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Customise this page
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○ white

Mothball banner

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○ on

○ blue

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on

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● off

○ red

○ blue

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Other tools
Diagnostic CSS on | off (?)
Activate Firebug Lite (?)
Design grid bookmarklet (?)
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SSI errors
No SSI errors found
Show page info **(?)**
Barlesque:
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Survey on: yes
Survey site id: ouch
Dotcom:
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Ads (combined): no
General:
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Query:
bbc=0&__ip__=94.174.54.229&u=movabletype16_314318&u=movabletype16_314300&u=movabletype16_314290&u=movabletype16_314273&u=movabletype16_314224&u=movabletype16_314204&u=movabletype
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Browser: Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; Intel Mac OS X 10_6_8) AppleWebKit/534.57.2 (KHTML, like Gecko) Version/5.1.7 Safari/534.57.2
console.log: (?)

It's a disability thing

Artist goes to bed in public to raise disability awareness

Emma Tracey | 14:51 UK time, Tuesday, 12 March 2013

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About this blog

Ouch! is a blog and internet talk show which goes beyond the headlines to reflect disability life. Add your comments to the frequent posts here, and listen to the podcast every month.

For the latest updates across BBC blogs, visit the Blogs homepage.

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Making invisible lives, visible

When Liz Crow is out and about, she adopts a strong public image. But when at home, she has to lie down, cave-in and totally relax. She calls this her "bed life".
"I go out there and try and be all energetic and busy and doing things", says Crow. "But then I come back and have this kind of hidden self where I switch off, spend a lot of time lying down, a lot of time in bed recovering."

She is not alone. Many disabled people have fluctuating conditions which are painful or energy-zapping. Lots hide the bed recovery aspect of their lives from others for fear that they won't be understood.

Previously, Crow hid her most-disabled self from others in case they saw it as "not socially acceptable". But in April, this part of her is set to become very public.

> Liz Crow speaks on the latest Ouch! talk show, available to stream now or download.

She will lie in bed for 48 hours as a human exhibit at Salisbury Arts Centre in mid April. Crow thinks the time is right to have an open conversation about the hidden life she and others have.
"There's a pressure", she says, "particularly after last summer and the Paralympics, to be a kind of super human when you're in public. And if you're not that, if you're a [benefits] claimant, then you're often cast as a scrounger.

"What I'm trying to do is to find that space in the middle where we just acknowledge that life is more complicated."

During the two day sleep over, Crow will invite visitors to join her for five scheduled bedside chats about disabled life. One of the discussions will be held on Twitter and via SMS text.

"Last time I did it," she says recalling a performance in Ipswich in November, "I was contacted by quite a few people who said 'this is great, thank you for making me visible. I'd really like to be there and visit but I have my own bed life and so I can't'."

The original version of Liz Crow's performance was only for those who walked in off the street; the new Salisbury performance will have a much wider audience as it will be streamed live on the web. A #beddingout hashtag has also been running for two weeks on Twitter and already there's a community of people with bed lives of their own springing up around the project.

The artist admits she has been surprised by the amount of feedback she's had and is keen to connect people with one another: "I had no idea that there are actually thousands upon thousands of us out there living this kind of life, because we are really isolated and we are really invisible in public life."

• The Bedding Out installation is at Salisbury Arts Centre. Liz Crow will be bedding down 'live' between 10-12 April.

You can follow Ouch! on Twitter and on Facebook.

Ouch! show 95: Things that make you go ouch!

Damon Rose | 16:44 UK time, Friday, 8 March 2013

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Ouch! disability talk show

Your monthly dose of razor sharp disability chat. Award-winning internet radio with Liz Carr, Rob Crossan and guests

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Hear the Comedians with Disabilities Act on the March show

Available monthly
This month: Chat ranges from Nazi anti-disability propaganda to benefit reform and the recent "disabled children should be put down" comments from a councillor. Features The Comedians with Disabilities Act, artist Liz Crow and Glasgow mum Laura Miller.

Liz Carr and Rob Crossan present.

How do I listen? Stream it on the web, download episodes or subscribe via iTunes and other services. Details below.

RELATED LINKS

You heard the show, now find out more about the people and subjects featured.

The Comedians with Disabilities Act - Find out more about Nina, Steve, Eric and Michael on their Facebook page.

Bedding out - Read about artist Liz Crow's 48-hour live sleepover in a Salisbury arts centre. As she tells Rob and Liz, it's about bringing invisible disabled 'bed life' people into the open and highlighting changes to benefits. It'll be streamed on the web with BSL and captions, and you can take part via Twitter using #beddingout which people are already using. Follow the link for more details.

Disabled Parents Network - On the show, Laura Miller talks about how valuable she finds support from fellow parents who have similar challenges.

Dan the Rapperman - Listen to this epic track from the cerebral palsy rapper from Hull on his "wheels of steel". You'll be singing it to yourself all month.

- The Ouch! talk show is a BBC News programme made exclusively for the internet and produced monthly by a team of disabled journalists and presenters.

- Go to the downloads page where you can grab single shows or subscribe via iTunes and other podcast apps. Play it on your computer, phone or other devices.

- Read a transcript of the show

"I'm a crawling mummy": how one disabled mum looks after her son

Emma Tracey | 11:30 UK time, Friday, 8 March 2013

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Laura got alternative parenting ideas from a support network

Laura Miller lives in Glasgow with her husband and 13 month old Jonathan. As Mother's Day approaches, the wheelchair-using mum explains how she cares for her little boy who she cannot carry.
"I do most of my parenting sitting down," says Laura. She can transfer from her chair to the floor and move around after her son on her hands and knees. But because she can't pick him up while standing, she's had to find other ways of getting Jonathan to where she wants him to be in the house.

At bedtime, Laura lures Jonathan to where his cot is by switching off all lights in places she doesn't want him to be, leaving on only the light in his room. Sometimes she crawls through the house with him, squeaking a noisy toy to grab his attention and make him follow.

The self-declared "crawling mummy" is in no doubt who is faster on four limbs and has the bruises to prove it. She is confident Jonathan's not upset that he's not carried because she makes it fun getting from place to place.

Laura can pick her child up and hold him while sitting down.

When outside, she obviously wouldn't want her son to crawl behind her in the street. So when getting ready, she coaxes him over with her voice and, when he's close to her powerchair, she can reach him and put him on her lap; he then sits nicely protected in a baby carrier strapped to Laura's middle while they're away from home.

"Children do tune in to what you're doing," she says. "He'll run to his dad to get him to lift him up ... but he won't do it with me."

Laura makes sure she is "super ready" for every possible situation and believes she has become an amazing problem-solver. "That is the unique property of a disabled parent," she says. "We have to do it at a higher level and that's why we need encouragement from other parents because, obviously, that can get exhausting. You need people to keep cheering you on and feeding you ideas."

In Laura's case, the support came from the Disabled Parents Network, for mums and dads with a disability or health condition. She credits DPN with teaching her the strategies she uses, and other examples of what she calls "alternative parenting".

The Glasgow mum is now a volunteer for the organisation, helping other disabled parents herself. She says: "I think it's really important to let parents know that they're not on their own."

• Laura Miller was speaking with Liz Carr and Rob Crossan on the latest disability talk show from Ouch!

Listen to the interview in full on the latest show which you can download to your MP3 player or hear online.

You can follow Ouch! on Twitter and on Facebook.

"Cold, getting warmer, hot": New app helps blind people find each other

Emma Tracey | 12:00 UK time, Wednesday, 6 March 2013

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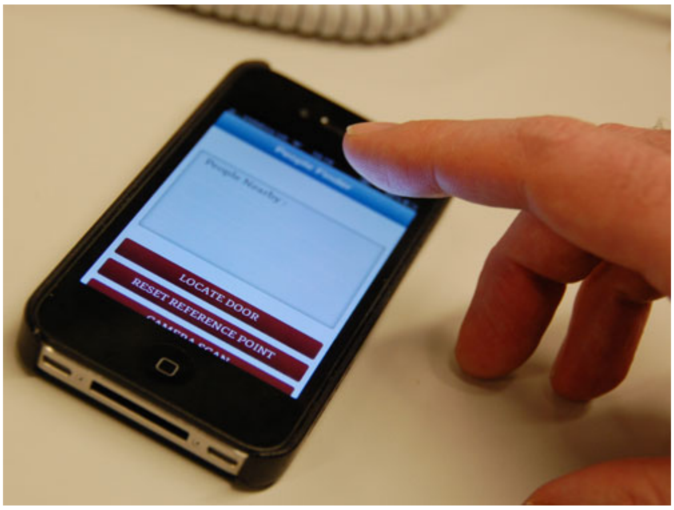

Emma tests a new prototype app that lets blind people find other blind people.
"We'd arranged to meet at a shopping mall but, as time went by, I began to wonder why my wife was so late," says Doug Wakefield, one half of a married blind couple visiting the CSUN accessible technology conference in San Diego last week.

His wife Judy picks up the story: "Eventually, someone came up to me and said, are you waiting for a man with a guide dog?

"We were to meet at the main entrance but I was to the left of the door and Doug was standing to the right, only ten feet away."

Lots of blind people have blind friends, so This game of cat and mouse takes place regularly. It can be funny but it's certainly a little frustrating.

As smart phones are fast becoming a basic part of a blind person's toolkit, it's perhaps not surprising that someone has now created "an app for that".

People Finder has a very basic but accessible interface. Like mainstream products with similar aims, such as Grindr for the gay community and Spotme for networking at conferences, you have to have the app running if you want to meet up with people in your circle.

It alerts a user, via a vibration and a noise, when someone else with the app comes within 50 feet. It uses Bluetooth to detect people.

As you search for your friend, the app will let you know how close you are, by saying "near" or "cold" as you walk around.

To aid social niceties, There's the option to message the person through the app to say you've clocked them, before descending on them.

Mike May is The brains behind People Finder, which is being developed by his company Sendero Group. They have 13 years experience of making accessible satnav solutions for blind pedestrians but Mike says he has wanted to make a people finding app for a long time.

"As a blind person I'd love to be made aware of when somebody I know is near by, so that I can meet with them," he says. "As a bonus, you will also be careful not to talk about someone if you know they might be in hearing distance."

Another attendee of the CSUN conference is Julian Vargas from California. He hopes to test out the app on a local bus route to see if he can spot the bus his friend is already on, so they can travel together. His friend can't see to wave to him through the window and so it's very easy to get on the wrong one, alone.

"The way we tend to do it now," says Julian, "is by sending text messages. This app would be nice because if my friends are running it, when their bus pulls up, theoretically, all of a sudden my phone should ding and say that it sees their phone."

Blind people already have a range of strategies for letting a sightless friend know they are nearby. The best way is to use your voice so your friend can hear you but, socially speaking, it looks a little odd just talking to yourself so blind people might pretend to be having a phone conversation or pet their guide dogs saying "good boy Buttons" a little more loudly than usual.

It may have crossed your mind that there might be a big security risk with having already vulnerable people announcing themselves digitally over the air so others can find them. Some apps of the people-finding variety have caused concern but the dynamics seem a bit different here. Potential sighted stalkers can already see blind people at 50 feet, and are likely to know they can't see if they're using a dog, a white cane or that they're not negotiating obstacles very elegantly, so the app isn't going to betray them any more than normal in most circumstances. Blind users may consider this an acceptable risk if it means that they too can spot their pals.

One hundred people are currently testing the prototype app, which can be used indoors or outdoors wherever you are in the world. Mike May is having trouble getting funders to see why blind people would need it and wants all current testers to form a "fan club" to raise its profile.

Now for a blind access app that keeps track of your children in crowded shopping malls, a GPS app which is accurate to within 1 CM and perhaps, one that
can plot a direct route into the arms of a soulmate.

Voices Found: Stammerers collaborate on new mini album

Guest | 09:55 UK time, Friday, 1 March 2013

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"I'm fluent when I sing" says Matt

Twenty year-old music student Matt Bond has produced an EP, featuring himself and four fellow artists who all have a stammer. He doesn't like using phones, so explains his project in an interview conducted by email.

I had to come up with an idea for a project as part of my popular music course at Falmouth. Music and stammering have been two hugely influential and defining factors in my life and so I wanted to merge them somehow.

I'm always fluent when singing. No one knows for certain why this is but I've often heard that of the brain, which is why some people with other disabilities such as Tourette's also find they can sing without their disability interrupting them.

My inspiration for an EP came when I read the story of Kyle Coleman in the Cornishman newspaper. He also finds it difficult to communicate, he had rarely spoken aloud, but found out he could sing and made a charity album in aid of autism, the condition he has.

I've found that there's a lack of understanding about stammering and what it's like to have one, so I decided to make my own awareness-raising recording.

The British Stammering Association kindly sent a call out via their social media pages, asking for interested musicians who stammer to contact me.

Adam Lovell, Brandon Marchant, Oli Cheadle and Ben James came forward. They each wrote, performed and produced their songs about stammering and then sent them for inclusion on the EP that we named Voices Found. Their songs are: Tell Me If You See This, Normal, Shaking the Rafters and Pathways, respectively.

> **Lyrics from the Voices Found EP**
>
> And oh, time moves so slow in the moments when you wish the ground would open up and swallow you whole. It's more than just dumb luck how my words get stuck when I try to say my name...
> (chorus)
> Well the phone's got teeth and the sound of the ring gives me constant grief, but I

> don't care.
> Could I squash that fear? Pick it up - let 'em know that I'm still here?
> I'll sew a patchwork quilt from my shame and guilt and the fit can more than make do.
> Tell me how it feels to be normal. I want to be normal too - and only normal will do.
>
> (Normal by Brandon Marchant)

The song that I contributed to the project, Part of Me, expresses the problems stammering causes me in day to day life but is also an acceptance that stammering is part of who I am, hence the title.

I had speech therapy sessions at school and took a two week intensive speech therapy course at the Michael Palin Centre in London when I was around 16. I tried many fluency techniques which they suggest, such as slow speech and sliding in and out of words, but nothing really seemed to stick.

The course was still a life changing experience , because for the first time I met other people my age who stammered. This made me realise I was not alone and I gained a lot of confidence.

Stammering can be extremely frustrating at times, causing feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety. Things that other people take for granted become a real problem, like talking on the phone and introducing yourself to new people.

I hope the album will show there's more to someone who stammers than what comes from their mouths, and I hope it will inspire others in the same situation, giving music they can relate to.

(As told to Emma Tracey)

- Read more about the Voices Found EP and watch Matt Bond on YouTube.

All proceeds from Matt's EP are to be donated to the British Stammering Association.

You can follow Ouch! on Twitter and on Facebook.

Other posts from this blog

Lying on a sound box: deaf children listen to music

by Guest on 09:02 UK time, Wednesday, 27 February 2013 | Comments (1)

In order to see this content you need to have both Javascript enabled and Flash installed. Visit BBC Webwise for full instructions. If you're reading via RSS, you'll need to visit the blog to access this content. var emp = new...

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Disabled animal videos go viral

by Emma Tracey on 08:53 UK time, Tuesday, 26 February 2013 | Comments

We love animal videos and, if the animals in those videos happen to have a bit of a disability, then we're drawn to them even more. Here are some disabled creatures currently grabbing our attention. A buoyancy-challenged goldfish gets...

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Disability in film: Are attitudes changing?

by Guest on 10:20 UK time, Thursday, 21 February 2013 | Comments (2)

Marion Cotillard with an orca in Rust and Bone Ahead of Sunday's Academy Awards ceremony in LA, disabled film critic Scott Jordan Harris looks back at the year's bumper crop of disability related films. In an essay originally broadcast...

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Breaking Free: Three kids with Down's syndrome tell their stories

by Emma Tracey on 12:00 UK time, Tuesday, 19 February 2013 | Comments (2)

"My body needs to get more stronger than not getting fat." That's Ruben's take on what he must do to reach his goal. Ruben is 12 and has Down's syndrome. He's been training hard for the chance to swim...

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Blogging the week: business journalist Johny Cassidy (1)
Road trip to the five countries that allow assisted dying (1)
Disability in film: Are attitudes changing? (2)
Voices Found: Stammerers collaborate on new mini

Archives

Past twelve months
March 2013 (5)
February 2013 (14)
January 2013 (16)
December 2012 (4)
November 2012 (11)
October 2012 (13)
September 2012 (17)
August 2012 (19)
July 2012 (15)
June 2012 (18)
May 2012 (18)
April 2012 (13)

complete archive

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album (3)
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