

Exploring the Development of Identity and Community  
Amongst Disabled Youth on Instagram

Kristen Tollan, B.A.

Applied Disability Studies

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Faculty of Social Sciences,  
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## **Abstract**

This study explores the ways in which disabled young people use Instagram as a platform for developing their identity and building community, both online and off. Based on the social models of disability, particularly the affirmation model as proposed by Swain & French (2000), and the principles of photovoice and other social media-based methodologies, the study explored the publicly accessible Instagram accounts of eight participants ranging in age from 19-24, with each account providing 21 photos and associated captions for analysis. From the collection of observational notes, four themes were developed and examined, noting their connections to the concepts of identity and community: social media trends; disability, chronic illness and mental health; friends, family, and the greater community; and positivity, gratitude and giving back. The study demonstrates the uniqueness of Instagram as a tool for self-expression and the importance of studying disability in relation to current internet practices. The study concludes with possible directions for further research to fill the existing gap within this area of literature.

*Keywords: affirmation model, disability, Instagram, social media, youth*

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Methods for interpersonal communication have steadily increased and improved over the course of decades. With the development of devices like the smartphone, tablet and laptop, users are no longer confined to a specific spot in order to talk to others, as was the case with desktop computers and landline phones. With mobility established, designers and manufacturers of these devices began to add unprecedented and almost unimaginable new features that allow not only for communication, but for self-expression as well. With the advent of high-quality cameras that can take endless photos and videos instantly comes also a booming market for platforms on which to share these photos and videos.

Social media, including platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, has become a controversial yet undoubtedly popular use of technology. As explained by Baym (2010), with all the new developments of technology comes one of two common reactions: fear or enthusiasm. Fear emerges from the idea that our communication has become more shallow, threatening the quality of personal relationships. However, for others, excitement emerges. For these people, new means of connection and communication offer opportunities in fact for *deeper*, more diverse and more numerous connections all across the globe (Baym, 2010). It is the latter reaction that has inspired this research, combined with an interest in how these evolving means of communication influence those in our society who are often overlooked but from whom there is so much to learn, namely, disabled youth.

Communication technology is increasingly prevalent in the lives of young people ages 11-25, with youth now representing the largest group of social media users in Western culture (Walker, King & Hartman, 2018). Youth who grow up in this age of technology, with such a

prevalence of online spaces, are often termed “digital natives” (Székely & Nagy, 2011). Scholars have begun using social media more frequently as a tool for garnering knowledge about youth participant experiences, particularly in relation to these digital natives. As described in the study by Walker et al. (2018), which outlines some 15 examples of this new methodology applied to healthcare settings, researchers have conducted studies using Facebook for concussion awareness, Pinterest for depictions of depression, and YouTube as a peer support resource for youth with mental illness, to name a few. Other studies using social media as a data collection tool include Almjeld’s (2015) study on depictions of girlhood on Pinterest, Miller’s (2017) look at student social media use for queer and disability identity-making, and Brusilovskiy’s (2016) examination of social media use for the psychological well-being of individuals with mental illnesses.

Walker et al. (2018) further elaborate on this methodological progress, explaining that “online data collection methods may be among the most effective methods for collecting data on adolescents and young adults (13-24 years old)” (p. 45), arguing that using social media as a data collection tool may be more ecologically valid for specific populations, including vulnerable youth. Disabled youth are a population that is more vulnerable to experiencing social exclusion and isolation, along with the associated psychological difficulties that can be linked to these issues (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2016; Obst & Stafurik, 2010). However, Guo et al. (2005) found that internet use could significantly reduce these social barriers to inclusion for disabled people by providing access to education, information, and social networks (Obst & Stafurik, 2010). Yet, despite the growing use of social media platforms as a data collection tool for research regarding



young people, disabled youth have been slow to be included in this new methodology (Walker et al., 2018).

### **Personal Paradigm and Rationale**

In order to help fill the gap in this area of research, the present research study examines patterns and differences in social media usage by disabled young adult participants, particularly in relation to the formation of their identity and social communities. Evident in my own personal experience, and through examining works by various scholars, online spaces demonstrate an unparalleled opportunity for disabled youth to expand their social circles. For example, Leiter (2011) examined foundations of community spaces for disabled young people and found four main environments (geographic, disability-based, religious, and virtual) to be the most prominent bases for forming communities. Furthermore, online platforms like YouTube (video-based) and Tumblr (a blogging platform) have been used as a space for disability-related content more and more frequently, with opportunity for dialogue and collaboration making them increasingly popular. Vloggers like Molly Burke, Jessica Kellgren-Fozard, and Shane Burcaw have all had steadily increasing follower counts (in the hundreds of thousands) on their YouTube pages and Instagram profiles as they post videos about a variety of topics, from blindness and guide dogs, vintage and modern fashion, LGBT history, and inter-abled relationships.

While the prevalence and popularity of disabled content creators on social media is increasing, I believe that disabled people also deserve more exposure when it comes to academic research, outside of a medical and rehabilitative perspective. Much of the research done with disabled participants focuses on treatment, in attempts to cure diseases and disorders or to curb certain behaviours. Some scholars take on a newer approach, which focuses on the social and

environmental aspects surrounding the disability experience. Disability is often looked at as a negative experience, both by those without disabilities and even, at times, by those who have them. While it is certainly important to recognize and articulate these struggles related to the disability experience, it is also important to consider the idea that not all experiences of having a disability are negative ones. The social model has been recognized as allowing this positive paradigm shift. As Carol Thomas (1999) writes, the social model is “seen by many disabled people to have transformatory potential at the individual as well as the societal level” (p. 15). The people that Thomas refers to include disability activist, researcher and artist Liz Crow, who is quoted as saying that

this social model of disability has enabled me to confront, survive and even surmount countless situations of exclusion and discrimination . . . It has enabled a vision of ourselves free from the constraints of disability (oppression) and provided a direction for our commitment to social change. It has played a central role in promoting disabled people’s individual self worth, collective identity and political organisation. I don’t think it is an exaggeration to say that the social model has saved lives”. (Crow, as quoted in Thomas [1999] p. 207)

This model has allowed disabled people to reimagine their experiences as disabled to include opportunities for building community, for personal growth, for self-expression and self-acceptance as positive and fulfilling parts of one’s life, contributing to the overall quality of life of a disabled person. I aim to portray these experiences in my study as a way of countering the traditional narrative of disability as a tragedy through the eyes of insiders, rather than doctors or parents.

### **Theoretical Position**

The social model of disability is conceptualized as a different framework for analyzing disability (Cameron, 2014). The social model looks at disability not as something that a person

*has* (i.e., a physical or mental impairment), but rather, as an oppressive societal relationship in which barriers and lack of access create disablement (Cameron, 2014). Furthermore, social modelists argue that what is required to better the lives of disabled individuals is not necessarily treatment and rehabilitation, but rather the recognition and removal of physical and social barriers in society (Cameron, 2014). Carol Thomas' (1999; 2004) "impairment effects" theory emphasizes the impact of impairment on an individual, as things like chronic pain or mobility difficulties certainly can restrict activity. In saying this, she argues however that it is important to recognize the difference between impairment effects and the experience of oppression and societal barriers that define disability. Both play a critical role in the experience of disability. This is a key concept drawn on in the current research. Impairments and the medical model of disability often create an isolating experience of disability in which a person's struggles are individual and the ability to create a positive quality of life is also left to them to bear. However, as Thomas emphasizes in her discussion of the social model, these frameworks of thinking provide disabled people a new way in which to view themselves, their experiences, and the greater community to which they belong.

Using Swain and French's (2000) affirmation model as a theoretical foundation for my thesis allows the opportunity to expand on the social model's discussion of disabled identity and community. Swain and French (2000) argue that the affirmation model is a "non-tragic view of disability and impairment which encompasses positive social identities, both individual and collective" (p. 569). They developed the affirmation model to directly contrast the personal tragedy model, a dominant view of disability often expressed by able-bodied and neurotypical people, and even at times internalized by disabled people themselves. While identity and community are not mutually exclusive concepts, they are defined separately in the literature

review (Chapter Two). The aim of this research is to draw on these two complementary theories as a foundation for using social media as a tool for a) expressing one's identity related to disability and b) forming connections with the disability community.

### **Intersectionality in this study**

A critical element of disability studies as a field is the discussion and appreciation for the concept of intersectionality. Disabled people can and do exist simultaneously as a part of any other identity category, including various genders, races, socio-economic status, and more. These intersections are part of what makes the disabled experience so diverse. Furthermore, the social structures that shape both disability and other identity constructs, often combine to increase (or decrease) the marginalization felt by disabled people. However, it is also important to note that “intersectionality” as a term was coined by Crenshaw in 1989 as a means of explaining “aspects of black and minority ethnic (BME) women’s experiences of discrimination in relation to the law” (Goodin, 2014). In the present research, there are no participants of colour, nor are there any participants from outside of Western, dominant nations. This certainly shapes the understanding of the results of this study and presents an important avenue for further exploration in the future.

### **Research Questions**

This research is informed by three main research questions:

1. How do disabled youth use Instagram to express their identity? What can be seen from both the images and the captions they post about their evolving identity and self-concept as disabled, if anything?
2. Do disabled youth use Instagram in a way that fosters community and connection with other disabled youth?

3. How can we leverage the knowledge gained in this study to further examine how youth with disabilities understand and communicate about their disability, both online and off?

### **Study Outline**

This study comprises five chapters, each addressing a different aspect of the research. Following this introductory chapter is Chapter Two, which encompasses the literature review, including a discussion on prominent narratives of disability, a look at the internet and social media as both a tool for research and in relation to disability, as well as the development of the themes of identity and community. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of the study, including the research framework, participant details and the steps followed for data collection and analysis. Chapter Four provides the results of the study, specifically looking at trends found in the types of images posted, themes across image captions (and examples) and elaboration on participant backgrounds. Following the results, the major themes are discussed in greater depth and with further connections to the literature. The final chapter, Chapter Five, includes a summary of the study, discussion of its strengths and limitations and implications for further research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Understanding the social model of disability is crucial to the present research, as the social model provides the basis for seeing disability in ways that step outside of a personal tragedy paradigm. Looking at disability in a positive way, which is one of this study's aims, also requires supplementing that model with other perspectives. There are other important narratives that build on a more nuanced understanding of disability and, further, provide context to the themes outlined in this study. This literature review provides a background in concepts such as the consideration of disability as a resource and the affirmation model. Following the discussion of these disability narratives, literature is discussed on the use of the internet and social media, particularly in relation to mental health, social media as research, and accessibility for people with disabilities. Concluding this chapter is further discussion of the concepts of identity and community in relation to disability.

### **Narratives of Disability**

Cameron (2007) states that contemporary discourse surrounding disability does little to include positive resources, particularly in regard to constructing positive personal and social identities. However, disability arts in particular has provided a turning point for viewing disability in ways outside of the personal tragedy and medical models, allowing for a paradigm shift towards positive views. For example, Cameron (2007) describes the first visit to a disability arts cabaret as “a moment of epiphany” (p. 505), in which the disabled person finally realizes that their experiences aren't theirs alone, but rather, shared and felt and understood by others. This is the key element for understanding the present research, and therefore a starting point for this literature review. This section discusses some prominent narratives of disability that were

influential in the shaping of this research. Garland-Thomson's (2012) discussion of disability as a resource explains the value and utility to having disability as a part of society, in contrast to a eugenics-based approach that looks to eliminate impairments. The affirmation model by Swain and French (2000) is also addressed, particularly in relation to its emergence from the social model and the influence of disability arts on positive identity development. Finally, the section closes with a look at Thomas' (2004) article on a social-relational approach to disability, in which she differentiates between impairment effects and societal barriers to access. According to Thomas, impairment and disability are separate concepts as they relate to individual struggles and societal oppression respectively. The two do combine, however, to create a unique experience for a disabled person. This is an important narrative to discuss in this research, as many of the participants in the study discuss both impairment related difficulties and also structural barriers that create their experience of disability.

### **Disability as a Resource**

Garland-Thomson's (2012) article on disability as a resource opens with a contrasting claim by another scholar, stating that disability "restricts, excludes, renders one exceptional: disqualifies" (p. 339). However, Garland-Thomson (2012) rejects this belief, stating that disability is something found in every family, something that happens to everyone if they live into old age; an experience that unites humankind. The main point Garland-Thomson makes here is that disability is so easily rejected by society, yet it is such a present part of the human condition, making this rejection a contradiction. Still, the typical narrative that surrounds discussions of disability is one based on medical pathologization and, as Garland-Thomson (2012) describes, eugenic logic. This way of looking at disability frames impairments as strictly

personal, and furthermore, something that humans as a species should strive not only to avoid but to eliminate. Disability is understood as synonymous with “pain, disease, suffering, functional limitation, abnormality, dependence, social stigma, and economic disadvantage” (Garland-Thomson, 2012, p. 340) and also as a means of limiting life opportunities and quality. However, Garland-Thomson (2012) argues for a contrasting view of disability in which it can be seen as a resource, and indeed as something we should aim to conserve. She calls her stance a counter-eugenic argument for the conservation of disability, as eugenics aims to create a utopian society in which disability does not exist and life is therefore “better”. In contrast, Garland-Thomson (2012) intentionally calls for the conservation of disability as a way of alluding to biodiversity and the value and benefit of disability characteristics, rather than seeing them as deficits. She looks to examine specifically what would be lost from society, besides the individuals themselves, if disability were eliminated. There are many reasons why disability should be conserved, according to Garland-Thomson (2012), including its functions as a narrative resource, an epistemic resource, and an ethical resource. Her argument for epistemic resource resonates the most with the current study, as Garland-Thomson (2012) states that “people draw on their bodily experiences not only to think and know but also to construct our social reality. In other words, our bodily form, function, comportment, perceptual apprehension, and way of mind shape how we understand our world” (p. 345). Without disabled people, society would lack the valuable knowledge about diversity, inclusion, and the human condition that we strive to find today. An example of this is in Garland-Thomson’s (2012) depiction of Helen Keller, who, while blind and deaf, was able to engage her other senses in ways that able-bodied others could only dream of. She opened a door to ideas and knowledge that could scarcely be imagined before.



Garland-Thomson's (2012) perspective for understanding disability aligns very strongly with the aim and intent of the present study. A stand-out point in her discussion of disability as a resource is her reference to what she calls a "because-of-rather-than-in-spite-of counter-eugenic position". This point is a prominent one, as many people who are disabled often hear comments and language surrounding their accomplishments that positions them as an inspiration, who achieved something *in spite of* their disability, rather than *because of*. It is very rare for disabled people to hear that their disability contributed to their positive existence.

This idea that disability is in fact not negative, and rather something that everyone experiences if they live long enough — a natural part of the human experience — is a key element of Garland-Thomson's (2012) thinking on disability as a resource. It is also the focus of Swain and French's (2000) affirmation model concerning disability, which concerns the benefits of being disabled and positive social identities surrounding the concept.

### **The Affirmation Model**

As presented in the theoretical approach section of Chapter One, Swain and French's (2000) affirmation model views disability from a more positive and personally accepting perspective, one which counters the ideologies of the personal tragedy model. Furthermore, it addresses the benefits of being disabled and the connection of impairment and disability to individual and collective social identities. First proposed by disabled feminists, the affirmation model was developed as way of addressing critiques of the social model whilst still encapsulating its strengths. Scholars like Crowe and Thomas believed the social model over-emphasized structural barriers and underrepresented the impact of personal aspects of disability (such as

impairment effects) (Cameron, 2014). Thus, the affirmation model was created by Swain and French, emerging from the values of disability arts and Disability Pride (Cameron, 2014).

This approach complements the social model of disability, which emerged in the 1970s as a result of the activism by disabled community members tired of the frequent oppression they faced. The social model focused not on specific impairments, but rather on the disablement faced by people with impairments due to barriers and inaccessibility (Cameron, 2014). The social model has faced criticism for its perspectives at times, but ultimately provided a foundation for the development of the field of disability studies and more inclusive ways of thinking about disability. Ultimately, the social model demonstrates that the problems disabled people face are related to oppression, not their impairments, despite statements to the contrary by those who subscribe to the personal tragedy model. The personal tragedy model, as Cameron (2014) describes, is based out of the normative ideology that able-bodiedness is to be valued, while impairments are unfortunate tragedies and people who have them contribute little to society. This way of thinking has been the dominant paradigm for centuries, though scholars and activists are countering it with perspectives like the affirmation model. In contrast, the affirmation model demonstrates the opportunities for building a positive identity and positive experiences, including the release from some of society's more stifling requirements (Swain & French, 2000). Furthermore, the authors describe the opportunity for personal growth due to one's disability, either from the ways disabled people are forced to adapt (for example, a person who becomes disabled later in life), or the ways they gain a greater understanding of oppression and the human condition overall (Swain & French, 2000). Swain and French (2000) also emphasize the

uniqueness of the disabled experience, in which quality of life is not defined simply by whether or not someone is disabled, but rather if

they can achieve a lifestyle of their choice. This, in turn, depends on their personal resources, the resources within society and their own unique situation... The writings of disabled people demonstrate that being born with an impairment or becoming disabled in later life can give a perspective on life which is both interesting and affirmative and can be used positively. (p. 576)

The affirmation model provides an opportunity for positive outlook on one's experience of disability, if one chooses. The element of personal choice is an important tie-in to the concept of identity, as a disabled person can choose to identify as such, and furthermore choose to look at their disability in whichever way suits their experiences best. Disability experience is unique, an idea further emphasized by Thomas' (2004) social relational approach.

### **A Social Relational Approach**

Carol Thomas' (1999, 2004) concept of impairment effects, discussed above, is an integral component of her social-relational approach to disability. In proposing a rationale for the concept, Thomas (2004) notes that popular, UK-based approaches to disability studies are primarily driven by the social model, despite the fact that the social model is not a fully developed theory, but rather a model with limited utility. Thomas (2004) argues that the basic use of the social model relies on the idea that "all restrictions of activity experienced by disabled people are attributed to socially imposed barriers" (p. 27). Thomas believes that the social-relational element of the social model has been overshadowed by the idea of socially imposed barriers and proposes, as a revision to the social model, the idea that impairment and disability are, as the social model states, separate, but interrelated. From Thomas' (2004) perspective, impairments cause their own

set of restrictions on a person's activity based on their mind or body's capabilities, while disability encapsulates "restrictions of activity that result from the exercise of the power to exclude" (p. 29). In many cases, *disability* and *impairment effects* can interact to create barriers and limit activity. Thomas drives home the point that it is important not to identify the experience of disability as impairment effects, but to clearly understand the difference between societal disablement and the difficulties associated with an impairment. This creates a foundational point for this study; there is no arguing against the struggles that disabled people can face due to their impairments. Chronic pain, frequent medical visits and numerous medications, for example, are all difficult to deal with. Furthermore, there are many challenging external experiences of disability as well (inaccessible buildings, people staring, or the lack of proper social assistance). However, Thomas (2004) emphasizes that that these two types of factors relating to disability combine to create a unique experience that cannot be generalized by a framework or model. It is this idea that helps shape this study, which is motivated by depicting an honest view of disability through the lens of those who experience it firsthand.

### **Disabled People and Online Access**

The internet and social media have become an essential part of the daily routine in most Western communities, particularly among young adults and adolescents (Park & Calamaro, 2013). This has been the focus of a great deal of research, both in terms of the impacts social media can have on its young users, as well as the use of social media as a research tool. Social media can be used as a tool for studying and understanding how disabled youth use the internet and Walker et al. (2018) provides a strong introduction to the idea.

Walker et al. (2018) discuss the lack of disability representation in the research process. Social scientists have begun using social media as a tool for data collection in their studies about youth populations, gaining insight and information about patterns of online engagement among young people, including their interactions and unique opinions (Walker et al., 2018). However, the authors argue that using social media as a tool for researching more diverse populations, including disabled people, has been slow in progressing. Nevertheless, Walker et al. (2018) say that disability research *has* evolved to value more than just a biomedical approach, finally including the lived experience of disabled participants. As well, social scientists are appreciating the value of studying social, environmental and medical experiences and interactions to provide a well-rounded understanding of disability.

For example, Shaw and Gant (2002) examined the impact of internet usage on the psychological health of its users. In their study of undergraduate students in an introductory psychology class who chatted anonymously amongst each other online, Shaw and Gant (2002) found support for their hypothesis that internet usage would be beneficial to users, associated with lower levels of depression and loneliness and higher levels of self-esteem and perceived social support. This hypothesis was in direct contrast to much of the research done previously on the same topic, including work by Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukophadhyay and Scherlis (1998). Kraut et al. (1998) argued that the arrival of the internet in the 1990s could change the lives of citizens as much as the advent of the television and the telephone did in their respective decades. While this is a claim I support, they further elaborated on their hypothesis with the finding that increased internet usage was associated with various declines, including

decreases in in-home familial communication and size of social circles, as well as increases in depression and loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998).

The concerns regarding the internet's increasing popularity, as outlined in Kraut et al.'s (1998) article, did not entirely disappear as the frequency of internet use continued to grow. For example, Obst and Stafurik (2010) discuss community for disabled people, specifically in relation to internet-based communication methods for people with a physical disability. In the introduction of their paper, the authors propose the idea that communication over the internet can enhance the wellbeing of physically disabled users through opportunities for connection. However, they also speculate that these internet-based communities could increase isolation in a population already at risk, similarly to ideas discussed by Kraut et al. (1998). The research conducted by Obst and Stafurik (2010) focused on three main areas: the most common types of support received online; the structural differences in support received both online and off; and the influence of online support on the wellbeing of participants. Previous research indicated a risk for increased social isolation spending more time online if the participants did not feel they received enough social support offline. Obst and Stafurik (2010) found that most of their participants' experiences of social support and sense of community online were associated with individual well-being. Obst and Stafurik (2010) also found that the time spent online was not associated with perceived offline support, meaning that the participants had support both online and off, rather than turning to their computers for something they weren't finding in their offline lives. Social media, despite concerns regarding the impact on mental health, in fact provides social connections for users, particularly those with disabilities who may be subject to greater isolation.

Leiter (2011) further discusses the reality that most disabled youth and adults with intellectual and other types of disabilities face more social isolation than their able-bodied or neurotypical peers. However, Leiter believes that although disabled youth have less community connections, these connections still do exist; they may just be found in different areas of life than their able-bodied peers. Thus, Leiter (2011) examined these foundations and found geographic, disability-based, religious, and virtual environments to be the most common.

Leiter (2011) defines disability-based communities as being settings in which membership is based on the youth's experiences of living with a disability. Leiter's (2011) disability-based community foundation is defined with the possibility of being disability-specific or more diverse, addressing a spectrum of disabilities, as well as fulfilling social desires or developmental needs of members. Of the 96 youth participants in Leiter's study, 73% were involved in disability-specific communities. Furthermore, virtual communities were, understandably, "shaped by youth's access to electronic means of communicating with others" (Leiter, 2011, p. 17). Frequently, virtual communities served as an extension of other aspects of the youth's lives, as well as occasionally a way of making new connections. Leiter also describes that in her study, the participants typically experienced one of the four types of community exclusively, without interaction with any of the other three types.

While Shaw and Gant (2002), Obst and Stafurik (2010) and Leiter (2011) examined the use of social media for building community, Miller (2017) additionally explored identity through the online experiences of queer, disabled, university students. He stated that the participants' engagement with social media gave them the chance to explore their identities, and "for some, to cement how they identified or gain new language that prompted a revelation" (p. 509).

Furthermore, these revelations demonstrated that online engagement with social media “presents an opportunity for higher education scholars and practitioners to understand students’ identity development processes... in a more nuanced way” (Miller, 2017, p. 509). While research on the identity-making practices of queer *and* disabled young people, especially in higher education, is quite limited, Miller notes that research is increasing in relation to college students’ use of social media. Still, he argues that the intersection of identity development and higher education student technology usage is an area with great exploratory potential.

The results of Miller’s (2017) study showed that all 25 participants had either active or passive engagement with online spaces. Notably, many of these online interactions with others involved Miller’s participants discussing their queer identity and disabilities separately from one another. Nevertheless, some participants aimed to find an intersectional community online, where they could discuss their sexuality and disability identities in the same place. Ultimately, Miller found three key themes discussed throughout his study, made evident by the exploration of university student social media usage patterns: finding validation, becoming involved, and managing identities contextually (Miller, 2017). Miller stated that the participants of his study, whom he interviewed directly for their insight and opinions, rejected the commonly held belief that online communities and connections are not real, or as valid as ones made “in real life”. This offered implications for future research, presenting the notion that students’ online lives are increasingly central to their higher education experiences. Furthermore, the unrepresented area of study related to social media use and identity development presents great opportunity and possibility.



Research literature has demonstrated the importance of digital literacy and participation in today's society, also examining areas of inequality in regard to online activity. Many different populations who are marginalized in respect to digital access have been studied; however, disabled people are not often included in these studies. Dobransky and Hargittai (2016), for example, note a digital disability divide, in which disabled people are not only excluded from the research, but also excluded from the opportunity to even get online. The authors indicate that the design of technology and the rapid pace of technological advancement are both barriers to access, along with frequent financial instability faced by disabled people, which prevents expensive technology from being purchasable (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2016). Certain populations of disabled people, however, do not face as many barriers to getting online as others. Dobransky and Hargittai (2016) write that those who are hearing impaired or have difficulty walking do not have as many access barriers when it comes to tech, while the visually impaired, those with hand-related mobility issues and those who have difficulty leaving the house are more likely to not be online. After controlling for certain sociodemographic characteristics (age, socioeconomic status and types of disability), Dobransky and Hargittai (2016) found that disabled people are more likely to engage in a specific subset of online activities: downloading videos, playing games online, reviewing products or services, sharing their own content, and posting to blogs (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2016). This relates directly to this study's examination of social media usage trends, as posting photos and video to the internet is a direct act of content, and in some cases, even serves as weblogs for the account users.

Foley and Ferri (2012) also comment on the inclusion aspect, or lack thereof, with modern technology. They begin their discussion with the recognition that technology has never

posed greater potential for connection and access to resources, yet still presents often unexpected barriers to inclusion for disabled people (Foley & Ferri, 2012). The authors argue for the view that technology and access actually have a paradoxical relationship, in which the access and integration created by technology also creates unprecedented forms of social exclusion. Foley and Ferri (2012) discuss subtle forms of exclusion, in which technology “privileges particular ways of being... [and is] designed in ways that reflect taken-for-granted ideas about what constitutes normal” (p. 192).

Beyond physical technology like cochlear implants and other assistive devices, Foley and Ferri (2012) also discuss the virtual world of cyberspace. Being online often offers the promise of a utopia where one can be anything one desires, and as the authors describe, “identity, embodiment and subjectivity can be fashioned and refashioned at will” (p. 193). Foley and Ferri (2012) argue that the utopia would be expressed through the idea of personal choice, stating that “the postmodern cyberbody then, becomes more of a choice than a static reality” (p. 193). Online, being disabled does not disappear; it is just different. For example, in the current age of COVID-19 when online education is extremely prevalent, those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia who could typically decide whether or not to disclose their disability in a traditional classroom situation, may now be facing no choice but to disclose in order to keep up with their work. In contrast, a wheelchair user would typically be classified as having a “visible” disability, but now can decide whether or not to share their disability at any time (Foley & Ferri, 2012). To conclude their article, the authors present a new perspective on technology and disability, something similar to the design-for-all framework that is popularized in graphic design and engineering spaces. Foley and Ferri (2012) support the idea that technology should be designed

for *people* collectively, rather than some designed for the disabled population and some for the rest of society. The ultimate message of the authors is the promotion of accessible technology for all, rather than assistive technology for some. This concept and the former example of the postmodern body connect notably to the key concepts of this study – identity and community. Developing technology that allows everyone to have access creates better opportunities for community-building, both within the disabled population, and also for disabled people and their able-bodied peers. Furthermore, this inclusive vision for technology “allows exciting new worlds where bodily limitations can be transcended, and new freedoms found” (Foley & Ferri, 2012, p. 193), allowing for new opportunities to build one’s identity – whether that includes their disability or not.

### **Developing Identity and Community**

Identity is not a concept specific to disability or to children’s studies, but rather a critical component of psychology, existing as a part of research on the study of the self (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). In their study of disability identity, Dunn and Burcaw (2013) state that identity refers to “conceptions of the self, expressions of individuality, and accounts of group affiliation. Identities define us because they contain traits, personal characteristics, roles, and our ties to social groups” (p. 149). In their article, Dunn and Burcaw (2013) conducted a literature review of various publications relating to disability identity. They found six key themes across six narrative articles that reflected ways in which disability identity is developed. On the basis of their review, Dunn and Burcaw (2013) conclude that “disability identity entails a positive sense of self, feelings of connection to, or solidarity with, the disability community [... and that] a coherent disability identity is believed to help individuals adapt to disability, including navigating related social

stresses and daily hassles” (p. 148). The themes that emerged included communal attachment, affirmation of disability, self-worth, pride, discrimination and personal meaning. Dunn and Burcaw (2013) claim that these narrative accounts of disability, alongside the themes that are presented, show potential to inform both disabled people and able-bodied individuals about what life is like with a disability. Furthermore, the authors believe that a coherent disability identity could serve as a tool to help one adapt to their disability and navigate the struggles associated with being a part of a marginalized group.

Cameron (2010) also examined, in his research aptly titled “Does Anybody Like Being Disabled?”, the idea of disability identity. One of the specific questions addressed in his study was “How useful a concept is ‘disability identity’ as a tool to people with impairments in making sense of their own experience?” (p. 260). Cameron (2010) argued similarly to Dunn and Burcaw (2013) that disability identity allows people with impairments to directly address the personal tragedy ways of thinking that are consistently shown in society, particularly in the media. Belonging to a social group of disabled people allows one to make sense of the ideas of inadequacy and resist them. Cameron (2010) also demonstrates the idea that disability and impairment do come with struggles, particularly when living in a society that is structured to accommodate able-bodied people, not disabled ones. He does not claim that disability identity circumvents these issues, but rather, that disability identity is a fluid thing that changes at various times. This idea is also proposed by Watson (2002), who discusses ways in which people with impairments may not identify as disabled, though it may seem strange to others. It demonstrates, however, the flexibility of identity as a concept and the freedom of choice for people to identify as disabled or not.

Community is the second focus theme examined in this research. In keeping with Leiter's (2011) idea of community foundations, Hall (2010) discusses spaces of inclusion for disabled people. Hall, a human geography scholar, focuses his examination of spaces of inclusion more so within the physical realm; however, his key findings can translate well to the arena of social media and personal connection. Though his unique research on alternative spaces of inclusion revolves around people with intellectual disabilities, Hall (2010) also cites other sources relating to other forms of disability, including mental illness, which demonstrates the applicability of his research to other areas. In particular, Hall discusses how people with intellectual disabilities (IDs) are often faced with only two options for successful inclusion in "normal society" – paid work and/or independent living. However, these options are often not desired by people with IDs, who instead seek out and become active in alternative spaces of inclusion. There are many reasons why these traditional spaces are not wanted by people with IDs, including "poor experiences of employment, isolation and abuse suffered when living alone, the complexity of welfare benefits, and the need for practical, social and emotional support" (Hall, 2010, p. 51).

Some of the examined alternative spaces of inclusion, often explored in relation to those with mental illness, are referred to as safe havens or oases (Hall, 2010). Hall describes a study in which artistic spaces of inclusion were studied for mentally ill participants. The study found that the participants "yearned" for attachment and belonging, either to people or places. In the spaces of art projects, participants found themselves building social capital through the forms of bonding with others (through friendship and communal support) and also a bridging form of social capital in which people with and without mental illness interacted with each other through exhibitions

and cultural settings. Feelings of safety and belonging are important gains for the participants in these projects (Hall, 2010).

An example of Hall's discussion of alternative spaces of inclusion is shown in a study of peer-to-peer support for mental illness. Naslund, Aschbrenner, Marsch, and Bartels (2016) examined this topic, looking at the use of social media as a tool for peer-to-peer support for severe mental illness. This idea of support is a common theme within the concept of community that is examined in the present study. Naslund et al. (2016) state that the unsolicited and naturally occurring communication of peer-to-peer support has been described as a transformational feature of the modern internet. Peer support is emphasized as a critical tool in treatment for severe mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, conditions that are so debilitating at times that they can rightfully be referred to as disabilities. This peer support brings with it the opportunity to feel connected to others and an overall sense of belonging to a group (Naslund et al., 2016). The authors break down the concept of online peer-to-peer support in the article as a sort of tipping point in the treatment of severe mental illness. The authors describe the experiences of symptoms of the illness, social isolation, fear of reaching out and stigma as combining and leading to the point where the person decides to visit a social network (Naslund et al., 2016). Once reaching this point, they are provided with opportunities to challenge stigma, increase their own involvement in their mental health care and access interventions for their physical and mental wellbeing. Social media's generally accessible nature for many people of various populations, and Naslund et al.'s (2016) study demonstrates the benefit of this modern tool for research and intervention with disabled participants.

## Summary

The literature presented in this chapter addressed narratives of disability, social media and online environments, and the key concepts of identity and community. In discussing disability narratives, it was shown how disability is a resource that can benefit society, and not something that needs to be looked at through a personal tragedy lens (Garland-Thomson, 2012). The affirmation model of disability continues this idea. It is based on the social model as its foundation and draws on positive identity formation elicited from experiences in the disability arts (Swain & French, 2000). A social-relational approach to disability concluded the narrative section, based on research by Thomas (2004) and the idea that both impairment effects and social barriers combine to create a unique experience of disability.

Following this, literature was examined relating to the internet and social media. Shaw and Gant (2002), as well as Obst & Stafurik (2013), focused on the internet as a tool for social connection and positive self-esteem, while Naslund et al. (2016) provided insight into the internet as a peer support resource for people with mental illness, serving as an example of the way communities can be formed online. Leiter (2011) described foundations for community amongst disabled people, citing virtual and disability-based. Walker et al. (2018) presented various ways in which the internet and social media can be used as a resource for gaining knowledge about the experiences of disabled youth. Miller (2017) explored both identity and community in relation to queer and disabled university students and their online practices, while Dobransky & Hargittai (2016) examined the unique online spaces in which disabled people were most active. Foley & Ferri (2012) also examined the ways that technology can be both accessible and inaccessible for disabled people.

Finally, the literature was discussed in relation to identity (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013; Cameron, 2010; Watson, 2002) and the ways in which it is shaped by disability, but also other factors that influence a person's life. Community was also examined with a focus on Hall's (2010) notion of alternative spaces of inclusion, which can be represented by online spaces such as Instagram.

The literature presented here provides a foundation for the exploration of the three research questions that form the current study. The affirmation model (Swain & French, 2000), alongside Garland-Thomson's discussion of disability as a resource (2012) and Thomas's look at a social relational approach to disability (2004), contributes to an understanding of positive disability identity. Therefore, it helps to provide a basis for looking at Instagram as tool for disabled youth and their expression of their identity. Following this, the exploration of social media as both a tool and an alternative space for community connections among disabled people sets a precedent for examining the way Instagram specifically can be used to build community.



## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the usage patterns on social media by disabled youth. The research questions revolved around identity and community, looking to see how disabled youth use Instagram to express their identity and how this can be seen in both the images and captions of their posts; if disabled youth use Instagram in a way that fosters community and connection with other disabled youth; and finally, how the knowledge gained in this study can be leveraged to further examine how youth with disabilities understand and communicate about their disability, both online and off. This topic is important in the fields of both disability studies and child and youth studies because of the growing development of social media and technology and the speed at which these changes are occurring, as well as the fact that disabled people are often left out of these conversations. As the literature demonstrated, disabled people are at risk for social isolation, which can be improved upon with access to social media (Shaw & Gant, 2002; Obst & Stafurik, 2010; Naslund et al., 2016; Dobransky & Hargittai, 2016; Leiter, 2011) Furthermore, disabled youth are a population commonly overlooked when discussing social media patterns (Walker et al., 2018) despite the knowledge that can be gained from hearing about their experiences.

The accounts analyzed in this study, along with the trends that the analysis elicited, can be used as a stepping stone for understanding the ways young people use their most favoured spaces on the internet. The study as a whole aimed to shed light on the experiences of disabled youth, demonstrating them as valuable and important resources in the field of disability studies. Methodologically, the study draws on a variety of research that uses social media as a research

tool. I frequently relied on *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, specifically a chapter focusing on the use of Instagram for gathering research data (Laestadius, 2018), considered in more detail below.

## **Research Framework**

Developing the structure of this study revolved around two key aspects: first, deciding on a primary social media platform to focus on for data collection and analysis, and secondly, finding a methodology on which to base data analysis. When selecting a social media platform from which to find and analyze data, I had many options, ranging from Facebook to YouTube and everything in between.

### **Deciding on Instagram**

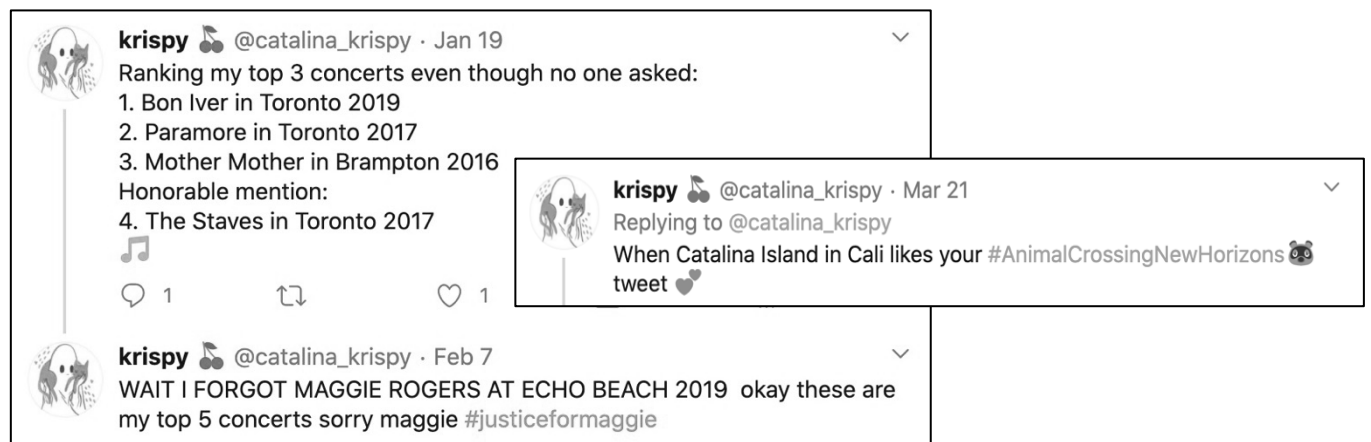
Using Laestadius' (2016) chapter on Instagram as a research tool was extremely beneficial in determining which platform to use. My aim was to select a platform that combines both text and image. Facebook is a first thought for this; however, that platform functions as a mostly private social network, where users tend to have "friends" that they know in real life and extensive privacy settings on the posts they share, as well as the expectation that their data will not go beyond their social circles. There is also Twitter, though that platform has a 2200-character limit and does not require that each "tweet" have an image or video. YouTube is a video-based platform, as is Tiktok, both of which have unique features and user demographics.

Instagram, however, is distinct in that it does require the posting of an image or short video, as well as the opportunity to caption each post. Memes, images of text, and photos taken by devices other than mobile phones are all possibilities on Instagram (Laestadius, 2016). Furthermore, Instagram has a privacy feature allowing for accounts to become outright

unavailable unless the user approves a follower request. All the accounts I chose for this study were public pages, making them both ethically and physically accessible for my research.

Hashtags are also very popular on Instagram, in a different way than typically seen on Twitter and other forms of social media. On Twitter, hashtags often indicate “continued text-based conversation” alongside the intended use as a search tool (Laestadius, 2016). An example from my own Twitter account is provided below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** *Examples of Hashtag Usage*



As can be seen in these two tweets, one hashtag (#JusticeForMaggie) is a bit of humour that continues or adds to the context of the first tweet. Contrastingly, I included the hashtag #AnimalCrossingNewHorizons as a way of linking my tweet to any others created about the recent Nintendo video game release. The second method of using hashtags is more common on Instagram, and in fact, searching the hashtag #disability is one way I found some of the accounts used in this study. Furthermore, hashtag use on Instagram is more likely done as a way of providing context for an image or indicating participation in a community (Baym, 2010).

Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) conducted a study using the principles of photovoice on the Instagram platform, specifically in relation to youth with Type-1 diabetes. Drawing on their

methods and initial photovoice guidelines laid out by Wang and Burris (1997), I was able to develop a methodology that worked for my research aims.

### **Traditional photovoice methodology**

Photovoice is a participatory action research technique in which participants are given a camera and asked to take photos of scenes around them related to a given topic or theme (Yi-Frazier et al., 2015). According to Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice is also described as very flexible and adaptable, able to meet the needs of a variety of communities and their goals.

Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) elaborate on traditional photovoice methodology, explaining that it usually involves a group discussion following the photography session(s) in which participants come together to discuss the photos. Furthermore, they state that using photography in youth populations has shown to elicit unique and relevant perspectives relating to the young person's point of view, particularly in relation to experiences with play and school. However, it has also been noted that photovoice projects conducted with adolescents usually take more time and coordination than projects done with adult participants (Yi-Frazier et al., 2015). Therefore, Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) adapted this methodology to work best for their needs and involved Instagram as a new tool in their photovoice methodology.

### **Adapting photovoice methodology**

Once an understanding of photovoice methods was developed, I drew on the work of Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) as well as Gibney (2017) and Miller (2017) to adjust the methods to suit my goals and research questions. Specifically, Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) used Instagram as their primary method of photo collection, while Gibney (2017) chose to use publicly accessible content on social media sites such as YouTube, and Miller (2017) used direct interviews with

student participants about their social media usage in relation to queer and disability identity-making. Yi-Frazier et al. (2015) more closely followed photovoice methodology through an Instagram-based investigation with youth, which provided a resource for this study in relation to both data collection and analysis. Gibney (2017) aimed to examine how “higher education students who identify as LGBTQ navigate their school and daily life experiences in relationship with their identity on web logs” (p. 2). While Gibney’s (2017) study did not include direct requirements for an investigation relating to content and frequency of Instagram posts, her methodology of analyzing YouTube and blog content provided another resource for the data analysis of the present study through presenting a way in which to structure my own analysis. Finally, Miller’s (2017) methodology used grounded theory for analyzing specific themes that emerged from the data. Together, these three studies aided in my development of a methodology that would be most effective and useful in my own research.

## **Participants**

In choosing the participants whose Instagram accounts would be studied for this research, I aimed to select between five to ten accounts with a fairly diverse demographic profile. I ultimately settled on eight accounts, with details shown in the Table 1. Four accounts selected were people I already followed personally (two of which are personal friends) and four were selected through searching the #disability hashtag on both Instagram and Tik Tok. While I wanted to use Instagram as my primary source of data and gathering of participants, I found it difficult to find useable accounts through exclusively browsing the #disability hashtag. When browsing on Instagram, the number of photos was overwhelming, with only choices to view them based on being recent, or being popular. While viewing the “popular” posts with the most likes, I found

that the majority of them did not meet my inclusion criteria of being posted by youth about their firsthand experiences with disability. Instead I searched the hashtag #disability on TikTok as well, since I had noticed an increase in content being created recently on the platform by youth that focused on disability, rather than on Instagram, where the age range of disabled posters seemed to be getting higher. On TikTok, 41% of the users are within the age range of what's considered youth (ages 16-24) (Beer, 2019). Once a participant was chosen from TikTok or Instagram, their content for analysis in the study was drawn exclusively from Instagram.

To be considered as a participant, Instagram users had to meet a few specific criteria. Their profile had to be public, which means it did not have privacy settings nor was otherwise locked from viewing. Also, their age had to be within the range of 18 to 25, therefore considered a young adult but not a minor. The United Nations defines youth as being between the ages of 15 and 24, which encompasses being a teenager (13-19) as well as a young adult (20-24). However, I chose to exclude participants who were under 18, as this is still classified as a child by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and further, by legal and ethical guidelines. Finally, the participants also had to identify as having some sort of impairment or disability, though a diagnosis or a specific type of disability was not a requirement. I tried to include an equal number of males and females, but noted male participants were difficult to find within the necessary criteria. However, within the age bracket I was looking for, I did find a fairly even spread, as well as a diverse range of diagnoses, which was my main goal. The participants I chose, organized by the pseudonym chosen to describe them moving forward, are listed in Table 1, which also includes their age, disability diagnosis and location.

**Table 1.** *Participant Demographic Details*

Pseudonym	Age	Disability (status and/or diagnosis)	Location
Alexis S.	22	Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome	USA
Ashley M.	24	(Undiagnosed) Ehler’s-Danlos Syndrome, Celiac disease, mental illness	Canada
Austin G.	21	Cerebral Palsy and hearing impaired	USA
Brittany A.	24	Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2	USA
Chelsea W.	21	Cystic Fibrosis	USA
Payton L.	19	Autism & mental illness	Canada
Zane V.	19	Down Syndrome	USA
Zoe W.	22	Autism & mental illness	United Kingdom

### **Data Collection**

Laestadius (2016) describes three types of data collection methods for Instagram. She states that photos can be collected using coding and programming directly with Instagram’s interface, from a third-party program that would perform the same steps automatically. The third option was the one that I chose to use, in which Laestadius describes viewing the participants’ Instagram accounts on the app as a user would, and then copying photos and captions from there. To choose the photos (and their associated captions) that were analyzed, I went to the beginning of each participant’s account (most recent) and went back through 21 photos, then downloaded these 168 photos (21 x 8 participants) to my computer. I feel that choosing this specific number of photos created more validity, as I examined a consistent amount of data from each account without using my own inferences to select what was analyzed. Furthermore, Instagram publishes photos in rows of 3, so going back through 21 photos or 7 rows allowed me to look at what would essentially be the “front page” of each Instagram account, giving an accurate look at a

viewer's first impression of the accounts. Following that, I collected all of the photos and their associated captions, proceeding to organize them in a spreadsheet (Appendix II), to move forward into analysis. All photos in the spreadsheet which logged my analysis were removed to protect the privacy of the participants. Identifying details such as names and places were also removed. Photos that were included in this thesis as figures had the faces of the participants blurred and pseudonyms were used at all times.

### **Data Analysis**

In keeping with the adapted photovoice methodology used by Yi-Frazier et al. (2015), the photos of each participant were first grouped based on visual content. Seven types of photos were classified. These types included selfies (photos of the person themselves, whether taken by others or on their own); old photos (including the person and/or family members/friends – typically scans or photographs of film photography); recent photos with friends, family and/or pets; landscape photos; celebrity photos; internet memes (a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc., that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users); and lastly, photos of objects or miscellaneous content.

Following this step, I moved on to analyzing the captions, which held the most detail about the participants and their experiences. The captions were analyzed in three stages. Firstly, I read through the captions of each photo by one participant and classified the caption based on major themes that emerged. For example, Chelsea W.'s most common themes included sickness/disability/chronic illness; gratitude; giving back; living life to the fullest; friendship/ community; and growing up/infantilizing disability. I then proceeded to follow this method with the seven other participants. In the second stage, I created an organized chart for comparison of the themes



across participant profiles (seen in Chapter Four, Table 2). After creating this chart and reading through key phrases in the captions a second time, I was able to see trends in the themes, both in the way they were presented across participants, and also how they connected to the concepts of identity and community overall.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There were two main ethical issues to be considered throughout the course of this study. The first was the collection of participant data, and the second was how that data would be shared in the write-up. Firstly, I chose photos that would all be considered public domain as the photos were posted online without any privacy settings. This meant that the Brock Research Ethics Board did not have to be consulted for the study. However, I did collect data from two participants who I know personally, due to the nature of their friendship with each other and the way that friendship has been influenced by social media. However, their real names and photos were not used and in fact, no information about their individual friendship or their relationship to me was in turn deemed relevant for this study. With the methodology used, their connection to each other and to myself was not shown through the photos and captions collected, but is presented in this section for transparency.

For the second ethical issue, which was the presentation of results, anonymity was ensured at all times, both in my journals and in the final document. All photos in the spreadsheet of Appendix II – in which I logged my analysis – were removed to protect the privacy of the participants. Identifying details such as names and places were also removed. Photos that were included in this thesis as figures had the faces of the participants blurred. Pseudonyms were used at all times throughout the write-up of the study.

## **Summary**

This section described the methodology that was used in this study as a means of understanding the usage patterns of disabled youth on Instagram in relation to their identity development and community connections. The research relied on qualitative methods specifically using adapted photovoice techniques (Yi-Frazier et al, 2015) and social media-based methods as described by Gibney (2017), Miller (2017) and Laestadius (2016). The collection of public domain data combined with the personal nature of social media content allowed for a small but diverse set of participants, whose demographic details were described in Table 1. Data collection and analysis methods followed the modified framework of photovoice studies (Yi-Frazier et al, 2015; Wang & Burrell, 1997). Ethical considerations were discussed in the concluding section of the chapter. Chapter Four follows and presents the results and discussion of the study.

## **Chapter Four: Results and Discussion**

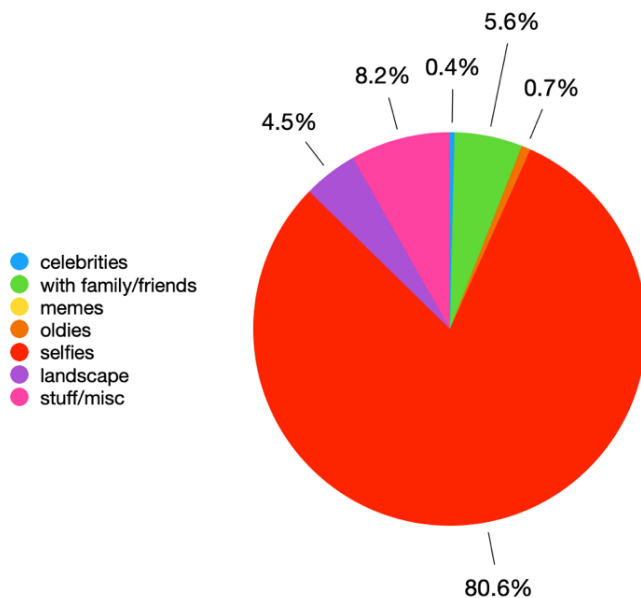
This study examined the content of eight Instagram accounts belonging to disabled youth between the ages of 19 and 24. After analyzing the photos and captions of 21 photos per account, there were trends in the types of images posted by the participants, as well as many themes that emerged from the associated captions. The first type of analysis includes a look the types of images each participant posted, such as notes on the frequency of selfie posts in contrast to posts with friends and family, or other types of photos. This was used as a way of noting whether or not there was a visual connection to the concepts of identity and community when viewed at first glance. The themes observed in the captions are presented as well, through a table (Table 2) that visualizes these themes across all accounts and through providing concrete examples of key phrases or photos. Based on the research questions that inform the present research, it was expected that participants who posted more selfies would demonstrate a stronger connection to their identity as disabled and that photos with friends and family would also be paired to captions expressing their relationship with the community, whether disabled or otherwise.

### **Analysis of Image Trends**

Each of the eight participants' individual accounts were analyzed, with the collective results shown in Figure 2 below, and the breakdown by individual shown in the appendix (see Appendix I). The results indicated a very diverse spread across the eight participants. Some posted nearly all selfies (Austin, Ashley) while others favoured landscapes (Zoe) or photos with friends and family (Zane). The one type of content that was not posted by any of the participants within their first 21 posts was memes. These image trends were notable as they indicated preliminary insight into the caption themes that later emerged from the participants' profiles. For

instance, many of the accounts posted primarily selfies. It was more common for these participants who posted selfies to also share details about their disability and their identity as disabled. However, the image trends did not exclusively predict who would discuss their disability on their Instagram profile. In other cases, such as Zoe, Payton, Ashley and Brittany’s profiles, the types of images they posted (landscapes, selfies, writing, etc.) indicated the elements of their lives that were important to them, outside of their disability (e.g., friendships, creativity, travel, etc.). Although the participants never explicitly discussed identity formation in their captions, it became apparent that, of the two concepts most relevant to this study – identity and community – identity was more pertinent to the participants. I found seven image types across the 21 photos in each account and demonstrated this in a pie chart based on the frequency with which each type appeared.

**Figure 2.** *Categorical Image Trends (Collective)*



## **Analysis of Caption Themes**

As is shown below in the breakdown of caption themes, a number of themes were found across the photo captions of the eight participants. In regard to the themes included in the results, I conducted the analysis first by writing down any themes I noted across each participant's photos and captions. Then, I took the seven most common themes in the captions that appeared across the accounts and grouped them into a lesser amount based on similarities and patterns. Specifically, I took the themes of disability and chronic illness as well as mental health and grouped them into one theme, because of the interconnected nature of disabling physical and mental symptoms. Following that, friends and family were considered their own main theme due to their connection with the idea of community. Giving back and gratitude appeared linked in the sense that they related to a thankfulness towards others in the greater community. I felt that this also connected to the theme of positivity in that when the participants showed gratitude, they were also placing a positive perspective on the experiences they had with their disability. The final theme that emerged that was significant across multiple accounts was social media trends. This theme connected specifically to the platform I was analyzing (Instagram) and the ways in which the participants followed trends or unique behaviours to add exposure to their posts. In doing this, I ended up with four themes for discussion.

My first impression was that the disability theme and the social media trends theme would connect more closely to the concept of identity, while friends and family and positivity would tie into community. The seven most common themes from the photo captions are visualized in Table 2 below, as well as a list of other less commonly seen themes that were mentioned, organized by individual.

**Table 2.** *Thematic comparisons of participant captions*

Seven Original Themes

	Disability, chronic illness	Friends, family, pets	Positivity	Mental health	Social media trends	Giving back	Gratitude	Other*
Chelsea W.	x	x				x	x	x
Brittany A.	x	x		x		x		x
Zoe W.		x						
Zane V.	x	x	x		x		x	
Alexis S.	x	x	x	x			x	x
Payton L.	x	x	x	x	x			x
Austin G.	x	x	x		x			
Ashley M.	x	x	x			x		x

Other Themes

- Chelsea W. — living life to the fullest; growing up; home
- Brittany A. — living an ordinary/normal life; writing/work/school; home
- Zoe W. — living an ordinary/normal life; writing/work/school; home; LGBTQ; travel
- Zane V. — none
- Alexis S. — school/work; sports; religion/church
- Payton L. — school; uniqueness; resiliency
- Austin G. — none
- Ashley M. — ballet

Four Final Themes (condensed from above)

	Disability, chronic illness, mental health	Friends, family, pets	Positivity, gratitude and giving back	Social media trends
Chelsea W.	x	x	x	
Brittany A.	x	x	x	x
Zoe W.		x		
Zane V.	x	x	x	x
Alexis S.	x	x	x	x
Payton L.	x	x	x	x
Austin G.	x	x	x	x
Ashley M.	x	x	x	x

## **Discussion of Themes**

### **Social Media Trends**

“Social media trends” as a theme encompasses the usage and patterns of hashtags in captions, as well as posting particular content relating to popular, often viral, trends. Zane, Payton and Austin most commonly followed trends with their content, which is notable because these three participants, along with Ashley, were found on Tik Tok, a platform that thrives on viral content. Furthermore, it is the use of hashtags and creating “viral” content that allows Instagram users to be found by others outside of their immediate or “real life” circle. This creates further opportunity for expanding their community and also for finding people who share their same interests or experience, such as disabilities, thus why I found this theme an important aspect of the present research.

Austin is a rising Tik Tok star, with 12 million likes and nearly 500 thousand followers on his account. Living in the United States, he has cerebral palsy (CP) and is also hard of hearing. Much of his popular content deals with having CP and his experience as disabled. A unique thing about Austin’s account is that some of his more viral videos show him using American Sign Language to perform popular songs. He also often performs trends like Tik Tok dance routines while discussing disability at the same time. On Instagram, his first 21 photos contained 20 selfies and a photo with his mom. The bio reads: “[University] ‘20 [university major]; Positivity influencer; Tik Tok: [account name] (449k); America’s Got Talent Contestant season 12 #signlanguage #photography”. Austin’s account featured disability as a theme on occasion, but most commonly focused on social media trends and overall positivity.

Zane's profile, for example, included hashtags in every post, including ones relating to his disability (#downsyndrome, #dslove, #worlddownsyndromeday, #321). Zane was found on Tik Tok. Zane has Down Syndrome and is 19 years old, residing in the United States. On Tik Tok, he creates popular videos with his older brother. At the time of this research, Zane and Peter had 3 million followers on their Tik Tok account, and nearly 72 million likes. Their joint Instagram profile has 71,000 followers. The bio to their Instagram account simply includes their post office box information, as well as links to their personal accounts. On Zane's individual account, his bio has the phrase "Changing Perspectives One Heart at a Time | Down Syndrome".

It is important to note that Zane and Peter share the Instagram account that was analyzed in this study. Therefore, it is Peter who typically writes the captions seen on the account. Understanding the concept of identity in relation to Zane and his disability is thus mediated through Peter's voice and his conceptualization of his brother's disability as an ally to the community, rather than a disabled person himself.

Zane also posted photos from his appearance at a 2020 event called Playlist Live, which is an annual convention held in Orlando, Florida, primarily for YouTube and Tik Tok content creators. Other captions promoted the YouTube videos made by Zane and his brother or addressed their growing follower count. Similarly, Payton included the hashtag #actuallyautistic on one post, but the majority of her hashtags were related to increasing her visibility on social media, including ones like these: #love #instagood #photooftheday #tbt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #bossbabe #instalike #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #megannpresets #motivation #art (taken from a selfie caption posted on August 2, 2019).



Payton was found on Tik Tok, where she has a significant following of 540,000 people and 8 million likes. While some of her content is following Tik Tok trends, her most “viral” content talks about her living with autism and what autism is like for a young person, especially a girl. Her Instagram account has over 40 thousand followers, most of whom likely found her from Tik Tok like myself, as is indicated by her bio. The bio reads: “leo; finding myself; ill do your lashes [Instagram account]; ya i’m that autistic girl”. Payton is 20 years old and Canadian. The make-up of her Instagram account (the first 21 photos) was almost entirely selfies, with 81% or 17 photos being of her and the remaining 4 including Payton and friends. Payton did mention disability in her posts on occasion, but more commonly, her friends and family, as well as some social media trends were themes seen in her captions.

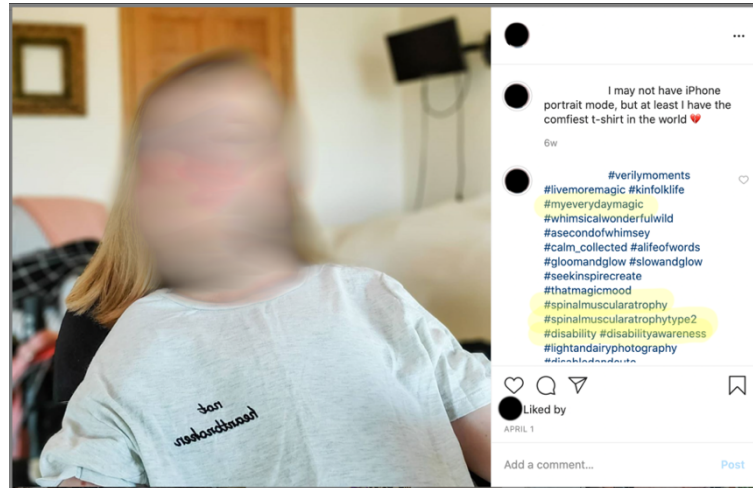
Two other participants also had unique patterns of hashtag use in their posts. Chelsea included no hashtags in her posts, perhaps indicative of the fact that she did not profit off her social media posts and already had a rather large following from her public speaking and advocacy work. Brittany, a twenty-four-year-old resident of the United States and the oldest participant, lives with a diagnosis of Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2 (SMA 2). Brittany is participant I know from my life outside of this study. She and I are friends, though we have not met in person, but rather found each other on a blogging site. She is close friends with another participant, Zoe, who she has known for 11 years. Zoe is the single participant from outside of North America, residing in the United Kingdom. She is diagnosed as having autism and mental illness and also identifies as disabled. Zoe and Brittany met online through a fan-fiction website, and I met Zoe through Brittany.

Zoe had a more unusual selection of content in this study, with her Instagram photos displaying a majority of landscape photos (48%). Selfies were only 14% of her first 21 photos. Her Instagram bio described her pronouns (she/they) and also stated that she identifies as a “queer poet & storyteller based in [location]”. Zoe’s themes did not discuss disability at all, focusing rather on her work as a writer, her travel experiences, her friends and family and LGBTQ+ issues.

At the time the data was collected, Brittany’s bio included her pronouns (she/her), the identifiers of “storyteller, space babe, fairy tale enthusiast” and the name of the novel she was writing and editing. Brittany’s profile contained a majority of the miscellaneous photo type, but when further examined it was found many of these photos related to her writing and activism work.

Brittany used hashtags frequently in similar ways to Zane and Payton; however, there was a notable difference. Many of Brittany’s posts included her own writing, both for online publications and her first novel. Even the posts that were not related to her work showed the prevalence of disability awareness and activism in her life. Hashtags related to her writing included: #authorsofinstagram #authorlife #writersofinstagram #ownvoices #criplit #sciencefiction #fantasybooks. #criplit and #ownvoices are notable as they indicate both that her book includes disabled characters or content about disability, and also that she is a disabled writer. Further, Brittany posted selfies including hashtags like #livemoremagic #myeverydaymagic #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disability awareness #disabledandcute #disabledpeoplearehot #disabledfashion.

**Figure 3.** *Example from Brittany’s Instagram*



The hashtag #myeverydaymagic is popular among people of all abilities, with photos posted sharing a similar aesthetic of light and airy colours, flowers and other generally pleasing content. However, in the context of a person with a disability using this hashtag for her selfie, something more could be indicated, which connects to the idea of disability identity. Brittany lives with Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2, a severe disability that is also a visible disability due to her using a wheelchair. Brittany strives to make disability a more prevalent part of the literary landscape and also non-fiction spaces, as evident by her use of the #ownvoices hashtag. Perhaps by her use of hashtags like #myeverydaymagic, which is shown in context in Figure 3, Brittany is attempting to normalize the everyday activities of disabled bodies and their own existence in social media spaces, which are often filled with glamourized, able-bodied celebrities and influencers. In fact, *The Washington Post* discussed this very concept, citing creators with whom Brittany has worked in the past. The post stated “creators with disabilities say they have gained many benefits from social media participation, such as support and acceptance, discovery of other people with similar conditions, information sharing and even income” (Chiu, 2019). Brittany’s attempts at normalizing disability also speak to the first research question of this study— how

disabled youth express their identity through photos and captions on Instagram. In viewing Brittany's 21 photos and captions, it is clear that she views her disability as a prominent part of her identity. However, she also recognizes the normalcy of being disabled, no different than her identifying as a "storyteller, space babe [or] fairytale enthusiast" (taken from Brittany's Instagram bio). It could also be said that Brittany's Instagram patterns show an owning of her disability, something that is in keeping with the social model and the affirmation model of disability. The affirmation model (Swain & French, 2000), as was discussed in Chapter Two, provides the opportunity for disabled people to choose how they identify. Here, Brittany demonstrates an interchangeable identity that reflects her unique characteristics and the freedom to be who she wants to be on any given day.

These ideas coincide with a point drawn in Cameron's (2007) article on disability narratives, in which he states that there is a "normality genre" in popular media (specifically films, but I argue it can be seen in writing and television as well), in which disabled people perform the "alien" role, as if in a science fiction story— "representing a threat to the fabric of normal decency, which has to be resolved... in order that normality can be preserved or restored" (p. 502). He then goes on to state that this resolution typically happens by means of death or curing the character's disability. However, writers like Brittany include characters with disabilities who are the protagonists, yet do not face untimely deaths or overcome their impairments. She further emphasizes this in her own life through the reclaiming of her identity as the protagonist of her story with her own "everyday magic".

Payton and Ashley's accounts provided interesting results in this area as well, as both posted almost entirely selfies, and had very limited content associated with their disability

(Payton has Autism and mental health issues, while Ashley deals with Anorexia and undiagnosed physical issues). Instead, their themes focused much more heavily on the things that interested them, such as fashion, makeup, dance and other “typical” hobbies for girls. This aligns with Hill’s (2017) study on disabled girls’ self-representation practices online, in which she states that “disability is often framed as a problem or lack, and that experiences of disability for girls appear to trump or silence other experiences, such as those of sex and gender, and the intersections that exist between these” (p. 114). It is highly likely that these girls, whose content on other social media platforms focuses heavily on their disability, curate their Instagram accounts more carefully as a way of normalizing *other* aspects of their life, outside of their disabilities. For instance, Ashley uses a feeding tube that enters her body through her nose, which is therefore always visible in her Tik Tok dance videos.

Ashley, found on Tik Tok, is currently undiagnosed but deals with chronic illness. Currently using a NG tube for feeding, she speculates that she has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome as well as some type of gastrointestinal illness. Ashley is twenty-four years old and lives in Canada. Her Tik Tok is popular for her content relating to disability, but also for her dances and other on-trend videos. On Tik Tok, Ashley has over 70,000 followers and nearly 800,000 likes. Her Instagram focuses on a different part of her life – her experience as a ballerina. Her Instagram bio reads: “Ballerina; Documenting my journey through the ups and downs of my personal struggles mentally and physically through dance.” As would be expected, dance, and particularly ballet, was the most common theme across her captions and photos, although disability, friends and family, positive and giving back were evident as well.

Payton is also known on Tik Tok for posting content dispelling myths about girls with autism. On Instagram, however, Payton and Ashley post pictures with their friends and other “ordinary” activities that are outside of the realm of frequent doctor’s visits and psychiatric diagnoses. Payton and Ashley’s accounts connect with the discussion of identity from Chapter 2, particularly in relation to the choice of identifying as disabled (or not). As described in Dunn and Burcaw’s (2013) work, there are key aspects of disability identity, such as pride, self-worth and personal meaning. However, some people with impairments don’t develop their self-worth from their impairments, like Payton (Watson, 2002). It is also notable that Payton identifies as autistic, and with a social group whose members often title themselves as neurodivergent rather than disabled. In this case, her identity is fluid, and at times may be represented in her neurodivergence, while at other times, she chooses to identify based on other important aspects of her life. Figure 4 depicts an example of Payton’s typical photos.

**Figure 4.** *Example from Payton’s Instagram*



## **Disability, Chronic Illness and Mental Health**

Across the captions analyzed from all of the participants, disability showed up frequently, but was also often separate from chronic illness and mental health. For instance, Brittany commonly discussed her diagnosis of Spinal Muscular Atrophy as her disability, but never mentioned any mental health diagnoses as a disability. She still discussed mental health in her posts, focusing on it more as a common aspect of human nature rather than a disability. Payton, in contrast, has diagnosed mental health issues and talks about them alongside her discussions surrounding autism. Disability was discussed at times purposefully with a clear intent to demonstrate a point, whereas other phrases about disability were said in a more casual, commonplace way. For example, in her April 9, 2020 post, Alexis wrote about her service dog assisting her in dealing with her high heart rate (due to Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome or POTS). She then easily segued into talking about her homework and basketball activities.

Alexis, who has a fairly large social media following, with 7600 followers on her account at the time of this study, was found through her work as a disabled model for a popular clothing line. The make-up of her Instagram account included 17 selfies out of the first 21 photos, 3 miscellaneous and one with a friend. Her bio read “chronically ill semi-functional human; owner of [company]; crushing stereotypes, kissing fish, cutting down on waste; service dog [name]”. Alexis’s profile paid frequent attention to disability related topics, including her diagnosis of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome among other unknown conditions, as well as her work and school life, sports, and religion.

In contrast to Alexis, Brittany typically wrote captions centered around one main topic, often disability-related but not always. Her post on March 8, 2020 read: “We have the first

presumptive coronavirus case in Minnesota. Which is something. I'm officially on lockdown, which means I'm wearing nothing but pajamas and listening to my embarrassing playlist of bubblegum pop to keep my spirits up. It's not fun being immunocompromised in a world full of germs. I'm fighting tooth and nail to keep from falling into a depressive episode, so naturally, I'm writing a blog post about it.”

Outside of the disability-related hashtags, three participants posted about disability most frequently and in-depth – Chelsea, Alexis and Brittany. Chelsea is the only participant who is no longer living. She had a very large online following at the time of her death; however, this study has upheld her anonymity in keeping with the protocols of the research. Chelsea was a 21-year-old living in the United States at the time of her death. She died from complications associated with a lung transplant. She was living with cystic fibrosis and was undergoing a double-lung transplant surgery in 2018 when she passed away. Therefore, her data is the oldest, chronologically, covering the timeframe of January to September 2018. Her Instagram account includes a simplistic “bio” section with only an emoji waving hello. Chelsea’s profile was the most diverse in terms of types of photo and all four of the common themes were evident on her profile, with a particularly high amount of posts talking about disability.

For Chelsea, it was impossible to post photos of herself on Instagram without her disability being apparent, as she wore a nasal canula at all times to deliver oxygen support to her lungs. However, it was entirely her choice to become an activist in the disability community. Her Instagram account, nearly 2 years after her death, still has 162 thousand followers. Many of her longer post captions were filled with her opinions about living life as a “sick person”, but also a young person, and trying to reconcile the two into a high quality of living. Of the 21 posts that



were analyzed from her account, four stood out as the most important. In one from June 21, 2018 she discussed losing her apartment to mold toxicity, which is dangerous for anyone, but especially someone with cystic fibrosis. She wrote not only about the struggle of having to find a new apartment in California, but also the “spectacular” way in which her life “fell apart”, and the emotions that came from living with a chronic illness whilst trying to live a life she was proud of. Chelsea shared in a June 21, 2018 post (shown in Figure 5) that she

spent the past year just barely holding myself above ground- juggling being sick with the deep incessant need in me to do something of value with my time. I’ve been exhausted just keeping myself alive and have nothing left to give to the world around me. That has always been my biggest fear in life, that I would spend everything I had “fighting” my illness and have nothing to offer- and for me, living without being able to give something of yourself to the world, living without adding value to the world, is not a life I want... You can’t put your life on hold until your “better” life begins. You have to fight like hell to make sure that the life reflected back at you right now is one you want to be living. I’m not going to let myself live a life I’m resentful of. Not if I live for another three months and not if I live for another 30 years.

**Figure 5.** *Example from Chelsea’s Instagram*



The quote emphasizes a few different things about Chelsea's life with a chronic illness, the main one being just how much it shaped her short life and the identity she had. Chelsea often referred to herself as "sick" in her posts, but she also frequently mentioned the life she wanted to lead and how important it was to her to be proud of the legacy she left behind. Instagram provided a platform for Chelsea to express these thoughts and have them received by other youth who felt the same, either with a disability or without. For Chelsea, as was previously stated, it was impossible to share parts of herself without also sharing that she was disabled, due to the visible nature of her oxygen support. However, Miller (2017) discusses the contextual management of one's identities. He describes the participants in his study as carefully considering how they would represent themselves in particular online spaces. For Chelsea, perhaps the curation of her Instagram account allowed her to compartmentalize her disability in ways that she could not do in real life. Chelsea's Instagram photos were the most thematically diverse, including friends, family, celebrities, landscapes, and other miscellaneous content. Furthermore, a lot of her captions discussed her disability, but on her terms. The captions contained Chelsea's own words and thoughts about her disability, rather than perceptions that other people might carry with them when they passed her on the street (such as those attached to idea of personal tragedy). Some of Miller's (2017) participants also discussed the idea of facing judgement on an online platform – either as something they experienced, were actively trying to avoid, or no longer were concerned about, in relation to their queer and/or disabled identities. Chelsea shows a lack of fear in her posts– not fear of death, or judgment, although perhaps an unfulfilled life was one thing she did fear.

## **Friends, Family and the Greater Community**

Another main theme, which was addressed across every participant account, was connections with friends, family, and animals. In some cases, this was exclusive to “real life” friends and family, while in others, the fostering of online community was also discussed. An example of this is in a post on September 4, 2018 by Chelsea’s sister, after her passing, in which she referenced her sister’s “connections with people all around the world” and how special it was “to see a group of people who don’t know each other come together in a time of sadness to become such an amazing support network”. Others, including Zane, also posted about the impact of community on them, and the reverse, of their impact on the community. In a March 22, 2020 post by Zane’s brother Peter, he wrote: “It’s hard to put in words the amount of impact Zane has made on me and others from his contagious smile to the great love he shares. Although I hear often how wonderful that he has a big brother to look up to but the truth is it’s the other way around. How did I get so lucky to admire someone and learn from him everyday. Happy World Down Syndrome Day! Thank you for being you.” This supports the positive impact of disabled voices on social media, both for themselves and for others.

However, social media comes with a variety of pros and cons for most users, as the amount of contact and sharing of information with others can sometimes be overwhelming. However, for disabled people, social media also can serve as an unmatched opportunity for connection – both with their “real life” social circles, family and friends, and with people across the globe who may share some experiences with them, which was displayed both in Leiter’s study (2011) and the present research. As was seen in Table 2, all the participants in this study featured captions and photos that included their loved ones, and at times, referred to the greater

community around them that social media provided access to. Chelsea and Alexis both made frequent references to their friends, family, and a wider community, as did Ashley.

Having nearly 3000 followers, Ashley has one of the smaller accounts in this study, particularly in comparison to Chelsea and Alexis. However, it was still notable that she felt connection with her followers enough to share updates and deeply personal information with them through public Instagram posts. As Leiter (2011) notes, “the web provided additional ways for the youth to make and maintain connections and to try out new aspects of their identities” (p. 17). Hall’s (2010) work on alternative spaces of inclusion is also relevant as Ashley’s statements demonstrated connections with her followers in a non-traditional community space, shown in her post presented in Figure 6 below. In fact, Hall (2010) states that people who are often excluded from social interactions (which includes disabled people) unsurprisingly seek out alternative spaces to find inclusion and belonging. Ashley writes about the frequency of mental health issues in those active in the arts in Figure 6, and her attempts to create community through her Instagram account. These attempts coincide with the idea that individual and communal belonging can increase self-esteem and strengthened self-identity (Hall, 2010). She also demonstrates exploration of her identity both as a ballerina (her username for Instagram is ballerina\_ashley) and as a young adult with a disability.

**Figure 6.** Example from Ashley's Instagram



Hello Everyone! Some of you may have noticed that my bio has changed and soon my content as well! I've been hesitant to do this for quite some time, but It's really been pressing on my heart to create a safe space for dancers to be able to discuss their struggles & or relate to my own personal experiences whether that be mentally or physically. I feel like I have been very quiet about my personal struggles in my life on this account, and would love to open up the conversation of mental health among dancers of all ages. It's no question that dance is not just a physically demanding career; but it also wreaks havoc on the mind, and mental health. In the arts, one in three people are affected by anxiety, depression or other mental health issues. Also eating disorders are 10 times more common in ballet dancers than non-ballet dancers. I believe many of us are aware of these facts, but when it directly effects you or a loved one- I know JUST how difficult that can be. I know this personally as I've struggled with Anxiety, Depression & Anorexia for about 11 years now. Very recently I have been through some tests that may show that I have Celiac Disease, and this has no doubtably been the hardest four months of my life by far. I also suffer from Sinus Tachycardia...OUR BODIES ARE CRAZY MACHINES!! I have a huge passion for helping people & children of all ages and I hope that in opening up my account and posts, that not only can I share my passion and love of dance but also support YOU GUYS as much as possible! I really want all of you to know that my DM's are ALWAYS open. Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle ... Bee kind. Lets ROOT for each other- and WATCH each other grow.

### **Positivity, Gratitude and Giving Back**

The theme of positivity, gratitude and giving back was shown through a combination of posts that depicted connection to both identity and community. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, giving back and gratitude as well as positivity were linked as one main theme for discussion. This was because the posts that related to gratitude and giving back often included a more positive or uplifting captions from the participants. Furthermore, community as a concept was related to this theme due to the fact that participants wanted to give back to their communities for the positive experiences they had with the people around them. This is demonstrated in Zane's example with Figure 7 below. Identity, however, was more closely related to the idea of gratitude, as participants frequently showed gratitude for the good things in their lives, both in spite of *and* because of their disabilities, similar to Garland-Thomson's (2012) discussion using the same concept.

The participants explored positive relationships with their disability, such as Austin’s sign language music videos. Taking a social media trend and adapting it to his own characteristics and identity demonstrated an understanding of who he was, and a desire to fit the world around him into that reality, rather than trying to fit himself into an able-bodied world. This theme also presented the positive connections that participants had made to people they met online because of their disability. For instance, Zane and his brother Peter were able to attend the Playlist Live convention and meet many members of their online community in real life. This was not because Zane is disabled and was the “token” disabled person at the event, but rather the manifestation of just how impactful their disability-related content was on social media. Zane and his brother had over 57,000 followers on their Instagram at the time of data collection, a number that is only growing due to the relevance and relatability of the brothers sharing their life with people online. The creation of an online, alternative space spread out into traditional spaces, and demonstrated the impact of having diverse voices present at all times. This connects to Foley & Ferri’s (2012) discussion of making the online world inclusive and accessible for all from the beginning. They state that “we should be talking about technology as a global, accessible and inclusive concept, not one that requires a qualifier based on who it is for” (p. 196). Zane and Peter represent this idea through both the scope of their reach, and their own engagement with others online. Their content is not only accessed by disabled people, but able-bodied people as well, thus creating a community that is inclusive of all abilities. Furthermore, as Peter comments in Figure 7, below, he and Zane met a pair of Youtubers they were very much inspired by prior to their own growth online. He states that their content helped his brother transition from being “non-verbal” and how big of an impact the online world made on their family.

**Figure 7.** *Example from Zane's Instagram*



All of you have been one of the biggest and first inspiration in our pursuit of social media. Zane's interest in YouTube and TikTok is due to the many years of love and admiration for your content. It has provided years of comedic content but most importantly during a time when he was known as non-verbal it provided language assistance as he repeatedly imitated the content with his own special personality. From the bottom of our hearts we can't thank you enough for your time, kindness, especially for these memories that we will forever cherish.

Gratitude was shown in many ways throughout the captions that were examined. There is often an opportunity for ableist forms of gratitude when it comes to disability, whether intentional or not, such as being grateful a disability isn't worse or being grateful to not be "wheelchair bound" for instance. However, these participants never subscribed to a personal tragedy way of thinking. Instead, gratitude was demonstrated through the ways in which disability made their life what it was. For example, Chelsea was grateful for her best friend helping her with oxygen therapy, which not only helped her breathe, but made her closer to her friend in sharing this intimate experience. Brianna showed gratitude through her writing, a career which has been spearheaded by her disability and passion for inclusion. Alexis expressed a love for adaptive sports and fitness, something that would not have been found without her attempts to accommodate for her disability.

### **Summary of Results**

The results indicated that identity was expressed in a variety of ways across the participant profiles. Identity was shown more blatantly through the frequency of the participants posting selfies, but also through specific identifying labels used in bio sections, repeatedly

included hashtags and the themes that emerged from each unique photo caption. Community as a concept was more implicit. It was not shown in the majority of photos, as most photos did not include family, friends or other community connections. However, through reading the captions, the ways in which the participants connected to their peers, both online and off, became more apparent. The preceding sections also described the four final themes for discussion that were evident in the analysis of the photos and captions shared by the participants. The four themes included social media trends; disability, chronic illness and mental health; friends, family and the greater community; and positivity, gratitude and giving back, and all connected to the broad concepts of identity and community. Each participant demonstrated more than one of the four themes in their posts, as well as other themes that were not addressed by all participants, but rather that were specific to their own individual experiences. Identity was shown through not only the sharing of one's experiences with disability, but also the other elements that made up their life. Community was made both online and off, but these community-building opportunities were ignited by the use of social media as a means of connecting and sharing one's story. Normalizing disability as an everyday occurrence and also living life to the fullest were two concepts that, when juxtaposed, actually went hand in hand, as they provided opportunities for the disabled participants to achieve goals and find happiness, whilst also indicating to able-bodied people that the disability experience cannot be generalized.



## **Chapter Five: Conclusions**

### **Summary of the Study**

Technology is advancing at a rapid rate, providing unprecedented opportunities for research and exploration. However, disabled people are often left behind in this modern technological age, included as afterthoughts rather than a part of design from the beginning (Foley & Ferri, 2012; Dobransky & Hargittai, 2016). Social media and online spaces provide a unique tool for researching the youth demographic (Amjeld, 2015; Brusilovskiy et al., 2016; Gibney, 2017; Hill, 2017; Leiter, 2011; Miller, 2017; Naslund et al., 2016; Park & Calamaro, 2013; Walker et al., 2018; Yi-Frazier et al., 2015), particularly those with disabilities and severe mental health issues. Framed as an alternative space for inclusion (Hall, 2010), Instagram specifically presents an opportunity for youth with disabilities to explore their identity and build community.

This research, shaped by the affirmation model of disability (Swain & French, 2000) examined the profiles of eight young adults with various disabilities, ranging in age from 19 to 24, and located across North America and the United Kingdom. The aim of the study was to explore the ways that Instagram was used as a platform for self-expression in relation to building identity and community amongst these youth. The methodology of the study was shaped by adapted photovoice methods, and scholarly work including that by Gibney (2017), Yi-Frazier et al. (2015), and Miller (2017). After collecting and organizing 21 photos for each of the eight participants, the images and associated captions were analyzed based on three aspects. These three aspects included the types of images posted, the themes expressed in the captions, and the connection of the previous two areas with the key concepts of identity and community.

The results of the study indicate that selfies were the most common type of photo posted, although this wasn't always indicative of the participant's relationship to their disability or their identity as such. Some participants posted selfies discussing disability (Chelsea, Brittany) while other chose to discuss other topics relevant to their lives. From that, four major trends emerged: social media trends; disability, chronic illness and mental health; friends, family and the greater community; and positivity, gratitude and giving back. Social media trends related to the nature of the platform being examined and the way the youth engaged with it, while disability as a theme presented many connections to the concept of identity. Some of these connections included the desire to normalize disability as only a part of one's identity (for example, participant Ashley's profile), while other participants looked for the opportunity to live a fulfilled life in ways that appreciated and celebrated their disability (for example, Chelsea and Brittany's profiles). Friends and family and the greater community provided connections to the idea of *building* community, as none of the participants came to Instagram with an already existing collection of followers. Rather, they worked to build rapport and relationships with the people who began to follow them, finding reciprocal comfort within the notion that they were not alone in their experiences. The theme of positivity, gratitude and giving back connected to both identity and community. The participants explored positive relationships to their disability, and to people they had met online because of their disability. However, positivity was not the exclusive experience shown in the photos and captions – negative experiences were depicted also, but there was always a common thread of gratitude for what one had, and a desire to give back to those who did not have as much.

## **Strengths of the Study**

The study's primary strength was the exploration of the disabled experience through the viewpoint of disability insiders, rather than family members or medical professionals. The study also relied on the affirmation model as a theoretical foundation. In using the affirmation model, the study brings awareness to a model which prioritizes positive identity, encompassing both impairment *and* disability (Swain & French, 2000). Furthermore, the present research presented a different perspective for viewing social media – an alternative space for inclusion, and a foundation of community where youth can express their identity in unique and unprecedented ways (Hall, 2010; Leiter, 2011). Furthermore, the study presented an insider view of disability as experienced by young people, on a platform that is underrepresented in academic research, yet extremely popular and influential in the lives of youth.

## **Limitations**

A limitation of this study is the lack of diversity across the participants. While the diagnoses of the participants were different across each person, other elements of diversity were not as well-represented in the sample. For example, the study participants came from North America and the UK, which are predominantly white countries, and all of the participants in the study were white or white-passing. Furthermore, there were only two male participants, and LGBTQ+ status was not disclosed by all but one of the participants (Zoe). While these participants met the inclusion criteria of the study, it would certainly improve future studies in this area to include a more diverse sample of participants.

## **Implications for Future Research**

Future research could immensely benefit from a larger, more diverse sample in which race, gender, sexual orientation and country of residence and other characteristics were more

varied across participants. Intersectionality is a major part of disability studies as a field, considering the ways in which disability interacts with other areas of societal marginalization such as race and sexual orientation. To further examine how these different identities impacted one's portrayal of their disability identity would certainly improve the impact of the research. For example, Woodin (2014) writes that single-identity politics in relation to disability discredits the diversity of the disabled experience. Identifying as only disabled or only Black or only a woman would lessen the impact of the struggles that are faced when all of these identities meet. Thus, the results of the present study could vary greatly based on the unique combinations and interactions of social identities.

Furthermore, it would be very interesting to see how the results of the present study translated across platforms other than Instagram. Although this study only examined Instagram as a platform, it was noted that different content could be explored on platforms like Tik Tok or Facebook. For instance, Payton is known on Tik Tok for her autism-focused content and exploring the area of disability-related videos on that platform alone would provide novel and interesting insights into the topics at hand. For instance, looking at commentary on a platform like Tik Tok could show how the disability-related content is perceived by viewers.

### **Final Thoughts**

In this study, normalizing disability as an everyday occurrence and also living life to the fullest were two concepts that, when juxtaposed, actually went hand in hand. They provided opportunities for the disabled participants to achieve goals and dreams, whilst also indicating to able-bodied people that the disability experience cannot be generalized as a collective experience, and certainly not as a tragedy. The main concepts in this study, identity and community, served as the vessel through which to research the disabled population, the only socially oppressed group

which any person can find themselves in at any time. Identity was demonstrated both through expression of being disabled and what that means for a young person, but also through the exploration of other unique traits, qualities and events that make up the life experience of a youth. Community was shown through the participants connections to their friends, family, and peers, as well as the greater society around them. This was influenced by their online activity on such a novel platform. Through the activism of these participants, living their day-to-day lives as disabled youth, their followers are presented with plentiful opportunities for exploration into what it really means to be disabled and given a reminder of both the diversity and common ground found in the human condition.

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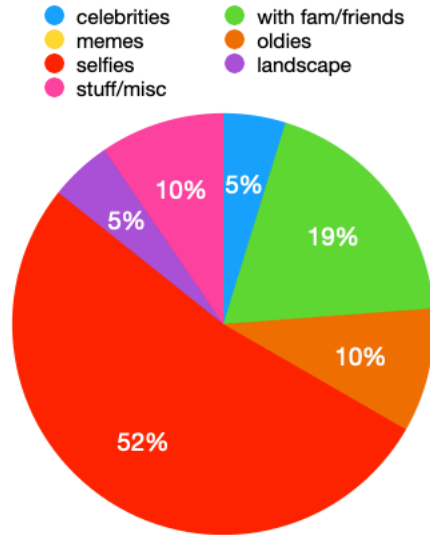


Yi-Frazier, J. P., Cochrane, K., Mitrovich, C., Pascual, M., Buscaino, E., Eaton, L., Panlasigui, N., Clopp, B., & Malik, F. (2015). Using Instagram as a modified application of photovoice for storytelling and sharing in adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*(10), 1372–1382.

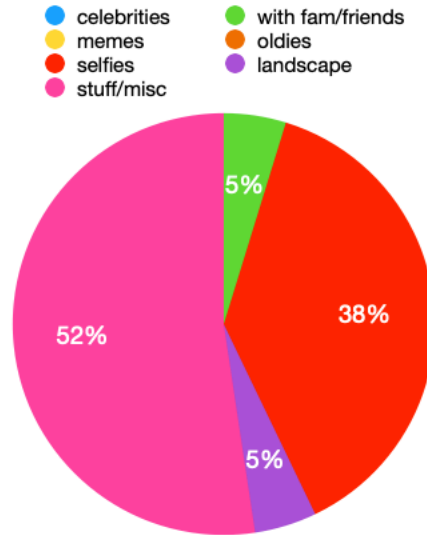
# Appendix I

## Individual Image Category Breakdowns

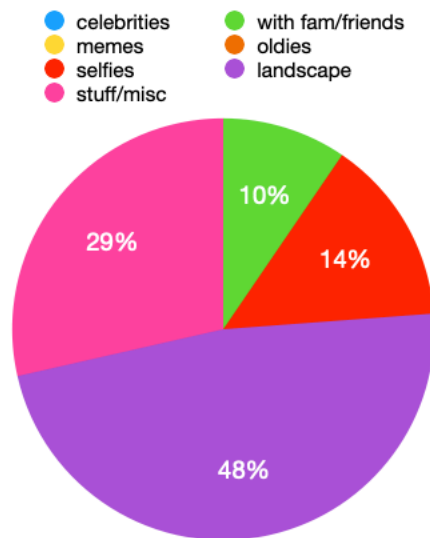
Chelsea W.



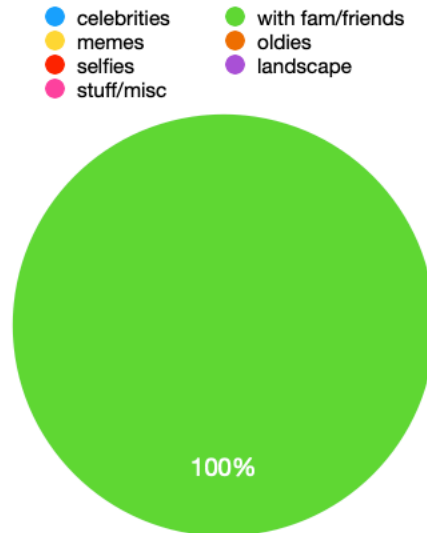
Brittany A.



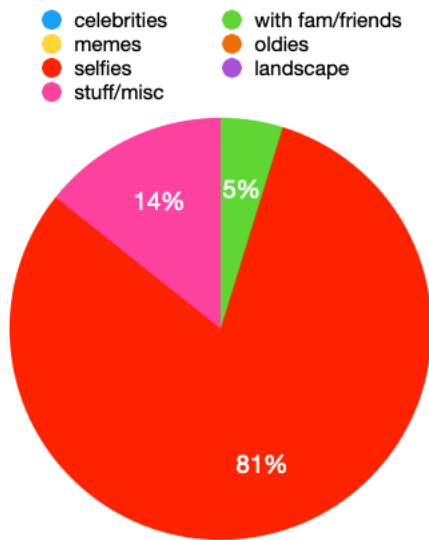
Zoe W.



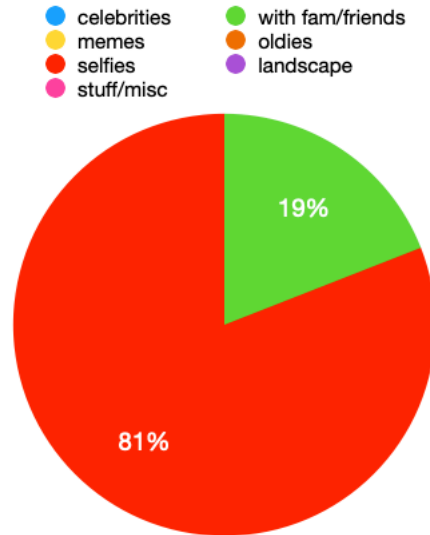
Zane V.



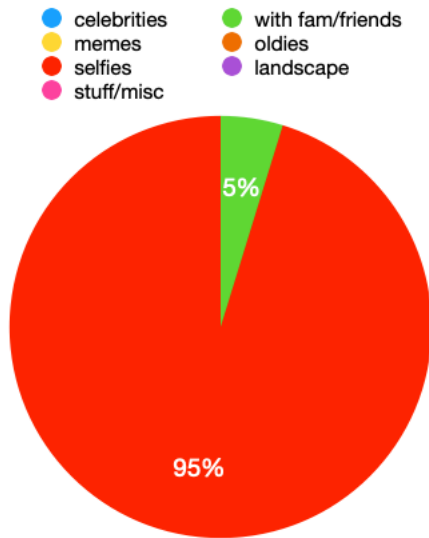
Alexis S.



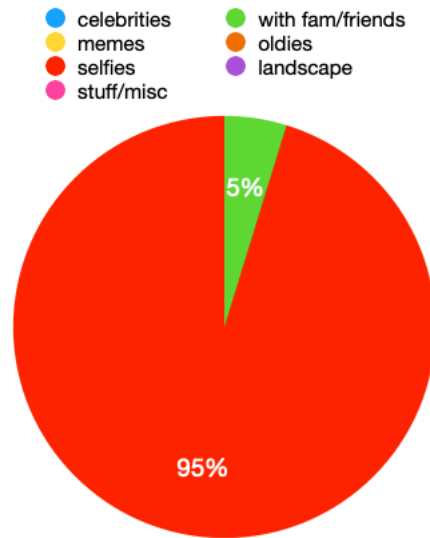
Payton L.



Austin G.



Ashley M.



## Appendix II

### CONTENT THEMES

#### CHELSEA W.

1. Sickness/disability/chronic illness
2. gratitude
3. giving back
4. living life to the fullest
5. friendship / community
6. growing up / infantilizing disability.

#### BRITTANY A.

1. sickness/disability/chronic illness
2. writing/school/work
3. mental health
4. living an ordinary life
5. giving back/ contributing to society
6. friends

#### ZOE W.

1. home/nature/uk
2. writing
3. family/pets
4. ordinary life
5. LGBTQ
6. travel

#### ZANE V.

1. Family
2. Trends/humour/social media
3. Down syndrome/Disability
4. Happiness/positivity
5. Friends

#### ALEXIS S.

1. Gratitude/positivity
2. Health/disability
3. Family/friends/pets
4. Sports
5. Religion/church
6. School/Work
7. Mental health

#### PAYTON L.

1. Disability/autism
2. Uniqueness
3. Positivity
4. Mental health/illness
5. School
6. Resiliency
7. Social media
8. Family/friends
9. Gratitude

#### AUSTIN G.

1. Social media/trends
2. Disability/ASL/CP/deafness
3. Optimism, positivity
4. Family/friends

#### ASHLEY M.

1. Ballet
2. Disability/health/chronic illness
3. Community
4. Helping, giving back
5. Positivity/happiness
6. Family

## Types of Photos

**selfie** → a photo of the person, whether taken by themselves or another person.

**oldie** → a photo from years ago of the person, their family and/or other personal events.

**meme** → an internet graphic.

**w. friends** → a recent photo of the person and their friends, family, pets, etc.

**celeb** → a photo of a famous person

**landscape** → a photo of the user's environment.

**stuff/misc.** → a photo of objects, etc.

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION
September 4, 2018  <i>oldie</i>		hey this is [redacted] little sister and I'd just like to say that I really appreciate all the kind words that you all are spreading about claire. I know how much it meant to her to have connections with people all around the world and it's so special to see a group of people who don't know each other come together in a time of sadness to become such an amazing support network. thank you again... 💕🦋
August 26, 2018  <i>w. friends</i>		[redacted] We some cheese balls just cheesing it up. 🐶 So grateful for everything this month. I'm grateful for all the people who donated to help me get through transplant. I'm grateful for the doctors that'll be scooping out these lungs and giving me some more life to work with. Im grateful for the chance to keep being a person. I'm grateful for my own head and for all the weird things in it. I'm just really overwhelmingly grateful for all of this. There is no passionate rant to be had here I am just happy and thought I would let you all know.
July 26, 2018  <i>selfie</i>		Just laid around in bed today eating fruit, taking pictures of myself because I feel like I look healthy and not malnourished for the first time in months and reading articles on fungi's ability to communicate with other fungi and plants- fucking riveting and also terrifying. I've had a theory going for years that the real battle being waged on earth is between bacteria and fungi and that everything that happens and has happened is somehow directly because of them. Anyway I've got nothing all that deep or moving to say, just wanted to post these cuz I like em and tell you all to go research the history of fungi and it's role in evolution if you are bored. Ok 🐶
July 24, 2018  <i>selfie</i>		hospitals don't teach you manners. 🐶 wolf child forever 🐶
June 21, 2018  <i>selfie</i>		This post is about to be a life update/rant of all rants so click if you are bored and in need of entertainment. Two weeks ago I lost my apartment due to mold toxicity that had been building for lord knows how long. I literally can't explain everything fucked up that has happened because it won't all fit in a text post but the main points include: having aspergillus in the lungs decreases chances of lung transplant success, I had to put my dog down, we lost all our furniture, I have no money saved up because I have been too sick to work this year, our airbnb has a gas leak and a plethora of other shit that just seems too ridiculous to be true. In all honesty though I am profoundly grateful that my life fell apart this spectacularly. I've spent the past year just barely holding myself above ground- juggling being sick with the deep incessant need in me to do something of value with my time. I've been exhausted just keeping myself alive and have nothing left to give to the world around me. That has always been my biggest fear in life, that I would spend everything I had "fighting" my illness and have nothing to offer- and for me, living without being able to give something of yourself to the world, living without adding value to the world, is not a life I want. I do not want to fight for a life that consists only of self care, I would rather die than live just for the sake of living. I can sense how fragile this life is, how fragile our futures are. How easy it is to let yourself be swept into a version of your life that you despise. It's far too easy to let your life become something you resent. Everyone has been scolding me for wanting to stay living on my own, for wanting to move to different side of town and find a home while being on the transplant list. " why not just wait until after the surgery to try and start your life?". You can't put your life on hold until your "better" life begins. You have to fight like hell to make sure that the life reflected back at you right now is one you want to be living. I'm not going to let myself live a life I'm resentful of. Not if I live for another three months and not if I live for another 30 years.

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DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	
May 27, 2018 <i>selfie</i>		Hahaha going through my phone deleting pictures and found this picture of me taken a year ago in a Jon's "the ethnic vons" baked out of my mind buying three packs of !sponch! Marshmallow snacks and a bag of hot peppers like it was the best decision I've ever made [redacted] who was completely fucking sober taking this pic and probably wondering wh [redacted] ed to befriend such a gremlin 🧜	5
May 23, 2018 <i>w. friends</i>		his is @larissaperoux giving me CPT therapy with Daisy watching guard in the corner. Normally I don't post pictures of me doing my treatments because people like to feed off health drama but this one felt special to me. It was taken on the first trip down to San Diego for the first stage of the lung transplant evaluation debacle. We were so worn out and overwhelmed and just sorta walked around feeling like we wanted to cry and not totally understanding why. I feel very blessed to have so many people willing to go through this whole shit storm with me, it's a miraculous part of humanity that we are willing to suffer along with someone to ease their burden. There is something tremendously powerful about being close to another person's pain and letting them know you will go through it with them- i would have crumbled a million times over without the people I love. I'm just very grateful to those who are shouldering this burden with me. [redacted] don't have Instagram 📷 also pic creds to [redacted] dis was from an article so gotta give cred or else imma be in trouble 🙏 I'm sorry to have to tell you all like this but my mom has been scientifically proven to be the best mom out of all moms ever so 🙏	5 1 2
May 13, 2018 <i>oldie</i>		Progression of a cough 🤧	1
May 8, 2018 <i>selfie</i>		Interrupted stoop selfies with dis one forever [redacted]	5
April 27, 2018 <i>w. friends</i>		Just let me love you	
April 2, 2018 <i>selfie</i>			

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION
<p>April 2, 2018</p> <p><i>celebrity</i></p>		<p>👤👤 I'd like to dedicate all my late Sunday afternoons of sweet melancholia to the albums I Want You and What's Going on. we have been blessed. Was going to post this yesterday on his death day to be original but I forgot so here we are 🙄</p>
<p>March 28, 2018</p> <p><i>stuff</i></p>		<p>Bookshop haul 📖 feelin a certain kind of mood</p>
<p>March 24, 2018</p> <p><i>selfie</i></p>		<p>LA sun popping it's head out to give me some impeccable lighting 🌞👤</p>
<p>March 19, 2018</p> <p><i>selfie</i></p>		<p>The way sick people are captured in media completely ruined any ounce of self confidence i had growing up. I learned to deeply hate having my picture taken by professionals because there was always a need to make me look childlike and innocent- lacking in anything sexual or appealing. I was convinced I looked like an ugly sickly five year old for the first two years of high school and that that was why guys never seemed to be interested in me in "that" way. It took having a fair amount of relationships and casual sex before I realized that I wasn't the empty smiling shell of a girl I saw reflected back in pictures. It's so much easier to believe that sick people are cherubs- held in perpetual youth and innocence- who simply don't understand the truth of their condition because they are living up in the clouds. Seeing people who are sick as anything more complex and intelligent than that would mean we couldn't use them as these false beacons of hope. I've struggled more with guys, depression drugs, family and career than I ever have with my illness. I'm not an innocent and I'm not a child. I'm not "dying before I have had a chance to live" and what I choose to talk about with the world is not just empty positive falsehoods. Sick people deserve to be seen as more than hollow shells just waiting for their lives to begin. As always thank you to [REDACTED] For taking the most bomb ass pictures of me that will ever be taken.</p>
<p>March 10, 2018</p> <p><i>stuff</i></p>		<p>[REDACTED] has a new visual poem that I found so beautiful I just wanted to share it. I've had a deep affinity for poetry and literature my entire life-it was the only thing that touched at the loneliness and isolation of being sick. I don't know how I managed to become best friends with someone whose writing affects me so much. Sometimes when we are being lazy and laying around she will read to me some of whatever it is she is working on and I get these pangs of feeling like I am a witness to something vastly important that's unfolding. It's surreal. It's surreal to be close to someone you admire this much and whose work feels so vital to you. Anyway, she's got more of her work on her page if you feel like falling down the hole 🙄</p>
<p>February 22, 2018</p> <p><i>selfie</i></p>		<p>It's an AI Green stay up late on the couch staring at the wall sorta night 🙄 I impulse bought expensive gaudy ass sunglasses today to match my Sherpa coat and now I gotta wear them around the house all day to feel like I'm getting my moneys worth 🙄</p>

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DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION
February 20, 2018  <i>selfie</i>		<p>I'm hooommmmeeee, fucking blessed to have a home of my own to come back to and a life of my own that's worth living, worth putting up with all the endless treatments and seemingly pointless self care. It's so rare for people with cf to be able to go out on their own in life; more often then not we are entirely dependent on others to survive and we are forced to live half lives in fear of losing it all to our illness. I resigned myself at an early age to losing it all to illness. I've risked my health so many times in search of the things that will make my life worth living and although I am having to deal with the consequences of that in a very real way I feel honored. Really truly honored to have lived and failed and accomplished in the ways I have. I'm trying to not die here and it's fuckin wild, Trying to get new lungs and taking any possible cure I can rummage up. I think that the act of wanting something better is one of the most terrifying things we can do. But alas, here I am. Wanting to live. not because I was told that's what I should do but because there's a kind of life I believe is worth living. I know this is all a bit corny but there comes a point where you don't care and I have apparently reached that point, so happy to be home drinking coffee and plotting with ██████████ life is sweet</p>
February 5, 2018  <i>w. friends</i>		<p>Getting admitted to the hospital for a bit to tune up ██████████ thanks for the peaceful last day of freedom building sand tunnels</p>
February 1, 2018  <i>landscape</i>		<p>✖ tonight was insane it's midnight and I'm still pumped the fuck up</p>
January 30, 2018  <i>selfie</i>		<p>✂</p>

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DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3
April 6, 2020	stuff	This pandemic will go down in history as a collective trauma, which explains why we're seeing such a broad spectrum of trauma responses. In my latest column, I explain why you'll likely exhibit more than one kind of trauma response as a result of the coronavirus. Swipe to see the full cycle, and click the link in my bio to read more. #healingtrauma #healingyourself #highestself #selfawareness #selfhealers #selfcareaccount #mentalhealth #mentalhealthmatters #trauma #traumarecovery #traumareponse		1 2 3
April 4, 2020	stuff	My book [redacted] is officially on Goodreads! If you're interested in reading it (someday), I'd appreciate it if you'd mark it as to read! The more people who add it, the more people will see it on their home feeds. Link in bio -> #authorsofinstagram #authorlife #writersofinstagram #ownvoices #scrip! #sciencefiction #fantasybooks		1 2
April 1, 2020	selfie	I may not have iPhone portrait mode, but at least I have the comfiest t-shirt in the world 🍷 #verlymoments #livemoremagic #kinfolklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #allfeetwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekin spirerecreate #thatmagickmood #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #disabledandcute #disabledpeopleareh #disabledfashion		1 4
March 30, 2020	stuff	My latest column [redacted] is about hope for what comes after the coronavirus. There is nothing good about this pandemic. But I genuinely believe we can make it into something good. We have a responsibility to flatten the curve, yes, but we also have the privilege of looking to the future with critical consciousness and a desire to make the world a better place. Link in bio 🍷 #stayhome #disabilityadvocate #disabilityrights #writingcommunity #writerscommunity #writersofinstagram #allfeetwords #seekinspirecreate #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness		1
March 27, 2020	landscape	It's finally warm enough for me to go outside. The first walk of the year is always a big deal, but this felt a little bit like a miracle. The birds were chirping, the sun was out, and signs of life were everywhere, including this sweet lil message written in chalk. I'm starting to think that not everything is hopeless 🍷 #verlymoments #livemoremagic #kinfolklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #allfeetwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekin spirerecreate #thatmagickmood #spring #quarantine #stayhome #lightandairyphotography		3 4
March 15, 2020	stuff	I've been wanting this lil bag for years, and the other day he just ? turned up on my doorstep out of the blue?? Not sure who bought it for me but, hey, whoever you are, thanks a bunch, you have me believing in magic again! 🍷 PS. Just sent out that newsletter I mentioned a week ago (oops). Click the link in my bio to read and subscribe! PS.S. These are wild times. Stay safe and stay home. I love you. We'll make it through this.3w #verlymoments #livemoremagic #kinfolklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #allfeetwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekin spirerecreate #thatmagickmood #glitterpunkjewellery #glitterpunk #lapelpins #lightandairyphotography3wReply		2
March 8, 2020	selfie	We have the first presumptive coronavirus case [redacted] which is something. I'm officially on lockdown, which means I'm wearing nothing but pajamas and listening to my embarrassing playlist of bubblegum pop to keep my spirits up. It's not fun being immunocompromised in a world full of germs. I'm fighting tooth and nail to keep from falling into a depressive episode, so naturally, I'm writing a blog post about it. Click the link in my bio and subscribe to get the post in your inbox when it goes live. Also, please, for the love of everything holy, wash your hands. I'm choosing to believe that spring will come and wash the nastiness away 🍷 #verlymoments #livemoremagic #kinfolklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #allfeetwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagickmood #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #coronavirus		1 2 3
February 29, 2020	selfie	Off to [redacted] for a class on literary agents! I got new glasses last week and I'm kind of in love with them 🍷 #verlymoments #livemoremagic #kinfolklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #allfeetwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagickmood #bookcommunity #fantasybooks #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #writingcommunity #lightandairyphotography		4 2
February 24, 2020	stuff	For #rare disease day, I wrote about trauma and service dogs and stories I consistently get a kick out of telling. Link in bio 🍷 #whatmakesherareSMAA #rare disease #rare disease awareness #disabilityadvocate #writingcommunity #disabledwriters #allfeetwords #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness		1 2 3

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3
February 21, 2020		My graduation gift to myself was author photos by the amazing [redacted] Fingers crossed I'll have reason to use them soon! Oh, and swipe to see my hair, done by the ridiculously talented @debjademanley 🌸		2 4
February 20, 2020		I keep thinking about what I wrote to [redacted] a virtual letter the other day. I hate winter. Winter is hard. But I keep telling myself listen I love you joy is coming. Listen. I love you. Joy is coming 🌸 #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #poetry #kimadonizio	2 3 4	
February 17, 2020		Today is a bad fatigue day, but at least I recorded a lil something for the folks at [redacted] can't wait to show y'all what we've been working on 🌸 #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #disabledandcute #disabledpeoplearehot #disabledandcute	1	
February 12, 2020		Came home to this beautiful sight 🌸 #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #nofilter #nofilterneeded #flowers #light	4	
February 7, 2020		What you can't see in this picture: thermal leggings, thermal slippers, an obscene amount of Hot Hands, and how much I love [redacted] #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #wedding #brideandme	6 4	
January 25, 2020		I haven't posted in a while because school is driving me nuts but hi, I'm still alive, I did some skillful maneuvering so y'all could see my scrunchie in the mirror 🌸 #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #disabledandcute #disabledpeoplearehot #disabledandcute	4	
January 7, 2020		Winter is hard. I try to get out of the house, but either I'm too cold or too many sick people are around for me to really enjoy myself. I went to a cafe today and came home discouraged, half because I was chilled to the bone and half because I'm grumpy about my last semester of grad school. All I want to do is sit in a pool of sunshine and work on my book [redacted] But my house was full of liquid golden light when I got inside, which convinced my seasonal affective brain that maybe not everything is terrible 🌸 How do you cope with winter blues? #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #bookcommunity #fantasybooks #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #lightandairyphotography #light #winter #mentalhealth #mentalhealthawareness	2 3 1	
January 5, 2020		It's my book! My book! My child!!! I have labored over you for so long, and now it is time for you to see the light of the real world!!! I'm freaking out a little!!!!!!! #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #bookcommunity #fantasybooks #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #disabilityawareness #amwriting #writersofinstagram #writerscommunity #writingcommunity	1 2	
December 31, 2019		I went into 2019 with the goal of investing in some fun pajamas. I work, learn, and everything else from home, so while I'm too lazy to wear, like, actual normal clothes, these floral dreamboats have made a stupidly ridiculous impact on my mental health. 2019 was a year. I didn't expect a whopping 95 percent of what happened, which gives me high hopes for 2020. Among other things, my list for the coming year includes graduating with my M.A., getting a literary agent, pitching [redacted] getting another tattoo, and exploring Disney World with [redacted] It's gonna be 🌸 What's on your list for 2020? #verilymoments #livemoremagic #kirfofklife #myeverydaymagic #whimsicalwonderfulwild #asecondofwhimsey #calm_collected #alfeefwords #gloomandglow #slowandglow #seekinspirecreate #thatmagicmood #bookcommunity #fantasybooks #spinalmuscularatrophy #spinalmuscularatrophytype2 #disability #lightandairyphotography	1 2 3 4	

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3
December 27, 2019 <i>stuff</i>		<p>A while back [redacted] interviewed me for her book, <i>Before and After the Book Deal: A Writer's Guide to Finishing, Publishing, Promoting, and Surviving Your First Book</i>. I was so thrilled to receive a contributor's copy in the mail from [redacted] now that I've finished the first draft of [redacted]. I'm looking forward to diving in and soaking up the wisdom of giants such as Roxane Gay and Ottessa Moshfegh.</p> <p>Before and After the Book Deal comes out on January 7th. You can preorder your copy by clicking the link in my bio 📄 15w</p> <p>#lightandairyphotography #lightroom #publishing #interview #literature</p>	3	
December 25, 2019 <i>stuff</i>		<p>Merry happy 🎄 #christmas #tree #lightandairyphotography #holidayseason #holiday #holidays #holidaydecor #christmasornaments #ornaments</p>	4	
December 20, 2019 <i>w. friends</i>		<p>My printer is throwing a fit about my 500+ pg book (oops), so in the meantime, here are my fave girls 💜</p>		6

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 10, 2020		I've missed home ☹️	①			
March 1, 2020	landscape	I have long been fascinated by the tale of y gwyllgi - the giant black dog said to stalk travellers on little haunted roads in the Welsh countryside, a little while ago, the tale inspired me to set out to record myself today, that story finally reaches you, graciously given a home by the [redacted] team. link in bio for Y GWYLLGI! enjoy x	② ①			
January 19, 2020	landscape	candy floss skies.	①			
January 9, 2020	landscape	brunch ☺️	①			
January 8, 2020	stuff	it's been over a year since [redacted] passed. I still miss her so much. things were better with her around. Rest in peace, pup.	③	[Redacted]		
December 30, 2019	selfie	this is months old but I look cute af so im posting it anyway	④			
December 20, 2019	w. friends	I kept dragging us in the path of the foam cañon	④ ③			
December 13, 2019	stuff	this bathbomb be looking like a fancy cheesecake (credit to charles for this perfect association)	④ ③			
November 4, 2019	landscape	even the most dreary of autumn days are absolutely spellbinding.	④ ①			
August 16, 2019	stuff.	judging of [redacted] #awepintchallenge	④			
July 26, 2019	selfie stuff	if me	⑤			
July 4, 2019	w. friends	bye for now [redacted] see you soon - i hope!	①	[Redacted]		

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
June 15, 2019	selfie	my eyeshadow palette said gay rights 🏳️💜💜 5				
June 8, 2019	landscape	realised I haven't given croatia any love on here! it was so beautiful, here are just a few pics. that take in the first pic? yeah. I SWAM IN THAT, and i have never felt so iconic. landscape I saw some old books today and it was neat! 6				
May 26, 2019	stuff	stuff. 4 2				
May 27, 2019	landscape	venice, i love you landscape not a bad view 6				
May 13, 2019	landscape	1 4				
April 20, 2019	selfie	hello friends 4				
April 19, 2019	landscape	beddgetert 1				
April 19, 2019	landscape	y mynyddoedd 1				
April 19, 2019	landscape	y mdr 1				

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
April 9, 2020	selfie	Happy Birthd[redacted] bu are the best big brother! #happybirthd[redacted] #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers	1, 3, 4			
April 8, 2020	selfie	Everyone is posting fake mugshots so here is us "locked up" on the playground 🤪 #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers #playground	2, 3, 4			
April 5, 2020	selfie	Life is full of sunshine w[redacted] sound 🌞 #sunshine #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #sunday #stayat[redacted]	1, 3, 4			
April 1, 2020	selfie	We are so excited to continue sharing our journey with you! Thank you for 50K! 🥳 #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers #friends #followers #gratitude #brothers			2, 3, 4	
March 30, 2020	selfie	These are what memories are made of - missing baseball season! 🥺 #spring #baseball #missyou #brotherlove #league #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers	1, 3, 4			
March 28, 2020	selfie	Never underestimate the value of pure joy and laughter! #laughter #brotherlove #joy #freshair #happy #therapy #walk #exercise #neighborhood #bluebirds #sunshine #downsyndrome #brotherlove #love	1, 3, 4			
March 27, 2020	selfie	Living our best quarantine life! 🤪 #downsyndrome #love #quarantine #brotherlove #brothers #funny #funnyvideos	1, 3, 4			
March 23, 2020	selfie	Wanted to share how we celebrated World Down Syndrome Day! 🧡💙 #downsyndrome #love #love #brotherlove #love #321 #brotherlove #brothers	1, 3, 4			
March 22, 2020	selfie	It's hard to put in words the amount of impact [redacted] made on me and others from his contagious smile to the great love he shares. Although I hear often how wonderful it that he has a big brother to look up to but the truth is it's the other way around. How did I get so lucky to admire someone and learn from him everyday. Happy World Down Syndrome Day! Thank you for being you 🧡💙 #worlddownsyndromeday #downsyndromeawareness #celebrate #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers #love #family #community #support	1, 3, 4			
March 20, 2020	selfie	In the mist of everything happening in the world we are reminded of those we care about the most. 🧡 Even if we are driving each other crazy in quarantine 🤪 #brotherlove #brothers #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove	1, 3, 4			
March 17, 2020	selfie	Happy St. Patrick's Day! Check out our new YT video "Not My Arms Challenge". Link in the bio 🧡💙 #stpatricksday #challenge #brotherlove #brothers #downsyndrome #love #luckycharms	1, 2, 3, 4			
March 14, 2020	selfie	There is only one thing that can have us both so rept up. Comment below your guess 🤪. #downsyndrome #love #brotherlove #brothers #reptup #love #basilia	1, 3, 4			

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 11, 2020	selfie	Where's My Brother? 🤔 Do you want to see more? Comment your favorite! 🥰	1, 3, 4			
March 6, 2020	selfie	That brother love 🥰 #brotherlove #dsklove #downsyndrome #brothers #love #awesling #below	1, 3, 4			
March 7, 2020	w/friends	Can't believe it's been a week since Playlist Live. We are happy to be home but missing everyone and the energy that filled us. This distance is pain for... special thank you to... we don't dare forget about... have been one of the biggest and first inspirations in our pursuit of social media... interest in YouTube and TikTok is due to the many years of love and admiration for your content. It has provided years of comedic content but most importantly during a time when he was known as non-verbal it provided language assistance as he repeatedly imitated the content with his own special personality. From the bottom of our hearts we can't thank you enough for your love, kindness, especially for these memories that we will forever cherish. Watch... and make his little dream a reality has been the greatest gift. Much love to... and fam! 🥰 #moments #missab #aaron #playlist #playlistive #orlando #streamscome #downsyndrome #sklove #socialmedia Orlando you were good to us! #DisneySprings #Orlando #Sunshine #Happiness #FunTimes #Love #Brothers #DownSyndrome #Photos #ZacharyValentine				1, 2, 3, 4, 5
March 4, 2020	selfie					1, 3, 4
March 4, 2020	selfie	We are still beaming with happiness from Playlist Live. Grateful for all genuine and good hearted individuals we met and for the new friendships we made 🥰 #sklove #downsyndrome #brotherlove #brothers #playlistive #playlistive2020 #funtime for all/tends	1, 2, 3, 4			
March 1, 2020	selfie	We are having so much fun at Playlist Live! #playlistive #brothers #colibis #happy #fun #orlando #downsyndrome #sklove #brotherlove #	1, 2, 3, 4			
February 28, 2020	selfie	This day is finally here - Playlist Live! #Playlistive #influencers #TikTok #YouTube #friends #BeingSilly	1, 2, 3, 4			
February 28, 2020	selfie	So excited! On our way to our first ever @playlistive 🥰 #skalist #orlando #fun #downsyndrome #sklove #brotherlove #brothers	1, 2, 3, 4			
February 25, 2020	selfie	Pizza anyone? 🍕 #pizza #brotherlove #downsyndrome #giantana #deep-dish-pizza #brothers #sklove #save gas #foodcove/language	1, 3, 4			



DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
April 10, 2020	selfie	Still don't know the right words to express my gratitude to the person who has been diagnosed with the herpes virus for the past 3 years. I wish given so many health prescription and advice for improvement. I totally lost hope, until I found many testimonies of people who have an online research like anybody would like to see any one that has been with herpes virus should contact the one and only give me you can contact me on my email <a href="mailto:herpes@herpes.com">herpes@herpes.com</a> today, because he has the cure to any virus problem.	1, 2			
April 9, 2020	selfie	Me and my friend decided to change a couple things up today because after noticing that my resting heart rate has been over 80 for the past month and a half I knew I needed to change something. As a POTS patient, having a high resting heart rate is very normal but I had managed to get my resting into the 70s and sometimes even the 60s so this sudden spike was weird. After lots of research on my lifestyle and HR history I realized that because I don't have my soccer I left I've been doing more upright cardio and my heart isn't able to recover from large spikes when I'm upright even if it's only 10 min. I can do an hour on the track and end the day with a resting hr of 69 but 10 min on the treadmill walking puts me resting at 85. So that was a kind of discouraging but also a relief that I want something some I tried some basketball and did all my work and school work for the day. Did the live <a href="#">herpes</a> another strength workout and now I'm chilling. Going to switch to using my day chair on the treadmill and utilizing a stationary handcycle for cardio instead of upright stuff for now. (miss my track chair so much though. #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball)	2, 3, 4			
April 8, 2020	selfie	Nothing quite like a "I forgot to take a picture while I was training so let's take one in my work clothes" kind of look. Today was FUN. I woke up early and had some really nice time just stretching and reading away from technology. I've been trying to not touch my phone until I start working and I makes my mornings <a href="#">herpes</a> get going through my own thoughts uninterrupted. I had a meeting with <a href="#">herpes</a> team and man I just love my job and the people I work with. Every email or phone call or <a href="#">herpes</a> come out of hours me feeling so excited. I got to do a fun game and live <a href="#">herpes</a> some drills, then basics training, some patio sprints, stop practice, then cardio, and finished with strength. I'm also continuing to finish up my classes for the semester. Just 3.5 weeks left. I am taking some summer classes due to some changes in requirements to my degree but I enjoy being occupied so I'm not upset about that one bit. I'm still on track to graduate on time in December it feels a bit strange graduating mid year but the semester I look off to live in LA and focus on my health was worth it. Happy for the little bit of rain we're getting to wash the pollen away and melted with the amount of sunshine I've been getting lately. #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball	1, 2, 3, 4			
April 5, 2020	selfie	Kind of a weird day but still great. My eyes did not want to open this morning and it was rough going there getting out of bed. But I woke up made some coffee and breakfast then sat down with my family and had church. Virtual church is a blessing I've been taking advantage of for some time now due to chronic illness but it's usually done alone in my room so being with family and worshipping is always awesome. Then I played some basketball for a while and messed around with tiling and tiling. I've fallen on accident a couple times but I could not for the life of me get me to fall on purpose so I could practice getting up <a href="#">herpes</a> let me practice tiling and I have a goal to be able to get on one wheel without help but we'll see how that takes. I did some sprint training and put up Christmas lights with more <a href="#">herpes</a> sat out "chose joy" so that the neighborhood is a little less gloomy. Then I finished up my abs and shoulder routines and watched a couple. Now I'm enjoying the weather on the porch. I've got a midterm and an exam this week and those have me a little worried but it's not too much work. Face tomorrow with strength! We got this.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5			
April 4, 2020	w/ friends	All the <a href="#">herpes</a> in her wheelchair leaning on one wheel next to <a href="#">herpes</a> holding the other wheel in the air. They are both smiling. <a href="#">herpes</a> #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball				
April 4, 2020	stuff	Thanks mom and dad for forgetting to throw out the basketball hoop 8 years ago! Mom and I dug it out of the pine straw by the side of the house today and put it back together so I can practice at home instead of in an empty parking lot so hooray for that! I did 4 whole miles of cardio today which is especially impressive considering I only planned on doing 1. I kept having to turn down neighborhoods and side roads to avoid people because some were complain with the social distancing thing and others very much did not care and I wasn't having any of that. Had fun even though I was wishing my left leg would just fall because it was in so much dead pain. It's only my work time and with <a href="#">herpes</a> hobby harness or any of my braces I was suffering more than I normally would have. But oh well. I'm alive lol. We had a picnic <a href="#">herpes</a> from like 15 feet away and enjoyed the sunshine. I did my arm and ab workout on the porch when we got home because I just want to soil <a href="#">herpes</a> has weather as much as possible. A good day. But now its bath time. <a href="#">herpes</a> #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball	2, 3, 4			
April 2, 2020	selfie	An outside walk day! Atlas has been so good with just hanging out or having me just throw the ball for a little bit because the roads here are so hilly my legs can't do it well. So we drove to a walking trail that's still open and walked for a mile and a half in the sun. We saw maybe 3 other people. It was nice. I did a long strength routine today and it made me so tired but I still went to the court for about an hour and half. I worked on my left arm a lot but I'm feeling a little lopsided after all these days shooting with my right arm lol. #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods	2, 3, 4			
April 1, 2020	selfie	I wrote 1100 words for a paper today but still need 400 to make it to the minimum. Y'all think I can manage a 400 word conclusion lol @ spent a good 2 hours on that today then took a break, then the court for an hour, then a short walk, then my live workout over on <a href="#">herpes</a> I'm lying in bed cuddling my dog because why not. Trying not to let the <a href="#">herpes</a> scares get me and being thankful for what I've got. I get to see my fiance on Saturday after 2 weeks of hard core isolation and over a month of social distancing. We've done the long distance thing before but it's very different when he's a mile away and the only thing keeping us from each other is an excess of caution. I'm thankful to have a man that came enough to be alone for that long just so he can see me for a day when he could've easily invited friends over any time he wanted to. We have no plans except to watch 3D rock and make food together and I'm excited. #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball	1, 2, 3, 4, 6			
March 31, 2020	selfie	A little rain ain't gonna stop me! Today was bumpy. Lots of little things just piling on top of each other and making me feel like I'm drowning. I'm struggling so much in a class I thought I was going to love because my teacher doesn't teach. It's just a read the textbook and hope you get it all kind of class which is frustrating. I needed a good workout today so when the rain stopped we went to the court and I shot some hoops for a half hour then did some endurance stuff on the small hill in the lot. It started raining pretty hard which made me cry slippery but I had some gloves that helped. Nothing finishes a workout up quite like a shower from the sky lol. Don't forget tomorrow at 5 on <a href="#">herpes</a> we have our second adaptive workout of the week. All text abby in her wheelchair in a parking lot, soaking wet and smiling. #pots #POTS #POTise #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endowarrior #broods #disabedathlete #adaptivewhite #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball	2, 4, 6			

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 30, 2020	selfie	Doing my best to remember to live joyfully during this crazy time. There's a lot to be afraid of but also a lot to be thankful for. I'm pretty happy today which is really nice after a couple of really rough days in a row. I got some work done that did some training and now I'm resting before going live on an adaptive workout. Feeling productive helps my mood substantially so this has been nice. The pollen is starting to get to me though and I'm ready for some rain to wash it away. At last! ably in her chair wearing a shirt that says "live joyfully". eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		1, 2, 3, 7		
March 29, 2020	stuff	This whole isolation thing is hitting me now. Small things are more frustrating and big things feel like the end of the world. Still doing my best to exercise and keep those endorphins going though. The stay at home order still allows outside activities as long as you can remain 6ft or further from another person you're not directly living with. This means I'm going back to the court. I went for an hour and then my side view mirror broke and I was stuck in traffic for an hour and a half. I dropped him off at home and got back in the car and went home. I let me play in the driveway while we watched and talked to me from the basement door. I'm officially making more shots than I'm missing which is super encouraging considering it's only been a week since I first sat in this chair. I'm feeling better now and gonna try and ride that high until something else comes along to bring it up again. At last! a view of her basketball chair while she's holding a basketball. Videos are taking 5 shots in a row and 3 in a row. eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #tumors #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball				
March 28, 2020	selfie	A happy first picture because I got new belts today and I'm very happy. We may have a stay at home order in place but (Sports) is still important. My old belt (swaps) was BAD. I came with the chair when I got it and I just assumed it would be fine. I was wrong. It dug into my hips so much that I had to buy another one and ordered these AMAZING straps. They're way comfy and make me feel 100% more secure in my chair. It may have taken me nearly 3 hours to figure out how to put them on but hey, I got there eventually. Ready for lots of home workouts. Following my schedule for adaptive live workouts Mondays and Wednesdays with ME! eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #tumors #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		2, 4, 6		
March 26, 2020	selfie	The best training buddy a gal could ask for! Plus (you can barely tell) but we have matching bandanas and sunscreens so like goals am I right? Today was beyond productive. I sat out lots of emails and had great conversations with my bosses. Took a math exam and got a 101% (grrrr me I'm dreaming). Then we went to the court and I played and did drills for an hour before being quite literally chased away by a dad and his children who thought routing me was a better idea than to leave. I keep your germs away y'all. Drove around with sis for a bit, brush my hair for 30 min and ended with another dog walk of half a mile. Got to see that winter coat blowout. Finished the day with a nap. The treadmill and 20 min of kickboxing with minimal Lovel every second of it. As has had one alerting during kickboxing which is why I only did 20 min. Has trained a lot when I'm working out and only alerting during his run during that time period. My HR was in the 170s while moms was 130. Yikes. The pollen is thick in the air though and all my nose soaking up the sunburn is biting me in the face. Hates to #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #tumors #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		1, 2, 3, 4, 6		
March 25, 2020	selfie	These back pictures by my eyes were closed in every photo I took but the sun was OUT and BEAUTIFUL so I'm not complaining. Earlier today we even went to my grandma's house and we parked the car in her driveway and sat in the trunk while she sat in a chair about 10ft away in her garage. I was actually lovely and the highlight of my day. I'm really happy I brought my basketball chair because it's something I can actually do even when everything's closed. I can still go to empty parking lots and I can still do drills. It's nice. I miss my razor though because a lot of my mental fog switch when I'm overworked. Basketball requires a fair bit of concentration right now but I've been racing long enough that I can hold my own and start pushing until my brain wants to turn back on again lol. I'm enjoying my classes still and really adoring my internship with #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #tumors #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		1, 2, 3, 4,		
March 24, 2020	selfie	Blurry parking lot photos. Spent 5 hours straight on schoolwork and felt like my eyeballs were gonna fall so we went to the parking lot and I shot some hoops and did some drills for an hour. Exercising as much as I can so I can keep my endorphins up and my depression down lol. Thankful that my normal schedule of school and work haven't been interrupted and praying for all those who are adjusting to online life. It's different and it seems like it's a bit of a struggle for most of the time but I know you'll figure it out and just absolutely kill it in work or school or whatever you're doing. PS, is anyone has tips on shooting better please send them my way. I am not good at this. At last! a blurry photo of her basketball wheelchair holding a basketball. The videos are various angles of her taking shots at a hoop in a parking lot. eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #tumors #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		1, 2, 4, 6,		
March 22, 2020	selfie	Empty parking lot with a basketball hoop in the corner? I'm there. Managed to actually get the ball in the basket too! Social distancing and isolation is still extremely important but going outside, whether that be your back yard, your porch or an empty parking lot is also important both for physical activity and for mental health. Stay away from people though. I'm staying far away from people that aren't in my immediate household and making sure I don't spread germs to anyone or anything. We need to overreact now so that we don't have to worry as much in the future. My serious thanks and love to those that are still working right now. If you're being forced to work or can't afford to take time off, I'm really praying for you. This is hard for everyone but you are in the thick of it. We need to work together and keep ourselves and others safe and healthy. Stay home kids. eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endovomior #broods #dsabedathlete #adaptivethe #wheelchairathlete #wheelchairbasketball		1, 2, 3, 4, 7		
March 20, 2020	stuff	A better day. We slept in till 11 and had a slow morning. I made my favorite cast iron skillet apple oatmeal balls and made avocado toast on homemade bread for me. I went for my usual walk with and I'm thankful that hasn't been interrupted in all this chaos. He doesn't need to be worried as much now that he's growing up and melting out but I still need the mental space that it gives me. Plus nobody else is out walking in the middle of an 83 degree day so I'm always alone and away from people. We went for a drive afterwards just to enjoy the sunshine a bit more. I got some work done. Book a nap when we got back. She woke up and we had a worship session. We played songs together, her on the keyboard, me on the guitar, and praised the Lord for just being who he is. After that we took advantage of the YMCA free workout video they have on their website and did a bare case that kicked my butt. I'm feeling optimistic again. Anger is my biggest struggle and it's come out a lot the past few days. I lost a lot when the virus showed up and it all did, and my community that I had finally built disappeared in seconds. I'm finally feeling like a comfortable home and then every aspect that helped me get there was up and ripped away. I'm happy it still feels like home but sad that it also feels empty and alone now too. It's a continuous work in progress. In the meantime, stay home and away from people, wash your hands, don't be stupid, all that jazz. eds #eherdantorsidromone #chronicillness #chronicallyill #response #red #cops #POTS #POTS #tachycardia #pain #disabled #disability #endometriosis #endovomior		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 19, 2020	<i>selfie</i>	My face when I hear that all the outdoor basketball courts and the track have been closed till April 🤒 I'm thrilled that the city is taking all the necessary precautions to keep its occupants safe and healthy but it's definitely hard for someone like me who can't just go for a run (or push) in my neighborhood. I need a track space so I can have that workout because sidewalks near me are non-existent and I don't feel safe pushing on open roads. I can still take my short walks but it's not the same. A lot of my races have been canceled or pushed back and the likelihood of me being able to do a PR (qualifier is shrinking, it's all a mess). I'm still passing time with sis in creative ways and we leave on Saturday to go be with our parents and be closer to our care teams 🙏🏾 <a href="#">Evelyn Henderson</a> <a href="#">#elderantiosyndrome</a> <a href="#">#chronicillness</a> <a href="#">#chronicfatigue</a> <a href="#">#pocooone</a> <a href="#">#red</a> <a href="#">#kops</a> <a href="#">#POTS</a> <a href="#">#POTSis</a> <a href="#">#tachycardia</a> <a href="#">#pain</a> <a href="#">#disabled</a> <a href="#">#inability</a> <a href="#">#endometriosis</a> <a href="#">#endowanor</a> <a href="#">#fibroids</a> <a href="#">#disability</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchair</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairbasketball</a>	1, 2, 3, 4,			
March 18, 2020	<i>selfie</i>	Yesterday was hard not gonna lie. I cried a bit. I was angry. I was anxious. I'm still not feeling emotionally stable but I'm getting there. This all has been a lot. So this morning I woke up and just went straight to the track. There were a few people there in the middle grass doing crossfit so out of extra caution I took lane 3. I want in training mode or anything. I just needed to push so I did. My lower back has been bothering me lately and being bent over for a 30 min 5k was rough. I was never out of breath because of pushing but that pain was hard to work through. I locked up my basketball tires on the way home and then showered, napped, headed to the basketball court only to see that all outdoor and indoor courts have now been closed so that was a bummer 🙄🙄🙄 I did some drills in the parking lot before calling it a night. Take a breath y'all. This is all bananas and it's hard to handle but I know we will. Keep implementing social distancing and stop going to restaurants and bars and parties. This next vacation time this is serious baffering the curve time. Love y'all 🙏🏾 <a href="#">#lumors</a> <a href="#">#endometriosis</a> <a href="#">#endowanor</a> <a href="#">#fibroids</a> <a href="#">#disability</a> <a href="#">#retraining</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairing</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchair</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchair</a> <a href="#">#disability</a> <a href="#">#retraining</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairing</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7			
March 15, 2020	<i>stuff</i>	I'm gonna be honest, this whole social distancing thing is a lot easier when you're bound. If it was just me here I know I'd be a wreck. I love her presence and goodness. We don't think and be able to spend more than a week together again until after school finished but now her university is closed for at least 2 more weeks and I'm already an online student. Today was fun. View both stories from phones most of the day to avoid fear and anxiety induced by media. I took [redacted] for a walk while she rolled back next to us. We read books together. We played board games and took naps. We made good food and took a drive around town to enjoy the sun. Not thankful for the reason that we are in this situation but I am thankful for the fun and joy its brought me this far. <a href="#">#elderantiosyndrome</a> <a href="#">#chronicillness</a> <a href="#">#chronicfatigue</a> <a href="#">#pocooone</a> <a href="#">#red</a> <a href="#">#kops</a> <a href="#">#POTS</a> <a href="#">#POTSis</a> <a href="#">#tachycardia</a> <a href="#">#pain</a> <a href="#">#disabled</a> <a href="#">#inability</a>	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7			
March 14, 2020	<i>selfie</i>	I got my chaf!! I've got to get new tires later this week but I'm so happy!! I'm already having so much fun practicing. With all this quarantine I said I have been doing the only thing we can really do outside is play in parking lots away from people. It's still lots of fun though. I'll never be able to play basketball but I've already got the hang of picking it up against my wheel and pushing while dribbling. Just gotta work on turning with the ball and shooting. Nicole and I have been doing lots of talking since we've stuck inside and my fridge has never been this full 🙏🏾🙏🏾 thank you all for supporting me in this new sport. I can't wait for everything ahead! <a href="#">#elderantiosyndrome</a> <a href="#">#chronicillness</a> <a href="#">#chronicfatigue</a> <a href="#">#pocooone</a> <a href="#">#red</a> <a href="#">#kops</a> <a href="#">#POTS</a> <a href="#">#POTSis</a> <a href="#">#tachycardia</a> <a href="#">#pain</a> <a href="#">#disabled</a> <a href="#">#inability</a> <a href="#">#endometriosis</a> <a href="#">#endowanor</a> <a href="#">#fibroids</a> <a href="#">#disability</a> <a href="#">#advocate</a> <a href="#">#wheelchair</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a> <a href="#">#wheelchairathlete</a>	1, 2, 3, 4			
March 11, 2020	<i>selfie.</i>	Enjoying one of my favorite birthday presents. This little handmade wheelchair home gym. I'm a little disappointed all my videos are out of at the top though 🙏🏾 now that its track season I'm doing a pretty even mix of cardio on the track and strength at home. I also got a lot of new physical therapy exercises to help strengthen some muscles around my Clummy pants as well. I'm still enjoying the movement though. I love working out and I love being able to do it from home instead of dealing with awkward inaccessible gyms. Also loving the weather after so long of just rain. It's still cloudy but its the perfect weather to be outside in right now. <a href="#">#elderantiosyndrome</a> <a href="#">#elderantiosyndrome</a> <a href="#">#chronicillness</a> <a href="#">#chronicfatigue</a> <a href="#">#pocooone</a> <a href="#">#red</a> <a href="#">#kops</a> <a href="#">#POTS</a> <a href="#">#POTSis</a> <a href="#">#tachycardia</a> <a href="#">#pain</a> <a href="#">#disabled</a> <a href="#">#inability</a> <a href="#">#endometriosis</a> <a href="#">#endowanor</a> <a href="#">#fibroids</a>				
			1, 2, 4			

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 13, 2020	selfie	sometimes, the analogy of snowflakes is used to describe autistic people. not the way boomers use it, but that we are all individuals, we are all different, you will never find two that are exactly alike. experiences, traits, special interests, opportunities and physical skills are all things that differ, but one thing binds us together: they way we process information is different. some things we have a very difficult time processing or getting grips of, while some we grasp faster, things that are abstract, philosophical, social, moral or non-literal are some examples of topics of difficulty, these things are not seen by having a simple conversation with the person, and definitely not by looking at their face. autism is a spectrum that does NOT act linearly, with more autistic on one side, and less on the other. you don't have a teaspoon of autism while others have a cup of autism. it doesn't work like that: the traits that make up an autistic person can be expressed heavily, or only expressed to a certain degree. some can be expressed more than other traits, and some traits may be expressed more in one autism than the next. i may not be like your son, daughter, cousin, classmate, friend, parent, neighbour with autism- and that's because no one is like them, they are them. i am me. this is my story. MY autism. What's yours? #autism #autistic #happy		1, 2, 3		
March 10, 2020	w. Friends	CEO of cool eyes				
January 24, 2020	selfie	you can find me dancin in between the raindrops 🌧️				
December 12, 2019	w. Friends	all spruced up with the blit!				
December 2, 2019	w. Friends	santa, we can explain				
November 5, 2019	selfie	constant stress, constant pressure, depression weighs on me and makes every step, smile, ounce of effort unbearable, but i'm tough, i'm determined to live and to thrive. i know that life is going to get better right now, most things are unbearable, but hanging on to the things that give me joy is giving me hope- my dog, my boyfriend, my family, my upcoming hair business that i look forward to growing into something beautiful, sometimes school isn't for everyone, even when i and everyone thought it was for me, sometimes you can be smart enough for it, but not strong enough for it, and i'm going to work around that now. thank you everyone for the messages and the love, new youtube vid will be out soon about therapy and some things i've learned- i find the videos help me a lot and it seems to be helping even just a few people out there and i love that, thanks guys, it's overwhelming to think of who cares about me when i thought no one did. xo		4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9		
October 16, 2019	selfie	i'm a lover not a fighter but i'll never let you flex on me				
September 30, 2019	selfie	the lovechild of amanda seyfried and billie ellish				
September 18, 2019	selfie	the bible didn't mention us, not even once				
August 27, 2019	selfie	for when the cold wind blows, i will close my eyes calmly, knowing i am anchored to you. #love #instagood #photography #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #an #girl #blonde #instadaily #sands #summer #fun #smile #ootd #instake #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #motivation #art		7		
August 26, 2019	selfie	bet you won't get as far into the cave as we did. (or make bat friends) #love #instagood #photography #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #an #girl #blonde #instadaily #sands #summer #fun #smile #ootd #instake #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganpresets #motivation #art		7		

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
August 14, 2019	selfie	follow the (yellow brick road) 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
August 12, 2019	w. friends	the A is I 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
August 6, 2019	selfie	anyone need a bridesmaid? 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
August 2, 2019	selfie	me looking at the LCBO. #thanks everyone for the bday wishes 🧡 very thankful i have so many wonderful people in my life! 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7, 8, 9			
July 25, 2019	selfie	how can i resist 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
July 15, 2019	selfie	you are my sweetest downfall 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
July 8, 2019	selfie	think of your diamond mind. #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
July 6, 2019	selfie	kick it bucket 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
July 5, 2019	selfie	people like it's hot 🧡 bless my relationship of for helping me achieve this tan with no tanners 🧡 FREE THIS WEEKEND with a VP purchase! \$1.09 save 🧡 you know where to find me! 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			
July 3, 2019	selfie.	me when i remember how i would've got dress coded so hard in this fit 🧡 #love #instagood #photooftheday #bt #cute #quote #me #followme #happy #follow #fashion #selfie #picoftheday #tan #girl #blonde #instadaily #friends #summer #fun #smile #boobabe #instastyle #happy #beautiful #entrepreneur #instamood #meganprezets #motivation #art	7			



DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
March 13, 2020	selfie	Let's go take a picture together 📸				
March 9, 2020		📸				
March 7, 2020	selfie	Be as goofy as you want to be 🤪			3	
March 4, 2020	selfie	Let me show you what I can do 📸				
March 1, 2020	selfie	Let's just keep the lights on 📸				
February 26, 2020	selfie	I feel so small compared to this 🤪				
February 22, 2020	selfie	I wish that this night will never be over! pic cred: [REDACTED]				
February 17, 2020	selfie	Just thinking about life 🤔				
February 14, 2020	w. friends	Happy birthday and Valentine's Day to my amazing mom! I'm so glad you support me with every decision that I make! I hope you have an wonderful double holiday!			4	

DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
May 19, 2019	selfie	<p>Hello Everyone! 🍷 Some of you may have noticed that my 'Bio' has changed and soon my content as well I've been hesitant to do this for quite some time, but it's really been pressing on my heart to create a safe space for dancers to be able to discuss their struggles &amp; or relate to my own personal experiences whether that be mentally or physically. I feel like I have been very quiet about my personal struggles in my life on this account, and would love to open up the conversation of mental health among dancers of all ages. It's no question that dance is not just a physically demanding career, but it also wreaks havoc on the mind, and mental health. In the arts, one in three people are affected by anxiety, depression or other mental health issues. Also eating disorders are 10 times more common in ballet dancers than non-ballet dancers. I believe many of us are aware of these facts, but when it directly affects you or a loved one I know JUST how difficult that can be. 🍷 I know this personally as I've struggled with Anxiety, Depression &amp; Anorexia for about 11 years now. Very recently I have been through some tests that may show that I have Celiac Disease, and this has no doubtably been the hardest four months of my life by far. I also suffer from Sinus Tachycardia, which is a condition of the heart, which the sinus rhythm is elevated by a rate of impulses, defined as a rate greater than 100 beats/min bpm in an average adult. The normal resting heart rate in the average male adult ranges from 60-100 bpm and women 60-90bpm. Mine usually runs around 115-120bpm RESTING and have had a few scenes where I've almost been sitting at 180-200bpm 🍷</p> <p>OUR BODIES ARE CRAZY MACHINES! I have a huge passion for helping people &amp; children of all ages and I hope that in opening up my account and posts, that not only can I share my passion and love of dance but also support YOU GUYS as much as possible! 🍷</p> <p>🍷 I really want all of you to know that my DM's are ALWAYS open. Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle ... Bee kind 🍷 Lets ROOT for each other- and WATCH each other grow. 🍷"</p> <p>♥Simplicity♥</p>	1, 2, 3, 4			
May 11, 2019	selfie	<p>Long time no stretch... Remind me to warm up next time I just spontaneously decide to do things like this....</p>	1			
May 2nd, 2019	selfie	<p>Long time no see sunshine 🍷 Hope everyone's doing well - xo</p>	1			
March 8, 2019	selfie	<p>Pulled out one of my favourite custom Leo's out the other night and spent a good few hours practicing. Feels so good to be home 🍷 and by home I mean ballet. 🍷 No, I'm not in classes or in studio right now due to health issues, but taking my own time to do what I live and breathe. 🍷 GOAL for 2019 - start attending classes again</p>	1, 2			
February 11, 2019	selfie	<p>You're back! It's been a while, how have you been? 🍷 Can't decide between dance and everyday photos. How about both? XD</p>	1			
January 24, 2019	selfie	<p>Hello lovelies! 🍷 It's been so long since I've posted some real up to date dance photos. It felt so good to put everything on and do what I love today 🍷 xoxo</p>	1			
July 23, 2018	selfie	<p>D🍷NUT W🍷FRY, BE HAPPY 🍷</p>				
June 13, 2018	selfie	<p>Happy 2018 everyone! Pretty delayed in posting but I am still alive 🍷 haven't really got any new photos to post but I'm hoping to very soon 🍷 Hope everyone is doing well! Xoxo p.s I am well aware I have a pupil in my hair 🍷</p>				
March 20, 2018	selfie	<p>I haven't posted here in over a year! 🍷 Took advantage of the snow storm the other night with my brother! I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas! 🍷 xoxo</p>	1			
December 26, 2017	selfie					



DATE	MAIN PHOTO	CAPTION	PHOTO 2	PHOTO 3	PHOTO 4	PHOTO 5
August 11, 2016	selfie	Blueberry Island 🍷				
June 5, 2016	w. friends	Oh my goodness! It's been SO LONG since I've posted 🙄 Time has been flying by like crazy! Working full time has definitely been keeping me super busy and very tired 😴 Today me and my sister [redacted] went on a fun adventurous bike ride & enjoyed the beautiful weather! I hope everyone is doing well 🍷 xoxo	5.6			
May 1, 2016	selfie	She believed she could, so she did! 🍷	1			
April 28, 2016	selfie	Cheeky puppy selfie 🐶 It's been much too long since I've posted here 🙄 I've been keeping extra busy with work, but things are going great! Love you all! Xoxo 🍷	5			
April 14, 2016	w. friends	Every brunette needs a blonde best friend 🍷 and that blonde best friend of mine is my sister 🍷 A few days late, but better late than never! #rationalblingsday (still 4 siblings left out from this post 🍷 [redacted] love you all so much!!)	6			
April 7, 2016	selfie	Throwback to filming with [redacted] in the studio 🍷 Missing this place more than anything right now!	1			
March 31, 2016	selfie	Hello my lovelies! 🍷 It's been much too long and I apologize for being MIA 🙄 Just wanted to update you all that I arrived safely in Edmonton and I'm finally starting to feel at home! My room has come a long way and is starting to become so cozy 🍷 I'm absolutely loving decorating my new space 🍷 I hope to post some new things very soon so STAY tuned! I appreciate each and every one of you guys and hope you stick around to see more of my new life in [redacted] 🍷	3,5			
March 20, 2016	selfie	Over 150 pounds of luggage I am finally here in [redacted] 🍷 Safe and sound! Just wanted to update you guys and also let you know that for the next few months I may be posting some more personal photos and such following along with my new life here in [redacted] 🍷 xoxo	3,5			
March 18, 2016	selfie	Hello lovelies! 🍷 Just wanted you all to know that today I am flying away from home! 🙄 I will try and post as regularly as I can. Unfortunately I won't be able to start ballet as soon as I move, and I have been in contact with the [redacted] but I cannot join mid-season and have to wait until September 🙄 Until then I am going to be practicing and working hard independently until I am able to get into a studio! 🍷 I am so so anxious to start dancing again! No	3,5,1			
March 13, 2016	selfie	Hello Everyone 🍷 Sorry for being so inactive lately! I've been super busy packing and organizing everything for moving on Friday 🍷 Lots of new adventures and experiences in store for me and I can't wait for all of you to be a part of this exciting new chapter of my life 🍷 xoxo	1,3,5			
2016-03-01	selfie	Missing this more than anything right now. 🍷 Can't wait to start dancing again soon once I'm settled in our West! The countdown begins... 1-18 Days before I move away 🍷 I'm really glad I'm pushing myself to take this opportunity/adventure and run with it and experience so many different things, but at the same time I'm have a lot of mixed emotions 🍷 Just all seems so surreal right now!	1,3			