

FilmDis Disability Representation on Television (2019-2020) Study – Easy Language Version

FilmDis is a group that studies disability representation on television.

FilmDis puts out a study at least once a year to look at how many disabled characters are on television.

FilmDis lists characters for TV Shows that aired on TV from April 2019 to March 31, 2020.

FilmDis watched 250 shows.

218 of the 250 shows had 1 or more disabled characters.

The 218 shows aired on 20 networks and 10 streaming services.

Local TV Networks by number

- NBC (191 disabled characters)
- CBS (182 disabled characters)
- ABC (172 disabled characters)
- FOX (104 disabled characters)
- CW (77 disabled characters)

Streaming Services by number

- Netflix (108 disabled characters)
- Hulu (33 disabled characters)
- Amazon (30 disabled characters)
- Acorn (20 disabled characters)
- Britbox (18 disabled characters)

The 218 shows had 1,198 disabled characters.

Disability Communities with the Most Characters

- Alcoholism/Addiction (214 disabled characters)
- Multiply Disabled (180 disabled characters)
- Chronic Health (161 disabled characters)
- Mental Health (111 disabled characters)

Disability Communities with the Least Characters

- Deaf (31)
- Blind (27)
- Learning Disabilities (10)
- Little People (8)
- Down Syndrome (6)

Gender Identity is how you feel. You can be a boy. You can be a girl. You can be non-binary or neither. You decided how you feel.

Cisgender means a person who has the same gender identity they were given at birth.

Transgender means a person who has a different gender identity than the gender identity they were given at birth.

Sexuality means who you are attracted to. You can be attracted to someone with or without the same gender identity.

Your sexuality can be **Heterosexual** (attracted to the opposite gender), **Gay/Lesbian** (attracted to the same gender).

Your sexuality can mean you are attracted to people of multiple gender identities (**Bisexual** or **Pansexual**) or to no sexualities.

Asexuality is when you may have no sexual attraction at all or only with certain people.

Sexuality and gender are both spectrums. This means there are a lot of different options for genders and sexualities.

Gender Non-Conforming is when your gender identity doesn't follow traditional ideas of male or female.

FilmDis found 503 cisgender white male disabled characters

Cisgender white male characters are the most represented disabled characters.

Cisgender White Male Disabled Characters

- Gay (16 disabled characters)
- Bisexual (4 disabled characters)
- Asexual (1 disabled character)
- Jewish (6 disabled characters)

FilmDis found 334 cisgender white female disabled characters.

Cisgender White Female Disabled Characters

- Lesbian (11 disabled characters)
- Bisexual (13 disabled characters)
- Gender Non-Conforming with Unknown Sexuality (1 disabled character)
- Jewish (1 disabled characters)

FilmDis found 837 were white disabled characters.

FilmDis found 101 Black female characters.

Black Female Characters

- Cisgender Female (99 disabled characters)
- Transgender Female (2 disabled characters – 1 who is Lesbian and 1 who is heterosexual)
- Lesbian (6 disabled characters)
- Bisexual (3 disabled characters)

FilmDis found 102 Black male characters.

Cisgender Black Male Characters:

- Gay (3 disabled characters)
- Bisexual (1 disabled character)
- Jewish (1 disabled character)

FilmDis found 203 Black disabled characters.

IPOC is an abbreviation that represents Indigenous + POC (people of color).

FilmDis found 79 IPOC cisgender males.

IPOC Cisgender Males

- 41 Latine (2 who are gay)
- 20 Asian/Indian (1 who is gay)
- 4 Hawaiian
- 4 Middle Eastern
- 4 Unknown
- 3 Indigenous (1 who is gay),
- 3 Biracial (1 who is gay)

FilmDis found 79 IPOC disabled female characters.

78 IPOC disabled characters are cisgender. 1 IPOC disabled character is transgender.

IPOC Females

- 33 Asian/Indian (1 who is bisexual)
- 27 Latine
- 7 Unknown
- 5 Biracial (1 who is queer)
- 3 Middle Eastern
- 2 Indigenous
- 1 AfroLatine (1 who is transgender)

FilmDis found 158 IPOC characters.

LGBTQIA Disabled Characters

FilmDis found 71 LGBTQIA disabled characters.

By race:

- White (48 disabled characters)
- Black (15 disabled characters)
- IPOC. (8 disabled characters)

By gender identity and sexuality:

- Transgender (5 Females)
- Gender Non-Conforming (1 Female)
- Gay (24 Males)
- Bisexual (17 Females and 5 Males)
- Lesbian (20 Females)
- Asexual (1 Male)

Trans Disabled Characters

- White Female (2)
- Black Female (2)
- IPOC (1 AfroLatine)

Disabled Characters by Nationality

FilmDis found most disabled characters were American.

- Afghani (1 disabled character)
- American (980 disabled characters)
- Australian (6 disabled characters)
- Austrian (4 disabled characters)
- British (89 disabled characters)
- Bulgarian (1 disabled character)
- Canadian (9 disabled characters)
- Chinese (2 disabled characters)
- French (4 disabled characters)
- German (4 disabled characters)
- Fictional World (37 disabled characters)
- Haitian (1 disabled character)
- Irish (12 disabled characters)
- Japanese (3 disabled characters)
- Mexican (6 disabled characters)
- Nigerian (1 disabled character)
- Pakistani (2 disabled characters)
- Russian (9 disabled characters)
- Scottish (7 disabled characters)
- Spanish (2 disabled characters)
- Syrian (2 disabled characters)
- Taiwanese (1 disabled character)
- Unknown from Africa (3 disabled characters)
- Unknown from Middle East (2 disabled characters)
- Unknown (8 disabled characters)

Age of Disabled Characters

Film Dis found most disabled characters were adults.

Baby is any age under 2.

Child is ages 2 to 12.

Teen is ages 13 to 19.

Adult is ages 20 to 60.

Elder is age 60+.

Disabled Characters by Age

- Adult (833 disabled characters)
- Elder (217 disabled characters)
- Teen (82 disabled characters)
- Child (72 disabled characters)
- Babies (4 disabled characters)

Types of Disabled Characters

Film Dis found most disabled characters were Bit characters.

A **Bit** character is a character that is in one episode or may have tiny parts across multiple episodes of television.

A bit role is considered a minor role. Minor means not as important to the story as Lead or supporting characters.

Many Bit characters have only one or two lines in a television show.

Lead characters are the main characters on a television show. They are sometimes also called protagonists. They are in every episode.

Supporting characters are characters that support the lead character. They are often in every episode or many episodes in a television season.

Guest Stars are characters that have a lead role in one or a few episodes of a television show. They are not Regular characters.

Disabled Characters by Type

- Bit (590 disabled characters)
- Supporting (321 disabled characters)
- Lead Characters (174 disabled characters)
- Guest Star (115 disabled characters)

Disabled Mimicry

Disabled mimicry means when a nondisabled actor plays a disabled character.

FilmDis found there were 1,208 actors playing 1,198 characters.

There are more actors than characters because some characters were played by more than one actor.

For example, 3 actors play the character of Randall on *This Is Us*. One is an adult. One is a child. One is a teenager.

FilmDis found that only 128 disabled actors play disabled roles. This is about 10% of disabled characters on television.

90% of disabled characters are played by people that are nondisabled or whether they are disabled is not known.

Hollywood needs to audition disabled actors for any role.

Disabled actors face a lot of stigma, which is discrimination.

FilmDis wants Hollywood to know they need to be more diverse.

Diverse means including disabled characters from communities not often included.

Diverse means more disabled characters who are not white. It means more characters who are LGBTQIA, Black, and IPOC.

Hollywood needs to hire more disabled directors, writers, and other crew members, as well.

FilmDis wants Hollywood to change so disabled people are treated better.

FilmDis wants Hollywood to change so disabled actors can show off their talents.