If You Have a Problem With It, You're the Problem

I am bisexual, and many people seem to have a problem with that.

(B)rave. By embracing your sexuality, you risk losing people. "I don't want to be seen differently" I thought every day I stood behind someone I wasn't. My palms were sweating and my whole body was sent into shivers as I came out to my best friend. Not many are capable of doing that, however as someone who is confident in myself, I use that bravery towards helping others start their journey. I have friends that have struggled with their identity, who come to me for advice. I'm doing my part in allowing them to feel confident enough to share a part of themselves they've kept hidden.

(I)dentity. My name is Dara Tokeshi. I'm dating a girl. I play basketball, dance hula, and play the ukulele. I'm passionate about many different activities, and take pride in all of them, but people always ask: "You're dating a girl?" It's how I'm defined. It's the only thing people see. Yet my identity goes far beyond who I'm dating, as does everyone else's. Judging someone because of who they are is wrong, and we should be doing more to learn about one another as we're all unique. We need to come together to embrace each other and celebrate the existence of our lives.

(S)ociety. I'm in a relationship that attracts the disapproval of complete strangers. I've realized that society can be a dark place: people stare and gossip. It was hard to deal with the looks, and conversations I knew were about me. As it is for many people. We hear a lot of ignorant comments like "that's so gay", or people carelessly throwing around slurs. It's degrading and hurtful, especially when it comes from people that I respect and trust. It's difficult to be yourself when people constantly make jokes about how "abnormal" it is to be anything other than straight. I want to make it my job to ensure others that anybody can be themselves while surrounded by people that will support them. This requires educating many on what it means to be queer, and how words make an impact. I've learned to be myself regardless of what others think because society will always find a way to judge who we are no matter how we're living our lives.

(E)ncouragement. Ever since I've truly been myself, I've done my best to be more encouraging. I feel privileged to share my experience with those who need it. Encouragement is one of the most important ways we can change our society. Those not in the LGBTQ+ community, should encourage those who are to be themselves. We need less bystanders and more allies.

(X)ena: "A tough confident woman". I believe that is who I am. Without that I wouldn't be in a healthy homosexual relationship. However, it shouldn't have to take a "tough" person to be happy in such a relationship. When people are constantly telling you who you should and shouldn't be dating, it becomes difficult to remain confident in who you are.

This toughness that LGBTQ+ members have to personify shouldn't be necessary, and by spreading more awareness, we won't have to anymore.

(U)nderstanding. I was afraid when beginning my "coming out" journey. Not everybody is understanding. I was in a lucky position. Most people in the LGBTQ+ community aren't. People are scared to be themselves because of what others will think. That's unacceptable. It's times like these that I realize we need so much growth in our society. It will require all of us to be united for change to be made.

(A)cceptance. Being "accepting" is preached as something a person should embody, when in reality being "accepting" of someone's identity shouldn't be a thing at all. Nobody needs to be "accepting" when you're in a straight relationship, but the second you say anything different, everyone suddenly becomes empathetic and "accepting" of your "situation". It's degrading. There shouldn't be people we have to "accept", no social standard, no "normal", nobody to compare ourselves to. Because honestly, it's just a bunch of bullsh*t.

(L)ove. Love is love. No matter what. I used to think that love was controversial, but it's not. The biggest lesson I've learned is to love who makes you happy, not what makes others happy. And that's honestly one of the most simple yet important things we need to remember. We're all different in our own ways, and that's the beauty of the world. At the end of the day we're all just trying to get by, and loving everybody for who they are would make that a hell of a lot easier.