

# BI+ SEXUALITY, CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

Welcome to an evening where we celebrate diversity and creativity of human expressions regarding sexuality and romantic attachments. Let's envision a future where identities are not limited by categories but enriched by the freedom to express desire and oneself freely.

## PROGRAM

**18.00-18.10** Opening remarks

**18.10-19.40** Beyond Binaries – Robyn Ochs

How do we assign labels to our complex experiences of identity? In this interactive workshop, we explore the landscape of sexuality, conduct a thought-provoking anonymous survey of those present, and look together at the data. How do we identify, privately and publicly? Where do we locate ourselves on sexuality and gender continue? How old were we when we came to our identities? How a/sexual are we? How well do our friends/family members understand us? This workshop will change the way you think about labels and deconstruct binary systems of identity.

**19.40-20.00** Coffee break

**20.00-20.50** The New Bisexual: Young, Progressive, Creative – Ritch Savin-Williams

When we are more inclusive by including both sexual and romantic attractions and behaviors as to who "counts" as bisexual, the percentage is closer to 20% and equally prevalent among women and men. The considerably higher prevalence is driven in large part by young people who are increasingly inventing labels and descriptions that best reflect who they are. Many are eschewing sexual labels altogether by referring to "bisexuality" less as a category and more as a spectrum of sex and romance to multiple sexes. Common identities that fall under a bisexual umbrella include fluid, pansexual, queer, and "something else" (unlabeled) and other descriptions are being created every day. This is a promising tendency because it reflects a progressive spirit on the part of young people not to be trapped by labels but to be sexually and romantically free to embrace whatever is best or true for them.

On the other hand, these developments complicate our tasks as researchers and clinicians; yet we should adapt to them rather than expect them to follow our lead. Perhaps because of their bisexuality, individuals have something unique to contribute to our national wellbeing, such as creativity, artistic skills, cognitive flexibility, and tolerance for differences. Bisexuality is not an obstacle but a blessing.

**20.50-21.00** Closing remarks

Robyn Ochs is an educator, speaker, grassroots activist, and editor of Bi Women Quarterly and two anthologies: the 42-country collection Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World and RECOGNIZE: The Voices of Bisexual Men. Her writings have been published in numerous bi, women's studies, multicultural, and LGBTQ+ anthologies, and she has taught courses on LGBTQ+ history & politics in the United States and Canada, the politics of sexual orientation, & the experiences of those who transgress the binary categories of gay|straight, masculine|feminine, black|white &/or male|female. Among other things, she crafted the definition of bisexuality that is used by many bi+ activists around the world: "I call

myself bisexual because I acknowledge in myself the potential to be attracted — romantically and/or sexually — to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.”

Robyn is deeply committed to intersectional and sustainable activism, to working with others to build coalitions across identities and across social movements, to supporting emerging leaders, and to learning and growing. She is particularly interested in bi+ health, the experiences of bi+ people in the workplace, the global bi+ movement, and bi and LGBTQIA+ youth. An activist for 50 years (so far), she is in it for the long haul.

Ritch C. Savin-Williams is a developmental psychology professor emeritus of Human Development, Cornell University and a licensed clinical psychologist with a private practice specializing in identity, relationship, and family issues among sexual-minority young adults.

Dr. Savin-Williams has written nine books on adolescent development. The last one is “Bi: Bisexual, Pansexual, Fluid and Nonbinary Youth”. With an understanding that sexuality and romantic attachments are often in flux, Savin-Williams offers us a way to think about bisexuality as part of a continuum. He shows that many of the young people who identify as bisexual often defy traditional views, dispute false notions, and reimagine sexuality with regard to both practice and identity. Broadly speaking, he shows that many young people experience a complex, nuanced existence with multiple sexual and romantic attractions as well as gender expressions, which are seldom static but fluctuate over their lives.

Dr. Savin-Williams research focuses on the experiences of growing up with same-sex attractions, the resiliency and mental health of sexual-minority youth, the sexual continuum, and the sexual development of youth. His work on differential developmental trajectories attempts to supplant our generic, stage models of identity development with a perspective that explores the similarities of sexual-minority youth with all youth and the ways in which sexual-minority adolescents vary among themselves and from heterosexual youth.

## For whom

For curious and creative people, BLGTQ+ people, activists, professionals, and other stakeholders.