June 2021: Identities

An offering to New Mexicans from the faculty and students of the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education at the University of New Mexico.
Identities

Summer is free of the molding and constraints of schools for kids. It also relaxes constraints on adults. And that’s when we’re not emerging from a fifteen-month-long pandemic! Summer is an awesome time to consider who we are, to try new things, to try new parts of who we are. To explore. Whether that’s Pride Month in June, or pent-up vacation travel, or redefining “normal”, explore this summer!
Simple Pleasures

These are our latest finds for relatively quick, easy, often healthy, things you can do during COVID-19 restrictions.

Summertime is movie-time! There are lots of movies about identity and exploring identity. Here are a few that come to mind for the WASH NM team:

Lawrence of Arabia (1962, Columbia Pictures)
“Who are you? Who? Are? You?” Yells the soldier across the Suez Canal at the travel-worn, wind-blown Lawrence of Arabia. In the movie, Lawrence has ridden across the Sinai to tell the English Army Command in Cairo that a fractious Arab army has taken the port city of Aqaba. Lawrence, an English soldier, has adopted Arab dress, Arab ways, and identified with the Arab armies over his own English loyalties.
The main themes of the film are Lawrence’s own identity and the question of whether there was a single Arab identity or not. This shouted question, “Who are you?”, occurs just before the intermission of the film and thus is both temporally and thematically at the center of the film.

As we go through the trials of finding and re-finding our own identities, very few of us have the question “Who are you?” explicitly shouted at us in the middle of our journey. I know, though, that, from time to time in my own explorations, I hear that soldier in my mind’s ear, leaning over his motorbike, shouting to be heard through the wind and across the distance: “Who are you? Who. Are. You?” - Jay Parkes

The Peaceful Warrior (https://www.peacefulwarrior.com/)
My dad introduced me to the Peaceful Warrior film over 10 years ago and it has been a timeless classic in our conversations since. He consistently reminds me of the wisdom of being present in the moment and paying attention to what’s going on around me: the birds chirping, the ants on the move, the bees pollinating—there is always something going on if we pay attention. The movie, inspired by true life events, accounts a spiritual coming of age. Socrates provides lessons and wisdom captured in everyday moments that continue to resonate with me. One of the wise messages displayed in the story is that “life is not about the destination, it’s about the journey.” I highly recommend this film! - Ashley Martin-Cuellar

Hunt for the Wilderpeople
The formation of multiple, situated identities is a dynamic, life-long process. “Hunt for the Wilderpeople” (2016, Piki Films, N.Z.) is a comic tale about the relationship between Ricky Baker, an urban 13-year-old and his crusty foster uncle, Hec, who flee together to the New Zealand bush country. The film portrays how readily bureaucratic systems mis-read and magnify youthful resistance, creating intractable “delinquent” identities. It is a powerful narrative about psychological change and successful aging in older adulthood, reminding us that it is almost never too late to learn and grow. - Jan Armstrong

Chicanos around my age in general cite American Me, En Mi Familia and even Colors as having an impact on our identities and as relatable to us, during our formative years and in USA lived experiences. Each include oppression of Chicanos, such as the mother’s deportation during the Brazos program (1920s) albeit she was a US citizen, the violence against Chicanos during this same time period (American Me), education to prison pipeline (all three) and our familialism, participation in US armed forces, and lowrider and orgulloso (pride-infused) culture regardless. In fact, I often use these in my writing and teaching, such as a photo essay some time ago entitled, New Mexican Me. - Maria-Elena Salazar
We’re on a long road to new things. Pace yourself!

The effects of the pandemic on our lives have been chronic now for a while. Here are some effects we’ve seen discussed recently.

- Are you (still) feeling foggy and tired from the pandemic? Lots of people are.
- The “digital intensity” of being on screens for so much time has cognitive consequences.
- “Pandemic Senioritis” is setting in because the pandemic is very close to being over, but it isn’t yet.
- Why you are missing a “responsibility-free zone”.
- Taking care of your mental health should not be shameful.

Nomadland

“Nomadland” (Searchlight, 2020) is based on the work of Jessica Bruder, who wrote a non-fiction account about the expansion of the full-time RV-dwelling workforce after the Great Recession. The film offers a glimpse into the ways that events beyond one’s control – the death of loved ones, job losses triggered by economic change, personal health challenges – require the invention of new identities. The film has earned numerous prestigious awards, including Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress in 2021. – Jan Armstrong
The month of June is recognized as Pride month, a time when we celebrate the beginnings of the Gay Liberation Movement (GLM). This year marks the 51st year of Pride. Additionally, we mark the time of Pulse, one of the worst mass shootings in US history. The pulse nightclub shooting occurred four years ago and targeted a gay nightclub in Orlando, FL. Pulse Remembrance Day offers a time to remember and honor all those impacted, as we continue to celebrate Pride month and honor this history. While many recognize the rainbow flags present around us and especially at Pride parades, there is a long history of its symbolism of diverse sexual, gender, romantic orientation, expression, and identities. We also honor the leaders of the GLM often attributed to the Stonewall protesters in New York City. In addition, we also honor individuals who were well respected in communities before the introduction of the binary ideology of gender and sexuality, that is our Two-Spirit brothers and sisters present on this land before Stonewall. Please read more on activism and change that has led to the celebration and honor of LGBTQ+ communities:

Pride Flag History: https://www.britannica.com/story/how-did-the-rainbow-flag-become-a-symbol-of-lgbt-pride

Stonewall: https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about/#:~:text=June%202020%20marks%20the%2050th,anniversary%20of%20the%20Stonewall%20Uprising


Here are some New Mexico resources:
Equality New Mexico, Statewide LGBT Advocacy Organization: http://eqnm.org/

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico: https://tgrcnm.org/

PFLAG Albuquerque, a support group and resource for LGBTQ persons and those who love them: http://www.pflagabq.org/

Casa Q, asafe living resource for LGBTQ youth who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless: https://www.casaq.org/

Celebrations:
Albuquerque Pride information: https://www.abqpride.com/

Pride Guide New Mexico: http://gogaynewmexico.com/events/

Pride is back in 2021! Here's how to celebrate with parades, in-person and online events: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/05/27/pride-month-2021-how-and-where-celebrate-person-and-online/7446989002/

NYC pride 2021: https://www.nycpride.org/
**Gains and Losses**

*All of these changes!*

*Some are true losses big and small.*

*Some, though, are gains.*

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**The Four Hundred Years Project** is an examination of Native American identity by Native Americans. This NPR story features photograph explorations, including one from New Mexico.

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**A Friend of IFCE Perspective**

**My Favorite Color: Pink with Glitter**

Samuel Rodriguez
Training & Development Consultant
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In the early winter I had a telephone conversation with my older brother, John, who was steeped in worry and contemplation.

His son, my nephew, Dominic, returned to school after a bout of remote learning. Dominic was in a new class that was structured for in person learning. Dominic was displaced because his close friends chose different learning options. Dominic was asked to introduce himself to his peers in an ice breaker introduction and was asked to share his name and his favorite color. Dominic shared that his favorite color is pink with glitter. This disclosure triggered discomfort with some of his classmates that culminated in shaming and bullying. Dominic retreated and didn’t want to return to school. John was in a space of wanting to protect Dominic and advocate for him. It seemed that John already had a course of action in place. He drafted an email to support awareness about what had developed to Dominic’s teacher. He took swift action to help mitigate what could develop, in an effort to prevent the bullying that Dominic had experienced in the last school year.

I worked really hard to be a good listener with my brother as it seemed that he organized and grounded himself through the course of our dialogue. I stepped into the dialogue and let my brother know that his loving actions mean more than he will ever know to Dominic. I wanted for my brother to know how big these actions are and that they make a big difference in the life of a child. I wanted for my brother to know that the most important thing is that Dominic is loved and feels loved by the most important people in his life, his mother and father, and that love is not conditional on his favorite color. From my perspective that is key to Dominic’s developing view of the world and his sense of self.

I internally celebrated that Dominic had the courage to stay true to his self and share his favorite color knowing that it wouldn’t be agreeable to some of his classmates. Dominic experienced care and support from his parents and that they would work to mitigate the shame he had already incurred. That their course of action was not to change Dominic to fit into the world but to change the world so that Dominic could safely share his favorite color. I wanted to celebrate that Dominic’s teacher worked in partnership with my brother to develop a plan of action.

As I pondered Dominic’s situation, it invited me to reflect on my childhood experiences with understanding and awareness. As a child I was perplexed, and did not understand why I was different. I loved hop scotch, jump rope and playing on the swings. The adults in my life redirected me to what they deemed as being socially acceptable for a male. The message I received was, it is not safe to embrace my authentic self. It made me feel that I had to
reinvent myself in a way that I could have a fighting chance of being accepted in the world I lived in. It made me feel shameful about what I was naturally excited and curious about. For most of my early years there was no one I could safely explore the emotional turmoil I was silently experiencing. Shame and repression are intricately integrated and woven into the threads of my identity. I have to be aware of how they can creep into my life at any moment and swipe away opportunities and limit my experiences.

The conversation I had with my brother made me hopeful about Dominic's course being different. His parent’s love him unconditionally, stand up for him, they protect and advocate for him and most importantly they didn’t redirect him about his favorite color. My hope is that Dominic does not have to oppress his true self and that he can trust the adults in his life to support his best interests. I am hopeful that it is an indication of the changing times. A remarkable shift from one generation to the next in terms of our capacity to support inclusion and acceptance.

The pandemic experience has created space for all of us to reflect on our ever evolving identity and reassess what we want to promote in the world. I am wondering about how I can be more intentional about supporting diversity, acceptance and inclusion. I want for every family to embrace how important they are in how their child experiences the world. That they are their child’s first and most important teacher. I want every family to feel empowered to advocate for their child in all of life’s arenas.

As I roll into the next phase of the pandemic transition experience I want to engage my sense of self as malleable, with openness to new challenges, experiences, and ultimately, growth. I want to be courageous enough to share that my favorite color is pink with glitter.
A Warm Nap in the sun!
Vladimir, May 2021
Chillin’
Lizard, May 2021

A Morning Hike in the Sandias.
Vladimir, May 2021
Bruder, Jessica. (2016). Nomadland  
Surviving America in the Twenty-first Century.

**Transgender History by Susan Stryker**  

**Untamed by Glennon Doyle**  

**Podcasts**

**Dax Shepard interview with Susan Stryker**  

**Adam Grant interview with Glennon Doyle**  

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**What’s Next?**

Refresh -- July 14 -- Summer, and especially this summer, is a great time for refreshing. We refill our spirits, reinspire our minds, and reinvigorate our bodies. WASH NM has refreshed and updated some of our favorite pieces from the WASH’s first year.
The faculty and students of the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico would like to offer to all New Mexicans thoughts, ideas, and resources from ourselves and our areas of study and work -- counseling, educational psychology, family & child studies, and nutrition -- to enlighten, soften, and aid the COVID-19-related transitions. We intend to make this offering monthly, each with a theme relevant to our times. With informed reflection and action throughout this time, we can all improve our Wellbeing at School and at Home in New Mexico.

All issues of WASH NM are available in pdf format at: [http://coehs.unm.edu/departments-programs/ifce/wash-nm.html](http://coehs.unm.edu/departments-programs/ifce/wash-nm.html)

An e-mail distribution list (WASH_NM-L) will announce each new issue. You can subscribe to the list by sending a message to listserv@list.unm.edu: Leave the Subject field blank. In the body of message type (with no other text): subscribe WASH_NM-L Firstname Lastname

The department houses four diverse, but interconnected, programs that prepare students to address the myriad issues faced by the State of New Mexico. Our faculty members are leaders in their disciplines of Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Family and Child Studies, and Nutrition; although each of these programs reflect different professional fields and identities, we all have shared values of human development, diversity, and excellence in scholarship and teaching. We offer various Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral Degrees and a number of programs have achieved national accreditations in their fields, a true marker of success and innovation.

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