How Hollywood and the Media Can Help Promote Independent Living for People With Disabilities

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United States
Keynote Speech

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Keynote Introduction

We want to share effective tools you can use to engage the entertainment industry and the media to support and promote independent living for people with disabilities.
Born This Way

- Born This Way chronicles the lives of a diverse group of 7 young men and women with Down syndrome who are defying society’s expectations by striking out on their own and pursuing lifelong dreams including jobs, housing, health and even marriage.

- The widely popular show has earned 3 Emmy awards including Best Reality TV Show, and it was the 2018 Critics’ Choice Award winner for Best Unstructured Reality Series. The program is now syndicated internationally.
Introduction: Born This Way
Lisa Trygg

Senior Program Officer
May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

Son Chris, Award-Winning Baker

Daughter Jennifer, Job Coach
Dyslexic and has ADHD
Founder and President,
RespectAbility
Warm, But Not Competent

Studies show that 70% of people with disabilities want to work and that the majority of young people with disabilities can get jobs and careers when they are given the right opportunities and supports.

Only 35% of working-age people with disabilities has a job and the poverty rate of working-age people with disabilities is over twice that of persons without disabilities (29% compared to 13%).

Fully 1-in-5 people have a disability.

There are more than six million children with disabilities, including more than a million black/African American and 1.5 million LatinX students with disabilities in our schools today.

32% of Federal prisoners, 40% of people in jail and the majority of women who are incarcerated have a disability.

Most accommodations to include people with disabilities are simple, free or low cost. With new technology and best practices, more people with disabilities can be included successfully.

Poll-Tested Messages That Work in the United States
Message Repetition

People need to hear a message at least 7 times to change behavior.
Important Statistics

• While one in five people have a disability, according to GLAAD, just 2.1 percent of scripted television characters (18 people) have disabilities in 2018-2019 season.

• In film, only 2.7 percent of all speaking or named characters were shown to have a disability in 2016 (up from 2.4 percent in 2015). None of the leading characters were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group or the LGBTQ community.

• Actors without disabilities play more than 95 percent of all characters with disabilities on television. Many characters are shown in a negative and inaccurate light.
Powerful Media Tools

• TV Shows: 9-1-1, Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, The Good Doctor, The Fosters, Speechless, This Is Us

• Movies: Sundance Institute, ReelAbilities


• National Public Opinion Polls

• Public Service Announcements
PSA: Working Works

I work.
Op-Eds

This sampling of op-eds discuss the number of people with disabilities who are striving for work, the value they bring to the workplace and the role of independence, including independent living, plays in employment and community acceptance. They underline current problems, celebrate past achievements and offer suggestions for further change:

• The Daily Caller  [We Expect Too Little From People with Disabilities](https://www.dailycaller.com/article/we-expect-too-little-from-people-with-disabilities/)
• Dallas Morning News  [People with disabilities are making gains in employment, especially in Texas](https://www.dallasnews.com/article/People-with-disabilities-are-making-gains-in-employment-especially-in-Texas/)
• USA Today  [People with disabilities are rapidly joining the workforce. That's a hopeful trend.](https://www.usatoday.com/article/People-with-disabilities-are-rapidly-joining-the-workforce/)
• Variety  [Hollywood Needs to Include People With Disabilities on Both Sides of the Camera](https://variety.com/article/Hollywood-Needs-to.Include-People-With-Disabilities.on-Both-Sides-of-the-Camera/)
Hollywood Disability Inclusion Toolkit

The RespectAbility Guide to Inclusion in the Entertainment Industry

• Help entertainment professionals to promote positive, accurate and diverse portrayals of people with disabilities

• Encourage the hiring of more people with disabilities in acting and other Hollywood jobs
Working with the Entertainment Industry

• A&E: Born This Way

• Disney/ABC Television Group

• NBC/Universal

• Netflix

• Pixar Animation Studios
Impact

• What we see and hear impacts our thoughts and feelings, which can have life and death consequences.

Results

• The number of people with disabilities getting acting jobs in the last year has at least doubled.

• While this is due to more than just the media, there also has been a 4-fold improvement in jobs for people with disabilities in America.
The Good Doctor
Opportunity for the Entertainment Industry

Opening the inclusion umbrella is the right thing to do as well as economically smart given that the disability market is valued at more than $1 trillion.
Replicate It In Your Community

• Public opinion research is vital so that you know what the best message is to move people who are not already with us.

• Conduct focus groups for qualitative research to test potential messages. Test those messages in a statistically valid poll. Find the most cost-effective way to repeat those messages over and over again in front of your target audience.

• We’ve found utilizing the entertainment and news media industries is the most cost-effective way to break stigmas.

• And you can do this with traditional and social media. No matter where you live, you can do this too.

• We have a free webinar (in English) on how you can write op-eds and get press: https://www.respectability.org/2018/09/webinar-winning-op-eds/.
Ollie Cantos Adopted Blind Triplets Who Became Eagle Scouts

Triplets Nick, Leo and Steven Cantos, blind since birth, have risen to the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts.
Becoming Quote-Worthy

https://www.respectability.org/resources
Delivering Impactful Resources

Resources You Can Use

- Education Resources on Disability Issues
- Employers Embracing Employees with Disabilities
- Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline
- Entertainment Professionals
- Faith Inclusion
- Inclusive Philanthropy
- Recursos en Español
- Job Seekers with Disabilities
- Policy Makers
- Sex Education Resources

https://www.respectability.org/resources
Contact Us

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