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# Merriam-Webster Updates Definition of 'Bisexual'

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For Bisexual Visibility Day, GLAAD is praising Merriam-Webster for making the dictionary definition of bisexual a little less binary -- although activists say there's still room for improvement.

Bisexual advocate Robyn Ochs reached out to Merriam-Webster in January 2019 to ask the publisher to change its definition of bisexual, which read, "1a: possessing characters of both sexes and especially both male and female reproductive structures; 1b: of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to both men and women; 2: of, relating to, or involving both sexes."

But a year later, nothing had changed, so she asked GLAAD to join her in lobbying Merriam-Webster. They sent a letter to the company noting that the use of "both" implied that gender is strictly binary, and they stressed that bisexual people are sometimes attracted to nonbinary individuals.

Recently, the publisher did update the definition on its website, and it now reads that bisexual can mean "of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex and of the opposite sex" or "of, relating to, or

characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's own gender identity and of other gender identities."

While GLAAD and Ochs celebrated, they noted the definition can still be refined. In a [GLAAD blog post](#), Ochs shared her definition, "the potential to be attracted -- romantically and/or sexually -- to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree."

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GLAAD cited the definition from its Media Resource Guide: "A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime." The post also included definitions from several other [LGBTQ+](#) groups and health organizations.

"Despite bisexual+ people comprising the largest community within the LGBTQ population, they face higher rates of stigma and discrimination as their identities and experiences are less likely to be understood or accepted than those of their lesbian and gay counterparts," Rich Ferraro, GLAAD chief communications officer, remarked in the post. "Merriam-Webster has a strong history of expanding and updating LGBTQ words, which has a direct impact on how the world recognizes marginalized communities. By updating the definition of 'bisexual,' Merriam-Webster took an important step in helping to create a more accurate and current understanding of bisexual+ people."

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