

Bisexuality and biromanticism refers to an attraction a person has for people of genders that are the same or different than themselves.

People who share this experience often refer to themselves as bisexual, biromantic, or simply “bi” for short.


Pansexuality and panromanticism refers to an attraction a person has for people of all genders, or irregardless of gender.

People who share this experience often refer to themselves as pansexual, panromantic, or simply “pan” for short.

Bi and pan are two examples of polysexualities. **Polysexualities** are sexual orientations that include attraction to more than one gender. Sexual orientations that include attraction to only one gender are **monosexualities**.



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Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



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NORTHERN
MOSAIC
NETWORK

all about BISEXUAL, BIROMANTIC, PANSEXUAL & PANROMANTIC IDENTITIES

UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY

The term bisexual was used for the first time in the 1890s by Charles Gilbert Chaddock in a translation of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's Psychopathia Sexualis, one of the first books about sexual pathology.

Bisexuality is one of the oldest terms that remains popular today to refer to a sexual orientation. When it was first proposed as term, it was introduced to capture the experiences of those who experienced both same and different gender attraction, but was popularized as referring to attraction to both genders.

Today, many bi people challenge this definition, as the term "both" implies a binary gender system: men and women. Many bi people experience a wide range of attraction to people of all genders, including non-binary people.

While the term "pansexual" was used before the internet, it was popularized online by people who felt disheartened or let down by the popular understanding of bisexuality ("bi- meaning both genders"), as many felt as though their attraction was either inclusive of genders outside the man/woman binary or that their attraction wasn't impacted by gender at all.

Some people may opt to use the term "omnisexual" instead of pan or bi.

Omnisexuality refers to an attraction a person has for people of all genders.

Some omnisexuals describe omnisexuality as different from pansexuality in that gender might still factor into the equation for attraction, whereas generally pansexuality does not.

BI / PAN FAQs

How can you tell the difference between bi and pan?

While there are some slight differences or nuances between these two identities, in reality each individual person who shares an attraction to more than one gender might have their own really personal reasons as to why they use one term over another. Sometimes, you can't always tell the difference, and that's okay!

Isn't bisexuality just a phase?

Being bi or pan is not a phase. Some people may understand themselves as bi or pan for a short period before learning more about themselves and discovering they are gay or lesbian, but this doesn't mean that all bi or pan people will "eventually" be something else.

Is somebody still bi or pan if they're in a same gender relationship? Or in a different gender relationship?

A person's relationships with others don't define their identities. In the same way that a straight person is straight whether or not they're dating somebody, a bi or pan person is still bi or pan, no matter what gender their partner is.

How many people are bi or pan?

The majority of people within the 2SLGBTQIPA+ umbrella identify as bi or pan! According to Ipsos, 3% of the global population identify as gay or lesbian, but 5% identify as bi or pan.¹

Are bi and pan people more promiscuous or sexually active than other people?

No, bi and pan identity does not cause a person to be more sexually active than others.

1 Ipsos. (2021). LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey. <https://www.ipsos.com/en/lgbt-pride-2021-global-survey-points-generation-gap-around-gender-identity-and-sexual-attraction>

AM I BI OR PAN?

The important thing to remember is that you don't have to use certain words to describe yourself just because that's the "box" that you fit into. That being said, here are some things that might apply to you if you're part of the bi/pan community:

- you experience attraction to people of any gender
- you experience attraction to more than one gender, but not all of them
- you feel like you could experience attraction to people of genders that are the same as yours or different than yours

If you are a bi or pan person in the NWT looking for support or community, reach out to us.

BIPHOBIA & MONOSEXISM

Biphobia (and panphobia) refers to a fear, hatred, mistreatment of, or negative attitude towards people who are bisexual or pansexual, because of their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

Monosexism refers to the systemic ways in which non-bi/pan people are considered the standard, and that bi or pan people are limited to participating fully in society or systems.

While biphobia and monosexism are tied closely to homophobia and heterosexism, it is important to recognize that bi and pan people can experience discrimination and violence that is unique to their experience.

If you are looking to learn more about bisexuality, pansexuality, biphobia or monosexism, talk to us about our workshops!