Alice,

How many women on Columbia and Barnard campuses are bisexual? What percentage of women on these campuses are sexually active or have had sex in the past?

Signed,

Curious

Answer

Dear Curious,

You ask a difficult question here for (at least) two reasons: people have various definitions of the term "bisexual" and, consequently, there is much variation in who identifies as bisexual. So, do you want to know how many women on campus identify as bisexual, or how many would be labeled bisexual by some given definition?

One survey of American citizens compiled by the National Center of Health Statistics found that about 1.8 percent of the national population identifies itself as bisexual. That same study suggested that approximately 1 percent of men and 3 percent of women ages 15 to 44 had both male and female sexual partners.

Whether or not these numbers are still accurate today, or are representative of people at Columbia and Barnard's campuses, is unclear. Likewise, it is difficult to say how many of the women on these campuses are, or have been, sexually active (especially without a single definition of sexual activity).

Have you given some thought as to why you may be interested in these statistics? Are you looking to meet people on campus? Do you want to find a bisexual support group? Just plain curious? If you are at Columbia and interested in LGBTQ support on campus, you may want to check out the GHAP (Gay Health Advocacy Project) [2]. GHAP also provides referrals to other LGBTQ-sensitive organizations and support groups, both on- and off-campus.

Alice!

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Life issues and resources [3]