

## Project Khitomer 2020

# Writing Disabled Characters

Hosts: [Sheila Bailey \[SB118\]](#) ([SB118](#))

Room Two • Session 4

**[Sheila Bailey \[SB118\]](#) 2/22/2020, 1:00:11 PM**

Hello, hope all is well. I play Lt JG Sheila Bailey, an Elaysian medical officer with the lovely people over at the Play-By-Email RPG group UFOP: StarBase 118.

Today I'll be holding an open discussion about writing for characters that have a disability. These disabilities can be mental or physical or even some combination and either be apart of the character from creation or gained throughout the story. In writing these types of characters I often find people shying away from writing for a disabled individual as they don't want to be inaccurate or romanticize the disability. Most of those that do write for a disabled character end up romanticizing the disability. Making it so they are better in a relationship, that having a disability means they should live life to the fullest or that somehow having a disability affects those around them; either in a negative way making them a burden or in a positive way where they can change the non disabled lives around them.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:00:50 PM**

Hello!

**[Sheila Bailey \[SB118\]](#) 2/22/2020, 1:01:02 PM**

As a way to get started I wonder what are your guy's background knowledge of disabilities?

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:01:16 PM**

IC or OOC?

**[Sheila Bailey \[SB118\]](#) 2/22/2020, 1:01:21 PM**

Either

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:02:12 PM**

OOC I have friends with various mental health problems, one whom I love dearly but need to keep away from sugar at all costs... so my floors and ceilings remain intact. And I have several friends who are either hard of hearing or deaf.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:02:32 PM**

OOC, I am an able-bodied male, but I have taken classes on human rights in the workplace and stuff like that, including how it pertains to disabilities.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:02:41 PM**

I have multiple disabilities myself. I'm a part time wheelchair user, have muscle and ligament problems and more recently I've found out I have a brain tumour, due to this I've suffered with depression too. As well as friends and family with varying disabilities. So I have a fairly large background on disabilities

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:02:54 PM**

I find it like an extra unique quality in some people that give them an advantage like how Jesse goes along with his writing for Chloe in our RPG

Who is blind so it takes more of an effort in quality in a vision based reality IC

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:03:51 PM**

That leads nicely into my next opening question: How have you seen disabilities written in role play?

**[STF] Heron 2/22/2020, 1:04:19 PM**

I have mental health problems and they run in my family as well. And my mother suffered brain injury in 2013. Also, I have friends and acquaintances with invisible disabilities

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:04:29 PM**

I've seen a few, one person I have played with as a mechanic arm and another had a dodgy leg. Both played the characters very well and with respect

**[22/OF] Kasterborous 2/22/2020, 1:04:35 PM**

unfortunately, i think from where i've roleplayed, they've done the representation of a disability rather poorly - without much thought into how it affects their character and sort of comes to romanticise them

**[22] Confusedfire [VFY|CO] 2/22/2020, 1:04:37 PM**

I'm presently writing a character that is autistic and she is a really difficult character to write simply because I have such limited experience with it.

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:05:19 PM**

So I haven't played disabled characters in star trek games but have from time to time played them in real life sims... so I find research of the various illnesses and in some cases technology available to help people with certain illnesses. But if I am not sure on something I'll research before making a decision

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:05:36 PM**

@Confusedfire one of my first role play characters was autistic and it didn't go well

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:05:36 PM**

IC, I play Tuula, the Chief Medical Officer of Langley Station. She became a paraplegic as a result of a shuttle accident partway through the academy. She also likes tattoos, musical theatre, surgery, medical antiques, dark makeup, and absinthe. Her twin sister is also aboard the station; basically, the characters were designed to represent high school stereotypes, with Tuula representing the goth and Jaana the nerd

**[STF] Heron 2/22/2020, 1:05:51 PM**

I've seen it both well played, but once in particular the character was almost god-like because the prosthetic limbs gave them lots of advantages.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:05:58 PM**

There's a bit of Commander Data in my main PC where something he feels obvious to him makes others become confused. Like how I will try to explain something, but it comes out differently to someone else

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:06:07 PM**

I don't write a disabled character, because being ex-military and having worked with wounded and injured soldiers. I really don't think I would or could do a disabled character justice .

**[22] Confusedfire [VFY|CO] 2/22/2020, 1:06:29 PM**

From time to time I'll let one of my friends read something before I post it with the character because he is autistic... But, otherwise I do a lot of research when it comes to the character.

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:06:33 PM**

Its very easy to write a disabled character up... but not easy to play and play well.

**[22/OF] Kasterborous 2/22/2020, 1:06:39 PM**

^

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:06:48 PM**

I try not to have disabled characters due to my irl problems and so role play as a form of escapism from it

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:06:57 PM**

fair point

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:07:28 PM**

One of the things I've done is try to put a lot of emphasis on her other character traits. For example, I've emphasized her interests in tattoos, dark makeup, medical antiques, etc., so she isn't just "the one in the wheelchair" but also "the creepy goth doctor lady"

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:07:41 PM**

It can be difficult and everyone has different reasons for why they do or don't write for a disabled character. For me I do it as a way to educate others

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:08:09 PM**

sounds like Abby from NCIS @crimsyn

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:08:23 PM**

Tuula if its Pauley Parette as the play by creepy goth doctor lady is absolutely fine.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:08:24 PM**

.. er.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:08:28 PM**

her bio is here: <https://langleystation.nl/index.php/personnel/character/112>

**Adingo 2/22/2020, 1:08:44 PM**

I tend to evade certain concepts I'm not familiar with, since I know I wouldn't be able to write them well

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:08:57 PM**

I think it's great that your not sole focused on the disability @crimsyn

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:09:37 PM**

I avoid playing mental illness... as have friends with mental health issues and sadly lost friends to them in the last couple of years. Would never be able to capture it well.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:10:02 PM**

I.. I have to ask. I apologize in advance, this is a rather blunt question for me. Is.. in a roleplay the best place to try and educate others? o.O

I'm just curious what your logic chain is there.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:10:39 PM**

However one of my big notes is to do your research. I Have a bunch of youtubers I watch that have disabilities and I find that that helps get an inside look at various peoples experience.

I think I can educate where ever I go however big or small

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:11:17 PM**

I think it probably is... we have young players in the fleets. If we can stop one being an a\*\*hole to someone else I think that's worth while. We also have adults who don't think before they speak as well aka me.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:11:21 PM**

I believe so because people can't always understand right off the bat if what is being talked about. In writing is better so there's more time to reflect and think on

**[STF] Heron 2/22/2020, 1:11:28 PM**

Most of my characters have had some trauma in the past and often some type of mental health problems because of it. While never an exact copy of my life and my mental health problems, I find that rping a character like that helps me work through and talk about my own depression and anxiety

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:12:23 PM**

Exactly yes! Because before I started Rping, I would've never had the confidence I had in IRL due to my anxieties

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:12:26 PM**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EggZPdKoJ0wzPwjKtT5NEjGRx4WeIC1A2S9HI1Ych9c/edit?usp=sharing> here's my list if you want some more resources

Watching these people helps me draw a more realistic experience as I'm not just reading a list of symptoms

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:14:04 PM**

Also there's a number of characters on the shows that I grew up watching that helped me understand more about the world

I wouldn't go as far as saying an entire species, but Vulcans made me feel better about my asperger's

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:15:17 PM**

One of my favourite characters as well as shows of the last twenty years is Spencer Reed and Criminal Minds... I mean its a minor example of someone who struggles to form natural relationships with others among others.

**Felipe Valenciano 2/22/2020, 1:15:27 PM**

Hi

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:16:13 PM**

then learning to work through a disability and not try to fix it right off the bat has helped with character development

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:17:04 PM**

Indeed

However along those lines I find some things to avoid. Romantizing things is never a good idea but one can accidentally do it. In a sim I would be up front that you may get things wrong and are still learning. I would also avoid giving your character a magical fix that makes everything better. That's not realistic and most of the time that shows that people with a disability aren't valued as they are

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:17:09 PM**

If you written a disabled character what is the point of writing a quick fix.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:17:52 PM**

Indeed. I've had to learn and point out to others that that's not how I want to write my character

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:18:11 PM**

in a world of hyposprays and quick surgeries, I've seen people who are magically all better after a few minutes

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:18:20 PM**

I don't like the "quick fix" the thought of having that is awkward for me. Being disabled I wouldn't want a quick fix. I know that may seem really really strange but it's how I personally feel

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:18:49 PM**

I think this ties into a question I have about playing disabled characters in future hi-tech hi-medicine settings.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:18:51 PM**

This also plays into the idea of balance. How do you balance the story and having a character with a disability?

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:19:10 PM**

I have had a couple people discuss ideas to "cure" my character. I've always avoided it because it felt like it would be giving the Doctor his mobile emitter in the 2nd episode. Also, I think any "quick fix" is kind of unrealistic... people don't have one surgery and are magically fully recovered, it's a long and painful process.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:19:21 PM**

Since... Trek makes it clear physical disabilities are largely curable via tech or medicine.

(Well. "clear".)

How do you think is kinda best to avoid that kind of quick fix in that kind of setting?

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:20:16 PM**

I have had a fair few surgeries and my leg still isn't fully well so fixing everything magically isn't realistic in my opinion

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:20:36 PM**

I think it's best to avoid a quick fix in any setting. In my opinion it does the community a disservice

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:20:47 PM**

agreed

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:21:42 PM**

The closest I have come to writing a character with a disability, is my Security Chief when she was raped. I had to take her on a downward mental journey, which proved very hard to do. In the end I opted for the quick fix, over about four JP's. I just couldn't continue, I felt I was promoting the very thing I was trying to talk about.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:22:00 PM**

People would point out that 24th century medicine is better and it would quick fix everything, but how does that really help with character development. There's nothing to learn

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:22:06 PM**

I play entirely out of star trek at the moment (looking to get back in) but as a GM if I see someone trying something like a quick fix its likely to lead to me screwing them over by having them have a complication during their quick fix. Retaliation is some times a way to get people to learn that if you do something daft their is consequences.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:22:24 PM**

Also, I think one of the more important things is to not romanticize the struggle. For example, if you are going to write a "cure" story arc, it can be easy to end up in a situation where you portray it as "my character was told she would never walk again but because she Never Gave Up, through sheer force of will, she was able to walk right into the office of that stupid doctor who didn't believe in her." That's not realistic. Further, it ignores the reality that for a lot of people, their disability is a permanent fact of life regardless of their attitude towards it. It implies that for those who don't recover, it is because their will isn't strong enough or whatever.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:22:29 PM**

By..what?

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:23:40 PM**

I've thought about "cure" arcs and I've been thinking that if I ever do that kind of cure arc for Tuula, the best she would be able to do would be a clunky exoskeleton that would have her go from full-time wheelchair user to most-of-the-time wheelchair user

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:24:03 PM**

Id day it realistic sometimes @crimsyn cause it's literally what's happened with me. I agree it's not the way for everyone but it does happen.

In a way

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:24:11 PM**

I also find that you should be realistic to your character. If you create an aspect of your character you can't dismiss it

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:24:16 PM**

...

I'm lost. Let me rewind my thoughts so I can be coherent. >\_>

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:24:52 PM**

I found I had to stop, writing about mental stress and damage. Was in fact impacting on my mental health.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:24:54 PM**

(This is a fascinating discussion, and I've got a thought about it, I just can't parse it into words.)

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:25:03 PM**

Tuula sounds awesome tbh. @crimsyn I read your bio.

[https://wiki.starbase118.net/wiki/index.php?title=German\\_Galven](https://wiki.starbase118.net/wiki/index.php?title=German_Galven)

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:26:01 PM**

Okay. I've reparsed my thought. Let me insert:

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:26:06 PM**

While some of us get our thoughts in order I would like to go back to the idea of balancing your character's disability with the role play's story

How do you or have seen a balance?

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:27:20 PM**

(actually, nevermind, I'll think it over longer. <\_<)

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:27:42 PM**

Finding a balance is hard I think

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:27:48 PM**

what sort of balance?

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:28:05 PM**

With Swenhart, my Dokkaran engineer who is very much lighter than most, she can't really lift anything heavy because she's so thin and fragile. But her flexibility comes into play by being able to climb through Jefferies tubes easier

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:28:58 PM**

A balance between not 100 on the disability but still being able to talk about it

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:29:56 PM**

I think finding that balance is difficult sometimes as the disability is very much a part of them and it makes sense for it to come into play a fair bit of the time but also not having to rely on it every time you write

Personally I struggle going a day when I don't bring up my disability irl

So writing about it I feel would be hard too

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:31:13 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 1:31:21 PM)**

What do you take into account when others write for the same disability you have @Zech &?

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:31:26 PM**

For me, the main thing is having a three dimensional character who has traits other than her disability.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:32:14 PM**

I have a very specific disability @German Galven and I don't see similar things very much but I'd want them to write it with respect and also if they needed talk to me about how it effects me so they can write their characters to a more effective level

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:32:56 PM**

That was what I was about to ask Groznin whether it was an illness or disability that was hard to conceal for one reason or another.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:33:35 PM**

Can you reword that I'm a little confused

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:33:35 PM**

I don't see you having a disability, Groz. We've been friends for so long that I know that's one thing that doesn't define you because I've seen progress. When I see you walking, I'm always happy for you 😊

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:33:57 PM**

It is very much part of me though

Irl more so

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:34:04 PM**

Your character shouldn't just be about their disability but you can't dismiss how it makes thing more difficult. I find writing about the little every day things to be helpful in balancing things. It doesn't take the focus away from the story but still gives you the space to mention the struggles

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:34:22 PM**

That's a good way to do it I think @Aly\_Tink

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:34:23 PM**

Your personality outweighs more the disability is what I meant

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:34:29 PM**

Thank you

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:34:57 PM**

You said you found it hard not to bring up your issues and I was wondering whether that was because it was an obvious illness for one reason or another. I don't mean to cause offense, just trying to put into context what it is you are saying.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:35:09 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 1:35:17 PM)**

Same with Jesse. I've learned so much through his sims because you wouldn't think the writer was blind



**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:35:35 PM**

Jesse does great

**Adingo 2/22/2020, 1:35:45 PM**

Yeah, Jesse honestly handles everything so well I was surprised when we talked about it.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:36:04 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 1:36:11 PM)**

In my experience of writing both a character with a mental and then one with a physical disability I find the two to be very different to write. is there one type, mental or physical, that you find easier to write for?

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:36:16 PM**

oof

I don't think either is easier because it's totally different levels of creativity

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:37:20 PM**

mm. I think, honestly, from what I've seen, writing mental is harder in a sense

It's hard to think about how you think

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:37:58 PM**

The other thing is accommodation. IRL, workplaces are required to accommodate people's disabilities as part of human rights legislation. I would imagine that Starfleet would be pretty similar, or even place more of an emphasis on making accommodations because Starfleet officers come from many species which have different body shapes. For example, they would have to have special helmets for Andorians to contain their antennae. I think accommodating a Starfleet officer with a disability would be no different. I've written Tuula adjusting the height of the biobed to be more in line with the patient, as it makes sense that Starfleet would have adjustable height biobeds for short Tellarite doctors

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:38:09 PM**

Mental Health can be easier to write I think as it's very easy to look into your character and how they feel and what's going through Their head

But also physical can be easier as writing your character into a wheelchair, or having crutches or prosthetic limbs can be fairly simple too.

It's just how you write it and what happens to your character and how they develop

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:39:01 PM**

It depends on what the character is suffering from mental health wise. If you are going to write someone with Discoiate personality disorder (Multiple personalities) you are likely inviting a lot of work upon yourself.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:39:08 PM**

yep.

I find it absurdly easy to write depressing or anxious characters, for example.

PTSD? Uh... I'll get back to you after I've spent 20 hours doing research. Don't ask me for harder ones, please.

**Adingo 2/22/2020, 1:40:13 PM**

I find it easy to write any kind of disability if I know how it feels like to the person  
If it doesn't, I really can't get into the head of the character..

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:40:14 PM**

I found that when I tried to write a character with Autism I struggled with how she thought. It was more about her thoughts then anything else that I couldn't find that balance

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:40:20 PM**

(and I have seen this handled badly, where it essentially becomes 'that PTSD chick', which at which point you've just *failed*.)

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:40:49 PM**

I've seen PTSD up close and personal, not a pretty thing and I would think nearly impossible to write about.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:41:03 PM**

Yes your character should never become the "disabled one"

**Fruit Loop 2/22/2020, 1:41:09 PM**

@Aly\_Tink I can help you with that. I am Autistic and hate it when people miswrite us.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:41:21 PM**

Yeah

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:41:32 PM**

No it really isn't PTSD is not a joke

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:41:34 PM**

I might hit you up if I ever bring the PNPC back @Fruit Loop

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:41:36 PM**

I have ASD, and my brother has Aspergers so I dislike it too @Fruit Loop

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:42:03 PM**

In these two sims, I found it extremely hard to write for the character who's species has barely any information on which her personality developed into a barrier. So it was really interesting to put emotion into her from a near death experience

Part 1

[https://groups.google.com/forum/m/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=footer#!topic/sb118-constitution/SWrwVivuDpo](https://groups.google.com/forum/m/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=footer#!topic/sb118-constitution/SWrwVivuDpo)

Part 2

[https://groups.google.com/forum/m/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=footer#!topic/sb118-constitution/KhTDEF3yZK4](https://groups.google.com/forum/m/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=footer#!topic/sb118-constitution/KhTDEF3yZK4)

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:42:24 PM**

I was thinking of PTSD because I've been reading a long-run fanfiction of a post War Harry Potter essentially suffering from PTSD/panic attacks, so yes. It's.. not a pretty image, and not a joke.

**Fruit Loop 2/22/2020, 1:42:45 PM**

@Zech & It is nice to know that I'm not alone. 😊

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:42:50 PM**

but it's also the documentation on it is pretty voluminous, so it's not hard if you put the time in to find the papers and books on it

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:43:11 PM**

It's never a Joke and you have to take into account that everyone experiences even the same disabilities differently

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:43:19 PM**

Agreed

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:44:06 PM**

I try to stray away from PTSD because it hits home a lot growing up in the military and seeing it firsthand tear my parents apart

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:44:08 PM**

All I know about PTSD, is anything can set it off. Must be difficult to live with.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:44:25 PM**

Which kind of gets into the politics of disability, and how often disability can be socially constructed. It's a concept that I found hard to wrap my head around because when we think of disability, we think of it as an objective thing -- someone walking around is able-bodied, someone in a wheelchair is disabled. But, we all have different bodies, but in some sense, a disability really only becomes a disability when those differences fail to be accommodated, either socially or how our architects and engineers design the world around us. For example, baldness isn't a disability, but if we somehow designed all doors to open by scanning people's hair, then baldness would be a disability. Similarly, if all buildings, workspaces, facilities, etc., were wheelchair-accessible, being a wheelchair user would be less of a disability.

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:44:32 PM**

I have a very dear friend who at his worst was trying to hurt himself in front of me to distance himself from memories of Afghanistan. Couldn't go near it as a player and would shy away from an app with it in

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:45:00 PM**

I don't think I'd want to explore it in a roleplay either. It was just an example of a relatively well known disability. I apologize for any bad memories it stirred up.

**ReminderBot 2/22/2020, 1:45:02 PM**

15-Minute Warning

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:45:39 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 1:45:45 PM)**

Not to make PTSD not valid, you can of course write a character with it, but it shouldn't be your first choice in my opinion. I find that often most people have it in stories and it gets over used. I like the thought of representing other disabilities

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:46:19 PM**

@crimsyn I disagree with the fact of buildings were accessible being in a wheelchair would be less of a disability. I struggle every day with pain but because of a Building being accseble It makes it less of a disability? I don't think so you'd still suffer with the pain and treatment that come with the reason your in a wheelchair

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:46:37 PM**

whether it should or shouldn't is entirely up to the person writing.

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:46:40 PM**

I'm ex-military, so PTSD is a fact of life for people like me. I'm lucky, I don't suffer from it and I still don't know how to handle those who do.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:47:46 PM**

I know people that play Call of Duty because it reminds them of the war they went through and it's a safe place for them to act out their aggressions

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:48:07 PM**

Sorry if I made that sound wrong in anyway.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:48:21 PM**

I understood what you were saying 😊

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:48:37 PM**

I'm just for a large range of representation and mostly find that say Superheros only have PTSD

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:48:39 PM**

I'm not trying to minimize people's pain and suffering, but I do think it is worth considering that disabilities can be partially socially constructed. Part of the reason they are such an issue is because our society often implicitly discriminates against people with disabilities by failing to accommodate them.

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:48:46 PM**

Yeah, I got the idea of it.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:49:29 PM**

@crimsyn well yes. But still it doesn't make people disabilities less just because they can get around easier

**[Exo/SA]RaWolfe 2/22/2020, 1:49:31 PM**

Just a bit random at the end, but PTSD and retired military within SARP as IC is actually currently being developed by our players. To give the old characters the support they need

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:49:44 PM**

Anyways, before the time is up, I would like to throw out there that it is worth considering how to portray the romantic life of a character with a disability. A lot of people have stereotypes about people with disabilities, assuming that they must be pretty much asexual. It's also easy to end up going too far in the other way and fetishizing it.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:49:48 PM**

You're doing really well and it's something that isn't discussed about a lot of times. Fortunately mental and physical disabilities isn't seen as taboo than it has been in the past 100 years

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:50:44 PM**

@crimsyn you know that's something I've never thought about.

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:51:12 PM**

Romance in star trek don't see it to often... so disabled romance would be interesting to see.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 1:51:37 PM**

Disabled romance is the same as normal romance. Just with a few differences based on the disability

And please dont call it disabled Romance

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:52:13 PM**

I've never thought of disabled romance, but I get it because sometimes characters(even people) can't express their emotions sometimes

**Skoll 2/22/2020, 1:52:32 PM**

Romance in star trek sims of any kind not being established from the start would be interesting to see.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:52:33 PM**

Over all I find that you should do your research. Figure out the little things you can write about in order to not over balance your characters role in the story. You should also not romanticize your character or down play anything. I would avoid a magic fix for your character as that is not realistic.

In doing research yesterday I found an article that stated things quite nicely. "When writing a disabled character, at least have some kind of understanding of their situation and the trials and tribulations they face in society and everyday life. And most importantly, don't try to make these struggles seem romantic."

<http://affinitymagazine.us/2017/02/19/ya-authors-its-time-to-stop-romanticizing-disability/>

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:54:01 PM**

I like to write 13+ so there is mostly fading to black on the naughty stuff. However, I do try to emphasize that Tuula has the same sort of romantic life as others. I've written about her going on blind dates, having an office crush, etc. -- all parts of a perfectly healthy and normal romantic life.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:54:32 PM**

@Aly\_Tink that article reminds me of when A Walk to Remember came out. A lot of people thought it was "great" writing and it started that troupe

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 1:54:47 PM**

(I also wrote a little bit about her being into some kinky stuff, but that was because my former CO mentioned that they hadn't had anyone write any 50 Shades type stuff and I took it as a challenge accepted lol)

**ReminderBot 2/22/2020, 1:55:01 PM**

5-Minute Warning

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:55:12 PM**

saved by the bell

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:55:20 PM**

I will open it up to questions now for the last 5 minutes

**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:55:53 PM**

Yeah, did something similar with a character of mine. Daftest thing I ever did, I don't think I'll repeat the exercise.

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:56:51 PM**

I think writing a character into liking kinky things creates writer's block

**Billy/USS Sutherland 2/22/2020, 1:57:08 PM**

^yes

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:57:30 PM**



**Lia 2/22/2020, 1:57:48 PM**

I agree with that, I mean you can ONLY write so much. Before it becomes pornography.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:57:50 PM**

I'm not going to comment on this, but now that I've let it percolate

How do you handle disabilities in a setting that can erase them as a matter of course?

**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 1:58:43 PM**

What do you mean? Barzans still haven't adapted and neither have Elaysians

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 1:58:59 PM**

... I was asking in general. Not in specific.

**[SARP] Immortal Cyan 2/22/2020, 1:59:27 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 1:59:46 PM)**

I have a friend who almost exclusively writes characters with disabilities and one of the problems they've been having is the fact that virtually all sci-fi (and some high fantasy) settings offer easy fixes to them, especially physical disabilities. As such, these fixes are usually taken advantage of by players who have no interests in writing characters with disabilities and such, but I'm wondering...how would you reconcile the

desire of some players who want to immediately fix their characters disabilities versus the desires of those who want to explore those kinds of stories?

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 1:59:42 PM**

I handle it by making it a point that I don't want to write in a way that would more directly fit canon. I don't want a "fix" no matter the level of technology as I don't find that realistic or even appropriate representation for those individuals with a disability

**[PF] AlexM 2/22/2020, 2:00:23 PM**

Not that I want to stop the conversation, but we do need to get ready for the next panel. Please continue the discussion in #680468458340745450. Thanks.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:00:58 PM**

I'm going to be over here if anyone wants to continue the discussion

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:01:04 PM**



**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:01:06 PM**

I feel like we should be flexible about canon when the story demands it -- heck, the writers are, which is why we have people like Comic Book Guy pointing out conflicts in the canon between offhand lines. As such, if your character background and the story demands no quick fixes to a disability, you can make up a reason why 24th century magical medicine won't work on her.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:01:48 PM**

Uh..

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:02:30 PM**

There's also the case of it being disrespectful to those living with similar conditions now days and could be reading. Like.. how would you feel if you had a condition and you read that X character has it fixed with a click of a finger. Gotta think about irl feelings too

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:03:06 PM**

I read books like that and don't particularly care, but I suppose that's not a problem considering I'm most likely not clinical.

**[SARP] Immortal Cyan 2/22/2020, 2:03:45 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 2:06:26 PM)**

Speaking as a player who's taken advantage of those "quick fixes" before (I enjoy writing combat-centric characters and I don't really have the appropriate knowledge to play characters with disabilities w/o going about it in a disrespectful way), I think it can be a significant point of tension.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:03:58 PM**

I think my point is somewhat pinnable down to: I get this.

I understand that people want to be feel represented/not disrespected. But some setting ideas preclude direct representation of that nature.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:04:35 PM**

True

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:05:22 PM**

I understand that cannon can conflict with this but I find that if you are wanting to be respectful and represent people well you have to bend cannon in some cases.

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:05:52 PM**

...

Let's.. agree to disagree there. (It's also canon, not cannon. <\_<)

(because I disagreee, strongly, with that statement on way too many levels and this is not an appropriate venue for that.)

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:09:27 PM**

does canon necessarily conflict? There have been characters with disabilities in Star Trek - Melora, Captain Pike, that dude from that one episode of TNG, Worf almost was permanently paralyzed, etc. I think there is a difference between canon, that is, things that have been said very explicitly on the screen, and "canon" that is what people have extrapolated about the setting, often based on a mix of canon, inferences, and stuff from the real life military.

**[SARP] Immortal Cyan 2/22/2020, 2:09:43 PM**

That's a fair point, but I guess that kind of goes back to the point of writing disabilities with respect. Is it better for a writer to simply "sidestep" any situations where their character would otherwise be disabled if they don't feel that they could represent that character in an accurate/respectful fashion, or would it be better for them to attempt to write the disability and...well, tbh probably fail and/or end up romanticizing it in the process of doing so?

I know Discovery had an extra/background character in a wheelchair.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:10:21 PM**

Loved that character

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:10:29 PM**

I mean, yes, but the only time we see disabilities is for plot reasons. Voyager had someone restore themselves from the evolved state back to their DNA.

**[SARP] Immortal Cyan 2/22/2020, 2:10:48 PM**

But, then you see the stuff where they use some magical laser to fix Michael Burnham's radiation poisoning

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:10:51 PM**

(Conversely, no mental disabilities are curable. I dont' get it.)

Yeep.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:11:32 PM**

For example, I ran a Miranda class ship in the 2390s, and I had people say that it wasn't "canon" because the ship is too old and it didn't make sense... even though they never mentioned on screen that the Mirandas were all mothballed by X date. It just conflicted with their made up "canon"

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:11:51 PM**

mmm.



I think they were basing it on the DW, I feel. But I see where you're coming from  
**[SB118] German Galven 2/22/2020, 2:12:33 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 2:13:04 PM)**

It's not like we're only restricted to a certain canon which we can veer a little off from.  
**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:12:33 PM**

Anyways, I think canon should be something that is expanded on as the story dictates, rather than a straitjacket. I feel like what we do is more like improv where we are trying to "yes and..." and make a good story.

If something conflicts slightly with canon but makes for a good story element, that's no big deal -- it's not like Comic Book Guy is going to send us hate mail that "well, actually, in episode 37 of DS9, they CLEARLY said..."

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:13:53 PM**

I disagree. Strongly.

If you want to do your own canon, elucidate it ahead of time or abandon it entirely.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:14:24 PM**

What's Elucidate mean?

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:14:31 PM**

explain it

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:14:35 PM**

ahh

Yeah is agree there.

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:14:57 PM**

It's not really making your own canon but expanding on what is there

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:15:20 PM**

... in the sense that you're also ignoring the implications of what's there, sure.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:15:28 PM**

There's a difference between expanding on cannon and making your own though  
remember

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:15:37 PM**

I hold the idea that medical teach in Trek is able to cure most things but it still takes time

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:16:01 PM**

That makes sense

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:16:05 PM**

keep in mind, this is a universe where anything can be fixed by reversing the polarity and adding tachyons lol

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:16:10 PM**

But yeah some things will take much longer.

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:16:21 PM**

I would say though that for the issue of disability, it is what the story demands.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:17:10 PM**

No it's about the character I'd say and how it'll effect them how long it will take for things to work out for them if you even go down the route of having them hesled I'd say anyway

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:17:53 PM**

I mean.

Oh, whatever. I should drop this before I really get upset.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:18:39 PM**

Sorry

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:18:59 PM**

If you want to not have any long painful recoveries and just have some security officer be a tough guy by getting severely injured but fighting on, then have him get badly injured but accomplish the mission and then fix him up quickly. If you want to do an arc with a long painful recovery, then say that medical technology can fix him up, but it won't be easy. If you want to have a character with a permanent disability, say he got hurt too bad for even 24th century medical technology to fix completely.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:19:33 PM**

Everything takes time

**[22][118][SARP] Kylindra 2/22/2020, 2:19:42 PM**

no worries. I'm just.. very opinionated about canon as it relates to setting.

**[SARP] Immortal Cyan 2/22/2020, 2:19:50 PM**

I guess the point is that "canon" does allow for writers to basically do what they want. Going back to the point with the background character in the wheelchair versus Michael Burnham getting her radiation poisoning fixed with lasers, in the end it's up to what the storytellers want to do.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:19:55 PM**

Oh I agree i feel strongly about Cannon

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:20:41 PM**

I adapt having a disabled character into the canon but I don't allow for any magical fixes no matter the setting

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:21:40 PM**

All three are possible, so I think with this (and in most cases) it is better to work backwards -- go with whatever would make the most interesting story then try to use canon and technobabble to justify it.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:21:48 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 2:21:54 PM)**

I feel strongly about no quick fixes because of my real life situation

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:21:56 PM**

Sure some aspects of the disability can be lessened by the advanced tech but I would never cure the disability out right

Other than reasons I've before stated it feels like a cop out

It them means that I would, If I did go through with a fix, I would feel the need to go through with how they adapt to being "normal" as that would be a struggle for a while

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:23:59 PM**

That's a sensible way to do it

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:25:06 PM**

It would be a fix then but not a magical one. A magical one is one were it makes it so the character was never disabled in the first place.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:25:17 PM**

Yeah

Even though I've had operations to help my disabilities I still have them and they'll always be part of me

So yeah it takes time and characters should be written the same

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:26:57 PM**

It seems people have moved on with the discussion but I have enjoyed it. If you have an questions or want to talk further please DM me.

**[SB118] Groznin Smith 2/22/2020, 2:27:08 PM**

Thank you!

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:28:16 PM**

Np

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:28:55 PM**

yeah, that was a good session

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:29:27 PM**

Feel free to DM me anytime if you want to talk more. Your character sounds interesting @crimsyn

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:30:56 PM**

thanks!

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:32:43 PM(edited 2/22/2020, 2:32:58 PM)**

Hey actually can you send me the link to your bio? I know you posted it during the discussion but it didn't get a chance to really look @crimsyn

**Tuula - Langley Station 2/22/2020, 2:36:50 PM**

<https://langleystation.nl/index.php/personnel/character/112>

**Sheila Bailey [SB118] 2/22/2020, 2:46:20 PM**

Cool thanks