



Seeing in the Dark: Sex and disability

by **Belo Cipriani**

While sex and disability are two topics rarely discussed together in popular culture, thanks to online dating sites and hookup apps, people with disabilities are finding communities where they can not only chat about sex, but also enjoy the occasional booty call.

Andrew Gurza, 32, is a queer man with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy who has been a power wheelchair user from age 4. For him, hookup sites have been his gateway into the world of sex.

"I had been considering hooking up on the web since I was 16. It just seemed so easy, and I was able to point and click without worrying about access. I didn't actually get the chance to hook up from online until I was 19," said Gurza.

But while some aspects of hooking up online were easier to navigate behind a computer than at your typical bar or nightclub, Gurza admitted there are still some aspects of the dating ritual he cannot escape online. More specifically, Gurza pointed to the fear of rejection.

"I was more scared of the reality that this person may not like me, may be uncomfortable around my disability, and may leave because of it," he said.

Gurza's condition requires that he receive assistance daily.

"I can't walk, and need help with pretty much all of my activities of daily living: dressing, showering, toileting," he said.

"Luckily though," Gurza continued, winking, "I can feel everything."

With confidence and a little humor, Gurza has been able to make connections on several of the popular sites and apps – never letting his disability define him.

"My disability played no role in which app or site I accessed, but I have found [Scruff](#) and [Squirt](#) to be the most easy to use," said Gurza. "I like Squirt.org a lot, because I can be overtly sexual, and I can combine my sexuality and my queerness together without apologies."

Like many people, Gurza has steamy encounters to share, as well as hookups that started off well, but quickly ended on a sour note.

"Halfway through the hookup, I suggested that we hang out; do a movie, coffee or fuck again. He stopped, looked at me, and said, pointing to my wheelchair, 'I came by cuz I felt bad for you. You were just a pity fuck,'" Gurza said.

Laughing, Gurza reminisces on another memorable hookup.

"We met at my dorm, and we had some really great sex. My disability didn't deter him in the least. He helped me get in bed, undressed me, and even positioned me inside him. It was really sweet. He went to go pee and, in the process, he accidentally locked himself out of my bedroom. He was stark naked in my kitchen, unable to get back in. I was stark naked on my bed, also unable to help him, locked on the other side. Long story short, he had to go get security, who barged in my room, and saw my raging boner."

Gurza believes that able-bodied people erroneously assume that people with disabilities do not want sex, have no sex drive, or, worst of all, that sex with a disabled person would not be good.

"They're all based on fear, and the misguided belief that my body has no value. To that I say, feel the fear and do me anyway, you might just be surprised."

Gurza lives in Toronto and works as a disability awareness consultant. You can find him on Twitter at [@andrewgurza](https://twitter.com/andrewgurza).

Belo Cipriani is a disability advocate, a freelance journalist, the award-winning author of *Blind: A Memoir* and *Midday Dreams*, the spokesman for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the national spokesman for 100 Percent Wine – a premium winery that donates 100 percent of proceeds to nonprofits that help people with disabilities find work. Learn more at www.belocipriani.com.

09/22/2016