Dear Alice,

I am openly bisexual and have been for years. I want to get involved with a queer community on campus, but I am afraid of being discriminated against for being bisexual and not lesbian, as bisexuals are often viewed as just greedy and unfaithful. What should I do?

? Unsure

Answer

Dear Unsure,

Good for you for wanting to be involved! Your hesitation is understandable, though some hold a definition of sexuality that is more rigid and constant than what is actually experienced by many people. As a result, those who identify as bisexual often feel as though they are not fully accepted within the gay or straight community. Still, with an open mind, some searching, and a willingness to try some groups on for size, you will likely find a community that will support and accept you—sexuality and all!

Being open and comfortable with your sexuality is the first step in finding a community to support you; it sounds like you're already there. Congratulations! The next step is to find a community in which to get involved. It sounds like you know there is a queer community on campus, but, if you are not sure, the first step would be to contact your school's center for student life. You can also visit their website for a list of student organizations on campus. If there are no LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) groups on campus, consider starting your own!

You may also be able to locate nearby LGBTQ community centers and organizations that are located off campus by visiting CenterLink. Once you have a few organizations on your list, contact the groups' leaders and plan on attending one of their meetings or events. You may even consider speaking to the group representative on the philosophy of the group in regards to inclusiveness. If you feel comfortable, express your concerns. Pay attention to the response you get—it could be revealing.

If you find yourself faced with biphobic behaviors, remarks, or reactions, you have a few options. Depending on the situation, you may be able to address them directly. Doing this without being accusatory or “fighting fire with fire” may not only help you assert your confidence in your sexuality, but also give a voice to others who feel discriminated against.
Communicating openly and finding common ground with those who you’re concerned may perceive you as greedy or unfaithful may help them realize that you are, in fact, neither of those things. However, if you feel at all threatened or unsafe, leave the situation and report it to a public safety officer on your campus or in the area. Additional tips on confronting discrimination may be found in the related Q&As.

As with any relationship, it may take a while before you find your perfect match in the queer community. Your concern over acceptance is one that is shared by many bisexuals and there are resources and support available to you. Start your search by visiting bi-friendly websites such as the Bisexual Resource Center [3] or the American Institute of Bisexuality [4]. For more personalized help with addressing discrimination and other bi concerns, you may find it helpful to make an appointment with a counselor. With these resources in hand, you’ll be well on your way to finding a community that will support and accept you for you. Good-bi, for now!

Alice!
Category:
Relationships [5]
Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, or Questioning [6]
Relating [7]

Related questions

Bi, gay, pansexual: What do I call myself? [8]
My parents don't believe I’m bi! [9]
Was I discriminated against? [10]
Tell my current partner I’m bisexual? [11]
Bisexuals on campus [12]
Lesbian questioning if she's bisexual [13]

Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [14]
Mental Health Service (CUMC) [15]
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Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service. If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

Source URL: http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/bisexual-acceptance-queer-community

Links
[10] http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/was-i-discriminated-against