



Out & Equal
2018 Workplace
Summit

Bi My Side

Allies, do your part to eradicate bi-erasure.

October 2, 2018



Northwestern Mutual[®]

Who we are... and how we're perceived



Descriptors

- Texan
- Word nerd
- Logical-minded perfectionist
- Not into sports
- Insatiably curious
- Husband
- Father
- Heterosexual

Ryan



Descriptors

- Midwesterner
- Mother
- Daughter
- Friend
- Nature-lover
- Eternal optimist
- Social justice junkie
- Bisexual

Laura

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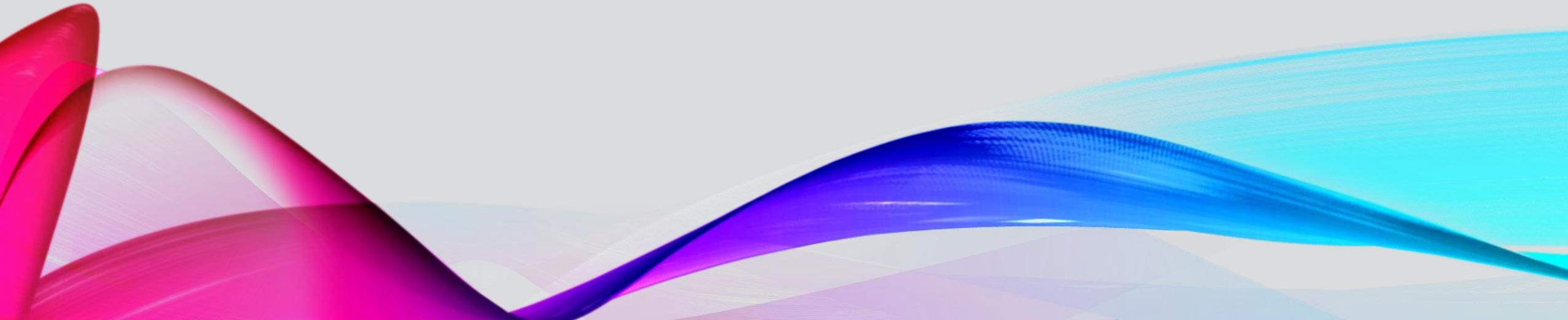
Descriptors

- Bisexual

• **Bisexual**
Laura

Why are we here today?

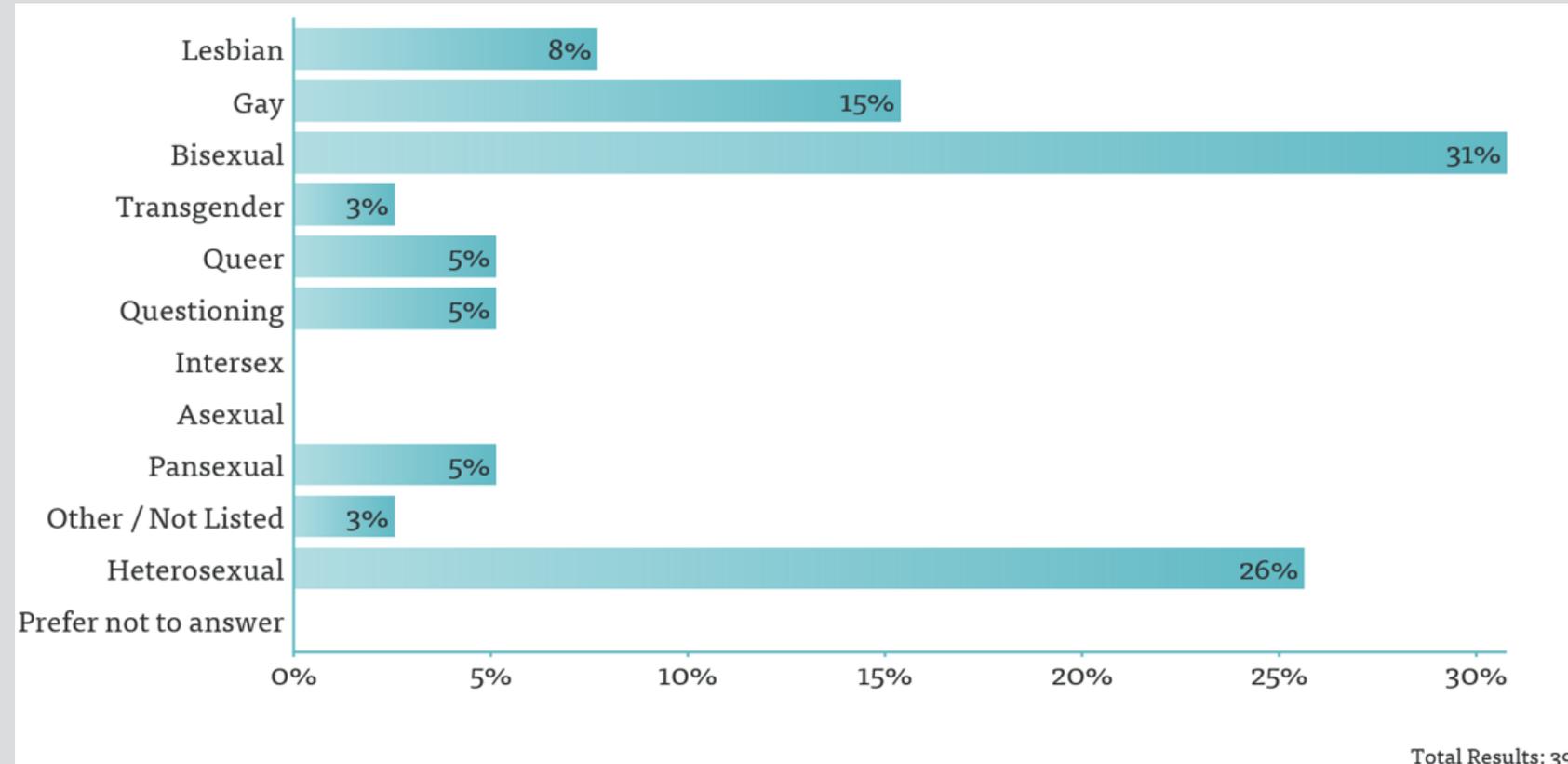
- What is Bisexuality?
- Bi Erasure Exists
- A Story of Hope
- Why Does it Matter?
- What You Can Do



Poll Question #1

With which of the following do you primarily* identify?

- a. Lesbian
- b. Gay
- c. Bisexual
- d. Transgender
- e. Queer
- f. Questioning
- g. Intersex
- h. Asexual
- i. Pansexual
- j. Other / Not Listed
- k. Heterosexual
- l. Prefer not to answer

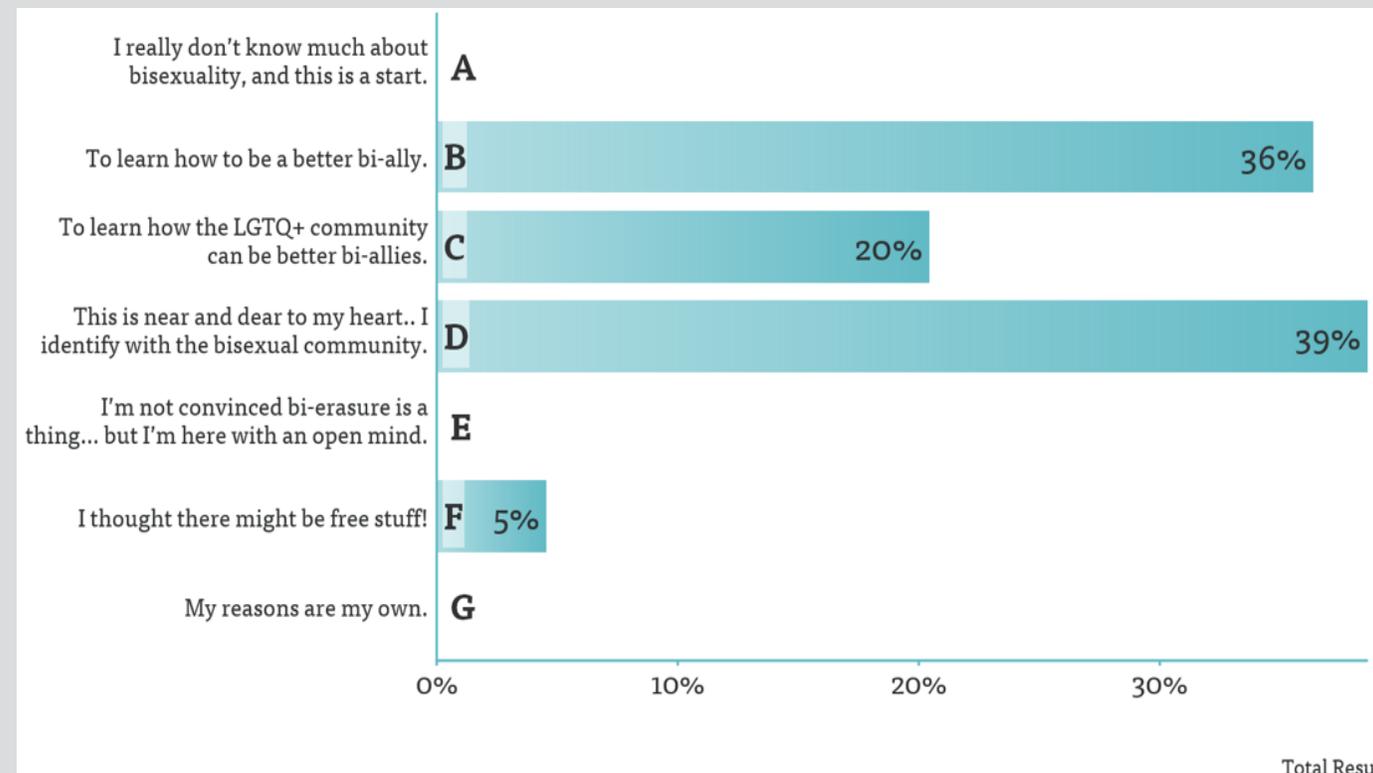


* Unfortunately the survey tool only allows one response

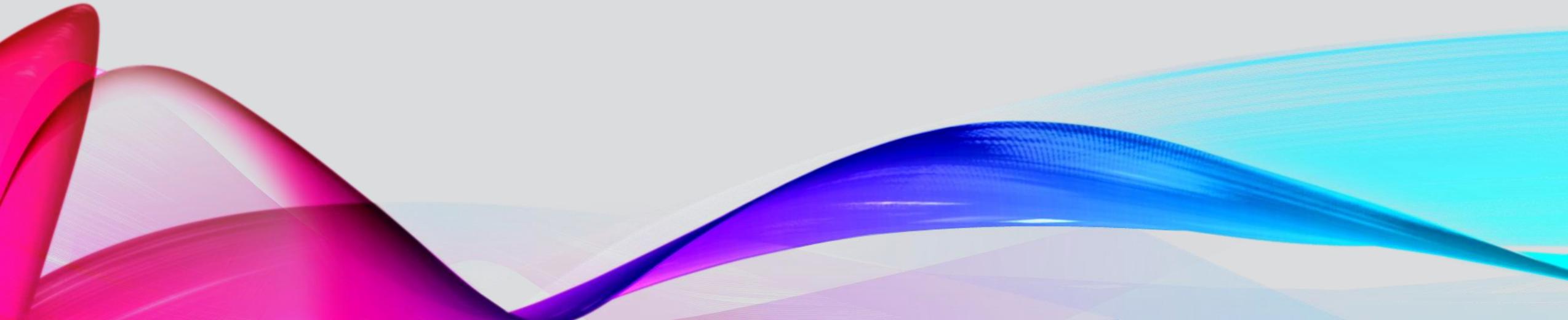
Poll Question #2

Why did you choose to come to our session today?

- a. I really don't know much about bisexuality, and this is a start.
- b. To learn how to be a better bi-ally.
- c. To learn how the LGTQ+ community can be better bi-allies.
- d. This is near and dear to my heart.. I identify with the bisexual community.
- e. I'm not convinced bi-erasure is a thing... but I'm here with an open mind.
- f. I thought there might be free stuff!
- g. My reasons are my own.



What is Bisexuality?



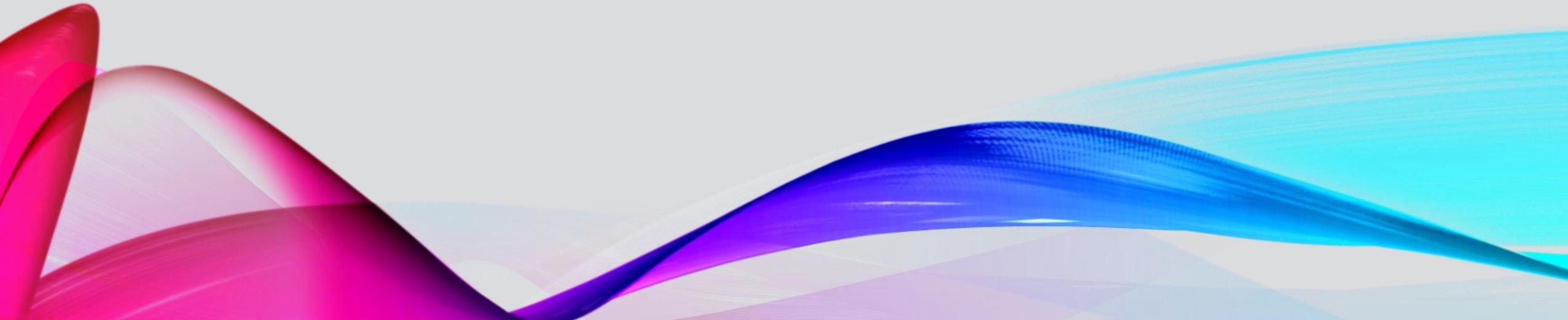
What is Bisexuality?

Bisexuality is the capacity for emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction to more than one gender or sex



The bisexual pride flag was designed by Michael Page in 1998 in order to give the bisexual community its own symbol. "The pink color represents sexual attraction to the same sex only (gay and lesbian). The blue represents sexual attraction to the opposite sex only (straight) and the resultant overlap color purple represents sexual attraction to both sexes (bi)."

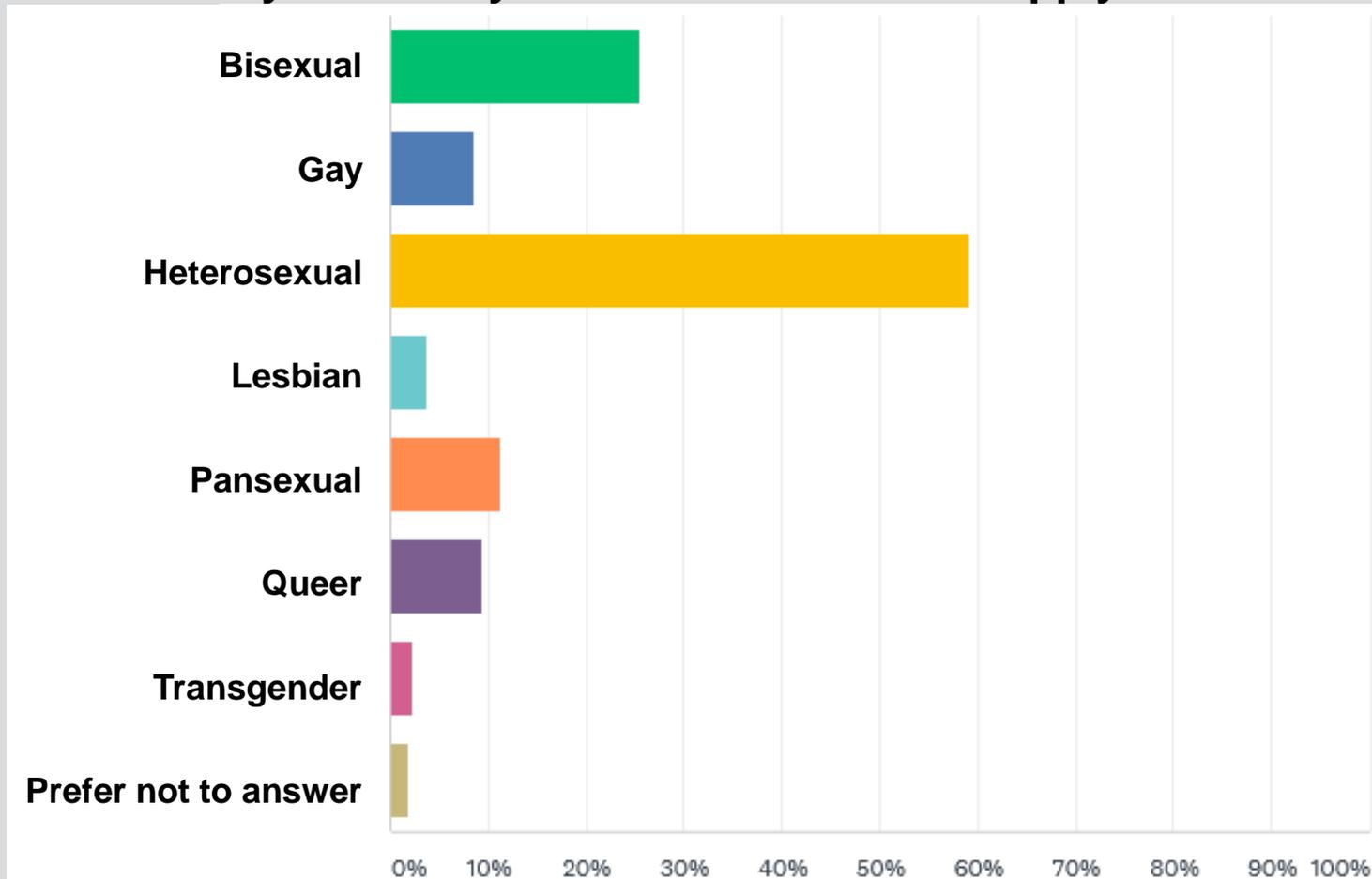
Bi Erasure Exists



Bi My Side survey results

Who responded?

Q: How do you identify? Please check all that apply.



7 respondents indicated "Other":

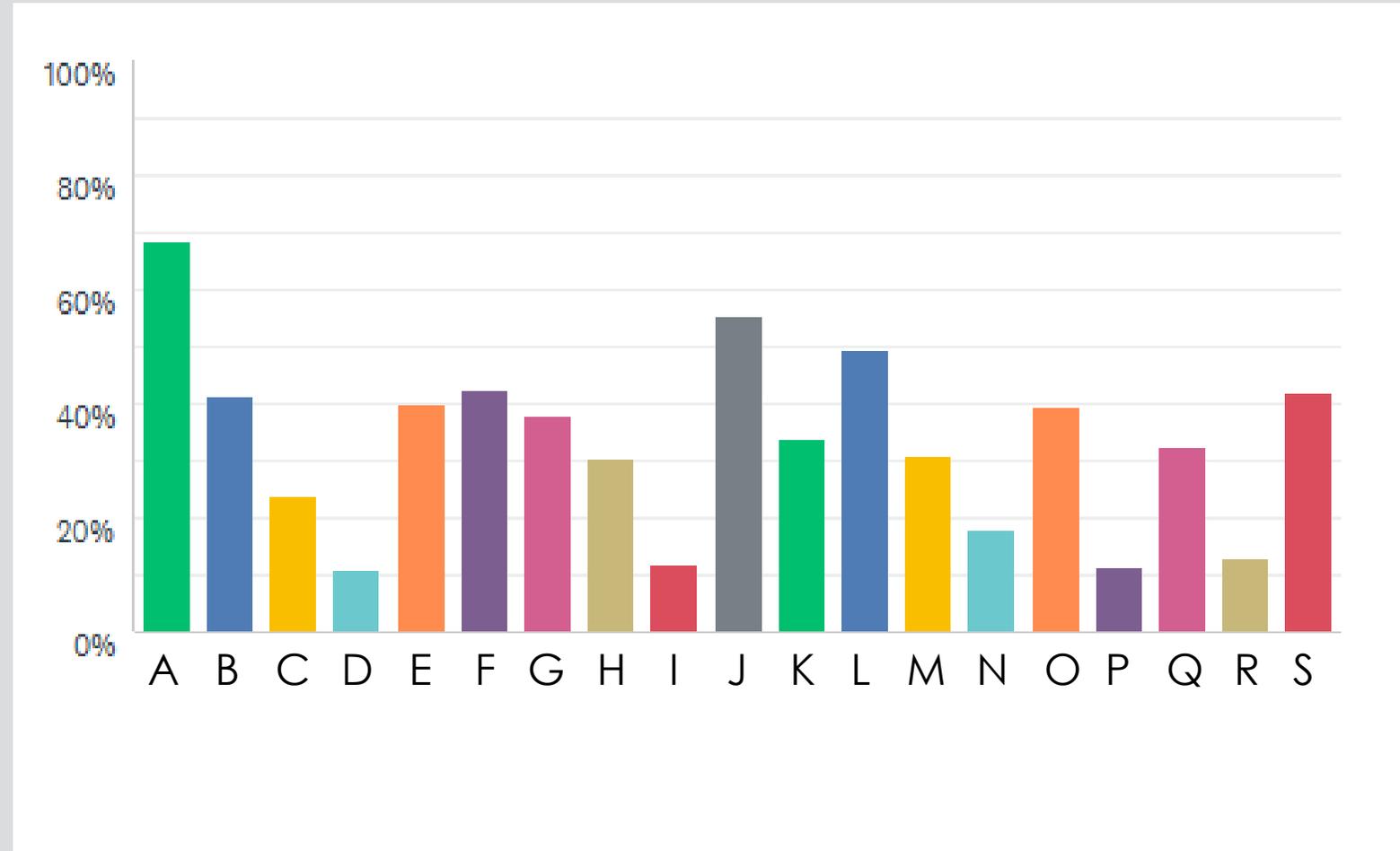
- Asexual
- non-participating bi-sexual - married and monogamous if that makes sense
- straight
- Asexual
- Nonbinary
- It depends on the setting and my comfort level
- Poly— while not an LGBTQIA identity, it is a GSRM minority identity, part of my queer identity, and a part of the way I live my bi/Pan identity

Bi My Side survey results

Hurtful phrases bisexuals hear

Phrases

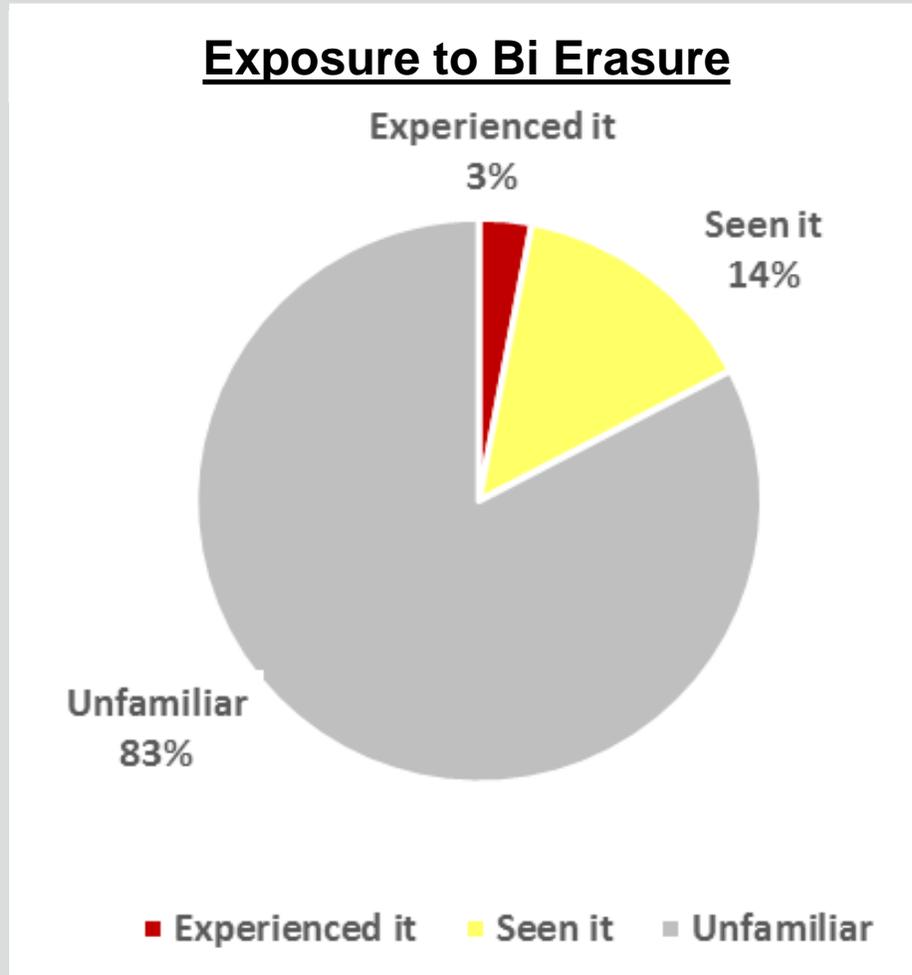
- A. "It's just a phase..."
- B. "You're just too scared to come out as gay/lesbian, huh?"
- C. "Do you just like attention?"
- D. "No, you're Pansexual!"
- E. "Do you and your partner have threesomes?"
- F. "So, you will just sleep with anyone?"
- G. "Isn't your partner worried you will cheat?"
- H. Asked about their sex life.
- I. "So... does that mean you'll sleep with me?"
- J. "But which do you like more?"
- K. Claimed bisexuality doesn't exist.
- L. "You're confused."
- M. "If you've never been with one of each, how do you know you're bisexual?"
- N. "You don't get to be attracted to both."
- O. "That's so hot!"
- P. Sex-shamed them.
- Q. "You will have to choose eventually."
- R. "Bisexuals are only attracted to binary genders."
- S. "So you are dating a man/woman, does that mean you aren't bisexual anymore?"



Bisexual respondents heard more than twice as many of these as non-bi folks, and 50% more than LGBTQ+ respondents

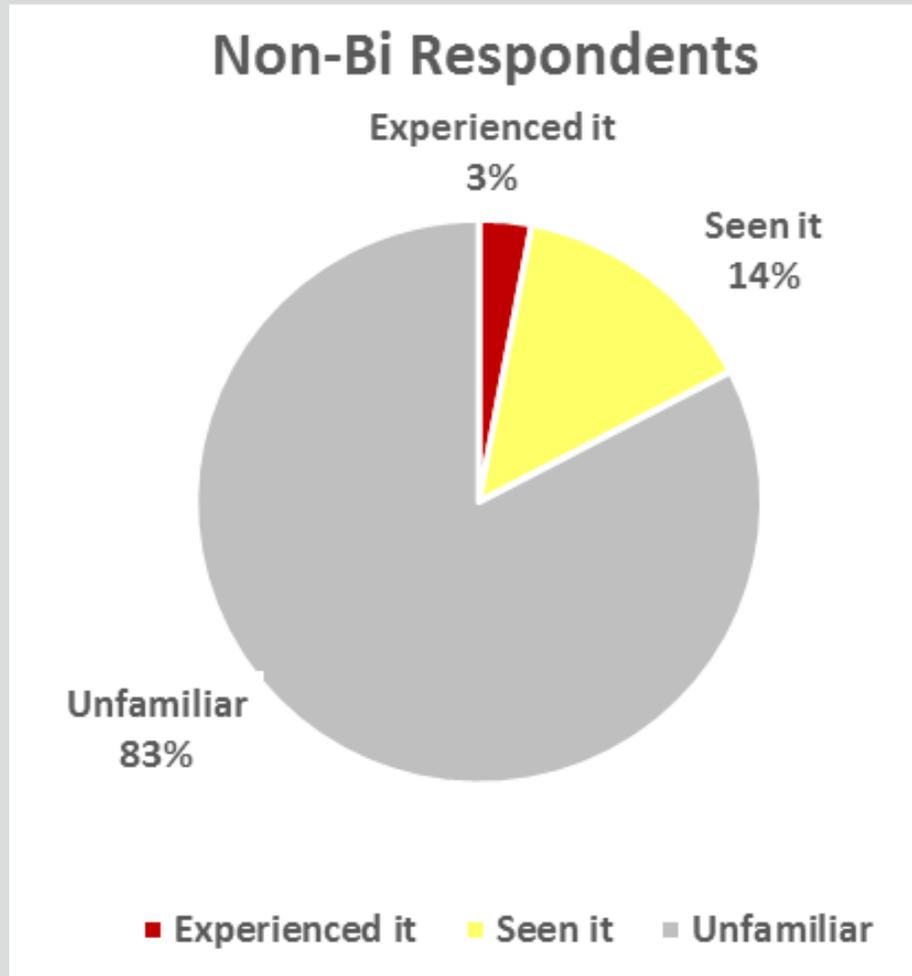
Bi My Side survey results

Exposure to Bi Erasure



Bi My Side survey results

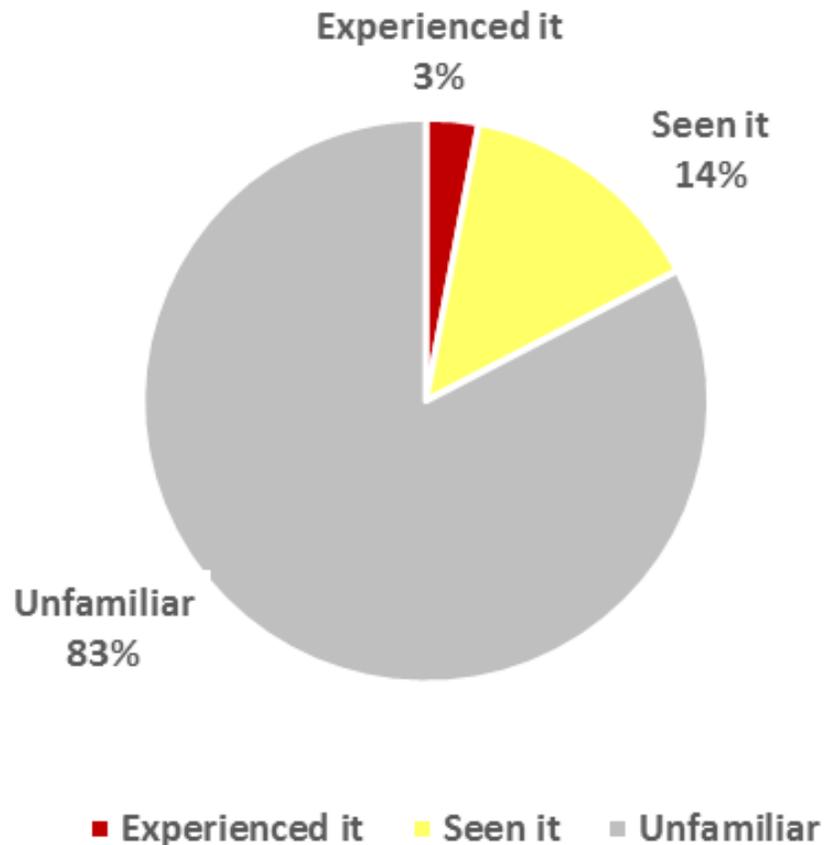
Exposure to Bi Erasure



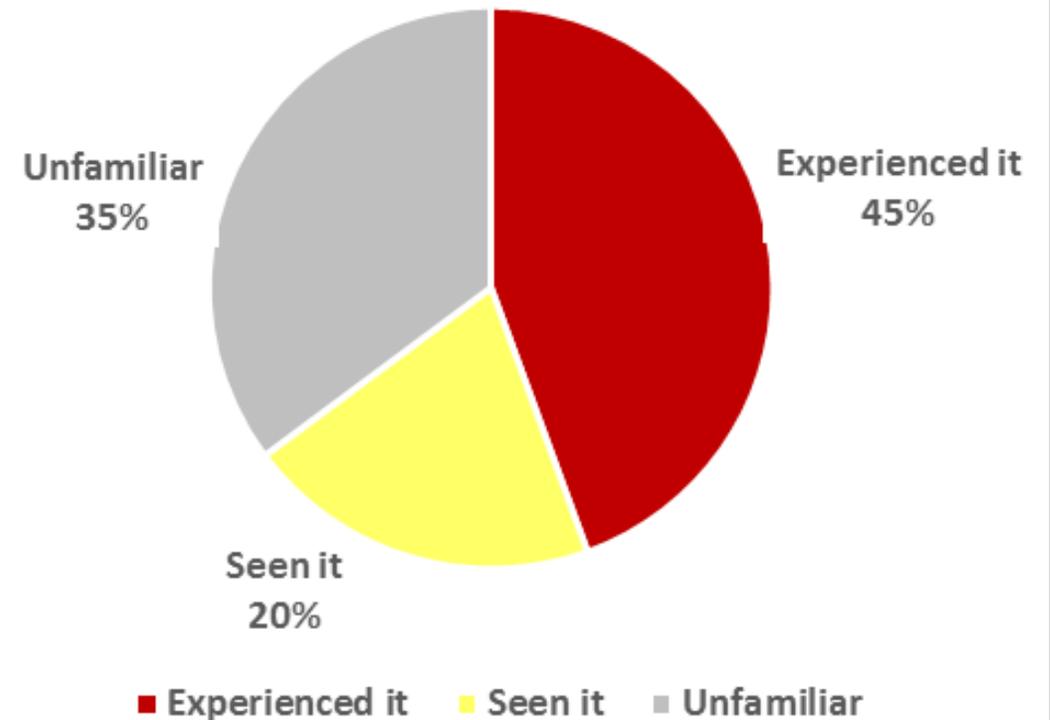
Bi My Side survey results

Exposure to Bi Erasure

Non-Bi Respondents



Bi Respondents



What is Bi Erasure?

You can't fight what you don't see

Bisexual **erasure** or bisexual **invisibility** is a pervasive problem in which the existence or legitimacy of bisexuality (either in general or in regard to an individual) is questioned or denied outright.

–<https://www.glaad.org/bisexual/bierasure>

“Bisexuals experience high rates of being ignored, discriminated against, demonized, or rendered invisible by both the heterosexual world and the lesbian and gay communities. Often, the entire sexual orientation is branded as invalid, immoral, or irrelevant. Despite years of activism and the largest population within the LGBT community, the needs of bisexuals still go unaddressed and their very existence is still called into question. This erasure has serious consequences on bisexuals’ health, economic well-being, and funding for bi organizations and programs.”

–from *Bisexual Invisibility: Impacts and Recommendations*

Trigger Warning

Telling stories to change hearts means telling stories that break hearts.

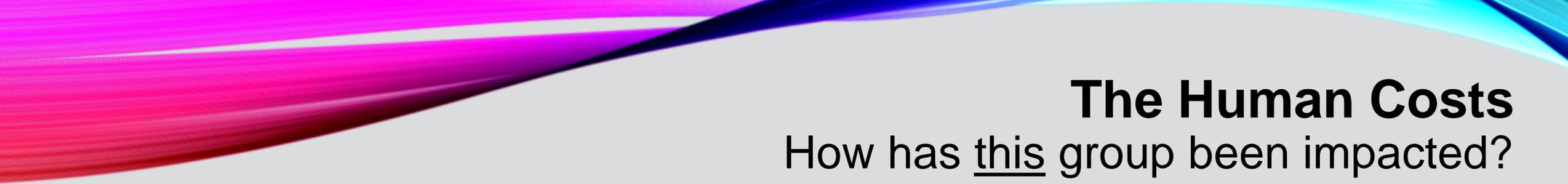
We feel passionately about our mission and care deeply about those on whose behalf we advocate... and that means you too. We will be sharing painful anecdotes of discrimination and bi erasure, and stories of allies vulnerable enough to admit hurtful behavior that ignorance does not salve.

Please take this moment to reflect on your needs, and we welcome you to prioritize yourself by stepping out for this next section, with our heartfelt embrace. We will have someone let you know once we've moved to the next section.



The Human Costs

Now we'll share some anecdotes—used with permission—relayed by survey respondents who agreed to provide additional details.



The Human Costs

How has this group been impacted?

Let's do a quick activity to see how pervasive the exposure to bi erasure has been with those of us here today.

A Story of Hope ... And it's our story



A Story of Hope

... And it's our story



A Story of Hope

Our journey continues

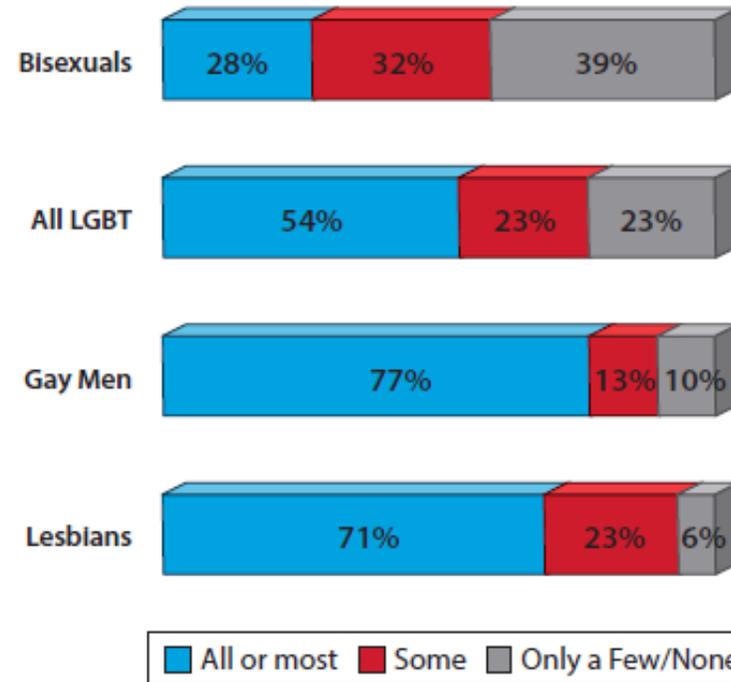


Why it matters

The increased impact to bisexuals

Figure 2: Gay Men, Lesbians More Open With Family and Friends

% Saying That ... Of The Important People In Their Life Know They Are LGBT



Source: PewResearch, "A Survey of LGBT Americans," July 13, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/>.



Traits of Acting in Ally-ship

1. Actually BE visible!
2. Passionately search for understanding
3. Dispassionate introspection
4. Understand both sides... but pick one
5. Burning passion, tempered with humility
6. Cultivate broken-heartedness
7. Tact and nuance in interactions
8. Refuse to be offended
9. Dogged pursuit of inclusion
10. Faith that being visible matters
11. Acknowledge your privilege
12. Strive to act in allocentrism
13. Willingness to be held accountable
14. Seek out “guilt” by association
15. Sacrifice privilege to raise visibility
16. Do not be selective

What does it mean to me?

What I learned as I raised my visibility

Deciding to act in visible ally-ship is immensely rewarding...

- Making a difference, even if you never see it
- Building bonds of love and friendship with others
- Growing and becoming a better person
- Watching the transformation as folks can embrace their whole selves
- Subverting systems of oppression

... but visibility is a double-edged sword

- Discrimination by exclusion
- Inaction for fear of blundering
- Relinquishing your privilege can hurt

Food for Thought...

How can you help move the needle on LGBTQ+ workplace equality?

On a personal level, what will you do differently?

If being a bi-ally was a crime, could you be convicted on evidence?

*Make a commitment to do something to
show your visible bi-allyship
**within the next seven days and be
accountable.***

“Real solidarity requires sacrifice... There’s no way to balance out the historical unbalanced system of reward (if that’s an ideal you value) without those who always get more either deciding to, or being forced to, give up some of it.”

- Mia McKenzie, in her *Black Girl Dangerous* blog (<http://www.blackgirldangerous.com/2017/02/adele-beyonce-solidarity/>)

References & Resources

Additional References:

- HRC.org/Bisexual
- GLAAD.org/Bisexual
- PFLAG.org/Bisexual
- BiResource.org
- StraightForEquality.org
- **Our survey:**
<http://bit.ly/BiMySide>

Documents we've found helpful:

- Traits of Visible Allies
- Bisexual inclusion in the workplace (*HRC*)
- How to be an ally to a bi+ person (*BRC*)
- Health disparities among bisexual people (*HRC*)
- Coming out as a supporter (*HRC / PFLAG*)

Have questions you want to ask, but are afraid to? Want to talk more about this topic? Want an accountability partner as you raise your visibility?

Please contact us, we'd love to help however we can!

Questions?

Don't forget to
complete your
session survey!
(in the Summit app)

How to connect with us:

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*Never forget... never ever forget... people's lives hang in the balance, and you have the chance to stand and fight for them. Be visible. Be approachable. Take something actionable back with you. Punch down the small fear-voice in your gut and run towards scary things. And above all,
Support, Advocate, Speak out, and Stand up... **Bi My Side.***

