

# **Jen Rinaldi, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Legal Studies, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at University of Ontario  
Institute of Technology**

Oshawa, ON, CA

Urging enhanced support for Canadians with disabilities through storytelling and arts-based mediums

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## **Description**

Social and digital media have sharpened the lens through which abject bodies are portrayed, and too often critiqued. It has opened the world to intense criticism, and allowed virtual strangers to weigh in on everything from one's sexual orientation and race to body image and body shaming, perpetrating hate and sometimes violence.

Inspired by stories of strength and adversity, Jen Rinaldi, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Legal Studies Program of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, advocates increased awareness and vital support for persons with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities who not only face discrimination, but are victims of violence due to their circumstances. She works tirelessly to create arts-based opportunities for these individuals to become self-advocates and share their stories.

Mental health diagnosis casts a wide net often stemming from internal emotional struggles or intellectual challenges. Dr. Rinaldi's critical body of research examines the development of narrative and arts-based methodologies to deconstruct eating disorder recovery, and to re-imagine recovery in relation to queer community. She also works in collaboration with Recounting Huronia, an arts-based collective that explores and stories traumatic histories of institutionalization. Co-ordinator of the Huronia Speakers Bureau, she helps former residents communicate the historical injustices that took place through its outreach program.

Dr. Rinaldi's latest research explores artistic interpretation of works generated by individuals with disabilities, and aims to increase the disability presence in arts-based communities. She joined UOIT in 2012, and earned a tenure-track role within her faculty in 2014. She concentrates on disability law in her teaching.

Diverse interests and influences led her to complete a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Philosophy and Classical Civilizations with Great Distinction from the University of Windsor in 2005, her Master of Arts in Philosophy with Honours from the University of Guelph in 2007, and her Doctorate in Critical Disability Studies at York University in 2013. Her graduate studies focused on the philosophy of law and identity politics of gender and disability studies.

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## **Industry Expertise**

Education/Learning, Legal Services, Mental Health Care, Program Development, Public Policy, Research, Social Services, Women

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## **Topics**

Body Image, Body Management, Constitutional Protections of Same-Sex Marriage, Disability, Eating Disorder Recovery, Gender

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## **Affiliations**

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### **Past Talks**

**Narrative Filmmaking on Body Stigma and QueerCrip Sexualities: An Exploration of Process & Themes**  
Canadian Disability Studies Association 13th Annual Conference, Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

**De/Constructing Exclusionary Immigration Law and Policy, Past and Present**  
Canadian Disability Studies Association 13th Annual Conference, Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences

**An Exploration of Participatory Arts-Based Research Conducted in Queer Community**  
Sexuality Studies Association Conference 2016

**Intersecting Stigmas, Intersecting Solutions: Insights from Through Thick and Thin, A Collaborative Research Project Exploring Queer Women's Experiences of Body Image and Body Management**  
3rd Annual Weight Stigma Conference

**The Production of the Recoverable Subject in Eating Disorder Treatment Regimes**  
International Society of Critical Health Psychology 9th Biennial Conference

**Imagining Disability Futurities**  
Canadian Disability Studies Association 12th Annual Conference, Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

**A Reflection on Legal Discourse and the Weight of Injustice**  
Canadian Disability Studies Association 12th Annual Conference, Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

**In Honour of the Arthurs: Disability Support Services in the Age of Austerity**  
Nordic Network of Disability Research 13th Research Conference

**Un-Fit Bodies**  
Nordic Network of Disability Research 13th Research Conference

**Curating the Disabled Body: Histories, Legacies, and Futurities**  
Law and the Curated Body

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### **Education**

**York University**  
PhD Critical Disability Studies

**University of Guelph**  
MA Philosophy

**University of Windsor**  
BA Philosophy and Classical Civilizations

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## **Accomplishments**

### **Co-ordinator, Huronia Speakers Bureau**

The Huronia Speakers Bureau is an outreach activity that is part of the Recounting Huronia: A Participatory Arts-Based Research Project. It consists of persons who were once residents at the Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia Ontario, and represents a wide array of personal experience and expertise on institutionalization.

### **Reviews Editor, Canadian Journal of Disability Studies**

The Canadian Journal of Disability Studies publishes peer-reviewed original articles that advance research in the multidisciplinary, international field of disability studies.

### **Executive Board, Canadian Disability Studies Association**

The Canadian Disability Studies Association-Association Canadienne des Études sur L'Incapacité is dedicated to providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and scholarship regarding disability; networking among individual members, community groups, and other academic organizations; and maintaining and building a commitment to a scholarship that remains connected to, informed by, and in ongoing dialogue with community and consumer organizations and agencies.

### **Robert Tiffin Student Leadership Award**

In recognition of Dr. Rinaldi's leadership efforts which contributed to the growth, development, and vitality of York University.

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