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|  | **July 12, 2016****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Seattle Commission for People with disAbilities is concerned about the messaging of the movie “Me Before You” playing in select theaters and the negativity and worthlessness it implies of people with disabilities****For information contact:** *Marta R. Idowu**(206) 684-4540* |
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SEATTLE - Theaters in Seattle and across the globe are currently showing the movie “[*Me Before You*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Me_Before_You)”. This movie tells the story of a man with a spinal cord injury who despite finding love decides that his life is not worth living because of his disability. He chooses to end his life to allow his beloved to move on. This movie is degrading and dangerous and as the City of Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities that advises the Mayor, City Council and city departments on issues that affect the disability community in Seattle, is publicly speaking out against this movie and its message.

 The underlying messages in this story are that life with a disability is not worth living and that loving and being with someone with a disability is a burden. This is a pervasive narrative in our society and has a profound negative impact on the disability community. Rates of suicide and suicide ideation are higher for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities. Some of the causes of this are social isolation, bullying, high rates of sexual and physical violence, trauma, unequal access to education, employment services, lack of access to mental health services and health care. Instead of “Me Before You” highlighting the very real challenges and struggles that people with disabilities experience trying to navigate in a world that is inaccessible, the film romanticizes his suicide as an act of love and selflessness.

 The narrative of the worthlessness of people with disabilities has a dark history from the eugenics movement of the 20th century, through which people with disabilities were forcibly sterilized, institutionalized and in some cases mass murdered. In 1907, Indiana was the first state of thirty-three to enact a forced sterilization law of people with disabilities in institutions, and which was later backed by the 1927 Buck v. Bell Supreme Court Decision. Another example of the use of eugenics against people with disabilities is from Nazi Germany. People with disabilities were targeted through euthanasia of youth with disabilities from infancy to 17 years and mass forced sterilization. Propaganda labeled people with disabilities as “life unworthy of life” and “useless eaters” that burdened society. It is estimated that at least 5,000 physically disabled children were murdered through the Nazi Eugenics program.

Instead of seeing a movie that perpetuates the idea that our lives are not worth living, we encourage fellow city residents to learn more about suicide in the disability community and to celebrate the lives and accomplishments of our community.

[1]<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49650010_Understanding_suicide_and_disability_through_three_major_disabling_conditions_Intellectual_disability_spinal_cord_injury_and_multiple_sclerosis>

[2] <https://everybody.si.edu/citizens/eugenics>

[3] <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-features/special-focus/nazi-persecution-of-the-disabled>

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