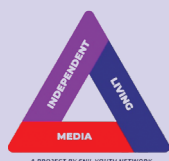




Guidelines on Media Representation of Persons with Disabilities





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Guidelines on Media Representation

About ENIL and the ENIL Youth Network

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is an organisation of disabled people. It has members all over Europe. It fights for human rights, inclusion, the right to have support and to make choices for every person with a disability.

The ENIL Youth Network is a part of this organisation for young people. Members of the network can join many activities and events to learn, speak up for their rights and get to know each other.

Anyone who is between 18 and 35 years old can join the ENIL Youth Network.

What this Guide is about:

This paper is about people with disabilities and the media (TV, radio, internet, social media, newspapers).

It explains how to talk about people with disabilities in a good, fair and respectful way.

It was created by young people with disabilities and young people who work in the media.

Important ideas

People with disabilities must be able to tell their own stories.

The media must be accessible so everyone can understand the information.

The media must respect the feelings, privacy and safety of people with disabilities.⁴

1. Real stories, by real people

People with disabilities should speak for themselves about their lives.

Journalists and content creators must listen and not change the meaning of their stories.

2. Make content accessible

Use captions in videos, describe images , and make documents that work well with screen readers.

Use simple words, clear structure, and if possible Easy-to-Read versions.

3. Be careful with information

Check that your information is correct and comes from good sources.

Do not use people's stories to create pity or shock; always ask for consent and protect privacy.

4. Protect feelings and safety

Remember that the media can bring both positive and negative attention.

Organisations should stop hate speech and harmful comments on their platforms.

5. Work together

Media should work with people with disabilities as partners, not only as “topics” for a story.

Give training and learning chances so media workers know how to represent disability well.

6. Create content with values

Focus on real life, rights, and equality, not on trends or “inspirational” stories only.

Show people with disabilities as part of everyday life, in school, work, family and community.

Let people with disabilities speak for themselves.

- People with disabilities tell their own stories.
- Listen carefully and don't change their stories.

Make Content Easy to Understand:

Media should be easy to understand.

- Use simple words and short sentences.
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- Add pictures, captions, and subtitles.
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- Make videos and documents easy to follow.

Be Careful with Information

- Check your facts are true.
- Don't use stories to make people sad or shocked.
- Always ask before sharing stories.

Protect Feelings and Safety

- Media can make people happy or sad.
- Stop mean or bad words online.

People with disabilities are partners, not just stories.

- Teach media workers about disability and respect.
- Create stories together with people with disabilities, not just about them.

Show real life, rights, and equality.

- Show people with disabilities in school, work, and family.

Dos and Don'ts in Media

Dos:

Listen to people with disabilities.

Use simple words and short sentences.

Use pictures and subtitles to help understanding.

Tell true and respectful stories.

Ask permission before sharing stories.

Show people with disabilities as active and equal.

Make media easy to access for everyone (captions, audio).

Don'ts

Don't speak for people with disabilities.

Don't use hard words without explaining.

Don't use scary or sad pictures to make people sad.

Don't share private or unsafe information.

Don't make people look like heroes or inspirations only.

Don't allow mean or hurtful comments online.

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