

GROWING UP DISABLED IN AUSTRALIA

SECONDARY YEARS 7-10

About the event

One in five Australians have a disability or chronic illness—and yet characters who are disabled or chronically ill are still underrepresented in media and literature. Why is this? And how do we change it?

Writer and activist **Carly Findlay OAM** is the editor of the *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* anthology. Here, she speaks with some of its contributors about the power of storytelling as a means for change and why ensuring our screens and pages reflect the society we live in is so vitally important.

Supported by Vision Australia

Read and discuss

Because I didn't identify as disabled, I wasn't able to advocate for the support I needed in school, nor recognise or speak up against discrimination towards other disabled people. In hindsight, it's clear that I had internalised ableism. By insisting I wasn't disabled, I was perpetuating the 'othering'. And I lacked a sense of pride and community. – Carly Findlay OAM

Research the meaning of 'ableism'. Discuss.

What do you think Carly Findlay OAM means by 'othering' in this quote? Discuss.

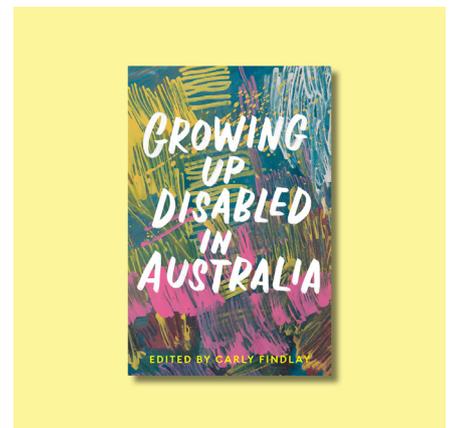
Read, research and share

But what did disabled mean? Both for me, and for how I fitted into a world that had little room for the way my body worked. Did it mean being an inspirational Paralympian, or raising money for a cure? Did it mean being isolated and always in hospital? Was I too disabled to work, or study, or love, or dance? Was I disabled enough to get assistance? P. 10, El Gibbs, *Growing up Disabled in Australia*

Perceptions of disability have changed over time. Look up the dictionary definition of 'disabled'. Research further and discuss.



Carly Findlay OAM



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, civics and citizenship, health and physical education

Capabilities: ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, personal and social

Discuss

*Not looking sick makes it harder to describe to others what is going wrong with my body or to explain why I can't do something that most people can, or why I can do it sometimes and not others. It means people don't vacate a seat for me on public transport, and I often get off trams before my stop to avoid passing out. P. 29, Astrid Edwards, *Growing up Disabled in Australia**

Imagine and discuss what it might be like to live in the world with an invisible chronic illness or disability.

About the editor

Carly Findlay OAM is a writer, speaker and appearance activist. She is the author of memoir *Say Hello* and the editor of *Growing Up Disabled in Australia*. She has been published by the ABC and CNN, and in *The Guardian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *Vogue Australia*.