

Accessible Community Forum: Disability and the Media

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PART I: Panelists

1. Katie McMillan
 - a. Founder of Kello Inclusive
2. Ladan Sahraei
 - a. Director, filmmaker, and actress
3. Grant Hardy
 - a. Employee at Accessible Media TV (AMI)
4. Susana Uchatius
 - a. Artistic Director of Theatre Terrific
5. Tilly Nelson
 - a. Commercial Photographer
6. Amy Amantea
 - a. Artist, actor, and advocate for individuals with disabilities
 - b. Podcast: Accessing Art with Amy on AMI

PART II: Forum

- 92 total EventBrite registrants
- 43 total Zoom attendees (including ConnectTra staff, panelists and hosts)

PART III: Survey Responses Summary

- 82 respondents completed the Accessible Community Forum: Disability and the Media Survey
- Respondents' connection with the disability community
 - 44 respondents had a visible disability
 - 20 respondents had a hidden or invisible disability
 - 5 respondents were the primary care aid for a person with a disability
 - 1 was a healthcare professional or aid for a person with a disability
 - 3 were advocates for people with disabilities
 - Remaining respondents preferred not to say, did not have a disability or belonged to a different category
- Types of disabilities respondents are currently living with:

- o 59 respondents had a mobility impairment
- o 17 respondents had a hearing impairment
- o 15 respondents had a visual impairment
- o 17 respondents had a cognitive disability
- o 12 respondents had a memory impairment
- o 11 respondents had a communication impairment
- o 12 respondents had a degenerative disease
- o 14 respondents had a mental health-related disability
- o 4 respondents indicated they did not have a disability
- o 3 respondents preferred not to say
- o 10 respondents selected "other"
- Age of the respondents
 - o 0 respondents were under 18
 - o 4 respondents were between 18-30 years of age
 - o 22 respondents were between 31-50 years of age
 - o 40 respondents were between 51-70 years of age
 - o 17 respondents were over 71 years of age
- Most respondents indicated they live in the Greater Vancouver Area or on Vancouver Island with the most frequent responses being Vancouver.
- 25 individuals were very dissatisfied with the amount of accuracy when it comes to representation of disabilities in the media. 22 individuals were somewhat dissatisfied, 11 were neutral, 13 were somewhat satisfied, and 1 was very satisfied. 4 individuals had stated they were unsure, and 4 had answered "other."
- 73% of individuals feel that the current media representation of disabilities does not adequately highlight the diversity within the disabled community. 27% had stated no, or that they were unsure.
- 59% of individuals think that physical disabilities are represented more in the media compared to invisible disabilities. 31% of individuals had disagreed or were unsure.
- Most people (88%) find that people with disabilities are portrayed as objects of pity, charity, or inspiration to able-bodied people in the media. Five percent of individuals had shared that this was rare, or they were not sure (6%). Zero participants thought this never happened.
- Nearly three-quarters of individuals (74%) felt that it is important for media to include stories about people with disabilities that focus on their achievements and successes rather than just their challenges. Twenty-one percent felt that it was somewhat important, and five percent shared that they were not sure.

- 48 individuals shared that they do not often see media that portrays people with disabilities in ways that challenge stereotypes. Five individuals were very satisfied with this and felt that the media does challenge stereotypes of individuals with disabilities. Some individuals (19) shared that they see this occurring on a somewhat often basis and 10 shared that they were not sure.
- 61% of individuals feel that it is important for the media to represent how disability intersects with other aspects of identity (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender). 22% shared that this was somewhat important, and the remaining were unsure (5%) or did not agree (12%).
- Over half of the individuals (62%) felt misrepresented or underrepresented in the media. Thirteen percent shared that they did not feel misrepresented or underrepresented in the media and the rest were unsure.
- 43% of individuals have had a positive experience related to disability and the media. 35% have not had a positive experience, and 27% were unsure.
- Best ways media outlets can ensure that their representations of people with disabilities are more accurate:
 - 70 responses indicated Involving people with disabilities (writers, actors, consultants, etc.)
 - 39 responses indicated involving showing diverse experiences
 - 44 Include disability in broader storylines
 - 33 Responses indicated to avoid stereotypes
 - 15 Responses indicated to use inclusive language
 - 32 Responses indicated to promote accessibility in media (captions, audio descriptions, etc.)
 - 30 Responses indicated to consult disability advocacy groups
 - 5 Responses indicated using other ways
- Half of the individuals agree that inclusivity has increased in recent years. 30% think that it remains the same, while 4% feel that it has decreased. The remaining were unsure.
- 54% of respondents do not see news stories about people with disabilities. 39% shared that they see news stories very often (2%) or somewhat often (37%).
- 48% of individuals find that media production teams are not very inclusive in terms of hiring people with disabilities. 39% of individuals were unsure. 11% shared that they were somewhat inclusive, and 2% felt that they were very inclusive.
- The majority of individuals (58) shared that they do not think that production teams understand the experiences of people with disabilities. Ten had shared that they

understood this somewhat well, and fourteen were unsure. Zero found that this was conducted very well.

- 96% of individuals feel that it is important for media outlets to consult with people with disabilities or disability advocacy organizations while making content about or including disabilities. The remainder were unsure or felt that it was not important to do so.
- 79% of individuals found that they do not see actors with disabilities being cast in roles that represent their disabilities accurately. 18% were not sure, 2% do see this being represented accurately.
- 66 respondents found that they do not encounter people with disabilities cast in lead roles. 3 shared that they sometimes do, and 13 were unsure.
- How often do you find that people with disabilities are portrayed by able-bodied people in the media?
 - Very often (29)
 - Somewhat often (20)
 - Not often at all (11).
 - I'm not sure. (22).
- Individuals feel it is most important to see more disability representation in media in the following areas:
 - 51 respondents said live performance (theater, dance, music)
 - 43 respondents said visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography)
 - 47 respondents said literary arts (writing, poetry, storytelling)
 - 69 respondents said film and tv
 - 59 respondents said radio and news
 - 12 respondents said other
- Over half of individuals (57%) believe that disability representation is currently an important political and social issue in BC, or Canada in general. 26% do not think it is an important issue. 17% were unsure.
- A majority of individuals (94%) feel that it is important to have accurate representations of disabilities in the media. 5% are unsure and 1% do not think it is important at all.
- 55 individuals believe that the media's representation of people with disabilities has a significant impact on public perception and attitudes. 20 people believe there is somewhat of an impact. 5 individuals felt that there was no impact and 2 were unsure.
- 95% of individuals feel that inaccurate media portrayals of people with disabilities have an influence on societal stigmas and/or discrimination. 2% feel that there is no impact, and 2% are not sure.

- 46% of individuals found that representation of disabilities in the media impacts their own perception of the media. 32% of individuals were impacted very much by this. Oppositely, 11% were impacted very little by this, and 4% were not impacted at all.
- Individuals that have taken action (e.g. advocacy, social media posts) based on a media portrayal of a person with a disability:
 - 8 respondents indicated they did this frequently
 - 31 respondents indicated they did this occasionally
 - 16 respondents said they did this rarely
 - 27 respondents indicated they have never done this
- The following are some ways that the participants find can increase the impact of disability representation in the media:
 - Tell nuanced stories (44)
 - Collaborate with disability advocates (61)
 - Integrate disability into mainstream media (68)
 - Feature characters with disabilities in leading roles (65)
 - Support disability centric needs media projects (47)
 - Collaborate with influencers (38)
 - Create engaging media campaigns around disability awareness (49)
 - Other (9)