Bisexual Network USA (BiNet)

Purpose: To collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality, to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility, to work for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed peoples, and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the bisexual community.

Contact:
BiNet USA
PO Box 7327
Langley Park, MD 20787
(202) 986-7186

Bisexual Youth Initiative
Located at BiNet USA
See above.

Bisexual Resource Center

Purpose: Serves as an international resource on bisexuality, provides educational services and materials, publishes the International Directory of Bisexual Groups annually and maintains an international bisexual archive.

Contact:
Bisexual Resource Center
PO Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 388-9595

Vermont BiNet

Contact:
PO Box 8124
Burlington, Vermont, 05402
(802) 658-9554 or (802) 229-0112

RESOURCES available from OUTRIGHT VERMONT

▼ Information and referral for GLBTQ youth, their parents, and people who work with them

▼ Toll-free information line: 1/800/GLB-CHAT

▼ Internet web site: http://members.aol.com/outrightvt/index.htm

▼ Weekly facilitated peer support groups

▼ Youth drop-in center

▼ Youth pen pal Service

▼ Youth written zine "Reaching Out"

▼ Lending library with over 1,000 volumes

▼ Social and educational events & activities

▼ Volunteer and leadership development opportunities

▼ Education for youth and adults about homophobia, genderphobia, heterosexism and the needs of GLBTQ youth including:

Panel presentations
Professionally facilitated workshops
Half- and full-day in-service trainings
Capacity building and organizational development consulting and training

GROWING UP BISEXUAL

P.O. Box 5235
Burlington, VT 05402-5235

Phone: 802/865-9677
Toll Free Information Line 1/800/GLB-CHAT

E-Mail: Outrightvt@aol.com
Visit our web page:
http://members.aol.com/outrightvt/index.htm

This brochure was adopted by Kimberly A. Ward from the Bisexual Network, USA (BiNet) pamphlets: Am I Bisexual? and The National Bisexual Youth Initiative. Current revisions (10/97) were completed by OUTRIGHT VERMONT. Organizations and individuals are free to reprint and distribute this brochure with written permission from OUTRIGHT VERMONT.

OUTRIGHT VERMONT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations to Outright Vermont are always welcome and are tax deductible. Volunteer opportunities are available for youth and adults.

TOLL FREE SUPPORT LINE
1-800-GLB-CHAT
(1-800-452-2428)

A BROCHURE FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN
Written by bisexuals for bisexual youth and young men and women about their sexuality.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BISEXUAL?

There is no universal definition of bisexuality, but many people define bisexuality as the potential to be attracted to women and to men. These attractions could include sexual feelings, falling in love, "crushes", or strong emotional feelings toward both women and men. These attractions may or may not lead to sexual relations with women, men, or both.

"I'm attracted to people, not genders." Monique

Bisexual people may feel equally attracted to women and men, or may feel their attractions are stronger to one gender while still having feelings toward the other gender. Bisexuals also form a variety of relationships with others. Bisexual people may have relationships with just one person or may be involved intimately with more than one person, just like heterosexuals or homosexuals. Each bisexual person is unique and acts on their attractions in a variety of ways.

"Even my closest friends sometimes still ask me if I think I'm REALLY Bisexual. I just ask them, did you know the first time YOU liked someone, whether you'd slept with them or not? How does anyone know when they are attracted to someone? Your pulse quickens, you feel foolish and you're sure you talked too much when the person finally leaves the room." John

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M BISEXUAL?

Self-perception is the key to a bisexual identity. Many people engage in sexual activity with people of both sexes, yet do not identify as bisexual. Likewise, other people engage in sexual relations only with people of one sex, or do not engage in sexual activity at all, yet consider themselves bisexual. There is no behavioral "test" to determine whether or not one is bisexual.

Some people believe that a person is born heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. Because biological, social and cultural factors are different for each person, everyone's sexuality is highly individual, whether they are bisexual, gay or lesbian, or heterosexual. The "value" placed on a sexual identity should not depend on its cause.

Many people assume that bisexuality is just a phase people go through. In fact, any sexual orientation can be a phase. Humans are diverse, and individual sexual feelings and behavior change over time. The creation and consolidation of a sexual identity is an ongoing process. Since we are generally socialized as heterosexuals, bisexuality is a stage that many people experience as part of the process of acknowledging their homosexuality. Many others come to identify as bisexuals after a considerable period of identification as gay men or lesbians.

An orientation that may not be permanent is still valid for the period of time it is experienced. Bisexuality, like homosexuality and heterosexuality, may be either a transitional step in the process of sexual discovery, or a stable, long-term identity.

AREN'T BISEXUALS JUST SITTING ON THE FENCE?

"I finally decided there was no reason I had to decide who I liked, men or women, that loving people was not a debate, so there was no certain side I had to be on." Erica

There is a misconception about bisexuals that they simply can't make up their minds whether to be straight or gay/lesbian. The fact is, bisexuality can be a decision in and of itself. No one needs to subjugate part of their emotions just to fit into one of these either/or categories.

One of the most often heard comments from the bisexual community is that we love people, not genders. Of course, on the other side of the debate is the belief that being attracted to men and women is wonderful because there is a different dynamic, another way of communicating with men and women that is what makes being bisexual so rewarding. Either way, the decision is yours.

WHO CAN I TELL?

You might choose a friend or an adult. You need to decide whether or not to tell your family, and to choose the right time. Lots of people, including parents, simply don't understand bisexuality and are difficult to come out to. But, it is crucial to be honest with yourself. Just as self-denial costs you, coming out pays off. Most kids who accept their sexuality say they feel calmer, happier and more confident.

BISEXUALITY AND AIDS

AIDS has had a major effect on the bisexual community. Bisexual men are often scapegoated as the agents of transmission of AIDS from the gay to the heterosexual population, and bisexual women may be scapegoated as transmitters of AIDS to lesbians. However, it is behavior, rather than sexual orientation, that puts people at risk for acquiring the virus that causes AIDS. Activities that involve the exchange of bodily fluids, notably semen, blood and vaginal fluid, are dangerous. Bisexuals, as well as homosexuals and heterosexuals, must educate themselves about safer sex practices, such as the use of condoms and dental dams. Safer sex guidelines can be obtained from health centers and AIDS education and action groups. Bisexuals are joining with gay people and other affected groups in an effort to fight AIDS by calling for an increase in research and education, better treatments, and an end to discrimination against people with AIDS and those perceived to be at risk for AIDS.

MYTHS ON BISEXUALS AND MONOGAMY

Myth: Bisexuals aren't trustworthy.
Myth: Bisexuals have to want threesomes.
Myth: Bisexuals need both a male and female lover at all times.
Bisexuals, just like people who are straight, gay or lesbian, are sometimes monogamous and other times have more than one relationship at a time (called polyamorous). This is a separate thing from sexual orientation and is not automatically decided when one identifies as bisexual. The key for anyone is to be honest and trustworthy in their relationships.

SOME BOOKS ON BISEXUALITY

Bi Any Other Name, Bisexual People Speak Out edited by Lani Ka'ahumanu and Lorain Hutchins
The Bisexual Option by Fritz Klein
Closer to Home, Bisexuality and Feminism edited by Elizabeth Reba Weise
The Bisexual Resource Guide edited by Thomas Getter
Women and Bisexuality by Sue George
Vice Versa by Marjorie Garber