An illustration showing two hands holding a light green rectangular sign. The hands are white with black outlines, and the background is a solid purple color. The sign contains text in a purple, sans-serif font.

**Coming Out  
As Bisexual:**

**The Disclosure Kit**

## Intro

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This kit is designed for bisexual women who want to tell the people who matter to us about our bisexuality.

**Bisexuality** is the potential to be attracted to people who are the same sex/gender we are, as well as to people with a different sex/gender. Bi women, for example, are attracted to women, and may also be attracted to men, genderqueer people, and/or people with a non-binary or fluid gender. Some people use other terms to describe this type of attraction, such as pansexual, fluid, or omnisexual.

**“Coming out”** refers to telling people about our sexual orientation. We may come out when we meet new people, start a job, move to a new area, or change the identity labels we use. We may even come out to the same people more than once. For example, we may have to remind people that we are still bisexual when we start a relationship with someone who is a different gender than the last person we dated.

### How you can use this kit:

The first half of this kit is designed to help you prepare to come out as bisexual or a related identity (e.g., pansexual, fluid). This half of the kit can help you decide what you want to say, assess the risks (if any) of coming out to others, and help you plan how you'll share this information.

The second half of this kit is for you to fill out, and then give to the person you'd like to tell about your bisexuality, to help them understand what you're telling them, what you hope to accomplish by coming out to them, and how they can support you.

### Who created this kit?

The Disclosure Kit was designed by a team of eight bisexual women over the course of two weekends in a creative design workshop led by The Public, an activist design studio based in Toronto. The Disclosure Kit is intended to increase the social support available to bi women.



## Coming Out as Bi



By coming out we share information about our identity, and the communities and issues that are important to us. Things you might share include:

- How you describe your identity (such as bisexual, pansexual, fluid, or queer)
- Your role in your community (such as organizing or attending groups, charities, or events related to bisexuality)
- How you express your identity (such as being monogamous or polyamorous) and what it means in your life

*I identify as* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*I would like to share information about:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### *Why Come Out?*

We may have many reasons for wanting to tell people about our bisexuality. Some possibilities include:

- Addressing an existing issue (such as a relative saying biphobic things)
- Being a role model to others
- Becoming closer with our friend(s)/family
- Celebrating and showing our bi pride
- Feeling less anxious about keeping a secret
- Increasing bisexual visibility
- Obtaining better or more relevant treatment (such as from a health care provider)
- Obtaining support from others when dealing with biphobia and monosexism

I hope that coming out as bi will: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We can't control how people react when we come out as bi, but knowing what our hopes are can make our experience better.

### Setting Limits for Your Disclosure:

Because bisexuality is often not visible in our society, people may have many questions when we come out as bi. Here are some topics people might raise when you come out as bisexual. Think about how comfortable you'd feel talking about the subjects on the following page.

Very      Somewhat      Not at all

My activism			
My attractions to others			
My current relationship(s)			
My sex life			
My views on monogamy or polyamory			
My experience of biphobia			
My gender identity			
My mental health (e.g., stress, anxiety)			
My physical health (e.g., HIV status)			
My relationship history or current status			
My sexual history			
My social life (e.g., groups or friends)			
My spirituality or religious beliefs			
My substance use (if any)			
My racial or cultural identity			
Something else _____			

Telling someone that we are bi does not mean we have to answer all of their questions. If you're not used to setting limits with friends and family try practicing a few phrases to help establish your boundaries:

*"This is as much as I'm comfortable sharing at the moment."*

*"I'm happy to talk about my identity, but what you've asked about is more private."*

*If someone asks a question I'm not comfortable answering I will say:*

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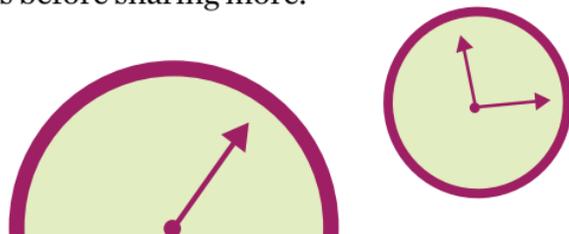
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### Timing Your Coming Out

Since holidays are often stressful, some sources recommend against coming out during that time. Also consider avoiding dates such as birthdays or anniversaries. Coming out on a date that already has a personal meaning may be stressful for the people receiving the information, and can make it more difficult for them to hear you.

Many people come out on October 11, which is National Coming Out Day, or on September 23rd, which is International Celebrate Bisexuality Day.

Consider coming out to the people you trust most first, to establish a circle of support. Coming out works best when you have a clear message, you show confidence and certainty about what you're sharing, and you give people time to process their emotions before sharing more.



*I would like to come out to a:*

*coworker:* \_\_\_\_\_  *relative:* \_\_\_\_\_

*friend:* \_\_\_\_\_  *roommate:* \_\_\_\_\_

*neighbour:* \_\_\_\_\_  *service provider:* \_\_\_\_\_

*partner:* \_\_\_\_\_  *(someone else):* \_\_\_\_\_

*When timing my coming out I need to consider:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## *Taking Care of Yourself During The Coming Out Process*



Coming out can be stressful. Think about the needs you might have when coming out as bi, and about the places and people who will support you.

What emotional support can you access? Having someone to listen to our fears and hopes is important. Support can be obtained online or in-person. Consider meeting with a friend beforehand, to talk about your hopes and fears, and meeting again after coming out, to discuss how it went. Many of us also get emotional support from pets, watching our favourite movies, creating art, and from the communities where we can be ourselves.

*I could get emotional support from:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Many of us benefit from mental support. Having a conversation with a friend can clarify our thoughts. Some bisexuals get mental support from friends, family, bi community, or from a trusted teacher, therapist, mentor, or elder.

*I could get mental support from:* \_\_\_\_\_

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This type of support can include activities that reduce stress, eating comforting food, and getting enough sleep.

*I could get physical support from:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Some bisexual people access spiritual support, such as a supportive faith community, or a spiritual path. If spirituality is important to you, consider how coming out relates to your spiritual journey, and think about what bi-friendly spiritual resources are available to you.

*I could get spiritual support from:* \_\_\_\_\_

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### Planning Ahead

If the conversation goes well: Express your appreciation for that person's care and attention. Consider enlisting their support when coming out to others.

If the conversation doesn't go well: Sometimes people aren't ready to hear what we have to say. The following questions can help you prepare in case your coming out isn't well received.

*What resources might be affected if coming out doesn't go well?*

*Financial support (such as school tuition, or a place to live)*

*Emotional support (such as friends)*

*Spiritual support (such as a community of faith)*

If coming out might threaten your safety, meet in a public location (like a coffee shop), talk on the phone or online instead of in person, bring a supportive friend, or have somewhere safe to stay in case it's needed.

If the person doesn't respond in a timely fashion: Consider asking them about the disclosure, or having a trusted mutual friend do so. This may be the prompting they need to continue the conversation.

*How to Use the Other Half of this Kit:*

This Disclosure Kit is not a substitute for a conversation, but is

intended to make the conversation easier when it does happen.

Once you've completed the exercises in this half of the Disclosure Kit, read through the second half and start to fill it in. When you're ready, share that side of the kit with someone you'd like to talk to about your bisexuality, and make a plan to speak with them, preferably in person.

*Remember:*

Just as it can take us time to become comfortable with our bisexuality other people may need time to adjust when they receive our news.



## Acknowledgements



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For more information about this disclosure kit and the research that led to it email Dr. Margaret Robinson at [margaret.robinson@utoronto.ca](mailto:margaret.robinson@utoronto.ca).



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