

Disability & Identity Documentary Transcript

Sonny (They/Them) 0:01

Gender, disability, and sexuality are so intertwined. Yeah. Like not only with my lived experience, but like when I'm doing research or learning about things, like, it's really hard not to notice the connections between like, I mean, gender and sexuality is, is a very obviously and directly connected because for some reason our categorization of sexuality is based on gender, whole other thing.

Tia (She/Her) 0:23

So, so I have the privilege, I've had the privilege of being born as able bodied, and then being able to experience like being disabled. And I say that as a privilege because it's been such a learning experience. And that's totally like, in hindsight, obviously, like, going through it, it still is really challenging and difficult. But I feel like I have such an appreciation for a wide variety of experiences now, because I've been able to kind of like, view things from different perspectives.

Sonny (They/Them) 0:55

Coming to terms with like, gender, and sexuality and disability it's really interesting to discover, like a desirability that's not based on social ideas and societal, i-ideas of what is desirable, like, what do I find desirable in myself? What kind of what kind of things do I want to present with

Em (They/She) 1:19

I struggled for the longest time to actually know who I am as a person. Um, and I think learning about... and I still struggle with that, like, it's really hard to be able to identify that when you're masking your entire life.

Tia (She/Her) 1:33

Going through that journey of like, reestablishing your own identity, and recognizing that like, you're, as a person, you're not a static being like you are always changing and growing, that's a tough thing to relearn.

Em (They/She) 1:49

I have a hard time with labels, because I feel like I-I get really stuck on the like little specifics... and little things that don't really fit that just don't really fit with that labels. So, I have a hard time like really sticking with one label. But if I were to define my gender would be closest to agender. So I would say that gender scripts are gendered expectations. If I'm on my own, and I'm not interacting, it pretty much means nothing to me, because I just, I'm just, I'm just Em.

Sonny (They/Them) 2:18

if I put together an outfit, and I look in the mirror, sometimes I look in the mirror and I go like, well, I look hot, but I don't look like me. So the goal is to look in the mirror and look hot and look like me.

Em (They/She) 2:29

I kind of like start having an issue with the whole gender thing when people are like, act like a girl or a woman because... I just know, they're trying to impose that gender on me, rather than just kind of view me as a person, just, just as a normal person.

Sonny (They/Them) 2:49

I think labels are incredibly powerful. Like I said, like, you know, disabled as a political position is incredibly powerful. Um, Non-binary as a gender identity is an incredibly powerful political position. But labels are not the end all be all, you don't need to use labels, you don't need to use any labels that don't fit you... uh, and you don't need to be in a rush to find labels,

Tia (She/Her) 3:12

Like I've struggled with that word, like disabled and like the label of it, because of like imposter syndrome, I think and like always feeling like I wasn't disabled enough. Especially like, having been able bodied before and like that, like before I was injured... I was like the strongest one of my sisters, and I was like, you know, I was like, super involved with karate, and like other like musical theater and like very active person. And I really prided myself on that and then it was like, suddenly, I wasn't that person anymore.

Em (They/She) 3:44

Generally, with my sexuality, I will say that I would... I've kind of always gone with a bunch of different labels. I think at first, for a very, very long time I was so preoccupied with masking and kind of like really playing that role to try and socially like fit in, because I wasn't diagnosed yet, so I had no idea I had a disability I didn't really understand why people didn't like me, I just knew they didn't like me. Um, and I will try anything and everything, so I really didn't give myself a chance to like kind of really get to know myself.

Sonny (They/Them) 4:18

I can't think of a way to say that isn't that this isn't corny, but liking yourself makes you feel desirable because you desire yourself... and that gives you the confidence to present in a way that probably makes other people like you as well.

Tia (She/Her) 4:34

Disabled people can be- can be happy, can be healthy, can be everything under the sun. You know?

Sonny (They/Them) 4:41

I think you can also change what labels you use. I think there's a lot of pressure to figure out who you are what you are and then stick to that because if you change it "it was a phase" or and I think it's important to know that like things like... I feel like saying things will like things do change makes it seem like they weren't true before. Something can be true one day and not true another, I can have certain needs one day and not have those needs another day, that doesn't mean that I didn't have these needs or that I'm not disabled.

Tia (She/Her) 5:13

It was like mourning the loss of the person you once were, and that, like really struck a chord with me... because it was like, yeah, like I I really had to kind of like, mourn past Tia, you know, but future Tia now has like this amazing experience and learning from it and I wouldn't change a thing.

Em (They/She) 5:30

I feel that labels don't really resonate with me, uh because they feel restrictive. Um, they feel like they're not fully... first of all, I struggled to fully kind of grasp them as a social construct, uh but they also feel like they don't fully fit all of what's in my head.

Tia (She/Her) 5:50

My scope of my own self was so narrow before, and then like really trying to like, widen it, and that opens so many new possibilities for like, new ways of exploring myself new, like ways of interacting with people with interacting with plants, animals, life

Em (They/She) 6:04

Storytelling. RPS, I would write a lot as well read a lot of novels. So, I guess yeah, fictional tropes are really what tends to be the main way in which I engage in... I guess my sexuality.

Tia (She/Her) 6:22

It's not something that is viewed in media right, like you don't have the represen- you don't, we don't have- don't have nearly enough representation of disabled people in like romance novels, and romance TV. I love romance novels, as I've talked about with you before. So like, like when I- I just yeah, like, like, there's not enough conversations about like, what that means for like, engaging physical intimacy, because disabled people are sexy, disabled people are sexual beings too, and have agency and like, you know, want to engage in those kinds of relationships, and some of them don't, but some of them do to, like, you know, just like any other person, like, we're people!

Em (They/She) 6:59

A lot of the relationships or the sexual encounters I've had with people over the years were mostly encounters where it was through conversations, long distance, um, anything that didn't have to involve me being in physical contact with others, and I find that, you know, hearing other autistic people also describing their experience with sexuality, that seems to be something that comes back a lot.

Tia (She/Her) 6:59

In the last like, year... yeah, year or two, I've really, like really put a hold on like, like physical relationships and like physical intimacy, because like, there are very few ways that I can engage in those kinds of like, like, relationships without there being pain.

Sonny (They/Them) 7:46

When you let go of the social scripts of what sex is supposed to be like, it can actually be very, very fun. And sometimes, you know, having a disability or... being not a binary man or woman, trying to think how to put that, um, it kind of forces you to reassess and challenge those scripts, which is challenging, and can be awkward and hard. But it can also be really, really rewarding, because then you're thinking about like, well, what is it that I actually want? What actually works for me, what works for my partner? You know, you're opening the doors to exploring different things, and really figuring out like, how do I actually enjoy every moment of this.

Tia (She/Her) 8:29

When someone I think identifies as disabled, who engages with that, like identity, it creates this really amazing space, because we recognize that there's so many different ways of being in the world that are not confined to one's body. And they're not confined to one's experiences. Like, there's not one way of viewing the world or being in the world, at one any given point of time. And so, it really like cracks open, like, every, like everything that you kind of like, had assumed before.

Sonny (They/Them) 9:04

Disability, sexuality, and gender are socially constructed. That does not mean that they are not real, it doesn't mean that they don't deeply affect everybody's lived experience and they are, like, ingrained into almost every facet of life and society, and social interaction. Um, but those things are socially constructed, which means that we can change how we navigate conversations around those things and how we navigate, um, what we learn about those things, how we talk about those things, how we teach them...um, and I think that's kind of an important thing to know. That like... yeah, that they're socially constructed, but that doesn't mean that they're not real, it just means that they can be deconstructed or reconstructed or reconfigured.