

TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS & WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

All discrimination and legal issues that affect gay men and lesbians impact bisexual people also. When doing “gay rights” (LGBT civil rights) stories, interview bisexual people as examples of how this issue has affected an LGBT person.

- Remember the “B” in LGBT
- Include a bisexual example, when reporting on or describing any issue that affects the LGBT community.
- Interview bi people who are affected by the issue. The Bi Writers Association or BiNetUSA can find bi people for you to interview ie: bisexual same-sex married couples, bisexual veterans, bi people who have been fired from jobs or bashed.
- Contact bi activists, writers and researchers when reporting on bisexual issues.
- Write positive stories on bisexual issues.
- When reporting on scientific research on bisexuality, solicit information and opinions from qualified experts in the appropriate scientific discipline so that coverage does not overstate or misstate the implications of new research. (Note: J. Michael Bailey and his colleagues are not considered reputable.)
- Consider your terminology:

Preferred: bisexual

Problematic: bi-sexual

Preferred: “LGBT community” “Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community”

Problematic: “gay community” “lesbian and gay community”

Preferred: “LGBT rights”

Preferred: “civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people”

Problematic: “gay rights”

Preferred: “same-sex couple”

Problematic: “gay couple” “gay and lesbian couples”

Preferred: “same-sex marriage”

Best: “equal access to marriage for all couples”

Problematic: “gay marriage”

LGBT ISSUES IN THE MEDIA

“GAY RIGHTS” - Bisexual people are discriminated against in all the same ways as gays and lesbians and we need the same civil rights. Bisexual people are fired from jobs, bashed coming out of LGBT clubs and in the street, can’t legally marry their same-sex partner in 48 states, are kicked out of the military.

“GAYS IN THE MILITARY” - Bisexual people are also in the military and also get kicked out for being bisexual.

“GAY MARRIAGE” – Bisexual people also marry and commit to same-sex partners.

“GAY BASHING” – Bi people are bashed coming out of clubs where LGBT people hang out and walking down the street. No one stops to ask if the person is bi first or beats them up less.

HIV/AIDS: Unprotected sex spreads HIV infection--not sex with a bisexual person.

People who identify as bisexual tend to be open and honest with their partners. Men who secretly have sex with men, while maintaining a relationship with a wife or girlfriend, usually identify as straight, although they may be attracted to both. Please stop describing these men as “bisexual” in news stories because openly bisexual people are being unfairly painted with the same brush of being liars, cheaters and reckless with the health of their sexual partners. In news stories, remember to include reportage about how the pressures of homophobia contributes to sexual behavior that is secretive or reckless rather than portraying men who secretly have sex with men as evil.

HOW TO START USING “LGBT” IN THE NEWS

Many mainstream journalists are afraid to start using the phrase “LGBT community” even though it is more accurate than “lesbian and gay community” for fear that the general public is not familiar with the acronym. Here’s how to do it:

Use the phrase “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.” In your next sentence, shorten it to “LGBT.”

Or, use the phrase “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community” then say “or LGBT for short.”

MEDIA DON'TS:

Don’t discuss bisexual issues without a bisexual person on the panel. Just as you wouldn’t discuss racism without people of color on the panel.

Dont run a child molestation segment following a segment pertaining to sexual orientation. By doing so you are unfairly linking the two issues together in people’s minds.

DON’T ASSUME:

Don’t assume a man is gay because he has a boyfriend. Don’t assume a woman is straight because she has a husband. Both of those people could be bisexual. A person’s orientation is not determined by the gender of their current partner.

Don’t buy into the “one drop theory.” People assume that “one drop” of gayness negates the rest of a person’s relationship and sexual history. If someone has “gay” sex, they must *be* gay and their opposite-sex relationships are assumed to be inauthentic.

Many people enjoy sex with men and women and are capable of loving a man, or a woman, or both at once.

Don't assume a person is not bisexual because they are transgender. Many transgender people also identify as “queer” or “bi” and some bisexual people identify as transgender.

FILM, TELEVISION, LITERATURE: Any story where a character goes from an opposite sex relationship to a same sex relationship...could be bisexual. Don't automatically assume that character is gay/lesbian.

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Don't forget the B in LGBT

- **Do more than add the phrase LGBT: provide bisexual examples of an issue.** When you only use lesbian and gay examples, people get the message this issue doesn't affect bisexuals.
- **Don't use the phrase “gay and transgender.”** Lately, the phrase “gay and transgender” has been popping up all over. Although we are glad that you are remembering to include transgender people, you seem to have skipped right over and forgotten something. As a bisexual blogger recently lamented, “What Are Bisexuals? Chopped Liver?”
- **Model inclusion.** Other LGBT organizations, the LGBT community, the press and the world at large take their cues from you. You have tremendous influence and power for good or bad. When an LGBT organization does not treat bisexual people equally in its press releases, it signals the rest of the LGBT community that bisexual people are not worthy of respect. And it signals the world at large that bisexual people do not deserve to be treated equally or regarded positively.
- **Being bi-inclusive benefits you.** The bi community is very loyal to organizations that treat us well. And the more you help improve the image and status of bi people in the world, the more effective the bi community can be in speaking out on behalf of LGBT issues.