reckon.news

Bye bye binary: How Gen Z's bi boom could change EVERYTHING for future generations

By Denny | denny@reckonmedia.com

6-8 minutes



Portrait of young man with multiracial friends in illuminated bedroom at home - stock photo (Maskot)

When Robyn Ochs, bisexual icon, speaker, advocate and editor of grassroots publication Bi Women Quarterly, came out as bi 47 years ago, she fought valiantly for a space beyond the rigid binary of gay and straight sexualities. Today, most of LGBTQ Gen Z adults identify as bisexual.

1 of 5

That is, according to a <u>Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI)</u> report released last week. The report, directed by <u>Diana Orcés</u>, found that 28% of Gen Z adults—ages 18 to 25—in the U.S. identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer—most of whom are bisexual-identifying.

Ochs, who defines bisexuality as the attraction towards "people of my own gender, and people of different genders," correlates this increase in people coming out as bisexual to the major shifts in society and the surge of activism from the bisexual community.

"There's a greater cultural and societal acceptance," she said.

"There's far more information available. People have more representation and more role models. There are out elected officials, actors, musicians and sports figures."

The PRRI report's findings line up with another major survey released last February by Gallup, which also concluded that being LGBTQ is most common amongst Gen Z young adults. It found that 7.2% of adults in the U.S. identify as LGBTQ, making up for nearly 20% of Gen Z adults. Rather than half, in Gallup's case, 58% of LGBTQ Gen Z adults consider themselves bisexual.

"With respect to LGBTQ identity, it's very clear that Gen Z adults look different than older Americans," Melissa Deckman, PRRI's chief executive told NBC News on Jan 24.

Despite the community's <u>outcry of underrepresentation</u> and <u>ongoing fight against stigmas</u>, Gen Z's boom of bisexuality is a glimpse for the future of love for the generations to follow.

The future will continue to grow more fluid

River McMican, nonbinary president of the board of directors of

2 of 5 2/6/24, 12:44 AM

nonprofit <u>Bisexual Resource Center</u>, credits young people for their increase in social awareness around the fluidity of sexuality and gender.

"Our youth are, as always, on the leading edge of that awareness [because] while there are still many challenges for the LGBTQ community, Gen Z is growing up at a time where they can expect greater social support and legal protections than any other generation," McMican said, contributing that as a factor in the increasing number of bisexual-identified youth.

"And honestly, the internet makes a difference. Today's youth grow up with massive access to the internet, where they can find information, talk with other bisexual youth, and connect to supportive communities that aren't limited to their immediate physical location."

Emily April Allen is a Tennessee-based bisexual photographer whose focus is on documenting, highlighting and empowering the queer and trans community of Nashville via portraiture. Allen, who is 33, started her own photography series "The Nashville Bi+Diaries" in 2021 documenting bisexuals of Nashville across generations.

In her series, each subject provides a diary entry reflecting on their own bisexuality. Through this project, Allen describes the PRRI study as a glimpse into how much more fluid future generations will be regarding sexuality as a whole—especially bisexuality.

"I passionately think that there is so much possibility in the acceptance of fluidity," she said, adding that Gen Z's shattering of the binary of sexuality will lead to more young people coming out early, where "there is no either or; you just get to be."

3 of 5 2/6/24, 12:44 AM

Heterosexuality will not be a default sexuality anymore

Michael Lemus, a millennial bisexual Latino, is a content creator and founder & CEO of the inclusive platform Reclaiming Your Happiness with Lemus LLC who continues to feel great pride in the younger generation's openness to various sexualities.

Lemus, whose <u>TikTok account</u> has over 30,000 followers and garnered 200,000 likes, tells Reckon that "who you are dating does not necessarily determine how you identify."

He adds that in the future, he sees a decrease in heterosexuality because "I think many people are queer but may not have the support around them to be honest about it."

The more young people claim bisexuality, the more likely future generations will open up the "unrealized possibility that heterosexuality need no longer be the default assumption," according to Ochs. She claims that seeing younger people lead with a more open mind about sexuality, and the overall rise in number of people who are comfortable acknowledging multigender attraction is freeing to witness.

"It has the capacity to make the gender of who you love not a big deal," she added. "I want to live in a world where being LGBTQ is interesting, but no more interesting or controversial than being lefthanded."

She tells Reckon that her personal bisexuality is not even contingent on gender, but rather is based on individuals—something she sees becoming more common in the future.

4 of 5 2/6/24, 12:44 AM

Bisexuality as freedom

Nicole Kristal, executive director and founder of nonprofit and bisexual advocacy organization Still Bisexual, tells Reckon that bisexual Gen Z is less likely to bury their bi+ identity for people, which contributes to the PRRI's studies of their high percentage.

"Gen Z collectively knows what to say when their identities are questioned, where in past generations there was much more pressure to choose a side and shame around not being part of that gay/straight binary," she said. "That pressure is still there, but since Gen Z has also been freed from gender binaries, it's easier to feel liberated from the gay and straight sexual orientation binary."

There is yet to be extensive data on LGBTQ identities amongst the younger Gen Alpha, but Allen predicts an even greater sense of relief from pressures to conform to any heteronormative sexualities.

"I like to kind of think of coming out as bi—especially when you've been pushing down that part of you for a while—is like an exhale." Allen describes the present moment as a "larger collective exhale from this generation" of not having to hold in identity.

"That has a really healthy impact on every other part of your life—when you are able to embrace, claim and celebrate your identity from a young age and live your truth as your truth is unfolding."

5 of 5