

10 tips for improving diversity, equity, and inclusivity in news coverage

**Language,
Please**

1

Identify people the way they identify themselves

- First, make sure the identifier is relevant to the story.
- Don't assume someone's identity.
- Do ID people equitably.
- Set the precedent.
- Pay attention to how someone self-identifies.
- It's okay to ask directly if necessary.

2

Talk to someone who is part of the group you are writing about

- You don't need to belong to a particular identity group to cover that group effectively — but the less expertise you have in a subject, the more deeply sourced you should be.
- Talk to someone who's had the specific experience you're writing about.
- Remember everyone has their own perspective and agenda.

Resources

- Look to issue-focused websites and associations.
- Ask your colleagues who they would talk to or where they would start looking for sources.
- Reddit, LinkedIn, and Facebook groups can be helpful for finding unofficial sources.
- Advocacy organizations or special interest lawyers might be able to put you in touch with people who have personal experience in the subject at hand.

3

Remember that representation matters in every story

- Don't make someone's identity a proxy for a particular issue.
- Similarly, think carefully about the context in which you are showing or quoting someone.
- Everything is intersectional. One facet of identity does not determine a person's views.

4

Remember one person does not stand in for an entire group

- Diversity exists within underserved communities.
- Get multiple sources from within the community or population you're writing about, and look for different characteristics and perspectives.
- Engaging with the communities you're covering helps inform coverage and build trust.

5

Unconscious bias can be really tough to recognize

- Something can go through multiple rounds of edits and issues can still be missed.
- Avoid coded language or labels that may reinforce stereotypes.
- Use extra caution when including identifiers in headlines and display text.
- Watch out for passive voice — is your phrasing unintentionally shifting responsibility?

Questions to ask to help recognize unconscious bias

(originally from the [Seattle Times](#))

- What is my perspective?
- What are my assumptions?
- How impartial is my story?
- What are my motives?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How deep is the reporting?

6

Empathy is especially important when covering underserved populations

- Letting someone tell you their story in their own words paints a full picture of their experiences.
- Do your research, but keep an open mind.
- Cultivate long-term connections within the communities you're covering.

7

Give credit where credit is due

- Some movements may have been around for a long time but may only get mainstream attention when celebrities adopt the cause.
- Make sure you are exploring the real origins of a movement and acknowledging criticisms or potentially problematic aspects.

8

Look for views beyond those that bolster your argument

- Engaging with conflicting viewpoints can help deepen your understanding and reporting.
- It's not always necessary to give equal weight to opposing views. But it may be worth providing greater context for why someone holds a certain point of view; it can help readers (and reporters) understand why these divides exist.

9

Explore the human impacts of policies

- Talk to the people who make the policies but also the people who live with the policies. (Remember to seek out those “unofficial” sources.)
- Don’t prioritize the intent of a policy over its potential or actual impact.

10

Get a second (or third) look

- Find out what resources your newsroom has (DEI+ experts, employee resource groups, the Language, Please [inclusivity reader directory](#), etc.).
- Consult your colleagues with expertise on the issue (though make sure to ask thoughtfully).
- Go beyond just accepting or rejecting suggestions — try to understand the reasoning to help inform your thinking next time.

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Thank you!