

IN A DIFFERENT KEY: THE AUTISM UNDERSTANDING TOOLKIT

PROFOUND AUTISM



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

(suggested)

Autism is much more recognized today than it used to be. We can see this reflected in the TV shows with autistic characters that portray the social struggles autistic people have in settings like work and school, or in the world of dating. This is real progress. But these stories leave out a lot of autistic people whose autism affects them with such profound disability that no one is making TV shows about them. Representing nearly half of the autistic population, they are often intellectually disabled, and incapable of fluent speech or the ability to care for themselves in the most fundamental ways. Over time, they have become the less visible part of the autism spectrum. But their stories deserve to be told also. That's what we see in this scene from IN A DIFFERENT KEY.

KEY THEMES

- The more complex support needs of profound autism
- How self-injury is a frequent challenge in profound autism
- Other traits seen in profound autism
- Giving voice to people who cannot speak for themselves
- Bringing attention to those with more complex needs

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What did you learn from Jonah's story that perhaps was new to you?

What challenges does Jonah face in achieving independence?

What are the risks for a person who may not recognize danger?

Why don't stories of people like Jonah get more attention?

Should they? How? And how do we include their voices?