

“So who is it this week: a **guy** or a **girl**? Haven't you made your mind up yet?”



Have you ever had comments like this directed at you?

Have you ever heard these sorts of comments being said to a friend, family member, coworker, teammate or someone at school?

If you answered 'yes' to either of these questions you have witnessed or experienced **biphobic harassment**.

What do we mean by biphobic harassment?

Biphobic harassment is any conduct that humiliates, intimidates, insults, excludes, silences or harms an individual or group on the basis of their actual or perceived bisexual orientation. Biphobic harassment can occur in the form of verbal abuse (written or spoken), intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, insult, threat, violence and physical harm. Biphobic harassment may be persistent or a one-off incident.

Biphobic harassment is a result of biphobia. **Biphobia**, like homophobia and transphobia, is a form of **sexual prejudice**; where sexual prejudice refers to negative behaviours and attitudes towards people who are not heterosexual or do not fit normative ideas as to what it is to be a man or a woman. At times, this website uses the term 'homophobic harassment' to refer to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment collectively. This is to keep things short and simple, and not to deny the different issues facing bisexual and transgender people.

Bisexual people are people who are attracted to more than one gender. It is important to note however, that not everyone who is attracted to more than one gender would describe themselves as being bisexual. Many people, gay, straight and otherwise, commonly misinterpret bisexuality as 'indecision'. Seeing bisexuality as indecision, a phase or a denial of one's 'homosexuality' or 'heterosexuality' is a common attitude behind biphobic harassment.

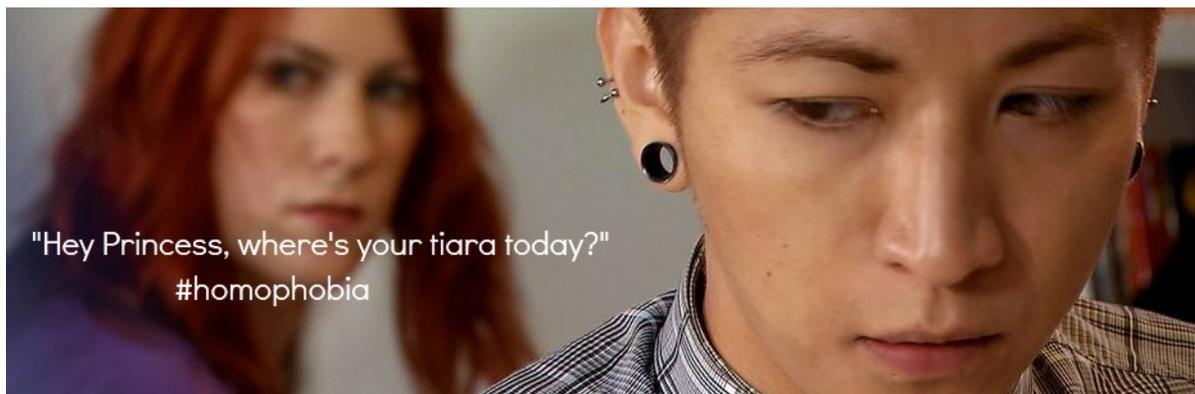
Bisexuality is a legitimate form of sexual orientation. Under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, everyone has the right to freedom, respect, equality and dignity based on their inherent humanity. Being bisexual does not make one less human in any way or form. Bisexual people have a human right to be seen, equal and heard members of our society. Biphobic harassment denies these basic human rights.

What does biphobic harassment look like?

Biphobic harassment can take many different forms. Here are a few more examples of what biphobic harassment may look like:

- + **Teasing**, making jokes, or calling someone names based on their actual or perceived bisexuality, e.g. "So you're into men AND women? Sounds like you're just confused mate!" "You can't be THAT straight if you're a guy who likes other guys."

- + Spreading **rumours** or suggesting to others that someone is bisexual with the effect or intent of causing distress.
- + **Withholding tasks** from an employee, or threatening an employee's job security because they are bisexual.
- + Demanding someone keep their bisexuality '**under wraps**' against their will, or exposing someone's bisexuality against their will.
- + Any act of **violence** or physical abuse against a person because they are (believed or assumed to be) bisexual.



What are the effects of biphobic harassment?

Biphobic harassment has many negative effects upon individuals, groups and society at large. For **individuals** it can cause mild to severe depression, anxiety, self-loathing and insecurity. It can lead to rejection by family and friends, and exclusion from workplaces, venues or social groups. Biphobia, and homophobia in general, makes it difficult for people to accept and express their bisexual identity ('coming out') and is also seen as the leading cause for the higher rate of suicide for bisexual people compared to the overall population.

Biphobia damages **relationships** between bisexual people and the wider community, both straight and gay. Biphobia positions the bisexual **community** so that it must become defensive or even silent, which often suppresses important, alternative perspectives about gender and sexuality, and life in general, from being heard, let alone understood. Most of all biphobia, alongside homophobia and transphobia, makes it difficult for people to appreciate true human diversity and to acknowledge the complexity of human experience.

What you can do

Biphobic harassment is not here to stay. If you have witnessed or experienced an incident of biphobic harassment you can do something about it.

- + Go to [Take Action](#) to find how to respond to or report biphobic harassment.
- + Go to [Find Support](#) for more information on counselling and support services that can help you (or the person you know) deal with the situation.
- + Go to [Your Rights](#) for more information about biphobic harassment and the law.

The most important thing you can do is to not shrug it off as 'just another incident'. Everyone has the right to be safe, equal and heard.

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