

TODRICK HALL

behind the curtain

Intersecting Identities & Representation

Lesson Plans & Discussion Guide

**Frameline
Youth in Motion**

Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall

Intersecting Identities & Representation

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About the Film and Guide

Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall

DIRECTOR: KATHERINE FAIRFAX WRIGHT
DOCUMENTARY, 2017, USA, 60 MINUTES

Suggested grade levels: middle and high school

AN INSPIRING DOCUMENTARY about grit, perseverance, vision, and the redemptive power of art, *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall* tells the story of a performer and YouTube sensation who has made waves on *American Idol*, *RuPaul's Drag Race*, and Broadway.

The film takes a deep look at Todrick Hall's life—from small-town Texas to big-time show business—and his experiences as he launches his most ambitious, and personal, project yet: the full-scale original musical *Straight Outta Oz*. With each new song that Todrick creates, we learn more about his layered experience growing up gay and Black in rural Texas, his turbulent journey



of acceptance within a religious family, and the harsh realities of trying to make it in entertainment and in mainstream media as an “outsider.” With limited time and a minimal budget, Todrick has the odds against him, but his passion and his team of talented performers overcome all obstacles to bring this story to the world and inspire audiences young and old.

This guide provides discussion questions and suggested activities for students and educators as they

examine and address topics raised in *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall*. Key themes for which lesson plans are also provided include what it means to hold intersecting identities and the impact of representation in media and art.

Discussion questions also cover aspects of Todrick's life, including his relationships, creating communities, and defining and embracing who you are. A special section written by the It Gets Better Project looks at how Todrick's story has inspired others. Lastly, a segment for educators and parents focuses on ways to leverage the film for professional development to better support LGBTQ+ youth.

A full-length and unedited version of *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall* is available for personal viewing only (not for any screenings or Youth in Motion activities) through Wolfe Video, including on Netflix: <https://www.wolfevideo.com/products/behind-the-curtain-todrick-hall>. Please note the unedited version may not be suitable for young audiences.

Director's Statement



I didn't know of Todrick Hall's existence until the day I got a call about this project, but I began to research him straight away, and the teaser for his new project *Straight Outta Oz* had just been released. It piqued my interest because it is both visually and musically enchanting, but also because it seemed to indicate a tonal, aesthetic, and thematic departure from Todrick's prior work. And wherever there's a departure, there's a story! So I hopped onboard.

Todrick is an astonishing lyricist, and his work strikes such a fine balance between gravitas, levity, wit, musicality, universality, and individuality—I was really impressed by that. I believe deeply in inclusion, in ingenuity, and in...costumes. Todrick's shared admiration of that trifecta was immediately apparent in his work. Todrick is also just a super captivating presence onscreen, which is part of why I was so smitten, part of why he has garnered such a following, and part of why I decided to spend the better part of a year studying him.

The resulting film, *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall*, is by and large a music documentary that follows Todrick during the creation of the three segments of *Straight Outta Oz*: the album, the visual album, and the stage show, as well as the national tour of the show. As I endeavored to encapsulate the wild world of Todrick, I insisted that I stick around for the duration: each rehearsal, production meeting, tour date, trip to the mall, and so on. The film soon took on a life well beyond rhythm and rhymes, as Black Lives Matter, gun violence, LGBTQ+ rights, inclusivity, the Trump administration, and other current affairs made their way organically into the story of Todrick and his merry band of performers. These matters emerged through Todrick's lyrics and backstory, as well as through circumstances that arose over the course of that summer. As *Straight Outta Oz* is an autobiographical project for Todrick, the documentary is an intimate coming-of-age story, and a love story between a mother and son—in all its beauty and complexity. The film advocates for self-expression, self-acceptance, and the redemptive power of art...but it's also about fun and friends and song and dance!

What I hope people get out of the film is that rapping in baritone shouldn't stop you from stunning in stilettos, that uplifting those around you doesn't make you sink, that being a trailblazing star doesn't mean being flawless, that being an extraordinary mother doesn't mean being a faultless mother, that success doesn't mitigate challenge, and that the caliber of your work and the quality of your soul will be only as high as the standard you set for yourself.

— KATHERINE FAIRFAX WRIGHT

How to Use this Guide

This resource is designed for middle and high school:

- **Educators:** all activities are designed to link with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and can be integrated into existing classroom curriculum.
- **GSAs (Genders and Sexualities Alliances) and student groups:** the film can be screened at schools, and GSAs and students can facilitate a post-screening discussion and/or adapt the suggested activities.

There are two basic formats available in this guide, which can be used individually or collectively:

1. The Discussion Guide is for student leaders and teachers who want to discuss the film with their student group or class. This section includes a series of discussion questions arranged by the following themes:

- » Representation
- » Intersecting Identities
- » Relationships
- » Creating Communities
- » Defining and Embracing Who You Are
- » Inspiring Others: It Gets Better
- » Professional Development for Educators/Parents

These questions are designed to foster dialogue. The organizer of the screening can choose the questions from each theme that best fit the group; stick with one two themes, explore all of them, or adapt the question themes as the conversation changes. This option is also flexible with time constraints.

We recommend reviewing the background information and resources in the *Lesson Plans* sections (see below), even if organizers do not plan to implement any of the activities. *Lesson Plans* contain important context that can aid organizers in facilitating a post-screening discussion.

2. Lesson Plans include resources, instructions, and materials for lessons and activities that can be implemented by educators in the classroom or by student groups, such as GSAs. There are two lesson plans, one focused on *Intersecting Identities* and the other on *Representation*.

Lesson Plans are designed to be flexible, so you can adapt them to work best with your interests, setup, and available time.

Lesson Plans can be:

- » Used individually or collectively.
- » Adjusted based on time constraints.
- » Used alone or in conjunction with the *Discussion Guide*.



Why LGBTQ+-Inclusive Curriculum is Important

Studying LGBTQ+ history and culture encourages all students to think more critically about the world, helps to create safe and affirming communities for LGBTQ+ students and families, and ultimately has the power to transform lives.

The following resources provide hard data and contextualize curricula as part of efforts for improved school safety, decreased bullying, and higher achievement across all schools and all students, not only LGBTQ+ students:

- » **GSA Network's *Implementing Lessons that Matter: The Impact of LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum on Student Safety, Well-Being, and Achievement***
<https://gsanetwork.org/resources/implementing-lessons-that-matter/>
- » **GLSEN's *Developing LGBT-Inclusive Classroom Resources***
<https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum>

It is helpful for educators and students who are addressing LGBTQ+-related topics at school to understand there may be potential pushback. It is important to know your rights when it comes to using LGBTQ+-themed content at your school. For example, in California, teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity is not only protected, but also mandated by the FAIR Education Act (<http://www.faireducationact.com>). However, laws vary from state to state and it is highly recommended that you research where your state and/or district stand.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **GSA Network's *Resource Packet***, which is updated annually and includes resources for starting a school GSA, suggested activities, terms, and more:
<https://gsanetwork.org/resources/annual-resource/>
- **GLSEN's *Make Your GSA Transgender & Gender Nonconforming Inclusive***:
<https://www.glsen.org/GSA/making-your-club-inclusive-transgender-and-gnc-students>
- **GLSEN's *Supporting Black LGBTQ Students* landing page of resources**:
<https://www.glsen.org/article/supporting-black-lgbtq-students>
- For more tips on how to respond to anti-LGBTQ+ language and harassment, see:
 - » **GLSEN's *Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students***
<https://www.glsen.org/safespace> or email educators@glsen.org for more information, professional development, or support
 - » **GSA Network's *Dealing with Hostility & Opposition***
<https://gsanetwork.org/resources/dealing-with-hostility-opposition/>
 - » **Safe Schools Coalition's *An Educator's Guide to Intervening in Anti-Gay (LGBTQ) Harassment***
http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/guide_educator_interveneharass2005NAT.pdf



Content Notes and Advisory



Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall is a powerful and engaging documentary that provides ample opportunity for engaging and enriching conversations. While its tone is uplifting, the film also includes content that may be challenging for some students. It is important for facilitators to consider actions that will help prepare for discussions around these topics. The film has been edited from its feature length to maximize its appropriateness for middle and high school audiences, but it is strongly recommended that teachers and student leaders view the film prior to screening it at their school.

Todrick's art draws from his own personal experiences that relate to wider events in society; at times his work touches upon sensitive themes, including bullying, gun violence and the mass shooting at Pulse, and fans addressing their experiences around mental health and suicidal thoughts. While nothing graphic is seen on screen, these scenes may generate emotions and could potentially be triggering for some students.

Consider providing students with an advance notice about some of the sensitive topics the film will explore, and provide resources for support and an option for participants to remove themselves from the screening if they feel concerned. For example, below is a script that can be adapted and discussed with students well in advance of working with the film:

The film we are going to watch, *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall*, is a powerful documentary about the life experiences of singer and YouTube sensation Todrick Hall. Within the story, there are some references to gun violence, mental health and suicidal thoughts, and bullying.

If you are concerned that the film may be triggering and compromise your mental well-being, please do not hesitate to let me know or excuse yourself from watching the film [or include other instructions for how students can opt out].

There are many resources available that provide support for mental health or for people having suicidal thoughts, such as:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>)
- Trevor Project, which specializes in support for LGBTQ+ youth and has free hotline, chat, and text services (<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>)
- [And/or discuss any local resources at your school or community].

Tips for Facilitation

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment is crucial in encouraging participants to open up and engage in activities or conversations about topics in this guide that may be new, sensitive, or personal. Below are a few foundational tips to consider when preparing an event.

- ✔ **Establish group agreements for discussion.** Rules may include an agreement to speak one at a time, to refrain from using slurs or making personal attacks, and to maintain confidentiality. Confidentiality might include keeping what people say in the group confidential, or not speaking about other people's experiences that are not your own (e.g., other people in your group or at your school) unless you have privately secured their consent. Encourage participants to speak only for themselves and to not generalize or presume to know how others feel. Other examples include:
 - **Make Space/Take Space:** Ask participants to consider how much they contribute to the conversation, and if they often feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in groups. If they do, how can they help make space for others to participate? If they don't, what are ways they might be able to participate more?
 - **Use the Language You Have:** Everyone is coming together to learn, and in order to do so people need to feel comfortable asking questions. LGBTQ+ terminology, and especially terminology around gender, is constantly changing and being updated, so ask participants to not be discouraged if they aren't familiar with language or terms used and to not be afraid to ask questions.
- ✔ **Establish language group agreements.** As a group, decide if there are terms that should be off-limits, and provide acceptable alternatives. Depending on the maturity level of your participants, remind them that insults, personal attacks, or even a denigrating tone of voice undermine effective communication (and are, therefore, unacceptable). Reinforce a climate of respect with the language used to pose questions (e.g., instead of inviting judgment by asking, "What did you think about [insert person]?" ask, "What did you learn from [insert person]?").
- ✔ **Be conscious of pronouns, gendered language, and names.** It is important to make sure everyone, including the facilitator, is using the appropriate pronouns when referring to another person. Common pronouns are she, he, and they, but there are others! Some people may choose not to share their pronouns, and can be referred to by name. A few suggestions to consider include:
 - **When in conversation, lead by example** with statements such as "My pronouns are she/her/hers and they/them/theirs. What are yours?"
 - **Begin meetings with a check-in.** It can be as simple as "Please tell everyone your name, pronouns (if you'd like to share), and your favorite ice cream flavor/book/color/etc."
 - **If the facilitator or anyone in the group accidentally uses the wrong pronoun for someone, apologize quickly and sincerely, use the correct pronoun, and then move forward.** The bigger deal that is made out of the situation, the more uncomfortable it typically is for everyone.
 - **Practice using gender-inclusive language when referring to anyone.** For example, saying "people", "folks," or "humans" rather than "girls" or "guys" to refer to a group. Many people also use the pronouns they, them, and theirs when referring to a new person whose pronouns they don't know so as not to accidentally misgender that person.
- ✔ **Always use a person's chosen name,** even if it differs from their legal name. This should be a standard, and demonstrates respect for and affirmation of their identity.

Tips for Facilitation (CONTINUED)

- ✓ **Acknowledge potential discomfort with the topics at hand.** Remind participants that everyone is coming to the discussion with varied experiences (e.g., race, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status) and that no one will force them to reveal anything about themselves that they don't want to share. This is especially important for middle or high school students, who may be beginning to grapple with aspects of their identity.
- ✓ **Clarify the difference between dialogue and debate.** A debate is about staking out a position and trying to convince everyone else that you are right and they are wrong. A dialogue is about exchanging ideas in order to learn from one another, which means actively listening as well as talking. It also means that you aren't trying to force participants to accept a particular set of values or beliefs. Remind everyone they are engaging in a dialogue, not a debate.
- ✓ **Invite participants to share their honest opinions.** Encourage participants to not just say what they think the facilitator, teacher, or others want to hear. Avoid leading questions and, in the case of students, assure them that they won't be graded on what they say or believe.
- ✓ **Model the use of inclusive language during classroom discussions.** For example, when mentioning families, use terms such as "caregiver" or "family members" or "adults at home" to create space for all types of family structures.
- ✓ **Leave time to consider activities that are listed in this guide, or brainstorm your own.** Addressing injustice—especially injustice that may be a part of participants' lived realities—can lead to anger, sadness, and despair. Give participants the space to acknowledge these feelings, as well as the support to help them engage in positive actions to make a change.
- ✓ **Be prepared to protect vulnerable participants.** Keep an eye out for students who seem to be struggling or upset. Offer to speak with them privately and be sure to have handy a list of local resources, support services, or professionals who can help.
- ✓ **Be honest about what you do and don't know.** Use phrases such as "I don't know," "That's a good question," or "Let me do some research and get back to you on that." The resources sections throughout this guide are good starting points for further information and reading.



How to Plan a Youth in Motion Screening

Below is a checklist of areas to consider when planning a film screening or event.

FILM SELECTION

- ✓ First watch the Youth in Motion film(s) alone or with your GSA, your advisor, your teacher, or anyone else helping to plan a screening, to consider how you might design an event at your school.
- ✓ Youth in Motion DVDs are educational copies with public performance rights included, allowing you to host admission-free screenings of the films for the students, teachers, and parents at your school for as long as you have the DVD. If you ever want to consider hosting a screening of Youth in Motion films for your wider community and inviting people from outside of your school, or to charge admission for an event, you must first request permission from Frameline at youthinmotion@frameline.org, though depending on the film it may not be possible. Remember that for your screenings you have rights only to use the Youth in Motion DVD, and you are not permitted to stream the film digitally on any platforms (e.g., Netflix or iTunes) at your events.

GOALS, AUDIENCES, AND CO-SPONSORS

- ✓ What do you want your screening to achieve? Share the goals with your audience so they understand the purpose of viewing and talking about the film. Some prompts to consider when developing goals can include:
 - Do you want to help open up dialogue with students, teachers, or parents? If so, what type of conversations do you want to help foster?
 - Do you want to have a social event to bring in new student members to your GSA or group?
 - Do you want to watch the films with only GSA members to discuss the issues you think are most important for your student group to focus on?
 - Do you want to accept donations from participants as a fundraiser for a school program or community organization?
- ✓ Who are your target audiences? This should tie back to your goals, and who you want to reach in order to help meet your goals. Some examples of audiences are students, teachers, and/or parents.
- ✓ Who can co-sponsor your event to help promote it and reach a wider group and your target audiences? Consider asking other school clubs, such as groups based on racial or ethnic identities, Key Club, drama clubs, sports teams, the school newspaper, or others. This can help build community and allies, expose people to new resources, and increase the likelihood of a good turnout. You can also consider reaching out to local community organizations, such as LGBTQ+ centers, but only to help provide students with resources and not to help promote, as your screenings are not open to the general public.

WHERE & WHEN

- ✓ Decide where and when to hold your screening, based on your goals. Some ideas include:
 - GSA meetings
 - School assemblies
 - Lunchtime or after-school events
 - PTA meetings
 - Classroom activities
- ✓ Remember to plan ahead to reserve a venue as early as possible. If you choose to use a venue that is not on your school's campus, for example a local public library, community center, or art house theater, remember that, due to the rights Youth in Motion has with the films, the only permitted attendees are your school's students, teachers, and parents. Your screenings cannot be open to the general public, and no admission fees can be charged.

EQUIPMENT

- ✓ Check that the venue comes with a television or projector, DVD player, and speakers.
- ✓ Test the equipment and your DVD, ideally at least one week before your event to make sure everything works properly.

How to Plan a Youth in Motion Screening (CONTINUED)

POST-SCREENING DIALOGUE, ACTIVITIES, AND REFRESHMENTS

- ✓ How can you engage the audience to increase the impact of the film? Consider inviting guest speakers for a post-screening panel. Or select GSA members to lead a discussion afterwards in small groups, using the *Discussion Guide* questions as a resource.
- ✓ Think carefully about who the facilitator will be, as they will play a key role in creating a welcoming and supportive space that invites attendees to participate. Will it be a GSA student leader or a GSA advisor? Provide the facilitator with this guide and suggest that they review it in advance of the event—in particular the *Tips For Facilitation* section.
- ✓ If you have time, consider using or adapting the activities in the *Lesson Plans* section of this guide to help attendees think more about the issues in the film. There are also two suggested shorter activities in the *Discussion Guide* section for *Inspiring Others: It Gets Better*.
- ✓ If you can provide popcorn or other refreshments, they can be a good way to attract an audience!

ADVERTISE

- ✓ Promote the event using the methods that work best at your school. For example:
 - Make flyers and post them in your school's library, on bulletin boards, and in other high-traffic areas where you are allowed to advertise.
 - Reach out to your student newspaper or literary magazine to include an ad for the screening.
 - Contact student leaders and/or teachers who handle your school's intercom or PA announcements to see if you can include a short message about your event.
- ✓ Use social media to spread the word to other students, teachers, and/or parents, depending on who your target audiences are.
- ✓ Be sure to include all of the key information about your event: date, time, location, brief film description, and if appropriate mention a post-screening talk, activities, or refreshments.

SURVEYS

- ✓ Don't forget to use the Audience Survey that Frameline provided in the Youth in Motion DVD package. Make additional copies based on the anticipated size of your audience. To receive an electronic copy of the Audience Survey, email youthinmotion@frameline.org.
- ✓ Be sure to provide everyone who attends your screening with a copy of the Audience Survey, ask them to complete it after the event, and provide pencils or pens for them to borrow. Send the completed Audience Surveys back to Youth in Motion using the envelope provided in the DVD package, or scan them and email them to youthinmotion@frameline.org. The surveys are incredibly important for Youth in Motion to better understand how the program is impacting participants, which helps us maintain funding to keep free resources available to schools. Feedback through the surveys also helps us to improve the program. You can share this information with your audience to help encourage them to complete the surveys.
- ✓ After the event, student leaders and teachers who organized the screening are required to complete an Organizer Survey, which is online at: <https://www.frameline.org/youth-in-motion>.

FOLLOW-UP EVENTS

- ✓ Consider whether you want to host future events to help keep the conversation at your school going. Find other available Youth in Motion films here: <https://www.frameline.org/distribution/youth-in-motion/collections>.
- ✓ If you already have your next event planned, you can promote it at your current screening.

Discussion Guide

The following sections include some brief background information and sample questions grouped by theme that are intended to facilitate discussion, film- or book-club style. Facilitators can choose from themes as they deem appropriate, or as the conversation demands.

"There were not a lot of roles for gay African American men. I was like, 'I'm going to create my own opportunities, because they don't exist if I don't.'"

"You don't even exist in these worlds. There is no castle for you. They didn't even draw us into the background."

(in reference to the lack of Black representation in Disney movies)

"I never saw people in movies be attracted to people who looked, or acted, or talked like myself, which makes you subconsciously feel like you don't deserve to be as beautiful as those people."

— TODRICK HALL

REPRESENTATION

In the above quotes from the film, Todrick expresses that growing up, he didn't see himself reflected in mainstream media and that it caused him to feel alienation and confusion. Additionally, Todrick emphasizes the lack of opportunities in the entertainment industry for people who are like him. We see in the film that Todrick makes an impact around representation by using YouTube and social media to share his art with the world, and by writing a musical about his own experiences and touring it across the country to reach audiences. Todrick and his cast also discuss how they feel fans relate to Todrick and his music because there aren't other people in mainstream media who are doing what he is doing, and they connect to this sense of feeling different.

Studies have shown links between media representation, self-esteem, and life-chances (The Opportunity Agenda, 2011, Gomillion and Giuliano, 2011, Martins and Harrison, 2012). When people, and youth especially, see themselves represented in a positive, complex way through various media, they are more likely to develop self-esteem, pride in their identities, and aspirations for what's possible for them to achieve. This is true not only for people seeing themselves represented, but also for people seeing groups other than themselves represented. When people are shown diverse representation in media, they are more likely to empathize with others and broaden their understanding about other groups beyond stereotypes (Mastro, 2017, Madžarević and Soto-Sanfiel, 2018). Data from the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative's 2018 report found that representation in mainstream media in the United States



SOURCES

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- The Opportunity Agenda. "Media Representation and Impact on the Lives of Black Men and Boys." 2011 <http://racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Media-Impact-on-Lives-of-Black-Men-and-Boys-OpportunityAgenda.pdf>

Discussion Guide (CONTINUED)

is overwhelmingly white, heterosexual, and male. This lack of inclusivity helps demonstrate the importance of having more diverse representation from identities not commonly found in mainstream media.

The questions in this section can help start dialogues around issues of representation, both in the film and in students' own lives. More resources and activities around *Representation* are in the *Lesson Plans* section on page 22.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Consider the quotes in the beginning of this section from the film, about Todrick not seeing experiences like his or people like him represented in media. What effect do you think this lack of representation had on his childhood and adolescent experiences? What about his experiences as an adult?
- Because Todrick didn't see himself represented in media, he created his own characters and his own art that represented his experiences. What are some examples of how Todrick did this? What are other examples of artists who take a similar approach to creating their own representation in media and art?
- What types of media platforms provide opportunities for artists such as Todrick to create their own spaces for expression?
- What does it take for Todrick to carve out his space in the world, aside from a great song? What do you think are the key ingredients? Students should note that Todrick not only creates content; he also works on several levels to bring the content to audiences, such as touring, creating YouTube videos, sustaining a social media presence, organizing flash mobs, asking celebrities for cameos, spending time and being in community with fans, etc.
- Where and what are the art, media, or creative spaces that you enjoy?
- Have you ever seen a representation or recognition of your identities or your experiences in art or media?
 - » If yes, describe the art or media and how it made you feel. Did it influence your sense of what's possible for yourself?
 - » If no, how does this lack of representation make you feel? What do you think can help change this lack of representation?
- Without mentioning any specific names, describe some identities that aren't highly represented in film, art, music, television, etc. How do you think that makes people with these identities feel? What effect do you think this has on society?
- How do you think having more diverse representation in media would impact society?
- If you could create your own characters (in art, music, movies, etc.) that made you feel seen and represented, what would they be like? How do you think this would influence you, your family, or your friends?
- In what ways can more diverse representation in art and media help people connect with one another? How do you think representation in media and art can influence different aspects of life, such as school, politics, opportunities, etc.?

"It was just very difficult, because I was the only boy, and I was the only Black person in like every project that I ever did."

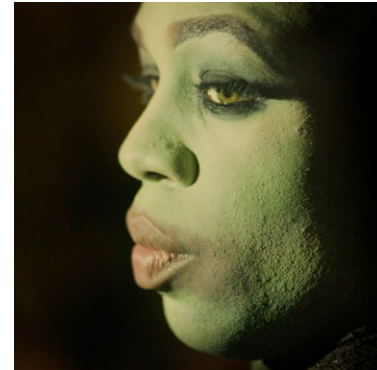
(about his experiences being a performer as a child)

"I never really thought about that I was raised religious, because that's like asking me, 'What was it like being raised with clothes?' It's never been an option...."

— TODRICK HALL

INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

We learn in the film how Todrick's experiences and perspectives are shaped by his multiple identities, some of which include being Black, gay, a male who doesn't always fit traditional gendered expectations, a person raised in a religious home, and a person from a small town in the South. In many cases, Todrick's identities intersected, and when combined they created unique challenges in his life. For example, Todrick expresses the hardships he faced being a young male performer in an art form that was only socially acceptable for girls, a hardship that was only increased by the fact he was the only Black person, and that his race kept certain members of the community from wanting to attend the ballet he was in.



This experience, and some others that Todrick shares, relate to the concept of *intersectionality*, a term first created by civil rights advocate and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality helps to describe how, for some people, the discrimination they experience from the multiple aspects of their identities can be combined, and create more layered and complex challenges. For example, Crenshaw (1989) used intersectionality to help describe that for Black women, both their race and gender *intersected*, or each informed the other, creating combined inequality and oppression. Intersectionality was used to help explain the unique challenges Black women face in comparison to Black men and white women, as they experience both sexism and racism, which was and still is often ignored or not understood in some feminist movements. These intersections can also change through place and time, as a person's life changes.

The questions in this section open up dialogue around holding multiple identities and intersectionality. More resources, such as a short video by Kimberlé Crenshaw about intersectionality, definitions, and activities, are in the *Lesson Plans* section for *Intersecting Identities* on page 24.

SOURCE

- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. 1989 <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=ucf>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of Todrick's many identities? How do they each influence his experiences in the world?
- How do Todrick's experiences influence his music, videos, and the *Straight Outta Oz* musical? Where do you see and hear these influences in his work?
- Society often places expectations on a person because of the gender they perceive them to be. For example, as someone perceived as male, Todrick says that he was expected to want to play sports, though he actually preferred to play with dolls. What other expectations were placed on Todrick based on his perceived gender?
- How did Todrick's gendered experiences influence or intersect with his journey as a gay person? See page 24 for definitions and the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality.
- How does being a Black person relate to Todrick's experiences in terms of his gender and sexuality? How do you think Todrick being Black at a majority white school influenced his experiences and shaped expectations placed on him?
- How did Todrick's upbringing in a religious home in Texas contribute to these intersecting experiences?
- In what other ways do Todrick's identities intersect that we have not yet discussed?
- What barriers or challenges does Todrick face as a result of his intersecting identities?
- Having intersecting identities can often make a person uniquely resilient, persistent, perceptive, or skilled. How does Todrick grow and develop strengths because of his experiences and identities?
- Intersecting identities don't only create barriers; they can also create opportunities. How do Todrick's various identities and experiences provide him with unique perspectives on the world, and how he sees himself within it?
- How do Todrick's experiences shape the way he relates to his fans and the community he creates?
- What are some of your intersecting identities?
 - » How have they shaped the way you've grown and developed as an individual?
 - » How do they provide you with unique perspectives on the world and how you see yourself within it?
 - » How do they provide you with unique strengths or privileges?
 - » How do they provide you with unique challenges or disadvantages?
- How do your unique experiences and perspectives help you relate to others, and create communities?



"I just think it's my responsibility as a mother to always reach for him, no matter how far he goes."

—TODRICK'S MOM

"I chose my career, and I chose to not disgrace my family over somebody who could've been my true love... I'm not sure if it was the right decision."

—TODRICK HALL

(on the pressures he faced with national attention on *American Idol* and not having his ex-boyfriend Gareth on camera during his audition)

RELATIONSHIPS

In many ways, *Straight Outta Oz* is about Todrick's relationships and how they have shaped him emotionally and artistically. In the film, Todrick explores the real-life effects of these relationships and how he turns them into artistic representations. For example, one of the first videos we see Todrick create explores his past with his absent father, and the effects this continues to have on him. Todrick's mother's journey to acceptance and support of him both strengthens and challenges him. Todrick also speaks candidly about his relationship with his first love, Gareth, and the tensions that arose while he pursued a career in mainstream media and faced expectations from his family.



Through the questions in this section, students can explore how Todrick's life and art are shaped by his relationships, and they can also think about the various relationships in their lives and the roles they can play.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do Todrick's many identities influence and sometimes complicate his relationships? Consider relationships with his mom, his dad, his ex-boyfriend Gareth, the dancers in his musical, the artists he collaborates with, and more.
- How do your own intersecting identities influence or inform your relationships?
- Todrick and his mother have experienced struggles in their relationship. How do they build their relationship in spite of, or through, their hardships?
- How does Todrick use his art to process his feelings about his relationships? Consider relationships with his mom, his dad, his friends, and his ex-boyfriend Gareth.
- How does Todrick's art help him to process and heal the relationships in which he has experienced obstacles?
- Todrick talks about many different kinds of love in this film. What are they? How does Todrick use his creativity to help him explore and express these loves?
- How do you process, understand, and/or heal relationships in your own life? Has art played a role in this for you? Explain why or why not.
- How do you think art can create ways of understanding when it comes to relationships that might be difficult to know or express otherwise?

Discussion Guide (CONTINUED)

"I feel like I was meant to use my voice for things that are a lot more important than just selling a ticket or selling a record."

—TODRICK HALL

"He's created this family, this crazy weird world of people that feel like they don't have a place. They all feel at home with Todrick."

—JENNI, CAST MEMBER

"Before the internet, we didn't realize that there were other people around who looked like we did."

—TODRICK HALL

CREATING COMMUNITIES

We learn about Todrick's childhood and the communities around him (church, family, and school) that were not always supportive of his many identities. As an adult, Todrick illustrates how there are multiple approaches to creating communities where you feel accepted and supported, for example: artistic communities, communities of chosen family and friends, and communities of solidarity around race, gender, and/or sexuality. Part of Todrick's success as an artist comes from the fact that he actively creates and interacts with his community of fans and supporters through social media, at in-person events and concerts, and more. This community, in turn, can be a support system for many who are part of it.



The questions in this section look at examples of creating community that appear in the film, and prompt students to consider the communities around them and/or ways they can help create community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do Todrick's childhood communities (school, church, family) impact his life and art?
- Have you ever been included in a community that you didn't particularly identify with, or that you felt was not supportive of aspects of who you are? If yes, how did you react?
- Why do you think Todrick feels such responsibility to create a loving and supportive community with his fans? Can you think of other artists who work to create communities?
- How do you think YouTube and other social media have played a role in Todrick's career and life? What about how he creates community?
- How do you think YouTube and other social media have changed the relationships between other artists and their fans?
- Why or how can art be central to helping create communities?
- What communities do you consider yourself a part of?
 - » What communities do you experience around art?
 - » Have YouTube and other social media played a role in the communities you consider yourself a part of? Explain your answer.
 - » How do the communities you're a part of support and improve your life?

"The other kids don't understand you and they're never going to. I'm still dealing with that today."

—TODRICK HALL

"He always has in mind that I want to do something that's inclusive, celebrating people who are different."

—CHESTER, CAST MEMBER & TODRICK'S BEST FRIEND

DEFINING AND EMBRACING WHO YOU ARE

Throughout the film, Todrick alludes to experiences he had while growing up where he felt different from the other kids at school and the other boys in his family, and the confusion this caused him. Some of the songs Todrick wrote for *Straight Outta Oz* explore these experiences from the perspective of being an adult who understands and embraces these aspects of his identity. For Todrick, creating his art and sharing it with the world are a large part of his journey to define and then embrace who he is.



The questions in this section explore how Todrick shows us his version of defining and embracing who he is, and ask students to think about what this might look like for them, recognizing the journey can be a different experience for everyone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are examples in the film of Todrick's journey toward defining who he is? What challenges did he face in that journey?
- How does Todrick try to understand and embrace who he is—for instance, the ways he felt different from the other kids at school and the boys in his family? What kind of work was required of him to go through this process?
- What examples in the film do we see of the ways that Todrick's art has helped people on their own journey to define and embrace who they are?
- If you created art, what would you encourage people to embrace when it comes to aspects of who they are? What part of yourself would you want to further explore or embrace?
- What do you think it means to define who you are? In what ways is this an ongoing process?
- What do you think it means to embrace who you are? In what ways is this an ongoing process?
- What do you think someone might experience or feel if they do not embrace all aspects of themselves?

"I was in an abusive relationship, and I Googled 'It Gets Better' and I found your video, and I watched it over and over and over and over."

—FAN, SPEAKING TO TODRICK HALL

"When I realized that when people saw me struggle it actually helped them, I was like, 'I want to talk about my deepest, darkest, most personal things.'"

—TODRICK HALL

INSPIRING OTHERS: IT GETS BETTER

Written by Staff at the It Gets Better Project

What does the phrase "it gets better" mean to you? For many in the LGBTQ+ community, it's an optimistic refrain that, when accompanied with a positive story, helps them envision a brighter future ahead, beyond the challenges they may be facing in the moment. For others, it's a daily reminder that when you find friends, connect with a broader community, or access needed resources, life is getting better already. For still others, it's a reminder that daily lived experiences can often be about struggle.

It's also the name of a global organization. Since 2010, the It Gets Better Project (www.itgetsbetter.org) and its many affiliates have collected and produced over 60,000 stories—primarily told through online videos—that uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe, all with the theme that *it gets better!* One of the most popular It Gets Better videos to date is from Todrick Hall, which was actually mentioned by a fan in the film. You can watch Todrick's video at: www.itgetsbetter.org/story/TodrickHall.



The following questions and short activities invite students to dig deeper into the empowering messages and stories shared in *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall* and in Todrick's popular It Gets Better video.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did you respond to Todrick's personal story?
- What do you think it is about Todrick's personal story and art that is so inspiring to so many, particularly LGBTQ+ youth? Which artists or works of art inspire you?
- We watched how Todrick's relationship with his mother keeps getting better. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to include that particular storyline? What can our communities do to help parents understand and accept their LGBTQ+ children?
- As you saw in the film, Todrick has worked with many influential icons over the course of his career, including Taylor Swift and the judges of *American Idol*. Even Beyoncé has acknowledged Todrick's tremendous talent! From your perspective, how valuable are these allies for the LGBTQ+ community in general? Explain your answer.
- Let's bring it home: What is life like for LGBTQ+ young people in your community? What are three things you could do to help make sure *it gets better* for them and for other young people?

SUGGESTED SHORT ACTIVITIES

If you have time, below are two short activities to consider using to further dialogue around the theme of *Inspiring Others: It Gets Better*. Consider first watching Todrick's It Gets Better video at: www.itgetsbetter.org/story/TodrickHall.



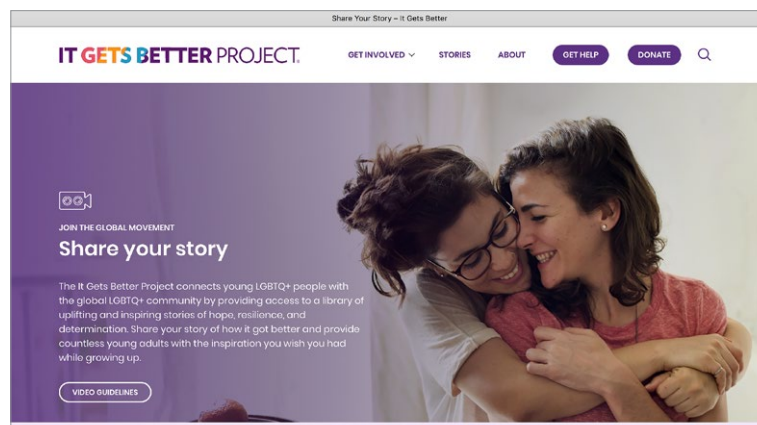
WRITE.

Imagine you have a friend or a close family member who has just come out as LGBTQ+ to you. Write a song (or perhaps a poem or short story) that you could share with this person to make sure they know they have your support. If inspired to do so, share what you've written on social media and include the hashtag #ItGetsBetter. Remember, this activity should not be based on any real person and do not name anyone who may have come out to you as LGBTQ+, which for many can be a deeply personal and private process.



RECORD

Make your own It Gets Better video like the ones you see at www.itgetsbetter.org/stories. It doesn't have to be a music video or a flashy production; simply tell the world who you are, why stories like those featured in the film *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall* matter to you, and what message of support you'd like to share with an LGBTQ+ young person having a tough time. Submit your video to the It Gets Better Project's website at www.itgetsbetter.org/ShareYourStory.



"Mrs. Carthel was always encouraging me [to reach for the stars], and she asked me to take dance classes. And it was \$30, and my mom was like, 'We can't afford that.'

She scholarshiped me and let me take dance classes there for free for years."

—TODRICK HALL

"She would call me and say 'Talk to him. He's different, you can't spank him, you have to talk to him.'"

—TODRICK'S MOM
(about what his grandmother would tell her about Todrick)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS/PARENTS

This section is designed for educators, parents, guardians, and adult allies to examine how they can engage with *Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall* to better support LGBTQ+ youth at school and in life. The following discussion questions can be used in conjunction with a screening of the film during a staff meeting, larger professional development session, and/or PTA meeting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where do we see examples of good mentoring in Todrick's life? And in contrast, where and when is it clear this has not happened? What can we learn from both examples?
- Todrick's explorations and expressions of his identities can help adults better understand the concept and implications of intersectionality, and how it applies to them and the young people in their lives. As a group, review the *Discussion Guide* background information about *Intersecting Identities* on page 14 and the *Lesson Plan* section starting on page 24.
 - » As educators, parents, and adult allies, how can we best address the needs of students with intersecting identities of various backgrounds?
 - » What blind spots might we have? How might we address those blind spots?
- In the film, Todrick addresses the lack of diverse representation in media and his responses to it, which in turn can help prompt educators to consider the importance of representation in school curricula. As a group, review the *Discussion Guide* background information about *Representation* on page 12 and the *Lesson Plan* section and resources starting on page 22.
 - » How do we create curricula where a diversity of students can see themselves represented?
 - » How can we accurately represent diverse histories and experiences in our classrooms and in our school life?
- YouTube and social media play a significant role in Todrick's career, and in building a community of support for youth who identify with him and his experiences. While the negative influences social media can have on students are often discussed, it's also important to consider the ways social media can play a positive role in students' lives and social-emotional learning. Consider how Todrick's story can help provide examples of supportive use of social media.
 - » In what ways does the film show social media shaping social-emotional growth for Todrick? What about for his fans?
 - » In what ways can social media engagement be healthy for students? How can we support students to use social media in ways that nurture community?
 - » How are your students not engaging in media healthfully? What are ways you might be able to step in and offer guidance?
 - » What are ways we can help support students with experiences similar to Todrick to access social media in ways that influence them positively rather than in ways that are harmful?

Lesson Plan: Representation

This is a concise lesson for students to take a more in-depth look at how Todrick creates art that reflects multiple identities and experiences, to examine the importance of diverse representation in media, and to explore how they can apply aspects of this learning in their own lives and engage with their own creativity.

BACKGROUND INFO:

See page 12 in the *Discussion Guide for Representation*.

MATERIALS:

Consider providing any combination of the following materials for students to creatively visualize their own representational art:

- Paper
- Markers/crayons/pencils
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Magazines
- Any other materials you have at hand (yarn, stickers, etc.)
- If your group is digitally savvy, you can also use Photoshop, iMovie, or similar programs

WARM-UP EXERCISE:

Ask students to respond to a few questions from the *Representation* themed questions in the *Discussion Guide* on page 13 to help them think more about the concept of representation and how it comes up in the film.

ACTIVITY:

Provide students with the below prompt, which you can adapt based on your time and needs.

Imagine you are an executive producer creating a new play, musical, artwork, show, film, or other creative expression that you feel will represent your own experiences and identities. You have been provided with a sufficient budget and one year to create the project.

What do you build? What are the key ingredients of your creative presence? What kind of art do you create to make a more representative world?

Think about answering the following questions as you design your project:

- What is the art form or medium you chose? Some examples include a film, screenplay, television show episode or script, podcast, musical, song, magazine, poem, drawing, or sculpture.
- What does your art look and/or sound like?
- Who will see themselves represented in this art?
- How do you hope people will feel when they experience this art?
- How do you hope this art will impact society?

Ready, Set, Create! Execution of this segment of the lesson will vary based on time constraints, and is ultimately up to the instructor to decide. What follows are some suggestions to consider.

Tell students how much time they have (based on what is available) to begin executing one part of their creative plan.

Some ideas of media to consider and art to create:

- A short video using applications such as iMovie (also available as an iPhone app), Snapchat, or Instagram
- A website using Tumblr, SquareSpace, or WordPress
- A drawing, painting, sculpture, installation using mixed media, or other fine art piece
- A dance or flash mob
- A written poem, short story, or zine
- A sketch that is written, performed, and/or recorded. This could be a drama, autobiographical piece, comedy, etc.
- Propose your own creative idea!

Lesson Plan: Representation (CONTINUED)

RESOURCES:

• **Bechdel Test**

A test developed by Alison Bechdel to assess the depth of representation of women in Hollywood films.

<https://bechdeltest.com/>

• **The Next Bechdel Test**

This *FiveThirtyEight* article asked several women in entertainment how they would measure representation in movies beyond the Bechdel Test, also considering race and ethnicity.

<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/next-bechdel/>

• **Where We Are on TV Report - 2018**

A study by GLAAD exploring LGBTQ+ representation in TV.

<https://www.glaad.org/whereweareontv18>

• **Inclusion or Invisibility?**

Comprehensive Annenberg Report on Diversity in Entertainment

A robust report that is a result of over a year of data collection and analysis by the scholars and students at the Media, Diversity, & Social Change Initiative at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, examining issues surrounding inclusion in mainstream entertainment.

https://annenberg.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017/04/07/MDSCI_CARD_Report_FINAL_Exec_Summary.pdf

• **Hollywood Diversity Report 2018: Five Years of Progress and Missed Opportunities**

A report from UCLA released in 2018 that documents the degree to which women and people of color are present in front of and behind the camera in mainstream film and television.

<https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2018-2-27-18.pdf>

SHARE:

If you have time, each student can share their art and representations with the class. Some examples of ways to interactively display projects include a "show and tell" session where each student gets a chance to share their project and answer questions, or a website where each student can make their own webpage about their project.

REFLECT:

If you want to extend the activity, ask students to write a reflection piece responding to the following questions:

- If your project was created and shared throughout mainstream society, how do you think it would impact the world?
- How would your project contribute to more diverse representation?
- Describe the following:
 - » Why did you choose this specific medium for your project (film, drawing, writing, performance, etc.)?
 - » What was your process for making the art?
 - » What does your art mean to you personally?
 - » What is at least one thing you learned through creating this project?



Lesson Plan: Intersecting Identities

In this activity, students will think about what it means to hold multiple identities and the way they can influence experiences, discuss the concept of intersectionality, and reflect on and visualize their own experiences of holding intersecting identities.

BACKGROUND INFO:

See page 14 in the *Discussion Guide for Intersecting Identities*.

MATERIALS:

Consider providing students with any combination of the following so they can creatively visualize their identity map:

- Paper, markers/crayons/pencils, scissors, tape/glue
- Any other materials you have at hand (magazines, yarn, stickers, etc.)
- If your group is digitally savvy, you can also use Photoshop or similar programs

WARM-UP EXERCISE:

Ask students a few questions from the *Intersecting Identities* section in the *Discussion Guide* on page 15 to help them think about the multiple identities Todrick holds and the influences they have on his life and experiences.

Screen the following short two-minute video from Kimberlé Crenshaw, which helps to explain the concept of intersectionality:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc>.

Ask students to discuss:

- What does intersectionality mean to you?
- What are examples of how intersectionality comes up in Todrick's life, as we see in the film? What challenges does he face, and how do they relate to his different identities?
- Have you experienced intersectionality in your own life? If so, in what ways?

SOURCES

- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. 1989 <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=uclf>
- Critical Media Project. <http://criticalmediaproject.org/>
- GLSEN. *Gender Terminology: Discussion Guide*. <https://www.glsen.org/article/gender-terminology-discussion-guide>
- GSA Network. "Genders & Sexualities Terms." *Resource Packet 2018*. <https://gsanetwork.org/resources/annual-resource/>
- Maher, Frances A. and Mary Kay Tetreault. "Frames of Positionality: Constructing Meaningful Dialogues about Gender and Race." *Anthropological Quarterly*: Vol. 66, No. 3. pp. 118-126. 1993
- Sensoy, Özlem and Robin DiAngelo. "Respect Differences? Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education." *Democracy and Education*: Vol. 22: Iss. 2, Article 1. 2014 <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol22/iss2/1>

TERMS:

It's important to note that **intersectionality** is a theoretical tool to consider the ways multiple identities combine to create unique, interconnected experiences of discrimination and inequality for an individual (Crenshaw, 1989). Thinking critically about one's multiple identities and how they inform the way one navigates and experiences the world is important to consider in conversations about intersectionality, and is often articulated as **positionality**—how the sum of your identities (whether privileged or disadvantaged) inform your position socially (Maher and Tetreault, 1993, Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2014). Race, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic background, and country of origin are some countless examples of the identities that can intersect within one person and can inform their social position.

Don't be discouraged if intersectionality and positionality are new terms for you, or if discussing these complex concepts with your students seems daunting. The terms and resources in this section are meant to help with the process. If you think it's more appropriate, you can also adapt the following activity to focus solely on exploring the idea of individuals holding multiple identities and how that can influence their experiences, challenges, and perspectives without going into depth with any terms or definitions.

There can sometimes be confusion about what a particular identity category means. Following are some suggested terms to help prepare for the activity; they can also be provided to students. These terms have been adapted from resources including the Critical Media Project, GLSEN, and GSA Network. As language is constantly evolving and words may have different meanings within different groups, all terms should be evaluated to determine what best fits for your group, and you can also consult other resources you trust.

Culture is the shared, learned, somewhat collective way you and your society view and navigate the world.

Ethnicity is where your ancestors came from. This is shared by your family and can include traditions and customs based on your ancestral origin.

Gender refers to expression or performance of a socially constructed role, such as masculinity or femininity. Gender is different from sex, in that sex is more about the body while gender is socially and culturally situated. For example, recent mainstream Western society has created a binary view of gender in terms of just masculinity and femininity, but many other societies recognize multiple genders and performances of those genders.

Nationality is the country where you were born and/or where you have citizenship and participate in civic life.

Race is a socially constructed category (meaning society creates it) based on your perceived phenotype or what you look like. Race is not genetic or biological, but social.

Sex refers to a person's unique sex characteristics (hormones, chromosomes, anatomy, etc.), often assigned at birth. In addition to "male" and "female," there are also multiple variations of intersex—being neither male nor female or having characteristics of both.

Sexuality is a broad term which refers to a person's expression of sexual attractions, desires, and/or orientations. This can include (but is not limited to) being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, or heterosexual.

Socioeconomic background is a term that refers to a person's combined class or economic status based on wealth, within their culture or social community.

Lesson Plan: Intersecting Identities (CONTINUED)

RESOURCES:

- **The Urgency of Intersectionality**
TEDWomen 2016 Talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term intersectionality.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality
- **Intersectional Gender Justice**
A toolkit from the Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) Network which explores how organizing and activism can be more intersectional and inclusive.
https://gsanetwork.org/resources/foundation-for-gender-justice-2017-2/?_sft_resource_type=toolkit
- **Learning Empowerment and Self-identification**
A lesson plan from GLSEN that helps participants explore how self-identification can be empowering.
<https://www.glsen.org/article/learning-empowerment-and-self-identification>
- **Supporting Black LGBTQ Students**
GLSEN's landing page of resources for how GSAs and educators can include LGBTQ Black students in school.
<https://www.glsen.org/article/supporting-black-lgbtq-students>
- **Supporting LGBTQ Latinx Students**
GLSEN's landing page of resources for how GSAs and educators can include LGBTQ Latinx students in school.
<https://www.glsen.org/article/supporting-lgbtq-latinx-students>
- **Teaching at the Intersections**
A case study and learning plan by Teaching Tolerance to honor and teach about students' multiple identities.
<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/teaching-at-the-intersections>
- **Why I am Passionate about Intersectionality**
A *Teen Vogue* article written by teen activist Eva Lewis on her personal journey as a social justice activist and why intersectionality is important to her.
<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/why-i-am-passionate-about-intersectionality-eva-lewis>
- **Teen Intersectionality Series**
A series of videos from Gender Spectrum featuring teens exploring their intersectional identities.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGruzmyUtNQ&list=PL0Qp9vQYpFuEj_wgdCDWUt307h9KiZVhD

ACTIVITY:

Provide students with the following prompt:

Visualize your identity map, showing the ways your multiple identities *intersect* to create your unique life experiences.

Start with one or two main roads. What are the identities that shape your life the most? Label the roads with those identities. For example, Todrick Hall might start with one road for "gay" and another road for "Black." Draw a symbol or graphic to represent each of these identities. For example, Todrick might draw a rainbow for the road labeled "gay" or an outline of the continent of Africa for the road labeled "Black."

Now add another road. How does this identity cross the others? For example, Todrick Hall might add a third road for "male who doesn't always fit traditional gendered expectations."

Look at each intersection. Are there any challenges or hardships that you have faced because of how these identities intersect? At these intersections, what new, unique experiences are formed? Draw, print, or create an image or symbol that stands for a story or example of your unique identities, and experiences at any intersections. For example, Todrick Hall might draw a symbol of a ballet shoe at the intersections of the roads for "male who doesn't always fit traditional gendered expectations" and "Black" to symbolize the challenges he faced as a Black male in ballet. Or he might add another road for "singer/artist," or yet another road to represent his religious upbringing. At the intersection of the road for "gay" he might draw a picture of a broken heart with Gareth's name inside, to symbolize the tensions he faced from mainstream media and within a religious family while being gay.

Continue until you run out of space or identities to express.

REFLECTION:

If you prefer a written exercise, or if you have time to supplement the above activity, have students write a short reflection paper answering at least three of the following questions:

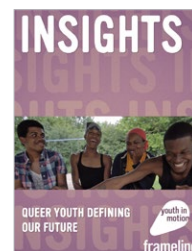
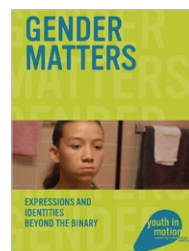
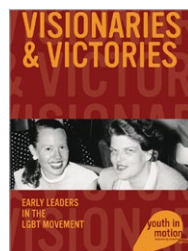
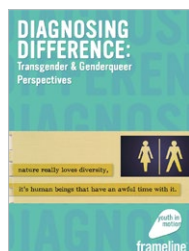
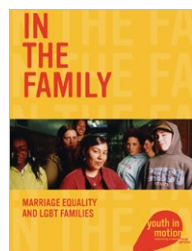
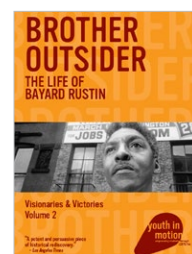
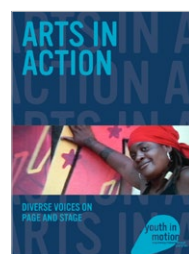
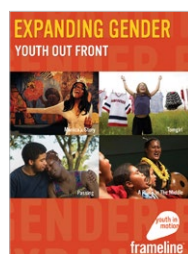
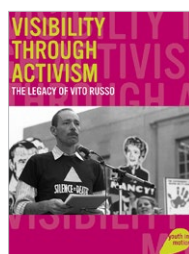
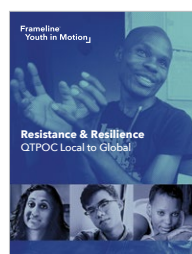
- What do you think are your most important or defining identities? Explain why.
- How do your identities collectively shape your life?
- How do your identities affect any art you make, or your other creative expressions?
- How do your identities influence the type of art or media that you enjoy or consume?
- Do any of your identities intersect in ways that combine to influence your experiences or perspectives?
- Which, if any, of your identities are marginalized, or might make you experience discrimination or inequality? Discuss whether any of your intersecting identities would fall under Crenshaw's definition of *intersectionality*, and why or why not.

Common Core Capacities of Literate Individuals

	COMMON CORE CAPACITY						
	They demonstrate independence	They build strong content knowledge	They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline	They comprehend as well as critique	They value evidence	They use technology and digital media strategically and capably	They come to understand other perspectives and cultures
Discussion Guide (Post-Viewing Discussion)	•		•	•	•	•	•
Lesson 1: Representation	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lesson 2: Intersecting Identities	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Previous Youth in Motion Collections

K-12 GSAs and schools can purchase most previous Youth in Motion film and curriculum collections for the reduced price of \$25 each. For more information, visit www.frameline.org/distribution/youth-in-motion/collections or email youthinmotion@frameline.org.



Acknowledgements

About Youth in Motion

Since 2008, Youth in Motion has provided free LGBTQ+ films and curriculum guides to GSAs (Genders & Sexualities Alliances), student groups, and educators in schools nationwide. Youth in Motion now supports more than 28,000 students in more than 1,400 schools and across all 50 states! Learn more at www.frameline.org/youth-in-motion.

About Frameline

Frameline's mission is to change the world through the power of queer cinema. As a media arts nonprofit, Frameline's programs connect filmmakers and audiences in San Francisco and around the globe. Frameline's integrated programs provide critical funding for emerging LGBTQ+ filmmakers, reach hundreds of thousands with a collection of more than 250 films distributed worldwide, inspire thousands of students through Youth in Motion, which sends free films and curricula to schools across the nation, and creates an international stage for the world's best LGBTQ+ film through the San Francisco International LGBTQ+ Film Festival and additional year-round screenings and cinematic events. Learn more at www.frameline.org.

About the Curriculum Developer

Annelise Morris, PhD, is a Social Science teacher at St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco, where she designs and teaches Ethnic Studies and US Histories courses that focus on diversity and inclusion in history education. She has a PhD in Anthropology and Archaeology from UC Berkeley, where she specialized in African Diaspora and Queer histories.

Guide Advisors

David Donahue, PhD
Professor of Education,
Director of Leo T. McCarthy Center,
University of San Francisco

Kin Folkz
Founder & CEO,
Spectrum Queer Media

Patrick Hurley
Principal, Foster City
Elementary School

Jamey Jespersen
Education Associate, GLSEN

Sameer Jha
Student, The College
Preparatory School

Justin Tindall
Director, Education and
Global Programming,
It Gets Better Project

Milton Reynolds
Educational Consultant,
Milton Reynolds Consulting

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Katherine Fairfax Wright
Director/Editor/
Cinematographer/Producer,
Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall



Copy Editor

Charles Purdy

Designer

Julie Ann Yuen

Frameline Staff

Frances Wallace
Executive Director

Daniel Moretti
Director of Distribution &
Educational Programming

Paul Struthers
Director of Exhibition &
Programming

David Warczak
Director of Marketing and
Strategic Partnerships

Mariana Lopez
Membership &
Administrative Manager

Brian Ray
Communications Manager

Storm Lee
Operations & Systems Manager

Alsea Raible
Distribution & Educational
Programming Associate

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Anonymous

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