

GDC

You Can Take An Arrow To The Knee and Still Be An Adventurer

CHERRY THOMPSON

Accessibility Consultant, Independent



GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

MARCH 18–22, 2019 | #GDC19

- ultraviolence but for feelings -

finally someone managed to describe my
personal brand and speaker style in 4 words

Ben Schroder @kyotocosmology

tired: we're looking for ROCKSTARS, WIZARDS and NINJAS

wired: we're looking for DISGRACED WANDERING HARPSICHORDISTS wearing
PRINTED SINGLETs e.g. 'ULTRAVIOLENCE, BUT FOR FEELINGS' or 'SWORDS &
SURFBOARDS', etc.



Ben Schroder

@kyotocosmology Follows you

Writer @ Rocksteady, prev. Horizon
ZD+TFW, Thief 2014, The Secret World,
Edge mag class of '04.





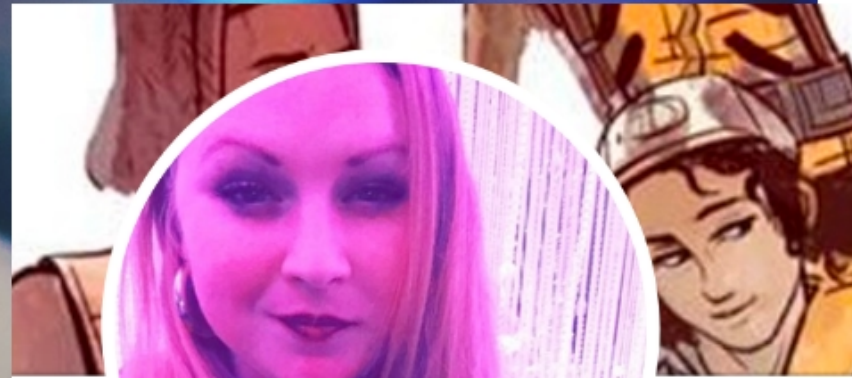
Content Warning

- + DISABILITY
- + DEATH
- + STIGMA
- + MENTAL HEALTH



You can't do Narrative Design in a social, cultural, or political vacuum. Not possible. You have to consider what interactions, environments, language etc will mean to the player's experience. You're providing them tools to live a story. Their story is informed by the real world.

If you're not considering what your players (all of them) might want to do and how they might feel at every moment as they experience the story/stories in your game... you're not doing narrative design. Thinking intersectionally isn't a plus, it's a must.



Emily Grace Buck 
GDC

@emilybuckshot Follows you

Game narrative designer & writer working on @waylandersrpg & Buckshot Interactive. Speaker. Workers rights & mental health advocate. She/her, bi, trying my best

11:56 AM - 10 Sep 2018




You Can Take An Arrow To
The Knee And Still Be An
ADVENTURER



DISCLAIMER
(I LOVE YOU)

AND I'M JUST ONE
PERSON



A person wearing a dark winter jacket and a hood is sitting in a wheelchair on a snow-covered path. The path has tracks from a sled or similar device. In the background, there is a dark fence with circular patterns and snow-covered bushes and trees. Snow is falling around the person.

WHAT IS DISABILITY?

A WHOLE LOT OF ASSUMPTIONS



EVERYTHING CHANGED

~~Enter's Darts Syndrome~~

~~Autonomic Dysfunction~~


~~TIA / pseudo aneurysm~~

~~Gastroparesis / Intestine~~

~~Migraines - Failure~~

~~Mass cell activation~~

~~Syndrome~~

A full-page background image of Lara Croft from the game Shadow of the Tomb Raider. She is shown from the waist up, holding onto a thick vine with both hands. She is wearing her signature blue tank top and a dark harness. The background is a warm, golden-brown jungle scene with sunlight filtering through the trees.

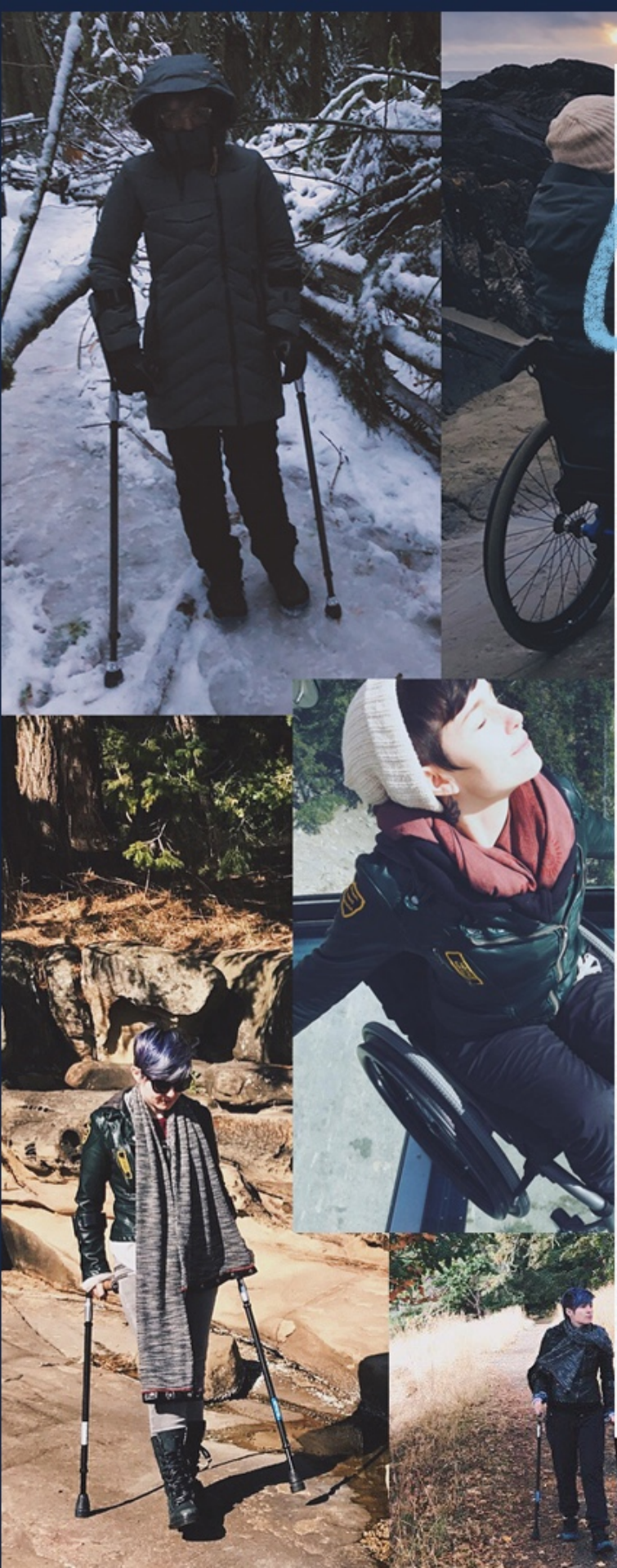
*"It's what you make of your
situation that defines you"*
— Lara Croft

SHADOW OF THE
TOMB RAIDER



CASUAL ZONE





Reasons a person might use a wheelchair:

- + Muscular Weakness
- + Amputations
- + Severe Fatigue
- + Bone or Muscle malformations
- + Chronic Pain
- + Bone and Soft Tissue Fragility
- + Frequent risk of Injury / Falls
- + Motor control & Movement disorders
- + and more!



Google



wheelchair

CA\$225.00
Walton Medical

CA\$252.99
Staples Canada

CA\$211.99
Staples Car

series Everyday Wheelchair ...
hairs.co.uk

Product
Invacare Terminator Ultralight ...
1800wheelchair.ca

Product
Top End Top End Terminator Everyday ...
spinlife.com

Product
Quickie GPV Sports/Everyday ...
1800wheelchair.com



Product
Excel Extra Wide Manual Wheelchairs ...
1800wheelchair.ca



Product
Drive Medical Sport Wheelchair ...
themobilityaidscentre.co.uk



Product
Buy KosmoCare Dura Rexine Mag Wheel ...
amazon.in



Product
KN-700T ...
karmanheal

Product
EPHYR Every ...
medical.com



Product
Folding Wheelchair on ...



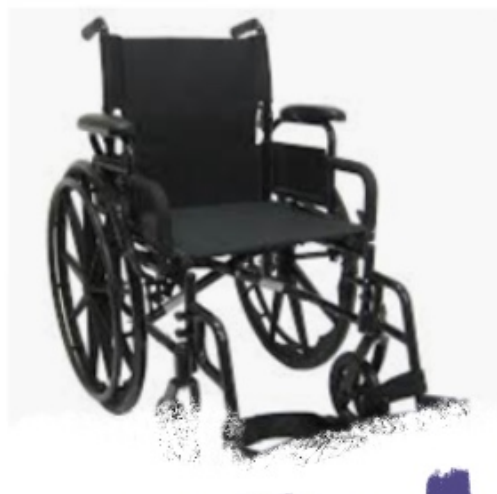
Product
Everyday Wheelchairs
topendwheelchair.invacare.



Product
Medline Excel Manual Wheelchair ...
homediscount.com



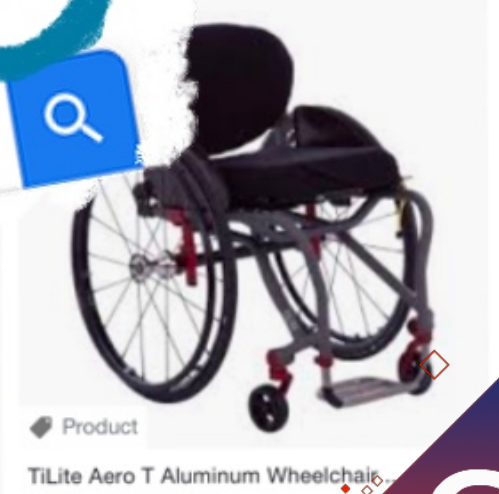
Product



Product
Everyday Wheelchair ...

Google

everyday wheelchair



Product
TiLite Aero T Aluminum Wheelchair ...
howirollsports.com



HOT TIP!!



STEREOTYPE OR HEAD-CANON



#DisabilityRepresentationMatters!! ♡



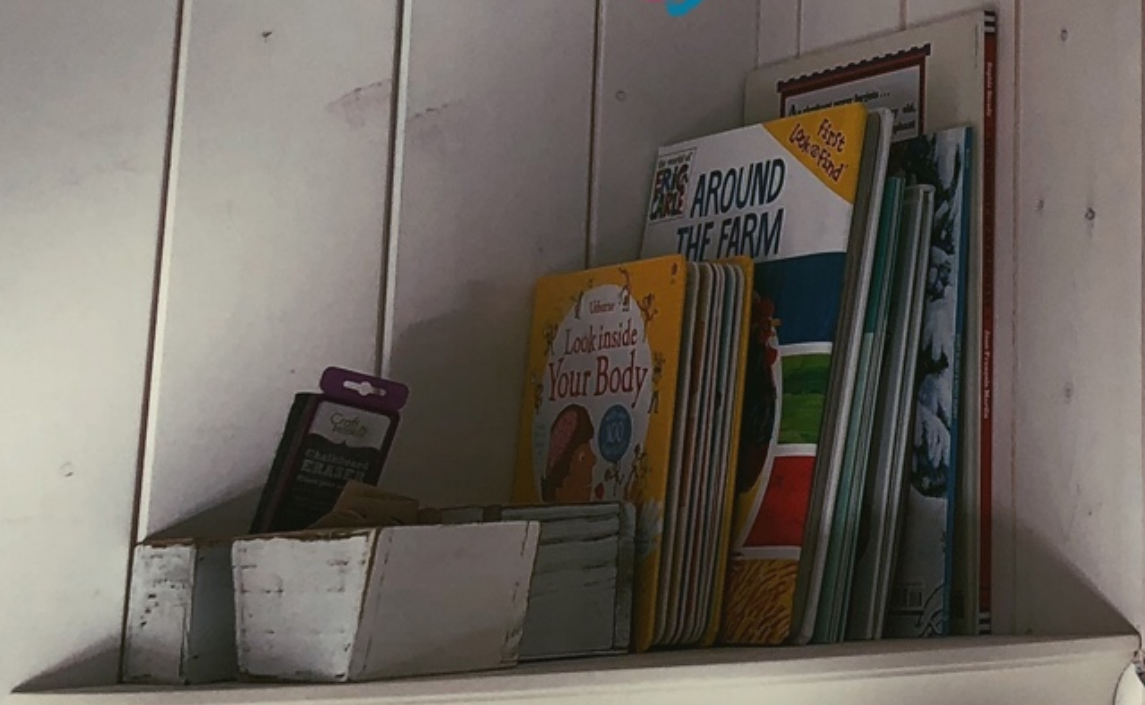
upto 30% of
gamers
are
Disabled

less than 1% of Characters are
Disabled

Negative Representation



Negative Attitudes



Positive
Representation



Acceptance

CHERRYRAE
Hello



\\ NO TIPS / HINTS / SPOILERS PLS
I LIKE TO FIGURE THINGS OUT, I'LL ASK IF I NEED HELP <3

(VIDEO)

John

"It's some kind of a weird duck. . . beaver thing."



 @cherryrae
 @cherryperson



I tend to find most people depict characters as "what" they are rather than "who", the condition becomes their sole defining trait. Being on the Autistic spectrum myself this is really frustrating, as it tends to be portrayed as "idiot savant" or "obnoxious cretin". :(

Eek! A spooky D.W. @DW_Dagon · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

Representation of identity can make me feel embraced by a community.

lil haunted darling @Cooking_J · Sep 17

It makes me feel like my experience matters like I'm actually worthy of being advertised to (talking my about my specific examples). I just want to see someone I can relate to on telly & when I do even if it's small it makes me so happy.

Amy-claire davis @Amy_Claire_x · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae @kelseyharden_

It makes me feel like I'm not alone.

Scareison Farton @spyrosmithy · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

It makes me feel visible!

Harri @wonderpusgospel · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

Being represented as a disabled person (positively I might add) feels like alone, that I'm a human being who is a valid member of society and de and kindness.

Because all kinds of people exist, they should be included.

Andie @peachboy333 · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

It makes me feel like I have a future.

JBrooksDev @jbrooksdev · Sep 19

Replying to @cherryrae

Identity representation is important to me - not so much for my present self - but for the child I was who absolutely needed to see more of it.

icy fields & CROWS @ornamentalia · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

I think especially with EDS it's supposed to be really rare, so seeing people who are sick like I am sick makes me feel a sense of larger community, of a world in



Jamie Knight

@JamieKnight

Replying to @cherryrae @ellenfromnowon

If I exist in the game world, it helps me persist in the real world.

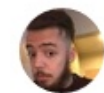
It helps me to see a space, event or community I can be part of, rather than feeling like a permanent outsider.

6:08 PM - 17 Sep 2018



Replying to @cherryrae @diegoarguello66

I feel more connection to a character that does the same things I do over how they look (ex. A game player vs a white male)



Spooky Scary Shack @Jayh_Official · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

There's something ephemeral about relating to a character who is like you in a way others can't understand; Proper representation helped me understand a part of me I was having trouble accepting on my own.



Alexx The 2018 Derp @AlexxAplin · Sep 18

Replying to @cherryrae

As a disabled gay man that grew up in Texas, seeing characters that were either

Positive representation of disability makes me feel hopeful for a future of inclusion and empowerment for those who are living with disability ("Positive" being the key word here).



Solstice Hannan @darkersolstice · Sep 18

Replying to @cherryrae

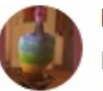
There's a book I encountered when I was younger, called "The Only Alien on the Planet". While the book itself didn't stick with me, the title very much did. Even brief glimpses of representation serve to remind me I'm not wrong, not broken. But it's so rare they're explicit!



Grant Stoner @Super_Crip1994 · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

That we matter, especially despite our limitations.



Epic Glitter @EpicGlitterYay · Sep 17

Replying to @cherryrae

It makes me feel like my own future is possible, like maybe there's a place for me.



•☆ kellen ☆•

@cryptic_crow

Follow

it helps to show me that I *do* deserve to exist.



Vivek GoEvil @ GA Conf @uncannyvivek · Sep 18

Replying to @cherryrae

Positive representation validates your existence, you feel allowed to be visible. It makes me feel part of society. In Spider-Man I was joyous seeing a wheelchair using character doing a crossword, I had to take a pic straight away! The small details have the biggest impact



Shouty Person @A3K0 · Sep 17

In a sentence. "The representation made me feel like some books I cared about cared about me, thought I could my mental illness as a monster in waiting."



spoop @kkylperpena · Sep 18

Replying to @cherryrae

There's a glimmer of hope for the society we live in.



claudiaalick @daudiaalick · Sep 18



• DISABLED PEOPLE ARE SEGREGATED





Andraste_Blaze

@Andraste_Blaze

Follow



Daughter is autistic. She doesn't fit in. She doesn't get praise outside of her close family.

During the first Forsaken mission, her favourite character told her Tevis would be proud of her. She cried.

Thank you @Bungie . You have no idea how much this means. ❤️

7 AM - 16 Sep 2018

GDC
19
GAME DEVELOPERS
CONFERENCE

#GDC19

ESCAPISM / POWER FANTASY



(INNER ROGUE) ☺



「HORROR」= THREAT

“I feel so emotionally ravaged by
this game and not in a good way”
- Cherry



DEATH = a mercy

At least you have a choice. When you want to make a decision, you can just do it. Look









CASUAL REPRESENTATION !! yes!!

! esp-Capable !



FTW



#GDC19

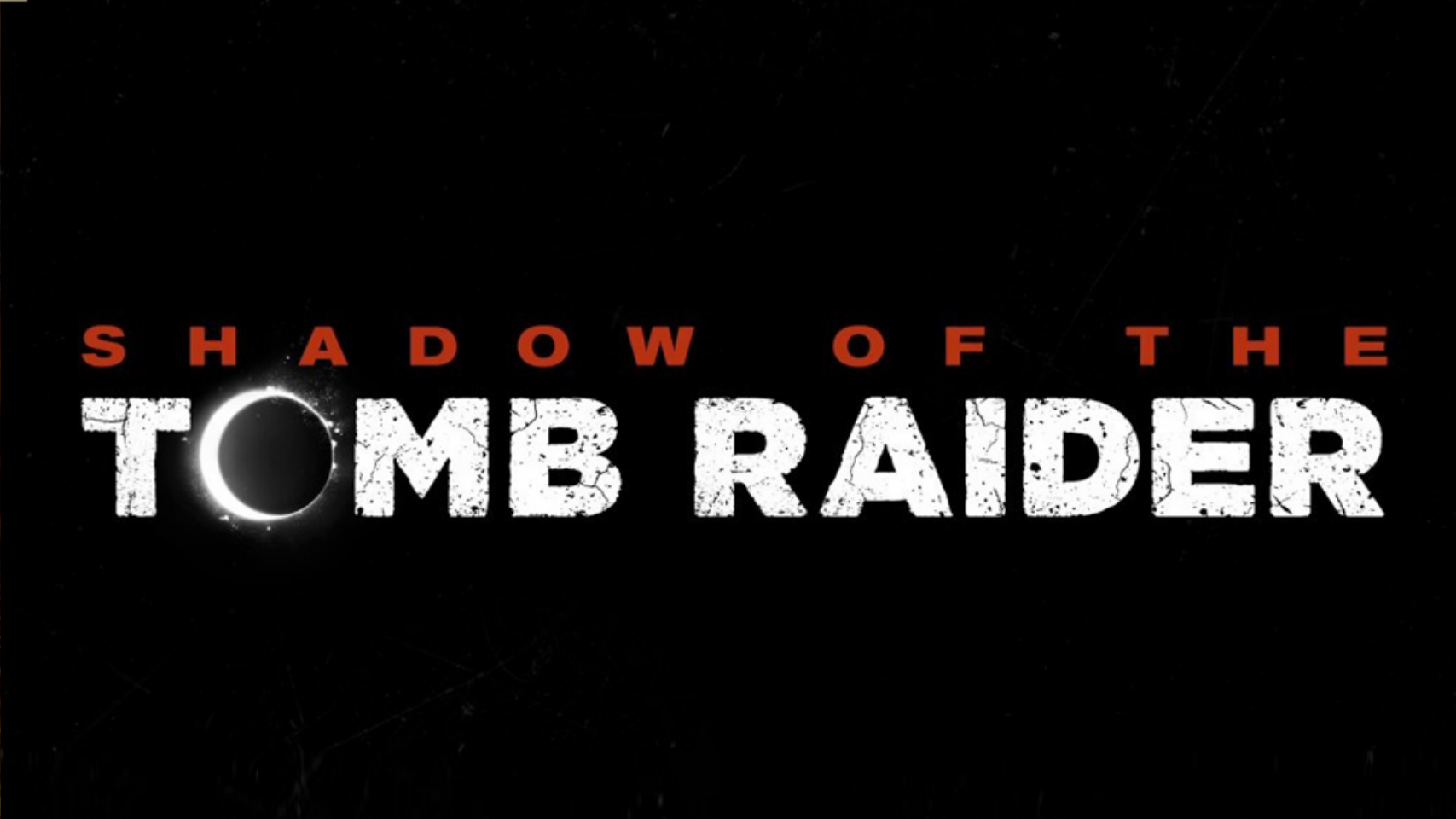


Angel Giuffria ͇_(ツ)_͇, 
@aannggeelll

Following

It's high noon somewhere in the world!
YAY for amputee/limb different [#cosplay](#)!
YAY for representation! I had an amazing
time at [#DragonCon](#) as [#McCree](#) & I'm
so ready for there to be MORE badass
characters for us to cosplay - Are You!?







GEARS OF WAR





(VIDEO)



• START SMALL

- + BRACES ON JOINTS
- + INDICATION OF CHRONIC PAIN
- + CANES/CRUTCHES/WALKERS FOR YOUNG N/PCS
- + YOUNG DEAF/BLIND N/PCS
- + NON-VERBAL N/PCS WITH SMART DEVICE
- + 'GOOD' N/PCS WITH LIMPS, DISFIGUREMENTS
- + LIMB DIFFERENCE & PROSTHETICS
- + DISABLED POC, WOMEN, LGBTQ+ & MORE
- + MAKE ENVIRONMENTS INCLUSIVE



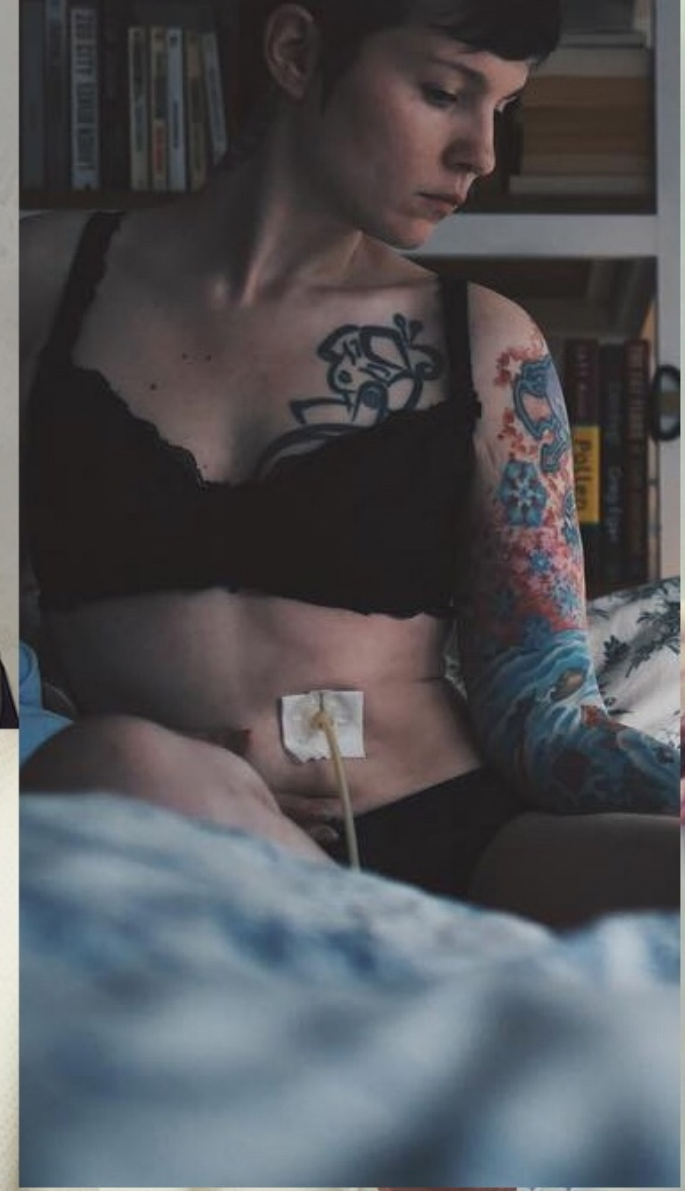


DEUS EX

HUMAN REVOLUTION™
CONCEPT ART



THE VILLAIN





YASS

OVERCOOKED!

The
**Festive
Seasoning**

So Cool!



ABHYYYHRGGGGHHHGAAAAAAGHGHHHH!!!

(VIDEO)



BORDERLANDS 2



Sir
HAMMERLOCK



Hunter. Scholar. Gentler.







Susan @SusanCantPlayIt · 11 Sep 2018

Replying to @SusanCantPlayIt @cherryrae

And I'm not sure if this counts as disability rep. but **seeing Moss use ASL brought me to tears. Seeing** the language I've used my entire life FINALLY be put in a game as a mechanic and not just a plot device for some victim. It was just incredible.

Susan

@SusanCantPlayIt Follows you

Deaf, Muslim, queer, and disabled. I do Deaf game reviews with [@cyclopediabrain](#) and shout a lot about game accessibility. She/her



Moss



(VIDEO)



♥ Please ☺ ♥

DO:

- + Include disability in your characters/worlds
- + Include disability in diversity efforts
- + Include invisible disability and mental health
- + Portray disability positively
- + Make disabled characters diverse
- + Consult disabled people

DON'T:

- + Make assumptions
- + Exploit disability as a tool for negative emotions
- + Erase disability entirely
- + Make the only disabled person a villain

[TvTropes.org](https://www.tvtropes.org)

Summary



IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO
ALONE! TAKE US.



Contact Me:

Reach Out
To
Communities



@Cherryrae



twitch.tv/cherryrae



hello.cherryrae@gmail.com





I TOOK AN ARROW
IN THE KNEE
AND I'M STILL AN ADVENTURER

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

MARCH 18-22, 2019 | #GDC19

(VIDEO)

Well, that was pretty traumatic,
but such is the life of an adventurer.

