

(un)Learning Together

(what is this? + other months' docs)

[optiMize](#) is based in Ann Arbor, MI and many of our resources are here as well, but we welcome nationwide resources since our community extends beyond this region.

Most of these resources have been thoughtfully included based on our interactions with them, but there are some resources (books, podcasts, etc.) that we haven't reviewed in full. Those resources will be denoted by an asterisk (*).

Additionally, please do research on the resources below — understanding who developed/wrote/created them is key to a fuller understanding. Some of these resources have been rightfully critiqued, and it is important to understand that as well as recognizing any value they provide.

This is a living document — we would love contributions (whether that be adding or removing information). They can be emailed to [optiMize Mentorship](#). Please keep in mind that this doc is meant to serve as a starting point for (un)learning on topics — not an encyclopedia.

This document would not be possible without the many resources that are already available as well as the work that folx within our communities have done to educate, highlight, and inform.

Any content warnings will be listed in purple font, abbreviated as “CW” with the nature of the sensitive content. We do our best to keep these updated, but please let us know if we miss anything.

The views expressed here are that of optiMize as a community — students, mentors, alumni, staff, local business and non-profit partners — and not that of the University of Michigan.

Considerations

- Topics for un(Learning) Together may be sensitive for members of our community.
- We ask that you approach all of these conversations and this document with love and grace.
- As a diverse community, we are coming from different backgrounds and levels of experience/exposure to these topics. Despite these differences, we acknowledge that we are all coming from a place of genuine desire to learn and grow to be better.
- If someone asks a question that seems obvious to you, please respond with patience. Be gentle with one another, and recognize that someone's lived experience is unique and important, even as it does not match your own.
- Be respectful, be kind, and let's navigate the processes of learning and growth together.

READ

Articles

- [Expansive Glossary of Identities](#) — Guess what?! There are a LOT more than just LGBTQ. Read on!
- [White gay privilege exists all year, but it is particularly hurtful during Pride*](#)
- [Should straight actors still play gay characters?](#)
- [African sexuality and the legacy of imported homophobia](#)
- For the Kiddos: [K-12 Lesson Plans on Pride History*](#)
- [Do's & Don'ts of LGBTQIA+ marketing](#)
- [More Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws Have Been Passed in 2021 Than Any Year in History](#)

- [History of Homophobia](#) — How did homophobia even become a thing? A VERY in-depth analysis, great for history lovers
- Religious: [The Biblical Case for LGBTQ Inclusion](#)
- [Bury Your Gays tropes](#) - why are LGBTQ people always killed off in shows
- LSA's [working group report](#) on best supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals

Non-Fiction Books

- [The Argonauts](#) by Maggie Nelson
- [How We Fight For Our Lives](#) by Saeed Jones
- [We Have Always Been Here](#) by Samra Habib

Fiction Books

- [Stone Butch Blues](#) by Leslie Feinberg **CW: Rape/SA, Violence/Transphobia/Homophobia**
- [24 books to read celebrating PRIDE](#) 🍷

WATCH

TV Shows

- **Black Mirror: San Junipero** (Season 3, Episode 4 on Netflix) — In a seaside town in 1987, a shy young woman and an outgoing party girl strike up a powerful bond that defies the laws of space and time. Literally the only happy ending to any episode of Black Mirror.
- **Tales of the City** (Netflix)
- **Special** (Netflix) — semi-autobiographical series starring Ryan, a gay man with cerebral palsy who decides to do away with his identity as an accident victim and go after the life that he wants.
- **The Lady and the Dale*** (HBO Max)
- **Pose** (Netflix)

Film

- **The Boys in the Band** (Netflix) — A visitor turns an evening upside down when he interrupts a gathering of gay men in New York City in 1968. All gay characters are played by actual gay men.
- **The Half of It** (Netflix) — Sweet, coming of age story about a young immigrant girl in a small town who begins writing love letters on behalf of a boy to his crush, but she begins to fall for her instead.
- **Portrait of a Lady on Fire** (Hulu) — directed by notable lesbian French film director Céline Sciamma, this film set in 18th century France tells the story of a young painter, Marianne, who is commissioned to do the wedding portrait of Héloïse. The two women become closer as they share Héloïse's last moments of freedom before the impending wedding. A phenomenal slow burn lesbian period piece.
- **The Watermelon Woman*** (Showtime) — directed by Cheryl Dunye & released in 1996, it was the first feature-length narrative film written and directed by an out black lesbian about black lesbians
- **Bound*** (Hulu) — The lesbian romance between a newly-released ex-con, and the girlfriend of a Mafia money-launderer, has a mercenary dynamic. Directed by the Wachowski sisters, who are both trans women best known for directing The Matrix.
- **But I'm A Cheerleader**
- **The Handmaiden** (Prime Video)
- **Pariah*** (Netflix)
- **Alex Strangelove** (Netflix)

Documentary

- **Paris Is Burning** — This documentary focuses on drag queens living in New York City. On (Apple TV + Outdoor screening on Friday, June 25th @ Clark Park, Detroit at 9:15PM \$10 tickets thru [Experimental Journal](#))
 - Note: Please read [this article](#) to acknowledge controversy
- **A Secret Love** (Netflix) — A former baseball player keeps her lesbian relationship a secret from her family for seven decades.
- **We Were Here** (Prime Video) — a documentary on the AIDS epidemic as well as the broad political and social upheavals it unleashed. An incredible story of love and loss through the eyes of five men and women who experienced it firsthand.
- **Gaycation** — Elliot Page and his best friend, Ian Daniel, explore LGBTQ cultures around the world in this docuseries.
- **The Gospel of Eureka** (Prime Video) —
- **All in My Family*** (Netflix)
- **Welcome to Chechnya*** (HBO Max)
- **HIV: The Neglected Pandemic** (Vice/Youtube)

Youtube

- [Queer Coding, Explained | Hidden in Plain Sight](#)
- [Performative Bisexuality: Y'all Not Tired?](#)
- [Indoctrination: A History of Homophobia in Schools*](#)
- [actual attraction vs. compulsory heterosexuality*](#)
- [Trans Stories Onscreen, Explained](#)

LISTEN

- [Out Now](#) on Spotify — a playlist of new music released by LGBTQ+ artists
- **A Gay and Non Gay** — James and Dan dive into conversations around day to day life, differences in perceptions, homophobia, coming out, mental health
- **The Log Books** — an award-winning history of LGBTQ+ life in Britain, stories range from police entrapping gay men meeting for sex in toilets, to women losing custody of their children for being lesbians, to people kicked out of pubs for wearing pro-gay badges
- **Busy Being Black** — the podcast exploring how we live in the fullness of our queer Black lives
- **Two Two Podcast** — Two black lesbians living in London speaking their unapologetic truth whilst creating a safe space for people like themselves and bridging the gap between LGBT+ people and Cis gendered straight people

FOLLOW

- Adam Eli [he/him] ([@adameli](#)) — gay Jewish activist & author
- Butch Is Not a Dirty Word ([@butchisnotadirtyword](#)) — media resource dedicated to Butch identity, visibility, and voices.
- wmn zine ([@wmn_zine](#)) — a publication of art and poetry by communities of marginalized lesbian
- Dancing with Her ([@dancingwithher](#)) & Dancing with Them ([@dancingwiththem](#)) — LGBTQ+ wedding content
- LGBT History ([@lgbt_history](#)) — account sharing photographs and stories from LGBTQ+ history

- [Black and Gay Back in the Day](#) — A digital community archive honouring & remembering Black queer life in Britain, as it was.
- Jessica Kellgren-Fozard [she/her] ([@jessicaoutofthecloset](#)) — Deaf and disabled lesbian Youtuber based in the UK (she & her wife just had a baby!)
- Jonathan Van Ness [they/he/she] ([@jvn](#)) - non-binary activist, author, beauty specialist on Netflix's
- [Anna Lytical](#) — a drag queen who teaching computer science in a fun & glamorous way

VISIT/SUPPORT

- [The Spectrum Center](#) — U-M on campus center that works toward enhancing the campus climate and support services for LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty at the university through education, advocacy, and community building
- [Affirmations LGBTQ+ Community Center](#) (Ferndale)
- [Ruth Ellis Center](#) — Detroit area social services agency serving the needs of runaway, homeless and at-risk LGBT youth
- [Transgender Michigan](#)
- The Ringwald Theatre — on Woodward Avenue, home of Detroit's LGBTQ-identified theater troupe
- [For the Gworls](#) — NY based Black, trans-led collective that fundraises money to help Black trans people pay for their rent, gender-affirming surgeries, medicines/doctor's visits, and travel assistance.
- Leslie Lohman Museum
- [Transgender Law Center](#) - the largest national trans-led organization advocating for a world in which all people are free to define themselves and their futures.

EAT & DRINK & SHOP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

Ann Arbor

- (Aut Bar has closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are still doing things [virtually!](#))
- Avalon — Cafe/bakery with locations in both Ann Arbor and Detroit
- [The Butters Hygienics](#) — Handcrafted personal care products, manufactured in Ypsilanti
- Detroit Street Filling Station — vegan restaurant in Ann Arbor that hosted Lesbian Bingo before the pandemic

Detroit & surrounding areas

- Five15 — Restaurant and drag queen bingo event venue
- [;GENDER? @ Detroit Artists' Market](#) (5/5/21 - 6/7/21) — an exhibition of how artists depict gender, using their own thoughts and experiences
- [Not Sorry Goods](#)
- The Royce
- Marrow
- Arts & Scraps Community Store
- The Larson Lens — photography and videography company
- Café Muse — Famous for being the home of Oprah's favorite grilled cheese sandwich, in Royal Oak
- [Raffa Reuther](#) — nonbinary ethical clothing designer & maker based in Detroit
- Hugh — Homegoods and lifestyle store in Detroit
- [Lisa Romano Real Estate Agent](#)
- Rosie O'Grady's — Bar and grill in Ferndale
- La FERIA — Spanish tapas restaurant in Detroit

- Amici's Pizza & Living Room in Berkley
- Sister Pie — Quaint bakery in Detroit, known for pies
- Detroit Vegan Soul — Black lesbian owned Vegan soul food restaurant
- Avalon — Cafe/bakery with locations in both Ann Arbor and Detroit

Online

- [Ur Internet Friends .\)](#) — optiMize funded project from Cohort 8, zines & other products created by queer and non-binary people featuring historically underrepresented artists and creatives\
- [Otherwild](#) — queer woman owned design studio & store
- [Star Laces](#) — optiMize funded project from Cohort 7 creating pronoun normalizing shoelaces
- [Trains Zine](#) — trans led zine showcasing work by exclusively trans and gender-nonconforming (GNC) writers and artists
- [The Phluid Project](#) — gender free fashion brand
- [Haute Butch](#) — Black queer owned masculine-inspired androgynous clothing brand

ASK

- How can we address and learn from problematic representation in the media?
- How do you show up for the LGBTQ+ community?
- Have you ever critically examined your gender identity, expression, and sexual identity?
- How has your own identity impacted you personally in aspects of career, education, interpersonal relations, etc.?
- In what ways have you benefited from OR experienced the consequences of heteronormativity?
- How do I feel about being asked to use or corrected to use non-binary pronouns (they/them etc)?
- How do I reinforce gender or sexuality stereotypes, consciously or subconsciously?

“
**Be yourself, the world will
adjust.**”

— **Manabi Bandyopadhyay**