

Limitless Heroics for 5e (Disability, Neurodiversity, Mental illness Mechanics for DnD)

November 23, 2021



When you play a tabletop role-playing game like 5e, you want to be the hero. The world is different for you having been there, better. **What if you could make the real world better by playing an RPG?!** That's what Limitless Heroics is all about. Limitless Heroics is the **most comprehensive disability compendium ever created for a Tabletop Role-Playing Game. For Fifth Edition, it provides:**

- **640 Pages of content!**
- **450+ Traits:** Game mechanics for nearly every condition or trait in existence (plus some fantasy traits, because that's what you should expect in a world with magic) with 4 Impact Extents, and 6 Frequencies. With 1–6 traits per character (or more), that's **64,800+ combinations with the option to add more.** (Free Sample Trait: [Blindness](#))
- **78 Random tables** to choose or generate the traits, their Impact Extent, and their frequency ([Get a free ashcan sample with all the tables from the book.](#))
- **200+ New Magic Items and an online random generator**

for thousands more! Nearly every trait includes mundane and magic assistive options. ([Free Sample Assistive Magic Item: Braces of Blades](#))

- **4 New Monster Stat Blocks** because sometimes, the disability or assistive device is a creature.
- **6 New Spells** because sometimes, assistance comes from a spellbook
- **Service animals** designed as classes (similar to sidekicks)
- **50 Example NPCs**, fully illustrated, ready to use
- **A [one-shot adventure](#)**
- **Thousands of real world examples** so players can learn more and better represent the traits
- **Tutorials:** Opening articles discuss how and why to implement these options, how to discuss it with your players, and common tropes to avoid. **You have all the tools here to run an inclusive campaign.**

Our website will have a [free random generator](#) to simplify determining character traits, but you'll need the book for the descriptions and mechanics, or you can use the included tables to choose or roll manually.

We talked to dozens of people with diverse conditions to make sure our game mechanics represented their experiences before writing it, and over 900 people looked at the manuscript draft, and we got 90 pages of feedback from their experiences!

All writers, editors, and artists hired for this book are disabled, neurodivergent, and/or have mental or chronic illness.



Book Accessibility

- Dyslexia-friendly layout
- PDF, txt/csv, and ePub versions
- Fully screen reader accessible
- Indexed audio version included with every purchase

Real World Benefits

We believe that this resource will help you normalize disabilities in your life and the lives of other players. Non-disabled people can sometimes feel uncomfortable around disabled people or don't know how to talk or act. This resource allows you to practice in an imaginary world to equip you with empathy and skills to feel increasingly comfortable doing that in the real world. And those with disabilities now have a way to represent their experience in-game to feel empowered and to help others see them more clearly. Imagine what we could communicate to the world when all those actual play Twitch streams include disabled characters!



This is a movement.

Limitless Heroics is more than an RPG book. It's a petition. By supporting this project, you communicate to every game publisher on earth that disabled people exist and can easily be included in their games, that the customers want that representation, and that accessibility and representation are necessary core

features for future products. Imagine companies and organizations seeing the success of this movement beyond the RPG community and how that would affect their decisions in the future. Imagine how you as RPG players who work in every industry can work for change to overcome ableism because of what you and your players learned while rolling dice at the RPG table. Imagining is what we do best, but we can use fantasy to change reality. Maybe RPGs have some real world magic after all. Support this project with the 2,287 backers and others who ordered it since, and mark this day on your calendar and social media as the day you helped change the world.

About the Players Edition

The Players Edition of Limitless Heroics includes everything in the full book except the adventure, magic items, and NPCs, reducing the size and associated costs by 346 pages. If you plan to use these resources in settings where you need multiple copies (e.g. schools, clinics, community organizations, etc.), this will save you some money.



We met these stretch goals, all of which are included.



\$25,000: Complications & Prostheses

Once we hit the \$25,000 goal, we added additional complications and magical prosthetics. Some experiences are not traits of various conditions, but complications that result from them, such as infections, concussions, secondary depression, and intoxication. Once we hit this goal, we added 20 complications to the book and 20 Magical Prostheses.



\$30,000: 10 NPCs

Similar to our previously published [Disabled NPC of the Week](#) but with more details, our character team added 10 NPCs (Non-Player Characters) with full backgrounds, personality details, disabilities, and artwork to the book. These are in addition to the characters created for the **Create a Character** and **DELUXE Create a Character** rewards and add-ons, which will be included automatically.



\$40,000: One-Shot Adventure: Horror of the Shade by Theo Kogod

When a caravan makes camp in the shadow of crumbling ruins, they awaken an ancient revenant and are transported to a dark eldritch dimension. To escape back to the physical world, they will need to fight their way past the undead shade or risk being trapped forever.



\$50,000: Service Animals

We included a chapter to implement service animals into your game, both real world and fantasy animals, including rules for training and how to use them. This section is written by Brittney Hay with service animal trainer and user consultation.

Content Warning

This book contains descriptions and game mechanics for nearly every physical, mental, and emotional condition in existence and a few that don't exist, including physical, mental, and

emotional trauma and all manner of illnesses, including an entry on phobias and mention or illustrations of possible phobic triggers. If it can happen to your mind and/or body, it's probably here. For those who would have difficulty with any of that, please be aware of that likelihood. Use the table of contents to avoid difficult sections, or give this book to a trusted friend, and let them comb through it for the details you need to build your character while skipping past the traumatic entries.

Creators



Dale Critchley (Owner, Wyrworks Publishing) Primary author of Limitless Heroics, [Dale Critchley](#) is the owner, lead writer, and chief tea drinker at [Wyrworks Publishing](#). He's been playing tabletop role-playing games since 1982 and launched Wyrworks Publishing as a hobby in 2000 to share his homebrew resources with the world. In 2021, after seeing the power that a TTRPG group can have to change the lives of the participants for the better, [he rededicated Wyrworks Publishing](#) to focus on using TTRPGs to intentionally improve the lives of others and turned a hobby into a full time pursuit.



Beth the Bard, Layout Editor is the author of "[She is the Ancient: A Genderbent Curse of Strahd](#)" guidebook, now a Platinum best-seller on DMs Guild. She's also a general TTRPG writer, graphic designer, and professional dungeon master.



Joie Martin, Cover Layout & Layout Contributor owns Drowning Moon Studios, a roleplaying game publisher that has produced over a dozen titles and two anthologies since being founded in 2017. They have been writing, developing, editing, and doing

layout and graphic design for tabletop and live action roleplaying games since 1996. Beyond roleplaying games, Joie has produced content for a variety of markets, including ARGs, interactive theater, and immersive experiences. They have been a key speaker on panels about roleplaying game design at events such as [DragonCon](#), [MomoCon](#), and [Metatopia](#), and was Head Judge for the [2020 IDGN Indie Groundbreaker Awards](#).



Naomi Hazlett: Copy Editor, Sensitivity Consultant Naomi Hazlett, Bsc., MScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.) is a writer, editor, and occupational therapist with chronic pain. She is neurodiverse, queer, and lives with chronic pain and mental illness. Her work has most recently focused on social accountability, diversity, and inclusion in occupational therapy and gaming, including the adoption of a critical disability lens. Naomi has played and run TTRPGs for over 20 years; she has worked with organizations including Level Up Gaming, BALANCE for Blind Adults, and LOFT Community Services to run accessible TTRPGs, and consults for D&D Beyond. Naomi has multiple publications in academic journals, magazines, blogs, and poetry collections, and is currently the Managing Editor of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' national magazine, Occupational Therapy Now. She can be found online at [@naomi_hazlett](#) or can be reached [via email](#).



Melissa Critchley, Sensitivity Consultant, lives with multiple disabilities. She has worked in the disability field for over 15 years and holds a graduate level certificate in Disability Policy and Services from the University of Minnesota in addition to her interdisciplinary master's degree. She also recently completed an advanced certificate in Equity and Diversity and is an advocate for social justice and equitable societal change. Melissa has played quite a few tabletop RPG games through

the decades which include Shadowrun, BESM, D20 Modern, Mutants and Masterminds, and Star Wars. However until we were confined to our homes during Covid quarantines, Melissa hated D&D. A good friend invited her to play over Discord, and despite her objections, convinced her that she “never had him as a DM.” It didn’t take long before she changed her mind about D&D, and it’s now her favorite game.



Simone Arnold, Sensitivity Consultant, Character Creation Team
Simone Arnold MA, Certified Geek Therapist, is a neurodivergent, queer clinical mental health counselor in the state of Vermont. They have been working in the mental health field since 2013 across a variety of settings including as a crisis clinician and currently as a counselor at a designated agency. Through this they’ve had the opportunity to work with people across the disability spectrum. They are also establishing their own private practice that is queer friendly with a special focus on ADHD and Autism. Simone has been gaming since 2012 and has had the opportunity to play across an array of systems including D&D 5e, Pathfinder, Dread, Thirsty Sword Lesbians, Call of Cthulhu and more.



Matthew Rickmon, Sensitivity Consultant, Character Creation Team, Certified Therapeutic Game Master, owns Tabletop For Growth ([IG](#), [Twitter](#)), a business dedicated to helping people learn interpersonal skills and develop core values through interactive tabletop games. Matthew has a Bachelor of Science in psychology and a Master of Divinity with a focus in pastoral counseling. He is a Certified Therapeutic Game Master and Certified Geek Specialist through Geek Therapeutics. He lives with multiple chronic illnesses: Crohn’s Disease, Irritable Bowel, and Psoriasis. He also strongly suspects he is neurodivergent. Matthew has been writing stories and running in-

person and live-streamed tabletop roleplaying games from his home in California since 2019. Beyond running roleplaying games, he maintains a strong partnership with The Erika Legacy Foundation, a mental health awareness and suicide prevention non-profit in Canada. Painting and writing tend to take up his free time when he's not being yelled at by his cat, Mr. Fox, for more pets.



Theo Kogod is a genderfluid writer, editor, educator, and activist. Diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD, Theo learned to read at the age of ten, then attempted writing their first novel a year later. They have written for numerous publications, including the websites CBR, Screen Rant, The Gamer, and The Comics Vault, as well as the podcast Enter the Fanboy. In 2014, Theo helped found the magazine *3 Feet Left* as its Resident Writer. Their fiction has been published in *Diabolical Plots*, *Starward Shadows*, and the cli-fi anthology *A Flash of Silver Green: Stories of the Nature of Cities 2099*, among other places. They are a lifelong storyteller and nerd who has been running *D&D* and other tabletop RPGs for over 15 years. You can find them at [@TKogod](#).



[Brittney Hay](#) is a non-binary ENNIE-nominated [bestselling TTRPG writer and creator](#). They are a full-time geeky nerd mom who enjoys reading, cooking and all things nerdy.

Amy Weisner

Amy Weisner is a second year occupational therapy student at the University of Toronto. She has been playing TTRPGs for the past five years, including *D&D 5e*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and most recently the *Avatar* TTRPG. She has a degree in Child and Youth Care, and has worked in many settings and roles including community

outreach and within the school systems. Through her experience, she has worked with individuals from all walks of life, including people from across the spectrum of disability and mental health. Amy is a passionate advocate, with experience presenting on social justice issues and advocating for clients. She has most recently begun a fieldwork placement with OT Naomi Hazlett at Level Up Gaming, assisting with running therapeutic TTRPGs for neurodiverse young adults and working on projects to make TTRPGs more accessible.

Artists

We intentionally assembled an eclectic team of artists to reflect the diversity of experiences and expressions of these conditions:



[Kalman Andrasofszky](#) ([Insta](#)) is a freelance illustrator, comic book artist, writer, and educator in Toronto, a longtime member of the R.A.I.D. Studio, and newly diagnosed with ADHD. In 20+ years as a creative professional, Kalman has worked with many clients such as Marvel Entertainment, DC Comics, Wizards of the Coast, Shaftesbury Films, UNESCO, Portfolio Entertainment, and TekSavvy, among others, creating content for such brands as X-Men, Avengers, Batman, Star Wars, Dungeons & Dragons, Murdoch Mysteries, and PG: Psycho Goreman. Kalman reinvigorated the classic Canadian superhero property Captain Canuck by both rebooting and adding many new concepts and characters to significantly expand the scope of the brand into a dynamic sci-fi shared universe. When not writing and drawing too many things at once, Kalman can be found retro-gaming on his vintage SEGA Genesis system.

Additional Artists

- [Dana Braga](#) (Cover Artist)
- ArtificialJealousy
- [Dot Valledor](#)
- [Erin Z. Anderson](#)
- Four-Horns
- [Hekellion](#)
- Jason Sherlin
- [Joseph Bielenberg](#)
- [Lucy Smart](#)
- [Luca Ippoliti](#) (IG)
- Pepoq

Additional Sensitivity Consultants

In addition to our primary sensitivity consultants, we discussed traits and game mechanics with hundreds of others as part of the research for this book to reflect their lived experiences as closely as possible. That list is too long to include here, but many of their names are included in the book's credits, and we can't express enough how grateful we are for their help.

Press

We appreciate all who have helped us get the word out about this project on podcasts and in the press.

- [It's a Mimic](#)
- [Crit Academy](#)
- [Geek Native](#) (and again)
- [Dicebreaker](#)
- [Nerd Immersion](#)
- [ComicBook.com](#)
- [Sly Flourish](#)

- [Disabled&Dragons](#) (Interview)
- [EN World](#)
- [Tabletop Journeys Podcast](#) (Interview)
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Should you have disabled characters in your Dungeons & Dragons game? (Part 1 of 2)

November 23, 2021



On the release of our first [Accessible Adventure of the Week](#),

the question arose, as it always seems to, “Why would I play a disabled character? They wouldn’t last 10 minutes in a dungeon!” While this led to some interesting discussions, it’s a question people will ask, whether openly or in their minds. So as we prepare for not only many more of these adventures and [NPCs](#), but also the [Limitless Heroics](#) book that will provide fifth edition game mechanics for nearly every trait in existence, the question is worth asking and exploring.

Personally, I’m not a fan of “should” or any sense of moral superiority (not that I’m innocent of it – it’s a tempting trap), but I’ve come to see the world and decisions in terms of “harmful” and “beneficial” (and certainly some decisions are neutral as they’re neither of the former). (Maybe this paradigm could help with all the hand-wringing about alignment in D&D – probably not.)

So then are disabled characters in D&D beneficial? (For brevity, when I say, “Disabled,” I’m referring to all matters of disability and illness, whether physical, mental, or emotional, and all varieties of neurodiversity.) My bias is obvious, but then *why* is it beneficial?

- **Representation.** People want to be able to play someone like them and have characters appear in the game that communicate, “You are welcome here. You belong.”
- **Encountering the Other.** Role-play is a powerful teaching tool that allows us to experience and walk through various life situations with minimal consequences that will allow us to avoid negative consequences when we encounter an analogous situation in real life. So when we learn to interact with a disabled character in-game, we’re learning to interact with a disabled person in real life and become more comfortable around them, but if we accidentally say or do something harmful, we can learn from the mistake

without actually harming someone (or at least less so – players are real people).

- **Experiencing the Other.** By playing a disabled character, we can get a small taste of the challenges someone with those traits experiences (a very small taste, since we can turn it on and off at will and only imagine the experience), but if we play them with complexity as we would any other character, we learn to see disabled people as complex people, not cardboard stereotypes or [inspiration porn](#).
- **Cooperation.** One of the most important lessons I've personally learned in the writing of *Disabilities & Depth* is the benefit that I as a non-disabled person can be to disabled people. We all need each other – independence is a harmful lie. Shorter people ask me (6'3") to get items off top shelves at stores. Blind people may ask you to describe something for them. Having a slight hearing impairment, I often ask, when the TV captions are unreliable, "What did they say?" D&D is an inherently cooperative game, and learning how best to cooperate with disabled people in-game will help us be more sensitive and helpful in real life.
- **Acknowledging the reality.** It's easy for non-disabled people to wish away disabilities, and when it's not part of every moment of every day or a significant amount of any given day, it's easy to forget that disability exists – it's not something non-disabled people think about. And when we're not considering the *existence* of disabled people, we're not considering the *needs* of disabled people, which leads to ableism through ignorance. The more we recognize that disabled people are part of our world, the more we expect to see them in all representations of existence without it seeming odd, just as a world lacking women would seem odd (and probably the main point of the

narrative or campaign world). Think about that – a fantasy world without disabled people should have, “Where are all the disabled people?” as a primary narrative. If that’s not the point of the story, ask yourself why you chose to alter that aspect of reality and what that decision means.

But then we need to consider the converse: is excluding disabled characters from D&D beneficial, harmful, or neutral?

I just showed how, at the very least, it’s odd. It doesn’t make sense. Even in a world with healing spells, at the very least, even [greater restoration](#) can’t restore a limb that was never there in the first place. Plus, clerics and other healers are rare. Not every cleric is a cleric. And not every cleric is high enough level to cast more than a daily [cure wounds](#) or two. There’s simply not enough healing magic for every injury and illness, especially when plagues sweep through. And then there’s socio-economic factors. (The king doesn’t want people camping outside the castle so the high priestess can come through and select some for healing each day – she should save those spell slots for ~~him~~ emergencies!)

Is it beneficial in the sense of escapism? When you play D&D, you’re going to a fantasy world that doesn’t have real world problems, right? Because that green dragon is nothing like your conniving boss? That bullying ogre is nothing like your obnoxious coworker or classmate? If you play D&D for the power fantasy, how does the presence of disabled people interrupt that? These questions are not accusations – they’re questions for self-reflection.

Is it harmful to exclude disabled people from your game world? What about excluding people with dark skin? What about excluding women from adventuring roles? Like any other people group, it’s beneficial for your own self-awareness to ask yourself, “Why

does my fantasy world include the kinds of people that it does and exclude the kinds that it does? Why did I make that decision, even if it wasn't a conscious decision? What have I learned about myself?" It also begs the question, "When I have the opportunity to be beneficial at little or no cost to myself and choose not to, is that inherently harmful?"

How does using disabled characters relate to the goal of D&D?

When I was in high school, our D&D group was at a church lock-in (overnight party). During free time, we found an unused room and played D&D. People would stop by and listen in and invariably ask, "Who's winning?" All the players would point at the DM and say, "HE IS!" But in reality, we were all winning. We were having a great time. We were bonding with each other, learning teamwork, practicing math, and benefiting in all the ways D&D is beneficial. To me, the goal of D&D is to have fun, regardless whether we complete the quest as expected.

That said, there's a sense of satisfaction in completing the quest, in powering up, in gaining loot or recognition or all the many goals players have for their characters. But does disability detract from that?

There's a reason each character class has limitations – the game is no fun if you can literally do anything. Were that the case, you wouldn't need dice (and could give them all to me!). No, the game is about facing challenges and finding creative solutions to those challenges with help from your allies. But isn't that the life of a disabled person? If anything, a disabled character who still uses class abilities is the quintessential D&D character – someone with disadvantages and challenges who isn't helpless and can achieve their goals, not *in spite of* their

challenges, but *regardless of* their challenges, because while their challenges are part of them, they don't define them.

So then should we pressure or require disabled characters?

Again with the "should" – what is harmful or beneficial? Forcing someone to play a disabled character would not be beneficial. It would not be fun. They would learn the wrong lesson.

I've also learned that moral pressure to do *anything* is harmful – it leads to resentment or self-righteousness, and either way, it never lasts or actually changes hearts and minds.

Rather, the more we introduce disabled characters as NPCs or through other players who would like to do so, the more we offer and demonstrate the benefits of doing so, but that's only possible when we normalize the presence of competent and capable disabled characters in the game world.

I welcome your thoughts in the comments below. If you, like me, would like to include the benefits of disabled characters in your game, I invite you to sign up for our newsletter so you don't miss our resources that will help you do that, many of which are free.

Note: This is the first of 2 in a series. [Read Part 2 Here.](#)

Gaining Advantage 001: Dungeons & Dragons & Therapy (Game to Grow)

November 23, 2021



Role-Playing Games are good for mental health, right? Of course! But what happens when it's used for therapy? For our inaugural episode, we welcome [Adam Davis](#) from [Game to Grow](#)!

We also take a look at Reactive Attachment Disorder and how one might include a character with this condition in a TTRPG.

Like what you hear? [Join the movement](#), and get lots of freebies!

- 00:00 Introduction
- 13:22 Game to Grow
- 51:32 Playing the Other: Reactive Attachment Disorder

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