

# Including Disabled People in the Media



## **Road Map for Inclusion: Changing the Face of Disability in Media**

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# About us



FORDFOUNDATION

We are the Ford Foundation.



We work to make the world more equal.

For example, we work to make sure that people are treated fairly, can do well in life and can have a say in decisions that affect them.

# About this report

This report is about disabled people and the media in the United States.

Media in this report means TV and movies.

This includes TV shows and movies on the internet.





Many people in the United States have a disability.

But disabled people are not in the media enough.



This report looks at:

- What the problems are
- How to make things better
- Some good work that has happened

## What is happening with disabled people and the media?



Many different groups of people are now being shown on TV and in the movies.

The media is making sure their voices are heard.



But disabled people are often left out.



A few TV shows and movies have disabled people in them. Like Speechless and Sesame Street.

But most don't.



Sometimes disabled people are in TV shows and movies. But this has been done in the wrong way.

For example, disabled people in TV shows and movies may be played by people who do not have a disability.



Or disabled people in TV shows and movies might be shown as:

- People who think their disability is a problem
- Bad people who do bad things
- People who can't do much because of their disability and need help
- People who are like children and cannot make their own choices





This is wrong. It means that:

- Disabled people are left out and treated like they are not really there
- Disabled people can't see people who are like them in TV shows and movies
- Other people can't see disabled people, who they are and what they can do



Disabled people should have the same chances as everyone else to:

- Be in TV shows and movies and tell their stories
- Work for the media and do well. For example, help make TV shows and movies



The media should show many different people who are disabled. Not just one kind.

This will help the public change the way they think about disabled people.

# What has worked well for other groups of people?



Some other groups of people have also been left out of the media or shown in the wrong way.

But some media organizations have helped to change this.

For example:



## 1. The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM).

This organization helps to train Asian American people who work in movies and TV to make sure their stories are included in the media in the right way.

## 2. GLAAD.

This organization helps LGBTQI people to be included in the media in the right way.

It helps people to see and understand LGBTQI people as they really are.





LGBTQI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer and intersex.



LGBTQI is about who people are.

For example, whether people might want a relationship with a woman, a man or someone else.

And if people are a woman, a man or another gender.



GLAAD also does things like:

- Writes reports about LGBTQI people and the media. This includes LGBTQI people who have a disability



- Gives people training about speaking to the media and working with the media

# What has worked well for disabled people?



Some good work has happened in the UK to include disabled people in the media.

The UK is England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



In the UK there are some TV channels called the BBC and Channel 4.

The BBC and Channel 4 have helped to change the way that people think about disabled people.



For example, they have helped more disabled people to:

- Be on TV
- Get training and support to be in TV shows or make TV shows



The BBC has a TV show run by deaf people for deaf people.

It is in sign language.



Channel 4 has shown a big disability sports event on TV called the Paralympics.



The Paralympics is where people from different countries play sports against each other to win.

There is racing, swimming, basketball and many other sports.



Disabled people were also on TV telling the stories of disabled sports people and talking about who was winning and losing.



This helped many more people to see that:

- The Paralympics is a very important event
- Disabled people have many skills just like everyone else

## What we think should happen next

**1. An organization should be set up to make sure that disabled people are included in the media and have the same chances as everyone else.**



This organization could be like the ones we talked about on pages 6 and 7.

The organization could do things like:

- Help people and organizations work together to change things.



For example, to make sure the media shows what disabled people are really like



- Find out information and look at new ideas

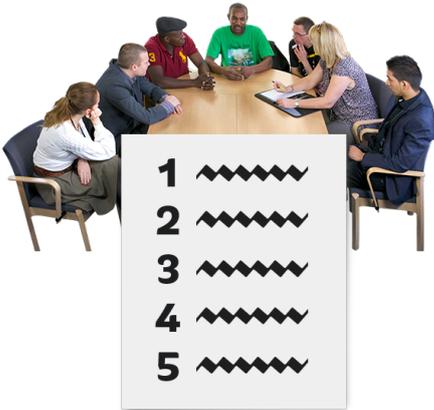


- Help disabled people get training and support to be in the media and work in the media

## **2. Media and other organizations should include disabled people when they talk about how to make the media fair for everyone.**

Disabled people are often left out.

Organizations should:



- Look at what they are doing for disabled people and work to make things better

- Make sure they are giving disabled people the right support to take part

- Help other organizations to do the same





We think this will really help change things.



The Ford Foundation is also working hard to make sure disabled people are a bigger part of our work.

We want to share what we learn with other people.

In this document we use the words disabled people.

But we also know that some people use and prefer to say people with disabilities.