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Inspiration

Repicturing Inclusivity and Mental Health

Discussions about diversity in the workplace often revolve around gender and race. Of course, both of these topics are incredibly important, but it's also critical to remember another underrepresented group of people that deserve to be heard—people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. According to Creative Spirit, 85% of people with an intellectual disability are unemployed. Creative Spirit, made up of a group of leaders from across the ad industry, was formed to address this issue in the US, with a goal of finding careers in creative companies for people with conditions like Down Syndrome, autism, and more.

As part of its launch, Creative Spirit created a series of videos that matched top creatives with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to poke fun at some of the clichés associated with pitching clients. The campaign's tagline, "What's more creative than being different?" serves as a good reminder for the industry as a whole.

Another inspiring movement that has recently launched is the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), a charity that offers support to men in the UK who are depressed or in crisis. CALM is tackling the horrible stigmas attached to mental health issues, which can have tragic consequences—in the UK, suicide is the single biggest cause of death for men under the age of 45. In addition to providing support, CALM also works to change the culture around mental health so that men feel more comfortable talking about their problems and not feel ashamed by it.

One way CALM changes that culture is through photography—in May 2017, the Getty Images Gallery in London hosted an exhibition in partnership with CALM called The Calm Photography Movement, featuring photos that repictured mental health. The powerful images were selected by a panel that including esteemed photographers Nick Knight and Rankin, and forced viewers to reexamine their own perceptions about mental health.

"All too often images representing mental health conditions play into narrow and outdated stereotypes," said Getty Images senior vice president Lee Martin. "Depicting diversity accurately is one of our biggest priorities at Getty Images, and we're committed to creating a range of true-to-life, authentic imagery that accurately and sensitively reflects the experience of mental illness."

Addressing these topics takes sensitivity, especially when discussing issues like mental health, and intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities. It's not easy to be a leader on subjects that aren't as openly spoken about, but doing so sends a loud message about the importance of addressing these issues, and the need for creating more inclusive work environments—for everyone.

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