# FilmDis Disability Representation on Television (2019-2020) Study Fact Sheet

The FilmDis Disability Representation on Television study examines 250 television shows airing between April 2019 & March 31, 2020. Of those 250 shows, 218 shows include at least 1 character who is disabled. This includes shows on 20 networks and 10 streaming services.

The top five networks featuring disabled characters include: NBC (191), CBS (182), ABC (172), FOX (104), and CW (77). Local networks continue to offer far more representation than cable channels.

The top five streaming services featuring disabled characters include: Netflix (108), Hulu (33), Amazon (30), Acorn (20), and Britbox (18).

Across the 218 shows that feature at least 1 disabled character there are 1,198 disabled characters.

The most represented disability communities: Alcoholism/Addiction (214), Multiply Disabled (180), Chronic Health (161), and Mental Health (111).

The least represented disability communities: Deaf (31), Blind (27), Learning Disabilities (10), Little People (8), and Down Syndrome (6).

The most represented characters are cisgender white males of which there are 503 characters. Only 16 of those cisgender white male characters are gay, and 4 are bisexual. This year there is also 1 Asexual white male character. This also includes 6 Jewish characters.

Cisgender white females make up 334 characters, including 11 lesbian, 13 bisexual, and 1 gender nonconforming with unknown sexuality. This also includes 1 Jewish character.

This accounts for 837 white characters.

Black cisgender females represent 99 characters, which include 6 lesbian and 3 bisexual. There are 2 Trans Black female characters, one heterosexual and one lesbian. This totals 101 Black female characters.

Black males represent 102 characters including 1 Jewish. There are 3 gay male characters and one bisexual.

This accounts for 203 Black characters.

IPOC cisgender males account for 79 characters. These include 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), and 3 Biracial (1 who is gay) characters.

IPOC cisgender females also make up 79 characters. There are 33 Asian/Indian (1 who is bisexual), 27 Latine, 7 Unknown, 5 Biracial (1 who is queer), 3 Middle Eastern, 2 Indigenous, and 1 AfroLatine.

There is also 1 IPOC character that is trans. She is a Biracial (AfroLatine) woman.

This accounts for 158 IPOC characters.

LGBTQIA representation accounts for only 71 characters. The breakdown for this is 48 are white, 15 are Black, and 8 are IPOC. This includes 5 trans women (2 white, 2 Black, and 1 IPOC AfroLatine), and 1 gender-nonconforming white unknown female. Three of the trans women are lesbian (2 white, 1 Black). The other two trans women are heterosexual. 24 of the characters are gay males. 22 are bisexual (17 females and 5 males). 20 are lesbians. 2 are heterosexual transwomen. 1 is queer. 1 is asexual. 1 is gender nonconforming with unknown sexuality.

The vast majority, 980 characters, are American. Other nationalities represented include British, Canadian, Australian, Austrian, Scottish, Spanish, Bulgarian, Nigerian, Haitian, Syrian, Chinese, Pakistani, Japanese, Irish, French, Mexican, Unknown from somewhere in South America, Unknown from somewhere in Europe, and Unknown. There are also a few characters from fantasy worlds.

The majority of characters, 833 specifically, are Adult characters between the ages of 20 and 60. Other characters include 217 Elder (60+), 82 Teen (13-19), 72 Child (2-12), and 4 Babies (under 2).

Most of the characters in this study are Bit characters. This usually means they have a very small role throughout a season/series. There are 590 Bit characters to report. There are 321 Supporting, 174 Lead, and 115 Guest Star characters.

When it comes to **disabled mimicry**, a term for when nondisabled characters portray disabled roles, only 128 of the 1,208 actors portraying 1, 198 characters*, or around 10% of the characters are played by actors we know are disabled. The rest are either not disabled or their disability status is unknown.

While representation is slowly getting better, there is still a huge amount of discrimination towards disabled actors playing disabled roles. Hollywood prefers to make disabled characters white, cisgender, and male. Black and Brown disabled communities struggle to find inclusion, which means they lack true disability representation. LGBTQIA disabled representation is still so sparse it's practically nonexistent. Multiply marginalized disabled people are being failed by Hollywood.

Hollywood not only needs to audition disabled actors for any role they can play, but they also need to hire disabled consultants to help their studios produce better content that is not harmful to disabled people, as well as disabled writers, directors, and other crew members.

*There is a slight discrepancy between the number of actors and the number of characters, because there are a handful of characters that are played by more than one actor at different ages. As such, we've had to count actors differently than characters.