



# BISEXUAL HEALTH

Research Workshop



National Institutes of Health  
*Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office*

## SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DAY

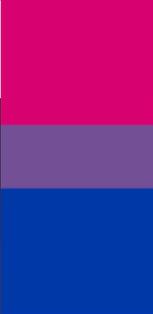
Co-Chairs Wendy B. Bostwick

& Brian M. Dodge

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

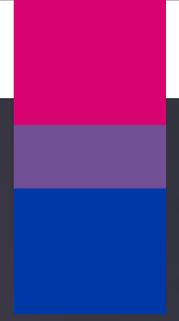
**"If I have seen  
further than  
others, it is by  
standing upon the  
shoulders of  
giants."**

**- Sir Isaac Newton**



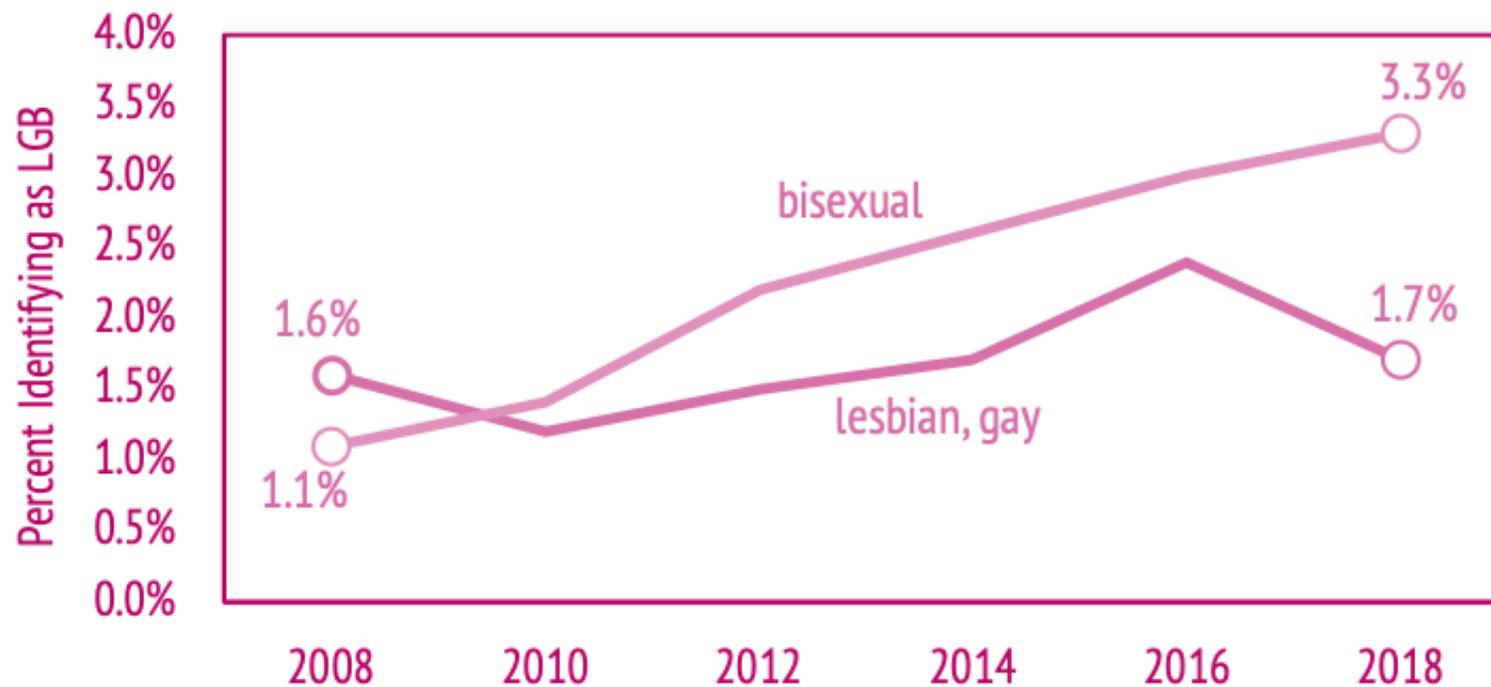
# Data & Definitions

# Definitions and terminology



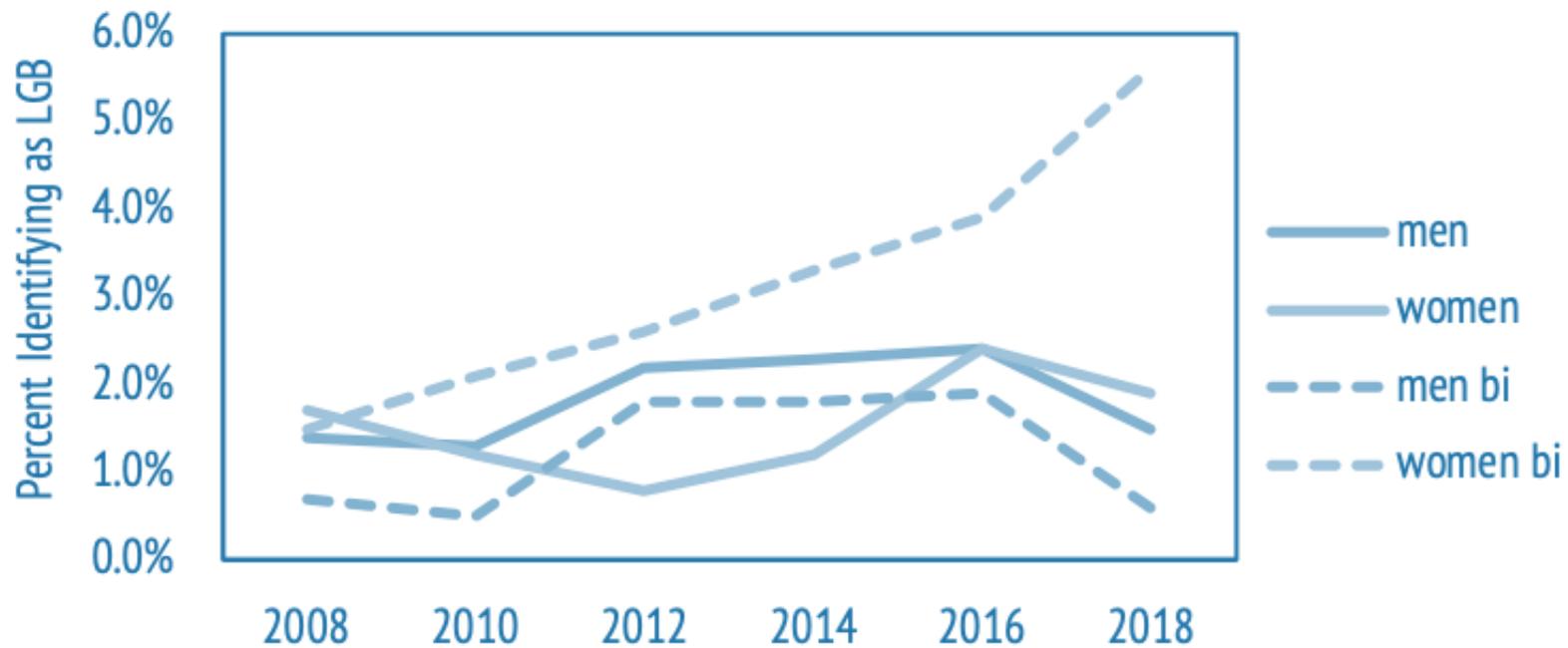
- ▶ **Bisexual:** A label used by those with the potential to be attracted, romantically and/or sexually, to people of more than one sex/gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.
- ▶ **Bisexual+ (Bi+):** An umbrella term to capture a range of non-monosexual identity terms, including but not limited to: bisexual, pansexual, queer, demisexual
- ▶ **Monosexual:** Term used to describe persons attracted to only one sex/gender, e.g., exclusively heterosexual, gay, lesbian persons

## Proportion of Americans Identifying as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual, 2008-2018



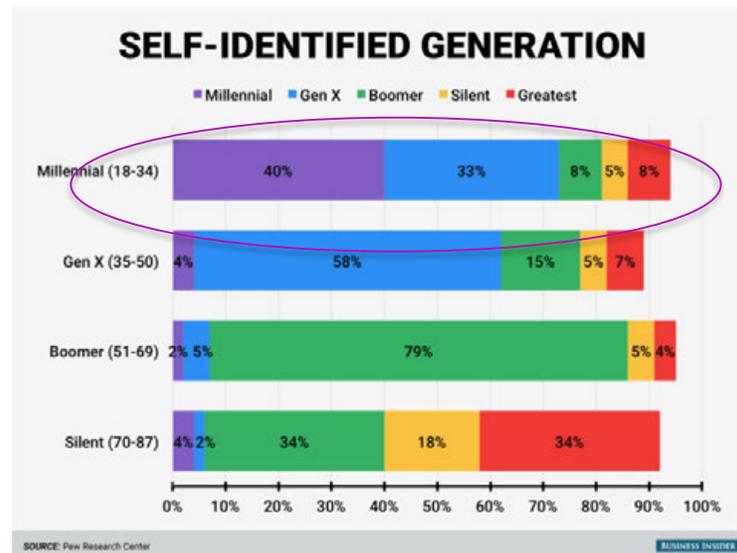
Source: General Social Survey, 2008-2018. Chart by: Tristan Bridges and D'Lane Compton

## Proportion of Americans Identifying as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual by Gender, 2008-2018



Source: General Social Survey, 2008-2018. Chart by: Tristan Bridges and D'Lane Compton

10,791,00 bisexual people are....



# For consideration

- ▶ Discussion of bisexual identity/ies must be attendant to issues of age, race, generational cohort, gender identity, and other intersectional issues
- ▶ When needed, and relevant to health issue(s), clarify dimension of sexual orientation identity, attraction or behavior
- ▶ Who are we missing? How do we/can we account for shifting identity labels (including no labels) or those not typically measured in large surveys, e.g., same-gender loving, fluid?



# Social Context of Bisexuality

# Bisexuality is ...



- **Not new**



# Bisexuality is ...

- Not rare



# Bisexuality is ...



- **Not monolithic**



Indeed ...



# Bisexuality is ...

- **Becoming SEEN**

Archives of Sexual Behavior  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1370-9>

SPECIAL SECTION: BISEXUAL HEALTH



## Introduction to the Special Section on Bisexual Health: Can You See Us Now?

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# As we launch into this special day ...

*It is time to move beyond existential questions and to determine how and why bisexual populations consistently demonstrate disproportionate rates of negative health outcomes relative to their exclusively heterosexual and gay/lesbian counterparts. However, it is also time to explore the potential role of resiliency and other factors that may buffer against poor health outcomes among some bisexual individuals. Though the body of evidence related to health inequities among bisexual groups is undeniable, we caution any interpretation that would suggest that bisexuality, per se, always already confers disadvantage. Rather, we hope these findings spur additional thinking around the larger social, political, and cultural context, to say nothing of the academic and scholarly context, from which such inequities arise, and how they are—or are not—subsequently discussed, addressed, and seen. – Bostwick & Dodge, 2019*