

Bi-Visibility Day: The Journey to Becoming Visible

The 23rd September is Bi-Visibility day. You might wonder [why it is needed](#) or what you can do to help.

Bi people and bi experiences are often erased, ignored or dismissed both inside and outside the LGBTQ+ community. We are told we are 'just being greedy' or 'going through a phase' or 'confused'; phrases that label Bi identities as shameful, performative, invalid or non-existent.

As a bisexual, [cisgender](#) woman cohabiting with a cisgender, male partner, many people make assumptions about my identity. Often, they see me as straight or devalue my attraction to people of the same and other genders because my long term partner is male. My bi identity could quite easily be concealed, which is a blessing as well as a curse. While anonymity affords bi people a certain passing privilege, it also contributes to erasure and can be confusing, hurtful and lead people to feel that they are not living as their authentic self. There is a fabulous [TEDx talk on this with Misty Gedlinske](#) entitled *Bisexuality: the invisible letter 'B'*.

When I was younger, [bi role models](#) were harder to find and I dismissed my attraction to people of the same gender because I was also attracted to people of other genders. In a heteronormative world, the obvious and easy choice was to stick with the 'straight' label. It's only over the past 5 years that I have come to fully embrace my identity.

[Stonewall](#) have stated that 'only one in five bi people are out to all their family compared to three in five gay men and lesbians' and 'two in five bi people hide or disguise their sexual orientation at work'. This speaks volumes about how coming out as bi is received; no one should have to explain or justify their identity.

As a bi person, it can often feel like we don't fit in to the communities around us. Navigating [heteronormative](#) spaces can feel challenging and LGBTQ+ spaces can feel unwelcoming. We often don't feel like we are 'enough'.

After spending most of my life being uncertain about how to express myself, I make the choice every day to identify openly as bisexual. For me, that choice includes the clothes I wear, the way I present myself and the lifestyle I choose to live. Personally, my journey with non-monogamy has been important to me in expressing my bisexuality although this is not the choice that everyone makes. It is important to acknowledge the diversity of experience within the bi community and accept all bi people without exception.

Ultimately, who *you* are and how *you* identify is for *you* (and only you!) to decide. I am hoping that through being more visible, I can help others to feel safe and supported in their journey to becoming visible as a bi person.

If you want to learn more about Bi Visibility and find out about how you can be a supportive ally, you can have a look at Stonewall's [Bi Visibility Hub](#).

You can contact the EDI Team with any questions or to request a bi/allies lanyard: equalityanddiversity@manchester.ac.uk