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For the final project of the Communication and Mental Health paper, a fourteen minute video was created analyzing a few of the scenes from the visual novel game *Katawa Shoujo* and the mental health implications that they held. Throughout the course of the video, three scenes were analyzed regarding the character Emi Ibarazaki, a track athlete who lost her legs in a car accident. The intent of the video was to show how different, more unique mediums can be used to express mental health and provide different perspectives on mental health in regards to physical health as well.

This scripted, fourteen-minute long video is primarily intended for the same sort of audience that the game is marketed towards, from the age range of teenagers to young adults. This is backed up by the use of a fully finished study by Mariana Theozzo Padovani et al., which saw that people suffering from phantom limb pain, a phenomenon where people with amputated body parts can still feel pain from those limbs, especially young adults aged 18-38, had increased levels of anxiety and depression. In addition, a planned study by the University of Illinois in Chicago has preliminary suggestions that teens with disabilities are up to five times as likely to suffer from mental health disorders such as depression or anxiety.

The reason for creating the resource in the form of a video is due to the relative comfort of making it, as well as the growing YouTube popularity for video essays. In addition, a video essay format is one that contains both visual and auditory components towards it, allowing for

people who are both auditory learners and visual learners to have more easy access to it. With the subject of the video being a game, and a visual novel at that, it is a similar format as the game itself, taking little away from the actual experience that the game may possess.

The primary two sources for this project are the aforementioned study by Mariana Padovani as well as a study by Robyn Cree that looked at the frequency of mental distress among adults with physical disabilities. The former study by Mariana Padovani was focused on phantom limb pain, a feature of the video subject that was relevant due to the circumstances of the focus, Emi Ibarazaki. As the article says, there is an aim to "assess emotional factors such as anxiety and depression and quality of life of individuals post-amputation chronic pain." The study's most notable use in the resource itself was the mention of those suffering from phantom limb pains having more mental distress, though there were other factors of the article used in the scriptwriting of the video. For example, the study mentions the "perception of the environment around (them)" in regards to the patients being a disruption to physical and psychological conditions.

The second article by Robyn Cree looked at disabilities as a whole and their impact on mental health, as well as looking at how other factors that could be impacted by the disabilities, such as adverse health characteristics and poverty affected mental distress. The primary takeaway in used in the resource itself was the mention that people with disabilities are 4.6 times more likely to experience mental distress than those without, though once again the article's other findings have some sway in the scriptwriting process. One of the major features is related to the previous point, noting that the number of people reporting mental distress was a third of adults. The study also mentions the possibility of fewer opportunities for "high-quality social engagement," a topic that is also briefly touched on.

While physical disability is not something that can be related to by many, being able to take a peek into some of the minds of those who do have those disabilities can overall help for a more well-rounded perception of mental health. In addition, if this video is able to bring awareness to a source that could potentially help people with these disabilities relate to other characters like them, then that is all the better. This project is a good way to help bring awareness to a good, unique source of inspection of characters not often seen in fiction.

Sources

Cree RA, Okoro CA, Zack MM, Carbone E. Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults, by Disability Status, Disability Type, and Selected Characteristics — United States, 2018. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1238–1243. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6936a2>
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Padovani, M. T., Martins, M. R., Venâncio, A., & Forni, J. E. (2015). Anxiety, depression and quality of life in individuals with phantom limb pain. *Acta ortopedica brasileira*, 23(2), 107–110. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-78522015230200990>

Rockett, D. (2022, January 5). *Teens with disabilities are 5 times more likely to suffer from mental, emotional and Behavioral Health Disorders*. Medical Xpress - medical research advances and health news. Retrieved May 9, 2022, from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-teens-disabilities-mental-emotional-behavioral.html>

Video Link: https://youtu.be/bAmlAgLX_hg