



Five Basic Ways to Be Supportive of Someone Who's Coming Out as Bisexual

Accept bisexuality as a valid choice of identity

- Don't assume that they are on their way to coming out as lesbian or gay.
- Don't tell them they should be choosing between gay or straight.
- Let them know that they can choose to identify as bi.

Help them to separate out their real, personal situation from the stereotypes of bisexuality

Much of the difficulty that faces a bi person coming out is simply dealing with all the misleading information they may have accepted and internalized. They need to know that in fact...

- Some bi people are happily monogamous.
- Some bi people are happily polyamorous (polyamory = non-monogamy with integrity)
- Different people find different solutions to making their relationships work.
- You don't have to have exactly the same feelings for men and women to call yourself bi.
- You don't have to go only by your history – feelings count too.
- There are many different ways of being bisexual.
- It doesn't mean they are greedy, confused, sex mad, selling out, or somehow wrong.

Help them to recognize and deal with homophobia in mainstream culture

If they're coming from a straight background, this may be new to them, and they will need help in dealing with homophobia as they would if they were coming out as lesbian or gay.

Help them to recognize and deal with biphobia in mainstream culture

If they previously identified as gay or lesbian, they will probably have internalized lesbian and gay culture's prejudice and stereotypes about what it means to be bisexual. They may be scared to come out to their lesbian and gay friends as bisexual. They may fear losing the community that's supported them in dealing with homophobia in the past.

Put them in touch with other bisexual people

Although the self-identified out-bi "community" is small compared to what's available for lesbian and gay men, there is enough there to make a huge difference to someone just coming out as bi. At the very least, let them know what there is. If possible, encourage them and support them in making contact. Everyone finds their own answers. But if you can supply these five things, you will have done an enormous amount to support someone coming out as bi.

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