



ALLEGAN | KENT | MUSKEGON | NEWAYGO | OCEANA | OTTAWA 

## Day 5: Disability – Not Your Inspiration

Australian activist Stella Young coined the term “Inspiration Porn”, which is now widely used throughout the disability community. She defines it as the objectification of disabled people for the benefit of nondisabled people.

Inspiration porn consists of images, stories, and media that portray people with disabilities as objects of inspiration. Typically, there’s an accompanying message to the viewers that implies something along the lines of, “the only real disability in life is having a bad attitude”. These messages also insinuate that if this (poor/lowly/less-than) person can manage to smile in “their condition,” than you have no excuse. Unfortunately, with the increase of social media use, these images are shared widely across the world which only perpetuates a negative connotation of disability.

As a result of lower expectations for people with disabilities, they’re often given awards and special recognition for doing things that aren’t at all out of the ordinary for them. There are countless stories from people with disabilities of strangers showering them with accolades for simply being out in the world living their lives; as though there is an assumption that they would not be out enjoying life.

Inspiration porn is very harmful to both disabled and non-disabled people. It provides people with an incorrect and offensive view of people with disabilities. It also sends the message that disability makes a person exceptional and overcoming a disability is admirable. Stella Young is quoted as saying, “Disability doesn’t make you exceptional, but questioning what you think you know about it does.”

## Learn More

### Read:

- Forbes: How to Avoid “Inspiration Porn” (Link includes audio option)  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulrang/2019/11/29/how-to-avoid-inspiration-porn/?sh=223a3e224434>
- Inspiration Porn – Once You See It, You Can’t Not See It  
<https://medium.com/@GirlWithTheCane/inspiration-porn-once-you-see-it-you-cant-not-see-it-56296cb2fd37>

### Watch:

- TED: Stella Young – I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/stella\\_young\\_i\\_m\\_not\\_your\\_inspiration\\_thank\\_you\\_very\\_much?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en)
- What is Inspiration Porn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmGtGaXbJSQ>

### Discussion:

- Do you agree with Stella’s statement that disability doesn’t make a person exceptional? Why or why not?
- What are some examples of inspiration porn that you have seen on social media or in movies or TV?
- How do you think being the object of inspiration porn impacts people with disabilities?

VOLUNTEER

GIVE TODAY

CALL 211

