



Narcolepsy Perspectives: A blog about anything & everything Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy in Media

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August 27, 2024 - Summer has me seeing STARS... Narcolepsy Stars!



Summer in Portland, Oregon marks the celebration of Portland Pride. Pride weekend is jam-packed with events dedicated to celebrating the beautiful and diverse LGBTQIA+ community. As a queer person, it was a wonderful experience. As a queer person with Narcolepsy, this year was extra special, because a person with Narcolepsy was an event headliner!

Jinkx Monsoon is a talented drag show artist with Narcolepsy. She has won RuPaul's Drag Race not once, but twice! I was ecstatic when I found out she would be performing at Pride! I waited for months in anticipatory excitement.

As a person with Narcolepsy, media representation is rare. Furthermore, *accurate* media representation can be difficult to find.

Watching someone perform who I know suffers from Narcolepsy was **so powerful**. I felt like I was seeing the disorder being celebrated as I watched Jinkx Monsoon perform. The entire set showcased representation, simply because of the star!

A STAR with Narcolepsy! Why does this matter so much?

Media representation of disabled individuals can have a significant impact on society's perception of disability. When we center people with disabilities in the media, challenge society's stereotypes, show disabled people in diverse roles and showcase their excellence, we can create positive change.

Wake Up Narcolepsy and Narcolepsy Media Representation



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Wake Up Narcolepsy (WUN) acknowledges the importance of Narcolepsy representation in the media. Media can be a powerful tool to increase awareness and understanding.

WUN has featured Q&As of stars with Narcolepsy such as Ginger Zee, Katie Morton and Vincent Arthur. Additionally, WUN visited with the football star Josh Andrews at the 2024 SLEEP conference in Houston, TX.

Ginger Zee, the Chief Meteorologist and Managing Editor of the Climate Unit at ABC News, spoke with WUN about her experience of living with Narcolepsy. In her interview, Ginger Zee mentioned that it took three years of experiencing symptoms and having accidents due to their severity in order for her to be diagnosed. Unfortunately, long diagnosis journeys are a common theme in the community. As we increase awareness of Narcolepsy and its signs, it is likely that we can create positive change in this realm.

Katie Morton, a contestant on the *Bachelor Season 23* and *Bachelor in Paradise Season 6*, has also experienced quite a bit of fame. In her interview, she stated that living with Narcolepsy is a bit easier when you have knowledge and tools in your proverbial toolbox on coping with the condition. This stood out to me because it points out just how important Narcolepsy awareness is - not only for the general public, but also for those living with the diagnosis.

Vincent Arthur, an iRacing eSports and Carolina Pro Late Model Series Driver living with Narcolepsy, collaborated with WUN to spread awareness and reduce stigma. Wake Up Narcolepsy partnered with Vincent Arthur to feature WUN colors and logo on his racing car!

By increasing Narcolepsy representation in media we can help increase awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in our community in several ways:

1. Portraying Realistic Experiences: Media can accurately depict the lived experiences of individuals with Narcolepsy, showcasing the challenges they face in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, relationships and everyday activities. By highlighting these experiences, media can provide a better understanding of the obstacles and barriers that individuals with Narcolepsy encounter and promote empathy among viewers.



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2. Breaking Stereotypes and Misconceptions: Media has the power to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding Narcolepsy. Portraying diverse and multidimensional characters with Narcolepsy can dispel misconceptions and show that individuals are not defined solely by their Narcolepsy. This can help to break down barriers and foster a more inclusive and accepting society.

3. Promoting Accessibility and Inclusion: Media can raise awareness about the importance of accessibility and inclusion for individuals with Narcolepsy. By showcasing the need for accommodations, equal opportunities and inclusive environments, media can encourage viewers to advocate for accessible spaces, inclusive policies and equal rights.

4. Highlighting Personal Stories and Triumphs: Media can share personal stories and triumphs of individuals with Narcolepsy, showcasing their resilience, strength and achievements. Highlighting their successes and contributions to society can challenge negative perceptions and inspire others. This can help to shift the narrative from focusing solely on the challenges to celebrating the abilities and accomplishments of individuals with Narcolepsy.

5. Sparking Conversations and Education: Representation in media can spark conversations and facilitate education about Narcolepsy. It can prompt viewers to learn more about different types of Narcolepsy, their impact on individuals' lives and the importance of creating a more inclusive society. This increased awareness can lead to greater understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals with Narcolepsy.

Seeing Narcolepsy celebrated and accurately represented publicly is imperative for our community. It serves as a reminder that people with Narcolepsy are worthy of their dreams.

Let's celebrate each other!