

# STUDY GUIDE

# Fun Home



Music by Jeanine Tesori  
Book and Lyrics by Lisa Kron  
Based on the Graphic Novel  
by Alison Bechdel

Directed by Sarah Garton Stanley

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# Fun Home

## STUDY GUIDE

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With Contributions From:  
Mackenzie Kolton & The Get REAL Movement  
Rainbow Resource Centre

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## The Creators of *Fun Home*

### Alison Bechdel - Source Material (Graphic Novel) Author



Alison Bechdel. Photo: [Chase Elliott Clark](#)

Alison Bechdel is an American graphic novelist and cartoonist. She was born in 1960 in Pennsylvania to teacher parents; her father also worked part-time as a funeral director (Bechdel and her siblings nicknamed the funeral home “the fun home”). She earned a BA from Oberlin College in 1981 and moved to New York City, where she began writing and drawing the comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* from 1983-2008. Much of Bechdel’s work lives in the overlapping of political and personal, “the relationship of the self to the world outside.” In 2006, she published *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, a graphic memoir that contained her relationship with her father, his closeted sexuality, and her own realization and coming out as a lesbian. The book was critically acclaimed and named by *Time* as the Best Book of 2006. The musical adaptation of *Fun Home* opened in 2015 and won five Tony Awards. In 2012, Bechdel released another memoir, *Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama* which dealt with her familial relationships as well as psychoanalysis theories. Bechdel has written/drawn comics for *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, *McSweeney’s*, and other publications. She was the recipient of a MacArthur Genius Grant in 2014. One of the characters in her comics in 1985 inspired what is now known as the Bechdel Test, which is applied to film and theatre to illustrate gender disparity - a “pass” of the test is whether the script has at least two women, who talk to each other, about a topic other than men. Bechdel currently lives in Vermont.

### Jeanine Tesori - Music



Jeanine Tesori. Photo: [Rodolfo Martinez](#)

Jeanine Tesori is a multiple award-winning American theatre composer, arranger, pianist, and conductor. She has also composed songs and scores for films. Tesori grew up in Port Washington, Long Island, where she began playing the piano at age 3. Her parents are a doctor and nurse, and she planned to study medicine, but after coaching at a theatre camp in the Catskills, she changed her major to music. After graduating, she worked in musical theatre in New York City as an arranger, pianist, and associate conductor, at which time she also met her husband, musical director Michael Rafter. Tesori wrote her first musical in 1997 and has continued to compose as well as move into a producer role with 2017’s *Sunday in the Park with George*. She is the first woman composer in history to have two original musicals running on Broadway concurrently. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild, a music lecturer at Yale University, and now lives in Manhattan with her husband and daughter Siena.

## Lisa Kron - Book and Lyrics



Lisa Kron. Photo: [Joan Marcus](#)

Lisa Kron is an actor and writer based in New York City whose plays have been nominated for and won multiple awards, and are performed internationally. Her past and family history (her Jewish father came to America to escape Nazi threat in 1937, and her mother fought racism in their community) are often themes in her writing. *Fun Home* was the first piece of theatre that she had written based on someone else's work. Kron attended Kalamazoo College in Michigan and moved to New York in 1984 where she was a founding member of the collaborative company The Five Lesbian Brothers; their plays have been produced by the New York Theatre Workshop and published by Samuel French. Kron has acted in those plays as well as other productions, and her playwriting honours include fellowships from the Lortel and Guggenheim foundations,

Sundance Theatre Lab, the Lark Play Development Centre, and the MacDowell Colony. She was resident playwright at the American Voices New Play Initiative at Arena Stage, and currently teaches playwriting workshops and is a member of Actors Equity and a Council member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

## Journey to the Stage

The graphic novel *Fun Home* was very successful and on several bestsellers lists when it was published in 2006. Alison Bechdel never thought of it as a stage play until she was approached by producers. While she felt “it would be a really terrible thing if a bad movie got made about this book,” musical theatre was a “complete alien territory” to her; because she could not imagine her story as a musical, this made it easier for her to give up creative control. Bechdel was glad to have Lisa Kron on board as playwright - “When this whole project began, the only reason I proceeded with it was because Lisa Kron would get it right... I trusted that she understood the importance of representing a lesbian accurately.”

It took years from the initial approach for Bechdel to see a draft of the script and soundtrack. Kron and director Sam Gold did not have much musical theatre experience, so when someone suggested the source material to Kron, she approached Jeanine Tesori right away. The two women worked on the show at California’s Ojai Playwrights Conference in 2009, where they met up with Gold. When he joined the team, they took the script to the Sundance Theatre Lab for development, then further workshops until it opened Off-Broadway in 2013 at the Public Theater. It was nominated for numerous awards at that point.

*Fun Home*’s jumps through time and non-linear progression were challenging for the whole team. Says Gold, “This is a musical that happens in three timelines simultaneously, and all three of them have to live at the same time, so we could be bold about conveying dramatic information through the juxtaposition. This event’s happening: What does it mean that this person from a whole other time and place is in relation to it?” Tesori and Kron came up with the idea of having three Alisons. Having three portrayals of Alison in the show feels very natural to Bechdel; as someone who is constantly writing about herself, seeing the character at different points makes sense to her.

It was also important to the team to not rely on projecting images from the book. For Kron, the story needed to be dramatized - she is interested in the “difference between telling the story and dramatic action.” Gold felt that music really needed to be the impulse behind this action, which led to him asking for underscoring and for Tesori’s repeated themes. Tesori saw the line of the drawings as parallel to musical lines. In an interview, Alison Bechdel also spoke about comics and musicals having commonalities - “I wonder if it is because of the way the two registers collide. In a musical, you have drama and music. In comics, writing and pictures. They operate differently, but with the same power.”

Workshops with actors and designers helped immensely to build physical manifestations of the juxtapositions that the creators were drawing from the book. The original presentation was in a

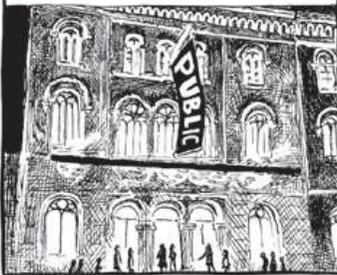
proscenium space (like the Royal MTC John Hirsch Theatre), but on Broadway, in Circle in the Square Theatre, the show was presented in the round and staging needed to be reworked.

Bechdel loved the drafts of the musical that she read and workshops she saw, but her mother was less thrilled as she felt exposed by Bechdel's book. She passed away five months before the show opened, which Bechdel says was perhaps meant to be - "I don't think she could have handled seeing it. That would have been too painful for her... But I do kind of wish she'd gotten to see the great reviews it had." Her brothers were very moved by the production. Because of a scheduling error, Alison Bechdel missed the opening of *Fun Home* on Broadway in 2015 - though she did write a comic about it! The show went on to be nominated for 12 Tony Awards, winning 5 including best musical. This was followed by a US National Tour and international productions, including this one at the Royal MTC.

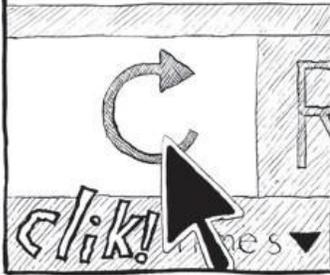
# FUN HOME! THE MUSICAL!

by Alison Bechdel

I MISSED THE OPENING NIGHT OF *FUN HOME*, THE OFF-BROADWAY MUSICAL ADAPTED FROM A GRAPHIC MEMOIR I HAD PUBLISHED SEVEN YEARS EARLIER.



DUE TO A SCHEDULING CONFLICT, I FOUND MYSELF IN A HOTEL IN RURAL OHIO, REPEATEDLY REFRESHING THE NEW YORK TIMES THEATER PAGE.



I WAS JUST AS GLAD TO BE IN OHIO THAT NIGHT. IT WAS FAMILIAR. GROWING UP IN PENNSYLVANIA, NEW YORK CITY HAD ALWAYS BEEN A DISTANT BEACON.



I HAD CEDED ANY CREATIVE CONTROL OVER THE PLAY. WHEN I SAW A PREVIEW TWO WEEKS EARLIER, I'D BEEN STUNNED BY HOW GOOD IT WAS.



BUT THEN HOW COULD I HAVE ANY CRITICAL OBJECTIVITY WHATSOEVER ABOUT A MUSICAL BASED ON MY OWN REAL LIFE AND FAMILY?



MY MEMOIR HAD BEEN AN INTRICATE, NONLINEAR ACCOUNT OF MY CLOSETED GAY FATHER'S SUICIDE AND MY OWN COMING OUT AS A LESBIAN.



I COULDN'T IMAGINE ANYONE BREAKING INTO SONG. BUT THEN I LEARNED THAT MUSICALS ARE ALWAYS ABOUT LIFE-AND-DEATH SITUATIONS.



AND HERE WE WERE, SINGING. ONE OF MY EARLIEST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES HAD BECOME A LESBIAN ANTHEM.



MY EXCRUCIATINGLY AWKWARD FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE WAS TURNED INTO AN EXUBERANT SHOWSTOPPER.



MY MOTHER, WHO HAD BEEN A VAGUE CHARACTER IN MY BOOK, WAS FLESHED OUT WITH A DEVASTATING SONG ABOUT THE TOLL OF SACRIFICE.



AND THE MOMENT MY FATHER STEPS IN FRONT OF THE TRUCK IS A RAW, DISSONANT REVELATION.



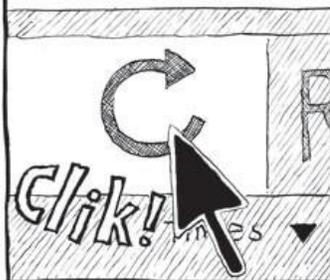
MY REAL MOTHER HAD BEEN AMBIVALENT ABOUT MY BOOK, AND WAS EVEN MORE SO ABOUT THE MUSICAL.



SHE WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT THE THEATER. I LEARNED FROM HER THAT THE *TIMES* REVIEW MEANT LIFE OR DEATH FOR A PLAY.



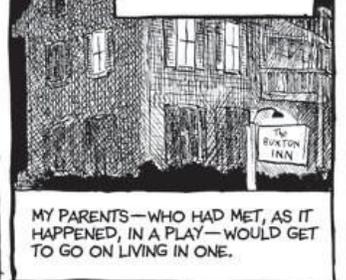
THE SHOW SPENT YEARS IN DEVELOPMENT. MOM DIED FIVE MONTHS BEFORE IT OPENED. I WAS NEVER REALLY INVESTED IN HER SEEING IT.



I KNEW IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO PAINFUL FOR HER IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. BUT HOW I WISH SHE COULD HAVE SEEN THE REVIEW.



IT WAS A STARTLING, UNQUALIFIED RAVE.



MY PARENTS—WHO HAD MET, AS IT HAPPENED, IN A PLAY—WOULD GET TO GO ON LIVING IN ONE.

Alison Bechdel's opening night comic, published in Vermont's Seven Days:

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/fun-home-the-musical/Content?oid=2393463>

## Characters

Alison - 43 years old, a cartoonist

Medium Alison - 19 years old, a college freshman

Small Alison - around 9 years old

Bruce Bechdel - Alison's father. An English teacher and part-time funeral director.

Helen Bechdel - Alison's mother. A teacher and community theatre actor.

Christian Bechdel - Alison's brother, around 10 years old.

John Bechdel - Alison's brother, around 6 years old.

Roy - a young man Bruce hires to do yard work.

Mark - a high school junior.

Joan - a college student.

Pete - a mourner.

Bobby Jeremy and The Susan Deys - imaginary television characters.

## Synopsis

This musical is non-linear; it could be considered a memory play. Alison in the present understands her past, but the characters in the play don't know their futures, even though we as an audience might know what is coming. Through remembering her childhood in small-town Beech Creek, Pennsylvania, and her time in college, Alison reflects on her family and their relationships.

The play opens with Alison sketching. She remembers being a child (Small Alison) and insisting that her father play "airplane" with her, but he's going through boxes of items that he got from a local barn to see which might be valuable antiques (*It All Comes Back*). In the present, Alison finds the same coffee pot that Bruce was examining, and she thinks about the time that a visitor came to see their house. Bruce is very proud of the restoration he has done on their home and the family stresses preparing it to his standards (*Welcome to Our House on Maple Avenue*). Through a caption on one of her cartoons, Alison reveals that her dad "was gay. And [she is] gay. And he killed himself."

We shift to Medium Alison in her Oberlin college dorm room. On the phone with Bruce, they discuss literature and he tells her to trust her instincts. She writes in her journal. The Bechdel family also runs the Fun Home - their name for the local funeral home. While Bruce is dealing with a mourner, the kids record a commercial (*Come to the Fun Home*). At college, Medium Alison reaches for the doorknob of the Gay Union but loses her nerve. She meets Joan, who "gives her the lesbian nod."

Small Alison and her brothers are doing yard work with Bruce. Helen comes home from rehearsal arriving at the same time as Roy, who goofs around with the kids. Helen and Bruce have a tense discussion about Roy working at the house and the kids go to watch TV. When Bruce and Roy are in the library, Bruce comes on to Roy, who responds. Helen plays the piano in another room (*Helen's Etude*) and tries not to acknowledge what is happening.

Medium Alison writes a letter home thanking her parents for a care package. She doesn't mention Joan, even though they are working on protest posters together. Medium Alison tells Joan about her family, and then says that she has just figured out she's a lesbian because of the book *Word is Out*. She promises to see Joan at the next Gay Union meeting. Small Alison is being pushed to put on a party dress and Mary Jane shoes by Bruce, even though she wants to wear jeans and sneakers. He tells her she'll be made fun of and she reluctantly agrees (*Party Dress*).

Medium Alison writes to her parents again, coming out as a lesbian, and excitedly tells Joan. She then second-guesses herself, but Joan kisses her and they have sex for the first time. After, she ecstatically reflects on the experience (*Changing my Major*). Alison reveals in a caption that four months after she "leapt out of the closet" Bruce stepped in front of a truck and was killed.

Small Alison works on homework, drawing a map of all the places the family has been to. She asks her parents for details and draws a cartoon representing the family history. Bruce is annoyed that Small Alison isn't doing something "substantial and beautiful" and tells her she will be embarrassed by it, so she uses his drawing instead. Alison looks at the drawing (*Maps*) and realizes that though her father has travelled, his whole life fits inside the small circle of their town.

Bruce offers a car ride and a beer to Mark, a student at the high school. Medium Alison has not gotten a response to her coming-out letter. Small Alison watches a TV show about a family musical group. Bruce thinks the show is silly and turns off the TV while he gets ready to go to the mental hospital to see a psychiatrist. Alison comments that he was arrested for "furnishing a malt beverage to a minor" which she says is a euphemism - implying that Bruce and Mark had a sexual encounter. While Alison draws, Small Alison hears her parents fighting including Helen saying if he misses his appointment they are in a lot of trouble. Bobby Jeremy and his backup singers, the Susan Deys, appear in the living room from the television. Along with Small Alison's brothers, they all sing a happy song together (*Raincoat of Love*) with Helen and Bruce even joining in.

Alison remembers a trip to New York City with her father and brothers. They've been shopping and to the theatre. Noise outside reminds the kids that there are a lot of sailors in town. Christian and John fall asleep in their sleeping bags but Small Alison is awake when her father starts to leave the apartment. He sings her a lullaby (*Pony Girl*) until her eyes close. Though Bruce said he was going out for a newspaper, Alison suspects he went cruising.

Medium Alison has gotten a response to her letter from Bruce and expresses her frustration with his flippant attitude to Joan. At a diner, Bruce tells Small Alison to put her barrette back in her hair and threatens to hit her if she won't wear it. A delivery woman who Alison calls an "old-school butch" comes into the diner and Small Alison is thrilled to see a woman sporting a crew cut. She feels that they are "alike in a certain way" (*Ring of Keys*).

Medium Alison talks to Bruce on the phone but he won't engage with her about her letter. She then talks to Helen who reveals that Bruce has had affairs with men for years. Helen and Bruce argue while Alison thinks back on what she did and didn't notice.

Medium Alison brings Joan home for vacation, and talks with Helen who reveals more details about Bruce's affairs and difficulties of their life together (*Days and Days*). Joan, Bruce, and Medium Alison have fun singing parody songs at the piano. Bruce asks Medium Alison to go for a drive but for the first time in the play, Alison interacts with Bruce instead, living her memories (*Telephone Wire*). Bruce finally comes out to Alison and they both talk about realizing their sexualities, but Bruce quickly changes the subject to his newest restoration project. Alison tries to distract herself by drawing but can't stop seeing her father. Bruce is struggling to come to terms with his life by throwing himself into the restoration (*Edges of the World*) but steps into traffic and dies. Alison remembers playing airplane with her father, and she is joined by Small Alison, Medium Alison to sing (*Flying Away*) about that "rare moment of perfect balance."

## Context

Alison Bechdel was born in 1960 and *Fun Home* takes place in the 1960s and 1970s, in small-town Pennsylvania, in the United States. Small and Medium Alison grew up in a period of time of great value changes, and several important movements becoming more visible and vocal including civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and feminism.

In the 1950s, homosexuality was listed as a sociopathic personality disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Though many professionals criticized this classification as a disease, it was officially treated as such for twenty years, and "patients" may have had to undergo types of aversion therapy, including electroshock, in attempts to "cure" them. At this point, LGBT people were banned from working for the American government, and were not protected from being fired from any job because for their sexuality. They faced much stigma in their day-to-day lives. History.com says that "LGBT individuals lived in a kind of urban subculture and were routinely subjected to harassment and persecution, such as in bars and restaurants." In non-urban environments such as Alison's hometown, homosexuality might not even be acknowledged. In 1962, Illinois became the first state to decriminalize homosexuality, and over the next two decades same-sex relations were gradually decriminalized state by state - the state of Pennsylvania repealed its final sodomy laws in 1995. While not mentioned in the script, in the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement was very much at the forefront of American news, and a struggle for racial equality was present across the nation. At the same time, LGBTQ people were fighting for their rights in the Gay Rights Movement, which became much more public in the late 1960s, and was brought to the attention of more Americans after the Stonewall Uprising in 1969. As activism increased in the 1970s, gay rights became more visible. In 1973, homosexuality was removed from the APA's list of mental illnesses, and soon openly LGBT individuals were elected to office (Kathy Kozachenko on the Ann Arbor City Council in 1974 was the first out American elected to public office, and Harvey Milk in 1977 was elected San Francisco city supervisor on his gay-rights platform, the first openly gay man to do so). However, individuals continued to face discrimination on a day-to-day basis, and it is still present today.

Mental health in general was not well-understood at the time that *Fun Home* takes place. When Alison would have been growing up, mental illness was treated as a "private matter," kept within individuals and families. People who were deemed to have severe mental health issues were institutionalized. Electroconvulsive shock therapy was used for severe cases of depression, but psychoanalysis and talk therapy, as Bruce is ordered to undergo in *Fun Home*, were more common. Psychiatry moved closer toward medicine and consideration of biology throughout the 1980s, with tricyclic and SSRI antidepressants that were developed through the 1960s and 1970s more commonly marketed. Mental health is more openly spoken about today,

with many individuals and organizations working to help reduce stigma and provide easy access to resources for coping with difficult feelings. Some of these are listed later in this study guide.

## **Mackenzie's Story & The Get REAL Movement**

By Mackenzie Kolton



I came out in grade 10. What followed was an unsettling time of questioning and uncertainty, and I yearned for a supportive community of allies and 2SLGBTQ+ folks who accepted, appreciated and supported one another in the vulnerable years of adolescence. I resisted - and continue to resist - rigid boxes and labels that people want to assign to sexual orientation, identity, and attraction, and committed myself to promoting and inviting 2SLGBTQ+ youth to safe spaces that exude kindness and support. It is this passion that brought me to my work as the Program Coordinator for Get REAL Manitoba and will help me in my portrayal of Medium Alison in *Fun Home*.

*Fun Home* is tragically beautiful in its portrayal of how a family navigates secrets, pain, and uncertainty. Medium Alison finds herself in the college years and discovers that she is not alone in her journey. As I embark on my adventure of portraying her, I can't help but notice how the themes of family turmoil, personal identity development, and uncomfortable truths play out in the lives of many 2SLGBTQ+ identifying individuals, and I see this in my work with Get REAL Manitoba.

The Get REAL Movement is a national nonprofit dedicated to providing role models and allies by creating safe spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Canada. I initiated the second Get REAL After-School Program in Canada last year and welcomed youth to be a part of a community that would understand, support, and embrace one another; a program that I desperately wanted when I was in high school. Feeling misunderstood can be difficult for anyone, but more specifically for queer or marginalized youth. In the After-School Program, students express "I just want to know who I am" or "I know who I am, but I don't know if the people around me will still accept me."

Although Medium Alison finds community and support within the Gay Union at Oberlin College, she struggles to find acceptance within her family. When her dad cautions, "I'm of the opinion that everyone should experiment," it diminishes her struggle to be confident in her identity. Her mother's urging to "avoid the lifestyle" and warning against "romanticizing this path," suggests it is a phase. While I was lucky enough to not experience this in my own family, this is a common reality for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

In our Get REAL workshops, youth commonly want to discuss how to come out to family and friends and how to deal with that conflict. Students are worried that they will be asked to leave their home or that their relationship with parents will change. Medium Alison feels totally alone when she is discovering her identity and lacks the family support system to feel confident in that identity. The uncomfortable truths and conflict in homes can shift the dynamic of family and can have a major negative impact on everyone. I believe that education and empathy are two key ways to support members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and the true story of the Bechdel family in *Fun Home* captures both of these.

As audiences watch the deeply raw Bechdel family story unfold, I am confident that it will raise awareness of the complexities that many queer people - and their families - experience: uncertainty, fear of rejection, denial, conflict, loneliness, and desperation. At the same time, there is love and deep desire for connection and speaking the truth. I hope that this story enables people to find something within themselves that helps them to be in touch with those unsettling feelings and experiences. I hope it sparks a curiosity and willingness to ask questions in an attempt to understand and avoid judgement. Most of all, I hope that this production starts a broader conversation about how to go beyond the lessons of the Bechdel family in search of safe spaces for members of the 2SLBTQ+ youth and community members.

#### **More about The Get REAL Movement:**

The Get REAL Movement is a national nonprofit that focuses on sharing stories and raising awareness surrounding topics of diversity and acceptance of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Starting in Toronto, Get REAL has expanded across Canada with University Chapters, high school After-School Programs, and leadership conferences. With the goal of **Reaching Equality At Last**, Get REAL is a collective of people who want to make a difference and create a world where everyone is accepted and embraced for who they are. Here in Manitoba, the After-School Program is our main initiative, in which high school students from across the city come together and form a community. The program meets once a month and includes mentorship, field trips, skill development, and a place to call home. We are very proud of what we achieved, together, and are grateful to all those who have helped us along the way.

For more information email [mackenzie@thegetrealmovement.com](mailto:mackenzie@thegetrealmovement.com) or follow our social media @getrealmb. More about our story can be found at <https://www.thegetrealmovement.com/>

## Glossary

**1950s Lesbian Pulp Novel** - pulp fiction was written about fantastic, sensational topics, and gets its name from the low-quality wood pulp paper on which it was printed. These inexpensive novels were not considered “high-brow.”

**Araby** - A short story in *Dubliners*, a collection James Joyce published in 1914. The story deals with the end of childhood and discovery of a world beyond that in which the main character grew up.

**Asexual** - an asexual person is one who does not experience sexual attraction. It is an intrinsic part of who a person is, like other sexualities (not to be confused with celibacy, which is a choice). This definition is from and more information is available at <https://www.asexuality.org>.

**Barette** - Hair clip (also known as a slide), which clasps hair in place.

**Bohemian** - unconventional; usually describing someone literary or artistic

**Brinley** - Daniel Putnam Brinley was an American painter whose works reflected his residence of Connecticut.

**Butch** - Someone who identifies and presents as masculine. While it’s most often used to talk about masculine lesbians, butch can also describe masculine queer men or queer people of other genders. (Gender Nation Glossary). The history of this term is

available in an article by *them*.

<https://www.them.us/story/inqueery-butch>

**Colette – Sidonie** - Gabrielle Collette was a French author and stage performer who lived from 1873-1954. She lived openly as a bisexual woman and her writing often dealt with queer themes, romance, and erotica. Collette was nominated for a Nobel Prize in literature in 1948.

**Crew cut** - a short haircut which resembles the bristles of a brush.

**Dungarees** - Dungaree is a denim-like fabric, so this word can refer to pants or an overall-like garment. In the *Fun Home* graphic novel, the character that Allison sees with a ring of keys is wearing jeans.

**Dyke** - Formerly and sometimes still considered a derogatory word to describe queer women. Some women have taken back the word, however, and use it for themselves. Do not call someone a dyke unless you know that they have reclaimed the word. (Gender Nation Glossary)

**Euphemism** - when referring to something unpleasant or taboo, a more mild or indirect word or expression

**Formaldehyde** - A strong-smelling disinfectant and preservative used for biological matter.

**Gay** - The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same gender (e.g., gay man, gay people). Sometimes lesbian (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Identifying gay people as "homosexuals," is an outdated term and can be considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people. (Gender Nation Glossary)

**Hectoring** - to speak in an intimidating, bullying, or harassing way

**Hepplewhite suite chairs** - Hepplewhite was a neoclassical furniture maker in 1700s England, known for a simple, elegant style.

**Dresden figurines** - German porcelain ornament prized by collectors, known for their delicate portrayal of fabric.

**Histrionics** - a theatrical, deliberate performance of emotion

**Hughes and Plath** - Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath were American poets. They married, had two living children, and lost one to miscarriage. Hughes had an affair and the marriage ended in 1962. Plath died by suicide in 1963, and after her death, letters were discovered written by Plath to her psychiatrist in which she alleged physical and psychological abuse by Hughes. Assia Wevill, the woman with whom Hughes had an affair, also died by suicide in 1969. More information available here: <https://www.literaryladiesguide.com/literar>

[y-musings/relationship-sylvia-plath-ted-hughes/](https://www.literaryladiesguide.com/literary-musings/relationship-sylvia-plath-ted-hughes/).

**Humectant** - retaining or preserving moisture

**Jack in the pulpit** - A plant native to North America (*Arisaema triphyllum*) that resembles a figure standing in a pulpit.

**Jean Stafford and Robert Lowell** - Stafford was an American writer (1915-1979) who was especially known for writing female characters who had to confront the restrictions of society. She had an addiction to alcohol. Lowell was an American poet (1917-1977) who was noted for his autobiographical poetry, including poems about his mental illness and time confined in hospital. They were briefly married in a relationship that included a traumatic car accident and alleged domestic violence.

**Jungian Rebirth** - Carl Jung (1875-1961) was an influential psychoanalyst who identified five types of rebirth as a renewal or transformation of personality.

**Land Shark** - references a 1975 *Saturday Night Live* recurring sketch which parodies the movie *Jaws*. A land-dwelling shark knocks on peoples' doors and denies its identity, and then eats them when they answer the door. See the original sketch at <https://www.imdb.com/videooplayer/vi3999373593>.

**Lesbian** - A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional

attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women. Identifying lesbians as "homosexuals" may be considered a derogatory term. (Gender Nation Glossary)

**Manic** - an abnormally elevated mood state; including excessive or unreasonable enthusiasm

<https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=4271>.

**Prodigal** - from the biblical parable of The Prodigal Son, someone who returns to a place after leaving it for somewhere far away. Can also mean a wasteful expenditure, and the Cambridge Dictionary deepens the definition to the person leaving to do something that their family disapproves of and returns feeling regretful.

**Senior, Junior** - Grades in high school; a senior is grade 12 and a junior grade 11.

**Red Baron with his Sopwith Camel** - From [history.com](http://history.com) - The Red Baron was the nickname of WWI German fighter pilot Manfred von Richthofen, and the Sopwith Camel a biplane. Small Allison might be referencing the historical figure or Snoopy the dog in the comic *Peanuts* by Charles

Schultz; Snoopy often imagines that his doghouse is a plane and he is a "World War 1 flying ace" with the Red Baron as his nemesis.

**Roman-a-clef** - a novel in which real people and events are presented in a veiled way including under disguise or with invented names.

**William Morris (wallpaper)** - "The 19th century's most celebrated designer" (Victoria and Albert Museum) who was best known for his textile and wallpaper designs using natural motifs.

**Winogrand** - Garry Winogrand (1928-1984) was an American street photographer best-known for his candid photographs of New Yorkers in the 1960s and 70s.

**Word is Out** - *Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives* was the first full-length documentary film about lesbian and gay identity with an entirely gay production team. The transcript of the film was released as a book in 1978; it is in this format that Alice encounters the interviews in *Fun Home*. See more at <http://www.wordisoutmovie.com/index.htm>.

## Curriculum Connections

Attending Royal MTC's production of *Fun Home* and discussing it, or participating in some of the suggested or similar activities, will fit into the Manitoba Senior Year curricula in Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, and English Language Arts.

### Dance (Senior Years)

Making: The learner develops language and practices for making dance.

- DA-M1: The learner develops competencies for using elements of dance in a variety of contexts.

Creating: The learner generates, develops, and communicates ideas for creating dance.

- DA-CR1: The learner generates ideas from a variety of sources for creating dance.
- DA-CR2: The learner experiments with, develops, and uses ideas for creating dance.

Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform dance learning and to develop agency and identity.

- DA-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to dance experiences.
- DA-R2: The learner critically observes and describes dance experiences.
- DA-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets dance experiences.
- DA-R4: The learner applies new understandings about dance to construct identity and to act in transformative ways

### Music (Senior Years)

Making: The learner develops language and practices for making music.

- M-M1: The learner develops competencies for using elements of music in a variety of contexts.

Creating: The learner generates, develops, and communicates ideas for creating music.

- M-CR1: The learner generates ideas from a variety of sources for creating music.
- M-CR2: The learner experiments with, develops, and uses ideas for creating music.
- M-CR3: The learner revises, refines, and shares music ideas and creative work.

Connecting: The learner develops understandings about the significance of music by making connections to various **times**, places, social groups, and cultures.

- M-C1: The learner develops understandings about people and practices in music.
- M-C2: The learner develops understandings about the influence and impact of music.
- M-C3: The learner develops understandings about the roles, purposes, and meanings of music.
- Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform music learning and to develop agency and identity.
- M-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to music experiences.
- M-R2: The learner critically listens to, observes and describes music experiences.

- M-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets music experiences.
- M-R4: The learner applies new understandings about music to construct identity and to act in transformative ways

### **Visual Arts (Senior Years)**

Creating: The learner generates, develops, and communicates ideas for creating visual art.

- VA–CR1: The learner generates and uses ideas from a variety of sources for creating visual art.
- VA–CR2: The learner develops original artworks, integrating ideas and art elements, principles, and media.

### **Drama/Theatre (Senior Years)**

Making: The learner develops language and practices for making drama/theatre.

- DR-M1: The learner develops competencies for using the tools and techniques of body, mind, and voice in a variety of contexts.

Creating: The learner generates, develops, and communicates ideas for creating drama/theatre.

- DR-CR1: The learner generates ideas from a variety of sources for creating drama/theatre.
- DR-CR2: The learner experiments with, develops, and uses ideas for creating drama/theatre.

Connecting: The learner develops understandings about the significance of the dramatic arts by making connections to various times, places, social groups, and cultures.

- DR-C1: The learner develops understandings about people and practices in the dramatic arts.
- DR-C2: The learner develops understanding about the influence and impact of the dramatic arts.

Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform drama/theatre learning and to develop agency and identity.

- DR-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R2: The learner critically observes and describes drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R4: The learner applies new understandings about drama/ theatre to construct identity and to act in transformative ways.

### **English Language Arts (Senior 1 through 4)**

General Learning Outcome 1: Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Express ideas 1.1.1

Consider others' ideas 1.1.2

Experiment with language and forms 1.1.3

Develop understanding 1.2.1

Explain opinions 1.2.2

Combine ideas 1.2.3

General Learning Outcome 2: Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, and other media texts.

Prior knowledge 2.1.1

Experience various texts 2.2.1

Connect self, texts, and culture 2.2.2

Appreciate the artistry of texts 2.2.3

Forms and genres 2.3.1

Experiment with language 2.3.4

General Learning Outcome 3: Manage ideas and information.

Make sense of information 3.2.5

General Learning Outcome 5: Celebrate and build community.

Cooperate with others 5.1.1

Work in groups 5.1.2

Share and compare responses 5.2.1

Appreciate diversity 5.2.3

## Activities

- Musical Theatre is a unique genre. Why would the creators of *Fun Home* have produced a show of this type instead of a straight play? What do the elements of music and choreography (dance) add to the story? What do these elements help portray? For discussion or as a writing prompt.
- In *Fun Home*, Alison is looking for objects or scenes to draw that will crystallize a point in her family's life, while thinking of the right caption to fit that drawing. Draw a graphic novel about an event or time in your life. You might want to begin by writing a journal entry, stream of consciousness, or timeline, and then taking a visual approach.
- Using the graphic memoir of a classmate, or another published graphic novel, turn that source material into a scene or song for the stage. How can you change these images back into dialogue or lyrics? (Students can use their own work for this but using someone else's is more in keeping with what the *Fun Home* team had to do!)
- Except for a single projection at the end, the original *Fun Home* production did not feature any of Alison Bechdel's drawings. Instead, some images (e.g. the airplane) were portrayed onstage by the actors. Using the graphics generated in earlier activities or a found graphic, explore portraying the images with props and actors' bodies. What is at the heart of the image, the emotion that is most important for the audience to understand?
- Movement is an important aspect of musical theatre and it is emphasized more than in a straight play. Add movement or choreography to your image or tableau to enhance the emotion that you wish to portray.
- After literally translating an image, find a story or scene - perhaps again from the "memoir" of a student - and translate from words to physical image to movement piece, rather than starting with a picture.
- The graphic novel *Fun Home* has been removed from curricula and libraries based on controversial elements, as have many other books over time and even now. Research what some of these books are, and read and discuss what might have made the book controversial. A debate could be held in-class or as a persuasive essay as to why the book should or should not be banned.

- Compare/contrast the gay rights movement in 1970s as it would have been taking place during *Fun Home* to now. How might this musical have been different if it took place in Canada at the same time? What other aspects of identity might people have been discriminated against in these contexts?
- Think about “perspective.” How would “small you” and “present you” feel about an event in the world or in your life? Write monologues or a dialogue between the two yous, or improvise a conversation.
- The team of *Fun Home* wanted music and underscoring in the musical to serve the purpose that drawings did in the book. Looking at images (from a news source, other graphic novels, or as a continuation of the earlier suggested activity of a moment in a students’ own life), determine the overall emotional state or mood that that image might impart to an audience. Then use rhythm and/or melody to create a phrase to convey that emotion.
- The creators of *Fun Home* were interested in the small details that helped set the show in the 1970s. They were inspired by musical styles (including influences from artists like Carole King and Joni Mitchell), as well as their memories of growing up in the time. What important influences might you include in a musical - whether that be aural themes or visual details in the set and costuming - that help set the period? (Teacher could assign a time period or it could be based on the students’ own life).
- Brainstorm with students some characteristics of the different people portrayed in *Fun Home*. Have students walk about the space and instruct them to lead with different parts of their body (your energy is in your forehead - your chest - your core - your knees...) to explore different movement styles. Experiment with having them walk at different speeds, rhythms, weights, and other movement qualities. Then brainstorm together what these different qualities might mean in terms of character traits - how did they feel when walking like that, or what kind of person might walk like that? Finally, have them use qualities of movement to explore different characters from the play at specific points (e.g. Medium Alison coming home from college), thinking about their traits, emotions in the moment, and ages. Appendix E in the Manitoba Dance curriculum explores some of these motion factors.
- Marketing *Fun Home* for Broadway is explored in this article from the Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/04/branding-queerness-the-curious-case-of-fun-home/479532/>. The article discusses the balance that the marketing team was hoping to strike between the universal elements of the story and trying to

reach a broad audience, versus remaining true to the issues at the core of the plot. Students may agree or disagree with the points made in the article. Look at the original branding of the graphic novel compared to the Broadway show and Royal MTC's production. Students can discuss what they think is most important to share about the story and then design a poster or other materials for their chosen audience.

- Identity is an important theme in this play. *The Safe Zone Project* features curricula and classroom activities for LGBTQ awareness and allyship at [www.thesafezoneproject.com](http://www.thesafezoneproject.com) including this one. It explores different identities and allows students to discover things they have in common, areas they differ, and engage in thoughtful dialogue about these identities. The lesson allows you to choose broad identities or more targeted, specific ones, depending on your comfort and your students'. Below are the main questions the activity explores. Here's the link to the entire lesson:  
<http://thesafezoneproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Identity-Signs-2.0-Instructor.pdf>

Identity Questions:

1. The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The part of my identity that I am the least aware of on a daily basis is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The part of my identity that was most emphasized or important in my family growing up was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The part of my identity that I wish I knew more about is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The part of my identity that garners me the most privilege is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The part of my identity that I believe is the most misunderstood by others is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The part of my identity that I feel is difficult to discuss with others who identify differently \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The part of my identity that makes me feel discriminated against is \_\_\_\_\_.

*The Safe Zone Project also has several other classroom-appropriate activities that discuss identity, privilege, and vocabulary.*

## Explore More: Recommended Library Reading List

### Explore More: Alison Bechdel

#### *Are You My Mother?*

Another tale of filial sleuthery about Bechdel's mother: voracious reader, music lover, passionate amateur actor; a woman unhappily married to a closeted gay man, and who stopped kissing her daughter good night, forever, when she was seven. A quest for answers concerning the gulf between mother and child that leads, finally, back to a fragile truce.

GRAPHIC B BECHDEL 2012

#### *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For*

Bechdel's ground-breaking comic strip is a wittily illustrated soap opera "suitable for humanists of all persuasions." It follows the lives, loves and politics of a band of friends, most of them lesbian, living in a midsize American city that may or may not be Minneapolis. They fall in and out of love, raise children, switch careers and cope with aging parents.

GRAPHIC 741.56973 BEC 2008

### Explore More: Darkly Funny Family Stories

*Imagine Me Gone* by Adam Haslett. When Margaret's fiancé is hospitalized for depression in the 1960s, she could back away from his suffering. Instead, she stays with him. This gut-wrenching yet frequently hilarious novel brings alive the love of a mother for her children, the often inescapable devotion siblings feel toward one another, and the legacy of a father's pain.

FICTION HASLETT

*Running with Scissors* by Augusten Burroughs. When he was 12, Burroughs' mother gave him away to be raised by her unorthodox psychiatrist. He found himself living an outlaw childhood where rules were unheard of and the Christmas tree stayed up year-round; where Valium was consumed like candy, and if things got dull electroshock therapy could provide entertainment.

B BURROUGHS

*Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* by Jeanette Winterson. At 16, Winterson left home because she was in love with a woman. This is her story of a life's work to find happiness: a search for belonging, love, identity. It's also other people's stories, showing how fiction and poetry can form a life raft to support us when we're sinking.

B WINTERSON 2011

## Explore More: Visual Memoirs

*It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken* by Seth. While trying to understand his dissatisfaction with the present, Seth discovers the work of a “forgotten” *New Yorker* cartoonist from the 1940s. Wry self-reflection and moody colours characterize his tale about learning lessons from nostalgia. This playful and sophisticated experiment with memoir provoked a furious debate about Seth's “hoax.”

GRAPHIC FICTION SET

*The Impostor's Daughter: a True Memoir* by Laurie Sandell. Sandell grew up in awe of her larger-than-life father, who told jaw-dropping tales of his privileged Buenos Aires youth, Vietnam heroism and celebrity friendships. But when she learned he wasn't the man he claimed to be, she had to piece together three decades of lies and the splintered person that resulted from them—herself.

GRAPHIC B SANDELL 2009

*Stitches* by David Small. At the age of 14, Small awoke from a supposedly harmless operation to discover one of his vocal cords had been removed, leaving him virtually mute. No one had told him he had cancer and was expected to die, a silence that was in keeping with the oppressive atmosphere of secrecy in his family.

GRAPHIC B SMALL 2009

Time to Read, the Winnipeg Public Library's podcast book club, discussed *Fun Home* in one of their episodes! Listen to it: [wpl-podcast.winnipeg.ca/fun](http://wpl-podcast.winnipeg.ca/fun)



*There are 1.4 million books, movies, audiobooks, eBooks and more at the Winnipeg Public Library, and all you need to borrow them is your library card. There are 20 locations throughout the city and there's an online catalogue for requesting items for pick-up at your library of convenience. An e-Library has thousands of eBooks, eAudiobooks and more! All free with your library card.*

*Visit us at [Winnipeg.ca/library](http://Winnipeg.ca/library)*

## Interesting Links & Related Resources

**Cast of *Fun Home* visits the original house:** <https://slate.com/human-interest/2015/03/fun-home-on-broadway-cast-members-visit-the-house-where-the-real-story-happened.html>

### **An Ally's Guide to Terminology from GLAAD:**

[http://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/allys-guide-to-terminology\\_1.pdf](http://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/allys-guide-to-terminology_1.pdf)

**Lesbians and Ring of Keys: A Cultural Love Story** - article about [signalling/symbolism] and exploring the metaphors used in [song]

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2016/12/the-lesbian-love-of-key-rings-and-carabiners-explained.html>

**Gender Nation Glossary:** A crowdsourced glossary developed by Refinery 29 editors in collaboration with GLAAD, one of America's leading LGBTQ\* organizations. Many definitions of terminology and slang relating to gender and sexuality.

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/lgbtq-definitions-gender-sexuality-terms>

### **Timeline of LGBT history in the United States:**

<https://www.gsafewi.org/wp-content/uploads/US-LGBT-Timeline-UPDATED.pdf>

### **Timeline: Same-sex rights in Canada**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/timeline-same-sex-rights-in-canada-1.1147516>

**GLSEN:** Resources for LGBTQ issues in K-12 education with sections for students and teachers. American but with some universal activities and resources.

<https://www.glsen.org>, <https://www.glsen.org/unheardvoices.html>

**The Safe Zone Project:** Free online resource for allyship activities and LGBTQ awareness. Includes free curriculum and activities as well as many links to articles, projects, and organizations. <https://thesafezoneproject.com>

**RISE (Respect, Inclusion, Safety, Equity):** University of Winnipeg site focused on inclusive education that includes research and resources about terminology, best practices for researchers and educators, and community connections.

<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/rise/index.html>

### **Historical context of *Fun Home* novel:**

<https://funhomeproject.wordpress.com/2018/03/29/historical-context-of-the-memoir/>

## Mental Health Resources

**Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba** - <http://www.adam.mb.ca>

**Canadian Mental Health Association** - <https://mbwpg.cmha.ca/?lang=2>

**KLINIC Community Health** - <http://klinik.mb.ca>

Provides health care, counselling, and education as well as a crisis line (suicide as well as sexual assault) for people of every age, background, ethnicity, gender identity, and socio-economic circumstance. Klinik's crisis lines" open to people of all ages, genders and backgrounds. **You do not have to be in crisis or suicidal to call.** Calling the Crisis Lines can be a good place to start when trying to sort out a problem. Klinik can also refer you to other services or programs.

**Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba** - <http://www.mooddordersmanitoba.ca>

Support groups, resources, education, and other services.

**Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support** - [www.reasonstolive.ca](http://www.reasonstolive.ca)

A project of Klinik Community Health, this website has resources for getting help, helping someone else, and dealing with loss as well as running a crisis and support line.

**Mental Health Education Resource Centre of Manitoba** - <http://www.mherc.mb.ca>

A provincial resource promoting the exchange of knowledge including reducing mental illness stigma. Electronic resources, an online catalogue and free library, and links to various specialized services within Manitoba and across Canada.

**MB Farm, Rural and Northern Support Services** offers free, confidential, non-judgemental counselling for anyone living on a Manitoba farm or in a rural or northern community: 1-866-367-3276 or 204-571-4180. Live chat and resources online at <https://supportline.ca>

**Suicide Prevention, Education, Awareness, Knowledge** - <http://www.speak-out.ca>

Material about depression and suicide for survivors and their loved ones. Not for those in immediate danger.

**Mental Health America** - <https://www.mhanational.org/live-b4stage4>

Information and tips on living a mentally healthy life, recovery and support for yourself, and others, and mental wellness tools.

**For immediate help in mental health crisis:**

**KLINIC Crisis Line:** 204-786-8686 or 1-888-322-3019

**Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line:** 1-877-435-7170

**Crisis Stabilization Unit:** 204-940-3633

**Mobile Crisis Service:** 204-940-1781

**Youth Mobile Crisis Team:** 204-949-4777

**Seneca House:** 204-942-9276 (7 pm to 11 pm)

**Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868

## **LGBT2SQ+ Youth Resources**

Provided by Rainbow Resource Centre

### **Rainbow Resource Centre** - <https://rainbowresourcecentre.org>

Serving Manitoba's Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two spirit, and queer + communities. Provides education, events, counselling, library, programming and events, and resources.

### **Youth Programs at RRC** - <https://rainbowresourcecentre.org/programs/youth>

RRC offers LGBT2SQ+ youth a fun, positive space to learn new skills, create projects, and celebrate our identities. Programming focuses on fostering resilience, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence while building social networks, contacts, and peer support.

### **Camp Aurora** - <https://rainbowresourcecentre.org/programs/camp>

Camp Aurora is Manitoba's only LGBT2SQ+ youth summer camp for youth aged 14 – 19 and has now been running for ten years! Camp Aurora offers the typical summer camp experience of outdoor activities, such as swimming, canoeing, and campfires, as well as identity-affirming, community building workshops in a positive and supportive environment. Camp Aurora is committed to providing a positive space for LGBT2SQ+ and allied youth to explore identity, make meaningful connections, and feel a sense of belonging.

### **Affirmations Deck** –

[http://teenhealthsource.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Affirmations\\_deck\\_fronts.pdf](http://teenhealthsource.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Affirmations_deck_fronts.pdf)

The Affirmations Deck was created by a group of queer and trans\* youth involved with Planned Parenthood Toronto's Filling in the Blanks: Queering SexEd project! Each card features a statement to help youth feel seen, valued, and supported. The cards touch on A BUNCH of topics, including bodies, consent, gender, identity, healing/recovery, self-love, relationships, and more.

### **Everyone is Gay** - <http://everyoneisgay.com/>

Everyone Is Gay works to improve the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ2S+) youth using a three-pronged approach: providing honest advice to these youth while keeping them laughing; talking to students across the country in an effort to create caring, compassionate school environments; and working with parents of LGBTQ2S+ kids to help foster an ongoing dialogue and deeper understanding.

### **Gender Spectrum** - <https://www.genderspectrum.org/resources/parenting-and-family-2/>

Gender Spectrum helps to create gender inclusive environments for all children and teens. Don't forget to visit the Gender Spectrum lounge! The Lounge is a space for teens, parents and

professionals to connect with one another. The Lounge has a constant number of growing peer support groups.

**I'm From Driftwood** - <http://imfromdriftwood.com/>

I'm From Driftwood aims to help LGBTQ people learn more about their community, straight people learn more about their neighbors and everyone learn more about themselves through the power of storytelling and story sharing.

**Minus 18** - <https://www.minus18.org.au/>

Minus 18 is Australia's largest youth led organization for LGBTQ+ youth. Take a peek at their website to find fantastic resources, rad advice, and stellar articles.

**P.R.I.S.M.** (Big Brothers and Big Sisters) –

<https://winnipeg.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/what-we-do/our-programs/>

The first of its kind in Manitoba, the PRISM program matches children and youth who identify as LGBTTQ2IA\* with an adult mentor who also identifies as LGBTTQ2IA\* for a one on one mentoring relationship. Through regular outings, the match will foster a friendship that is supportive, empowering and fun!

**Scarleteen** - <https://www.scarleteen.com/>

Scarleteen is sex ed for the real world. This website has inclusive, comprehensive and supportive sexuality and relationships info for teen and emerging adults. Check out their online forums as well for a safer space to talk about sex and identity.

**Send The Right Message** - <http://sendtherightmessage.ca/>

Send The Right Message is a campaign of the LGBTQ Youth Initiative. Their goal is to encourage straight and cisgender youth to challenge every day instances of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. This website is also a wonderful tool for folks within the LGBT2SQ+ community to become allies with other gender identities and sexual orientations different than their own.

## Sources

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### ***About the team and development:***

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<https://www.americantheatre.org/2015/03/25/lisa-kron-jeanine-tesori-and-sam-gold-welcome-you-to-the-fun-home/>

*New York Review of Books* article about the novel and musical:

<https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2015/06/03/fragments-of-family-fun-home-alison-bechdel/>

*The Guardian* interview with Alison Bechdel:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/nov/05/alison-bechdel-interview-cartoonist-fun-home>

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### **Why are there so many different variations of the LGBT acronym?**

Language around gender and sexuality is constantly evolving. Some organizations use a + or \* to denote those who might identify along a non-heterosexual or non-cisgender spectrum, but not with the same terms; other organizations might prefer to use specific initials in their acronyms. In this study guide, Royal MTC has used the preferred acronyms of contributing organizations and sources.

## Study Guide Contributor Biographies

**Ksenia Broda-Milian** is a theatre artist and arts educator passionate about the power that theatre has to make a difference in the lives of young people - whether or not they grow up to make it their career. Her work as a set, costume, and lighting designer for theatre and dance has been seen on stages in Winnipeg and across Canada, including at RMTC as assistant designer on *Matilda*, but most recently in British Columbia. She has taught classes and workshops for Manitoba Theatre for Young People, Sarasvati Productions, Theatre Alberta's Artstrek program, and RMTC's Backstage Pass as well as working as a guest artist, teacher's assistant, and instructor at the University of Alberta and University of Winnipeg. Ksenia holds an MFA from the U of A, an Honours BA from UWinnipeg, and has also trained with Creative Manitoba, the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Ghost River Theatre, and Off the Wall Artist's Alliance.

**Mackenzie Kolton** is making her Royal MTC debut as Medium Alison in *Fun Home*. Past theatre credits include: *The Laramie Project*, *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*, *Quest* (Meraki Theatre Productions), *The Banana Man* (Fringe 2018). Mackenzie is the Program Coordinator for The Get REAL Movement Manitoba, a 2SLGBTQ+ non profit organization that is dedicated to creating safe and accepting spaces for youth across the province. Mackenzie is honoured to be working on such an important show with messages that closely relate to her own life and work. She thanks her family and friends who have supported and encouraged her throughout this process.

**Rainbow Resource Centre (RRC)** offers support to the LGBT2SQ+ community in the form of counselling, education, and programming for individuals ranging from children through to 55±. It also supports families, friends, and employers of LGBT2SQ+ individuals. RRC's Education Program provides LGBT2SQ+ and ally education, awareness, and outreach that assists healthcare providers, educators, students, social service, and commercial service providers. The Youth Program offers LGBT2SQ+ youth a safe, fun place to learn new skills, create projects, and celebrate identities. RRC also has a volunteer program, community library, and coordinates the community-led groups and committees that meet at RRC.

**Arrive Early:** Latecomers may not be admitted to a performance. Please ensure you arrive with enough time to find your seat before the performance starts.

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:** Please **TURN OFF** your cell phones/iPods/gaming systems/cameras. We have seen an increase in texting, surfing, and gaming during performances, which is very distracting for the performers and other audience members. The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

**Talking During the Performance:** You can be heard (even when whispering) by the actors onstage and the audience around you. Disruptive patrons will be removed from the theatre. Please wait to share your thoughts and opinions with others until after the performance.

**Food/Drinks:** Food and outside drinks are not allowed in the theatre. Where there is an intermission, concessions may be open for purchase of snacks and drinks. There is complimentary water in the lobby.

**Dress:** There is no dress code at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, but we respectfully request that patrons refrain from wearing hats in the theatre. We also strive to be a scent-free environment, and thank all patrons for their cooperation.

**Leaving During the Performance:** If an audience member leaves the theatre during a performance, they will be readmitted at the discretion of our Front of House staff. Should they be readmitted, they will not be ushered back to their original seat, but placed in a vacant seat at the back of the auditorium.

**Being Asked to Leave:** The theatre staff has, and will exercise, the right to ask any member of the audience to leave the performance if that person is being disruptive. Inappropriate and disruptive behaviour includes, but is not limited to: talking, using electronic devices, cameras, laser pointers, or other light- or sound-emitting devices, and deliberately interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.).

**Talkbacks:** All Tuesday evening performances, student matinees and final matinees at Royal MTC feature a talkback with members of the cast following the show. While watching the performance, make a mental note of questions to ask the actors. Questions can be about the story, the interpretation, life in the theatre, etc.

**Enjoy the show:** Laugh, applaud, cheer and respond to the performance appropriately. Make sure to thank all the artists for their hard work with applause during the curtain call.