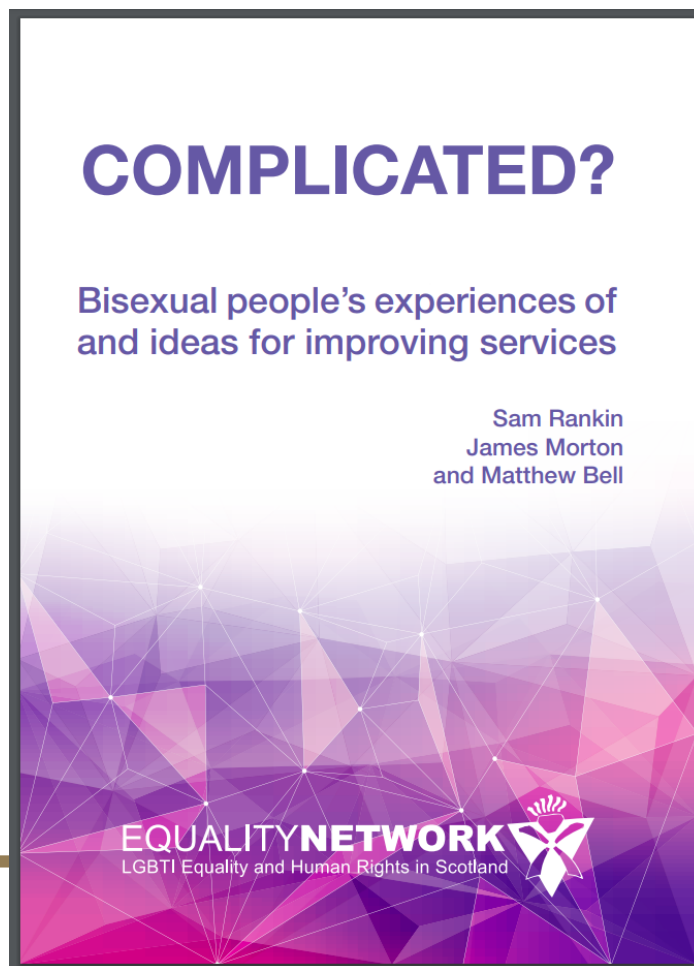
\* The term "bisexual" refers to a person's sexual orientation and describes people who can be attracted to individuals of more than one gender. The term "transgender" refers to a person's gender identity and describes individuals whose sex assigned at birth is different from the gender they know they are on the inside. At some point in their lives, many transgender people decide they must live their lives as the gender they know themselves to be, and transition to living as that gender. These identities are not mutually exclusive—someone can identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and transgender.

<sup>2</sup> Both "bisexual" and "pansexual" are terms used to refer to one's sexual orientation and are used by people who can be attracted to individuals of more than one gender or regardless of gender.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents who identified as "same-gender loving" were also included in this category.

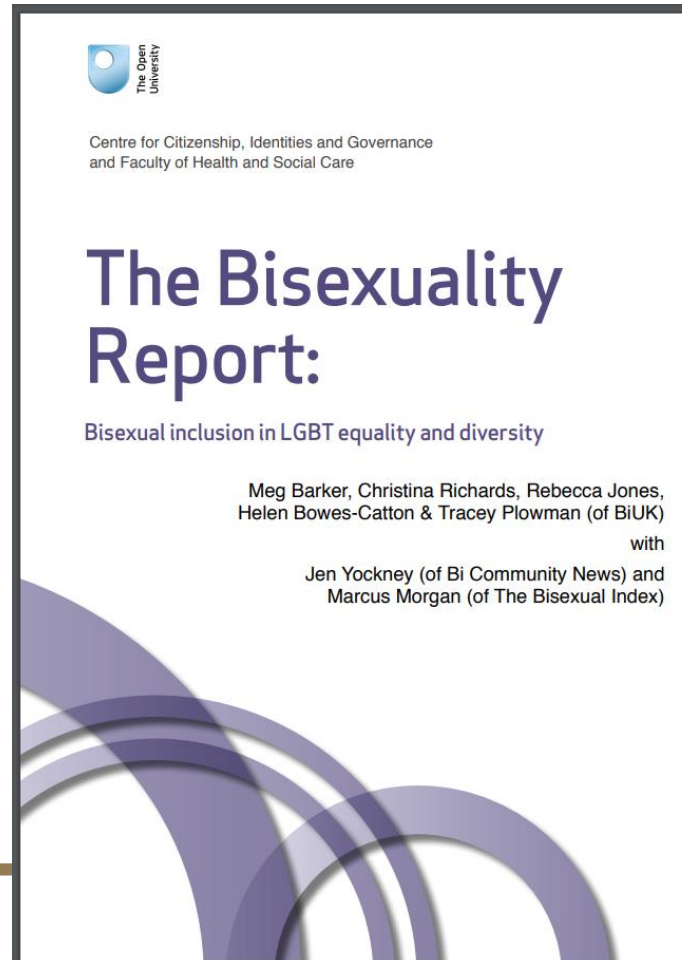
# Resource: Equality Network

## Equality Network: Complicated Bisexual Report



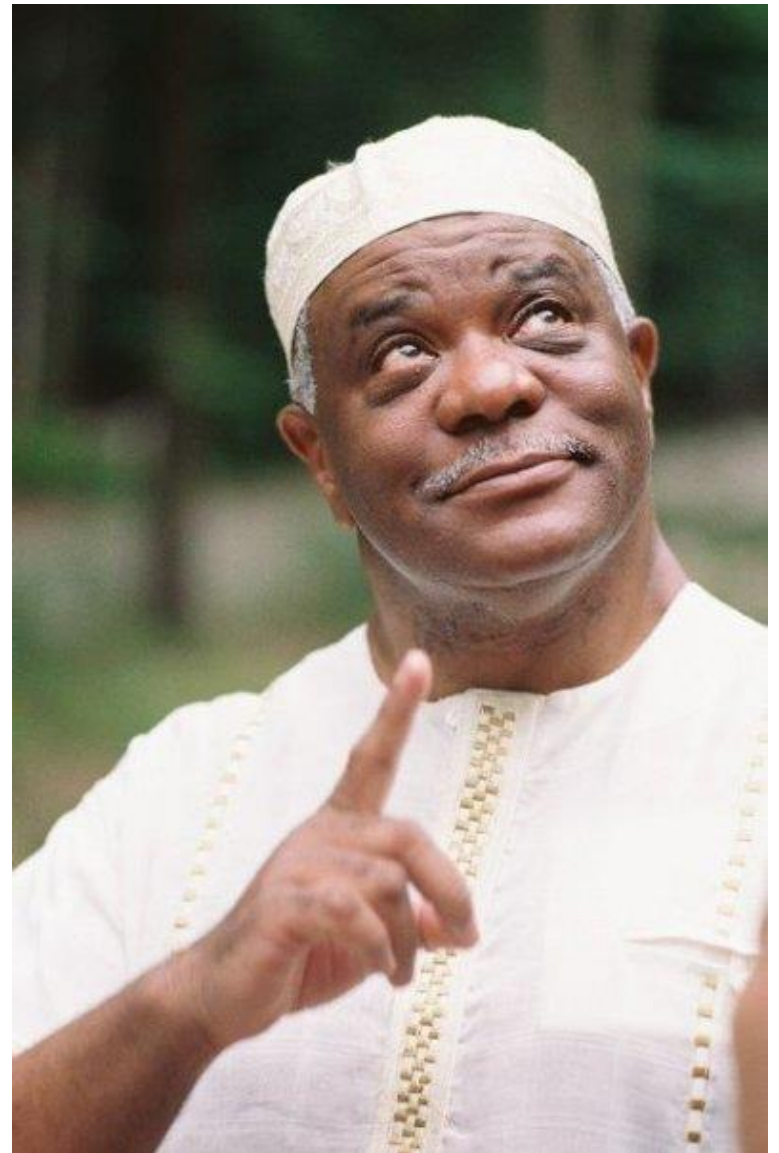
# Resource: Bisexuality Report (UK)

## The Bisexual Report



# ABilly Jones-Hennin

*Movement leader*



# Take Home Reminders







# Bisexual...

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- Is the largest segment in “LGBT”
- Is a sexual orientation identity more and more people are adopting
- May go by many names, especially to accommodate trans and non-binary identities
- Is frequently “invisible”

# Opposite of “best of both worlds”

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The reality:

- Less visibility
- More bias – from both LGBT and straight communities
- More discrimination
- Higher rates of violence
- Higher health disparities

# Assumptions and myths are rampant

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- Question your own assumptions
- Question others' assumptions
- Do not joke

# You can help (1 of 2)

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- Keep bisexuality in your awareness
  - Do not assume people are lesbian/gay or heterosexual based on their partner; they may be bisexual. You won't know unless you ask.
- Make bisexuality safe
  - Challenge myths and assumptions
  - Do not allow jokes

# You can help (2 of 2)

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- Help make bisexuality as visible as possible:
  - Use the words instead of the acronym whenever possible
  - Include “biphobia” when talking about phobias
  - Include bisexual case studies in trainings
  - Include bisexual people and topics in social media
  - Bring up bisexuality in public discussions

# Thank you!

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