

Dear University Community,

This month, we at WGSS recognize and celebrate two important occasions that mark progress toward justice. One occasion we celebrate is Pride Month, to recognize the strides made to secure human rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and beyond (LGBTQ+) community remembered most famously by the Stonewall rebellion that began on June 28, 1969. Pride month is a dedicated time to celebrate LGBTQ+ voices and contributions. Another occasion that we celebrate is Juneteenth, to recognize the end of slavery in our country and to celebrate the freedom of Black Americans. These two momentous occasions remind us of the strength and resistance of oppressed groups and inspire us in the justice work we have before us today. We stand with Black Americans and the LGBTQ+ community and celebrate!

We mention these two occasions together as an opportunity to additionally reflect on the intersecting nature of identities. For example, it was trans activists of color Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera that led the Stonewall uprising *then*. As well, trans people of color continue to experience the highest rates of LGBTQ+ hate *now*. Seeing the interconnectedness of sexual, gender, and racial/ethnic identities and oppressions allows us to better understand the complexity of our lived experiences, and that our fight for justice is not solitary, but *collective*.

Part of our collective work must encourage healing. As bell hooks instructs in *All About Love*, “Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion” (hooks, 2000, p. 215). We can learn a lot about collective healing from Black feminism. In their 2023 love letter to Black feminism, Pearis Jean and colleagues offered their thanks to the Black feminists from the abolitionist movement (1800s into early 1900s) to the civil rights movement (1960s) to current leaders of Black feminist thought – such as a set of authors that we lift up in the remainder of this statement, to inspire collective healing.

In 2020, Bryana French and colleagues developed a framework of radical healing that seeks to promote wellness in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) given their historical and current traumas. The tenants of this framework have been extended to multiple oppressed groups and as a therapeutic approach to healing more broadly. This framework applies to so many, because it considers healing a collective process involving social supports and a critically conscious lens through which to see interlocking systems of oppression contributing to (un)wellness. Within this framework healing is promoted by seeing and resisting oppression while simultaneously holding a radical hope for a well future.

In our work at WGSS we look to these and other scholar-activists (current and past) to inspire ways to effect change in our world and in our own lives. We resist oppression and embrace radical hope for a well future for LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and all oppressed groups. We hope you will join us in doing so, and, that by working together, we can turn that hope into reality.

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References

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