



# THE MEDIA GATEKEEPER'S TOOLKIT

NOVEMBER 2022

A practical guide to increasing the voice share for peace and security experts of color in the media and other public spaces.



ORGANIZATIONS  
IN SOLIDARITY



WCAPS | WOMEN OF COLOR ADVANCING PEACE,  
SECURITY, AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>ABOUT OIS</u></b> .....	<b>P. 1</b>
<b><u>HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE</u></b> .....	<b>P. 2</b>
<b><u>PANELS AND EVENTS</u></b> .....	<b>P. 4</b>
<b><u>PRESS</u></b> .....	<b>P. 8</b>
<b><u>WEBSITE</u></b> .....	<b>P. 11</b>
<b><u>SOCIAL MEDIA</u></b> .....	<b>P. 14</b>
<b><u>INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</u></b> .....	<b>P. 21</b>
<b><u>REFERENCE WORDS</u></b> .....	<b>P. 24</b>



# ABOUT OIS

**Organizations in Solidarity (OIS)** is a partnership among more than 300 organizations and individuals in the fields of peace and security, foreign policy, and national security with a shared vision of a world where all people are treated fairly, equitably, and with respect. Our mission is to combat racist beliefs, attitudes, and acts of discrimination and to integrate diversity within all levels of our work as organizations and as individuals. As part of the founding Solidarity Statements, member organizations committed to elevating the voices of Black people and people of color (POC) in the media and through other public engagements. In September 2020, the OIS Elevating Black and POC Voices Working Group were formed and defined four strategies to advance these goals:

- Prepare and train POC spokespeople.
- Create new opportunities for POC spokespeople.
- Create demand in media for POC spokespeople.
- Collect and audit data to monitor and report on progress.

Please connect with us!



**Toolkit author:** Grace Y. Choi (Ph.D., University of Missouri) is an independent scholar and a Senior UX Researcher at Handshake. Grace's primary work is focused on identifying how the creative use of social media can have substantial educational effects in terms of increasing technical skills, efficacy, and diverse representation.

**\*\* SPECIAL THANKS to Maher Akremi, Mari Fanes, Deepika Choudhary, Diana Ohlbaum, Daryl Kimball, Lynn Fahselt, Simone Williams, Sarah Edkins Lien, and the OIS Elevating POC's Voices working group** for providing the toolkit structure, ideas, content, and feedback.

The publication designer: Grace Y. Choi, Ph.D.

# HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THIS TOOLKIT

## What are the goals of this toolkit?

With this toolkit, we intend to:

- Create more opportunities for people of color to access public platforms, including the media, to influence law, policy, and culture, and to receive credit and recognition for their contributions.
- Build and maintain institutional buy-in for these efforts.
- Shift decisions about whose voices are heard and elevated from zero-sum framing to abundance/network framing.

## What is the focus of this toolkit?

We recognize the importance of intersectionality (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, disability), but this toolkit focuses on race and ethnicity to emphasize the urgent need to address racial inequities and combat systematic racism. Several other resources are available that highlight other dimensions of identity in media work:

- [Gender-Responsive Communications Toolkit](#) - International Organization for Migration
- [Pride in Reporting](#) - Love Matters
- [Creating Authentic Spaces](#) - The 519
- [Disability Inclusion Toolkit](#) - Ford Foundation
- [Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion Employers' Toolkit](#) - Social Mobility Commission

## Who should use this toolkit?

This toolkit can **help anyone who controls access to an organization's public profile** develop new opportunities to support and elevate thinkers, writers, and speakers of color in our communications, research, events, and advocacy. These gatekeepers include communications and marketing staff, event planners, executive directors, managers, and others.

# HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THIS TOOLKIT

## What should you be mindful of when reading this toolkit?

- **The term People of Color (POC) is used** to include all underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. See [Reference Words](#) for more details.
- **Everyone is involved in this toolkit.** This toolkit is for anyone who can take action to elevate the voices of experts of color in the field, not just the dominant identity groups (which in the U.S. and Europe, tend to be white). We also note that while many individuals of color have built successful public profiles in the media, this toolkit aims to address systemic imbalances in our field. This toolkit emphasizes how we all can work together to democratize public discourse and bring in people, communities, and perspectives that have been historically excluded and ignored.
- **Mindfully collaborate with POC.** We encourage a partnership between people of color in your organization to further this work and take actions; however, this should not be additional, unpaid, labor, but included in the scope of their work.
- **Avoid tokenism.** Throughout the toolkit, we will emphasize the importance of avoiding tokenism. We encourage our readers to use this toolkit to take meaningful and continuous actions instead of making performative gestures to increase social capital. It takes long-term efforts to make changes that last.
- **One toolkit doesn't cover all.** We acknowledge that we are unable to cover all aspects of media and issues related to race in this one toolkit. We encourage more organizations to engage with these issues, tailor their approaches to their specific context, and create resources to support spokespeople in the peace and security field.

# PANELS AND EVENTS

Diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences improve the quality of panels. By providing a wide variety of voices and perspectives, panels can challenge participants to think differently about a topic and engage in deeper conversations.

## AS AN ORGANIZER:

- **Consider the topic and set your goals.** Consider a panel/event topic that welcomes and connects with POC and is more inclusive of diverse views.
  - For example, it is vital to incorporate a range of perspectives when addressing global health. Individuals experience health issues at different rates and are affected by different healthcare systems. Experts of color from different communities can speak with more specificity and bring valuable perspectives about the experiences of people of color with health.
- **Gather a list of experts who are people of color.** Broaden your network to include more experts of color.
  - Search on social media, use your colleagues' networks, and ask for suggestions from previous speakers.
  - Form a search committee with sufficient staff to find, invite, plan, and work with more diverse panels and speakers. Make sure everyone on the search committee is committed to diversifying the line-up before proceeding.



# PANELS AND EVENTS

## AS AN ORGANIZER CONTINUED:

- **Be flexible and invite speakers of color FIRST.**  
To guarantee participation reflecting the demographics of those impacted by the topic, you may have to adjust the time and location to enable and encourage speakers of color to participate.
  - Exercise patience and be prepared to reach out to backup speakers. Recognize that these individuals may have more constraints on their schedules due to additional responsibilities such as caretaking responsibilities, and may also receive considerable similar speaker requests if they are one of the more well-established experts of color in the field.
  - After you have their acceptance, then fill in the remaining slots with speakers who are typically well represented.
- **Avoid tokenism.** It's important to invite POC to speak for their expertise, not because their representation fulfills the appearance of diversity for your organization.
  - If there is only one speaker of color on a panel, they should not be asked to speak for all POC, and should not be invited to speak exclusively on diversity-related topics unless that is their area of expertise. Aim to have the panel include diverse representatives who can speak on the topic from multiple different perspectives.



# PANELS AND EVENTS

## AS AN ORGANIZER CONTINUED:

- **Set up all speakers for success.** Before inviting speakers of color to a panel, reexamine speakers' norms and expectations to identify any possible exclusionary factors that may affect these speakers' experience and performance.
  - Exclusionary factors: English as the primary language or only language, panel structure, Zoom usage, Westernized jargon, and strict dress codes that are based on white culture standards. Evaluate what of these factors are necessary for your event to succeed and which are just manifestations of systems that result in exclusion.
  - Block out time beforehand to do thorough prep for speakers of color who are new to your events, making sure they understand the norms, expectations, and technology usage of the panel if they are out of the ordinary or specific to how your organization hosts events.
- **Pay your speakers of color.** Not compensating for the time and effort of speakers of color can further compound racial inequities, especially for POC who are most affected by a large racial wealth gap. At a minimum, pay for their travel expenses and stay for in-person speaking events.





# PANELS AND EVENTS

## AS AN INVITED SPEAKER:

- **Ask to participate with diverse speakers.** When you are asked to participate or moderate a panel, ask organizers about their inclusion of speakers of color. Suggest experts of color if there is a lack of representation.
- **For people in the majority group, commit to not speaking at non-diverse panels.** Let the organizers know that you expect diversity to be represented and that you will have to decline the invitation if you are going to be one of many others representing the same perspective or demographic.
- **Refer to other diverse speakers.** If you are unable to attend, provide a referral to other POC experts for the event planner to consider.

## AS AN ATTENDEE:

- **Practice active listening and be open-minded.** We can become better listeners and benefit from hearing from experts from different backgrounds who can provide new ideas and perspectives that may not be familiar. By being open-minded, we can identify new ways to both better support people of color, and be more effective in our fields.
- **Request more diverse perspectives.** If there is a single point of view being expressed, point this out during the panel and do what you can to provide or make space for others to provide additional viewpoints. Follow up with panel organizers with this list of tips or speaker rosters.



# PRESS

Whether you are working with media, it is important to feature and include experts of color across the field who can provide new stories and perspectives to offer an inclusive picture of your organization and your field of work.

## AS A COMMUNICATION STAFFER:

- **Tier media opportunities.** Many organizations lack senior experts of color but reserve media opportunities for only the most experienced staff. A concrete step to solve this is to create experiences for the emerging voices of people of color in lower-stakes appearances. This both reduces the media burden on senior staff and helps prepare new spokespeople for an increasing presence in the media. Ensure you are providing the necessary support for these new spokespeople.
- **Facilitate collaborations.** Talk to your media superstars and leadership about how they can uplift more experts of color by, for example, redirecting a media inquiry to another staff member or inviting an emerging expert to co-write a commissioned op-ed.
- **Ask reporters to speak to experts of color.** When a reporter asks for a quote or an interview, try to direct them to an expert of color, particularly a less well-known expert. Ask if they have spoken with any experts of color and be ready to suggest names (beyond your organization) if they have not.
- **Use appropriate language regarding diversity.** Make sure you fully understand the context and groups affected by an issue before agreeing to discuss it and identify their preferred language. Be as specific as possible when talking about racial groups and representation. Take time to educate yourself and your organization. Everyone has gaps in their knowledge and can improve.
- **Provide pre-publication support.** Offer to help edit and proofread pieces, identify press contacts, and make introductions to experts of color (in and out of your organization) who are trying to build their public profile.

# PRESS

## AS A SPOKESPERSON:

- **Invite underrepresented colleagues to write joint articles and op-eds.** Provide publication and byline opportunities by co-writing with younger, more junior, or less known experts who are POC, and give them top billing.
- **Suggest names of experts of color for quotes.** When you get a media request or are asked for a quote for an interview with a reporter, ask if they have spoken with a diverse range of experts including those who are people of color. Also, point the reporter to experts of color who helped you, colleagues of yours, or those less known in the field.

### Op-ed spotlight from WCAP members:

A timely topic that highlights POC

## UKRAINE AND THE GLOBAL COLOR LINE

*The violence of language, in conflict and beyond.*

COMMENTARY

Wrote:  
Raeghn Draper, Mari Faines, and Jasmine Owens  
Photos: Bruno Martins  
Date: March 18th, 2022

Show: Facebook  
Google+  
Twitter  
LinkedIn  
Print

A collaboration between multiple experts of color

A few days after Russia invaded Ukraine, five of us — people of color — sat on a Zoom call. We represented different peace and security organizations from across the US. We

were supposed to be collaborating on a joint project, but somewhere to express our feelings. Our empathy and compassion soon became intricately woven with frustration, disappointment, and anger. The media and politicians were reporting on this conflict. Scattered and scurried to action to help Ukraine left us wondering: What if we were for Yemen, or Syria, or Palestine, or Afghanistan, or Haiti, or a non-European, majority Black/Brown country? There are people committed all over the world, but we had to ask: Was it the people reporting the news that this conflict was “difficult”?

As days passed, our frustration and anger increased as media coverage and war against Black and Brown victims as a means to justify wanting to be at the forefront of *this* moment for justice. We were brushed off with the same measly explanation of “well, this is what that meant — and the media confirmed that for us, it was haired people,” good “Christians” from Europe, not people from World.nation.”

Unfortunately, the not-so-thinly-veiled and outright racism of focusing all energy toward Ukraine is nothing new. The only difference that existed was

*Raeghn Draper (they/them) is the Partnerships and Mobilization Associate at Global Zero. A storyteller with a strong trust in our collective power to reimagine current realities, they understand that stories are one of the most successful forms of organizing and mobilizing people. Their work involves using the power of writing to draft new realities for people of varying identities, specifically those most marginalized.*

*Mari Faines (she/her) is a social justice, diversity & equity activist, podcast host, and the current Director of Communications and Outreach for Physicians for Social Responsibility. Her research specializes in conflict resolution, transitional justice, and racial and systemic disparities. Faines is passionate about her work because of her belief that only through unselfish commitment, and authentic, innovative collaboration, can we ever hope to achieve equity, justice, and peace, for all populations.*

*Jasmine Owens (she/her) is the Lead Organizer and Policy Coordinator for the Nuclear Weapons Abolition Program at Physicians for Social Responsibility. Her work and her passions focus on centering our collective humanity in the fight for a more just and equitable world, starting with the abolition of nuclear weapons.*

Source: [Inkstick Media](#)

# PRESS

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES TO PROMOTE RACIAL DIVERSITY IN THE PRESS

Please click on the underlined link to access these resources.

- **The National Association of Black Journalists** has a style guide on terms and language related to Black American history, culture, and current issues.
- The National Association of Hispanic Journalists publishes a downloadable **Cultural Competence Handbook** that aims to help journalists and others “develop a working vocabulary related to diversity issues, avoiding stereotypes.”
- **The Asian American Journalists Association** has published a guide to covering Asian America.
- **The Native American Journalists Association** maintains numerous reporting guides on specific topics relevant to reporting on Indigenous communities.
- **The University of British Columbia** offers language guidelines on writing about Indigenous peoples.
- The Society of Professional Journalists and the Trans Journalists Association have teamed up to create the **Race and Gender Hotline**, free consultation service to help reporters on the deadline address questions about race and gender in their stories.
- Also, refer to our **Reference Words** for using certain terms.

Source: The Open Notebook, 2022



# WEBSITE

## KEY WEBSITE FEATURES TO CONSIDER

Your website is where online visitors often form their first impression. The text, images, and other media on your website should reflect the full diversity of your staff, stakeholders, and the people you serve with special attention to people of color. Be wary of tokenism that can isolate and pressure one person, or a few people, of color in your organization to represent diversity across your entire organization.

### PHOTOS/IMAGES:

- **Hire a photographer who can accurately capture diverse racial identities.** Talk to your photographer about the nuances of photographing various skin tones to produce flattering photos and review their previous work photographing people of color.
- **Examine practices for staff photographs with respect to diverse cultural norms for photos.** For example, not everyone should be expected to smile or wear a certain style of clothing for a staff photo. If stock photos need to be used, identify authentic photos that do not perpetuate stereotypes and are repetitively used in other places.



For a list of websites for diverse stock photos, [click here!](#)



# WEBSITE

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT AND BEYOND:

- If your organization already has a diversity statement that details its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for its employees, partners, customers, etc., make sure it appears prominently on your website and is easy to find.
- If your organization does not have a DEI statement, use the appropriate channels to encourage the creation of one.
  - This statement should not be solely a vehicle for promoting your organization's work, signaling progress without meaningful work to carry it forward, or framed as a competition with other organizations. Developing diversity statements requires buy-in from a range of stakeholders at all levels to ensure that its more than a communications exercise but rather a long-term policy.
- **Demonstrate how this diversity statement has been and will be applied to the organization.** Consider sharing an outline of your organization's DEI efforts, providing racial identity data on staff and leadership, and other examples of how your DEI commitment is implemented and tracked. Many organizations dedicate a website page to show the diversity and include a yearly diversity report that exhibits their efforts to make a difference in their workplace.
  - Remember, reporting this information on your website does not replace internal work.

### DEI page examples:

[Organizations in Solidarity](#)  
[Center for Strategic and International Studies](#)  
[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)  
[Friends Committee on National Legislation](#)  
[Peace Direct](#)  
[United Nations Foundation](#)

# WEBSITE

Take these examples as a starting point and create an original statement that fits with your organization. Remember, **the end goal is not to just inform the public.**

## Diversity page spotlight:

Providing real data from the org to show diverse representations and the need to increase diversity

**DIVERSITY and INCLUSION**

### Carnegie's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As the United States continues to address the challenges of inequity, systemic racism, and polarization, we need urgently to take tangible action to build a more just society. As an institution, Carnegie has an important role to play in overcoming the stubborn problems of injustice and inequality—across our society, country, and world—that eat away at human dignity.

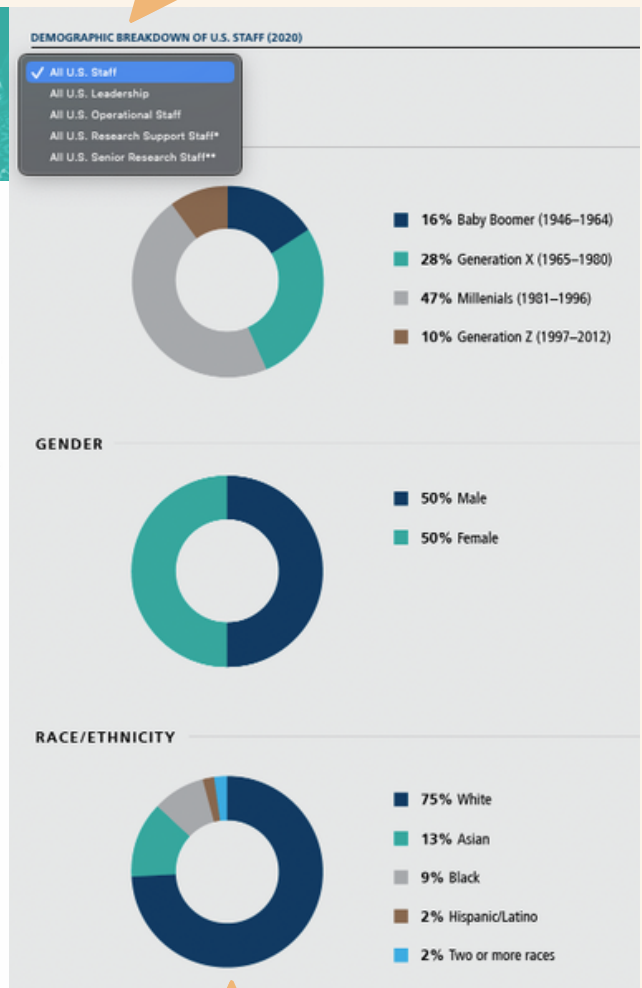
A critical part of our mission—in the United States and abroad—is to understand and reverse the corrosive patterns of civil conflict, political violence, and exclusion. We must elevate a diverse array of voices that offer new perspectives and solutions and mentor the next generation of foreign policy scholars and practitioners. And, we must ensure that our own organization reflects the rich diversity of the countries in which we work, tackling in particular the inexcusable underrepresentation of women and minority voices in our field in the United States.

What follows is Carnegie's plan of action for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion across our institution—and holding ourselves to account. We are grateful to everyone at Carnegie who has offered ideas, energy, and honesty to advance this effort, which will remain a very high priority for all of us in the months and years ahead. We are committed to this crucial cause.

Elizabeth Dibble  
COO

Shaping the Next Generation of Foreign Policy Leaders

Marena Snowden  
Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of State Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance



Hearing from the orgs' experts of color to support the diversity statement

Use both quant and qual data to tell POC's stories in the org

Source: [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an important communication channel. It is essential to use these platforms to listen to people of color and selectively choose content that can reach a diverse audience and increase diverse representations online. Incorporate these goals into the organization's existing social media policies.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IN GENERAL:



- **Engage your colleagues of color** to generate ideas on what to post on social media and where the organization fits in the diversity dialogue. Make sure to ask for their voluntary participation, as not everyone is comfortable contributing, and that it doesn't create extra unpaid work.
- **Compile and update a list of social media handles** of employees of color, the leadership of your organization, and experts in your field. This list should not be used for monitoring their social media activities but as a way to amplify their voices. Share and retweet content that is appropriate and relevant to your organization's mission. Be transparent about the organization's social media policy and ask for permission to follow and interact with their account. If they are not comfortable with this you should respect their preference.
- **Engage.** Whenever it's appropriate to the context, follow, like, comment on, and share postings by experts of color.
- **Highlight, support, and collaborate** with other organizations in your field led by people of color on social media to create virtual events or video posts (e.g., IGTV) that can create dialogues about diversity issues and encourage diverse perspectives on issues in your field.
- **Use diverse emojis.** Use emojis with multiple skin tones to indicate inclusivity.
- **Commit to producing meaningful posts** about cultural holidays and celebrations. However, note that although there are certain times dedicated to celebrating people of color, these one-time posts are not substitutes for regular, substantive engagement with communities of color.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## CULTURAL HOLIDAYS AND MONTHS TO HIGHLIGHT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### Important notes:

- This calendar (next page) highlights cultural holidays **focused on race and ethnicity and is meant to be used as a starting point.**
- We recognize that these holidays are primarily based on Western cultures, and we encourage more crowdsourcing efforts to identify international (non-Western) holidays.
- **More resources on cultural holidays:**
  - ReThink Media's [Peace and Security Editorial Google Calendar Add](#)
  - UNESCO's [International Days](#)
  - Seramount's [Diversity Holiday Calendar 2022](#)
  - Excellent [Presence's Diversity Calendar 2022](#)
- Although recognizing these holidays is important, it is even more important to **take action to make an impact.** For example (these should not be more unpaid work for employees of color):
  - Reach out to employees of color about what cultural holidays are important to them and how they would like to engage with these holidays
  - Build your organization's own cultural holiday calendar
  - Ask relevant individuals to write op-eds about these holidays
  - Create workshops to learn more in-depth about these holidays and exchange personal stories



# SOCIAL MEDIA

OiS is creating our own cultural holiday calendar! Please access [\*\*this sheet\*\*](#) to contribute any national and international holidays you know and deserve recognition. We will update these contributions to the calendar accordingly.

Add [\*\*the OiS Google calendar\*\*](#) to your Google calendar.

## JAN

**1/7** Martin Luther King Day  
**1/24** World Day for African and Afrodescendant Culture

## FEB

**Black History Month**  
**2/1** Lunar New Year  
**2/14** Frederick Douglass Day

## MAR

**3/10** Harriet Tubman Day  
**3/21** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

## APR

**Celebrate Diversity Month**  
**Arab-American Heritage Month**  
**4/16** Emancipation Day

## MAY

**Asian Pacific American Heritage Month**  
**5/5** Cinco de Mayo  
**5/19** Malcolm X Day  
**5/25** African Liberation Day

## JUNE

**Immigrant Heritage Month**  
**6/19** Juneteenth  
**6/21** National Indigenous Peoples Day

## JULY

**7/18** Nelson Mandela International Day  
**7/19** Maafa Commemoration

## AUG

**8/9** International Day of the World's Indigenous People  
**8/13** Black Women's Equal Pay Day

## SEP

**Hispanic Heritage Month**  
**9/11** Ethiopian New Year  
**9/16** Mexican Independence Day  
**9/24** Native American Day

## OCT

**10/1** Native American Women's Equal Pay Day  
**10/11** National Indigenous Peoples Day  
**10/17** Black Poetry Day

## NOV

**National Native American Heritage Month**  
**11/29** International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

## DEC

**12/1** Rosa Parks Day  
**12/2** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery  
**12/26-1/1** Kwanzaa

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIFICS:



- **Join DEI LinkedIn groups.** LinkedIn has many professional groups that focus on DEI. Join these groups (and encourage your HR staff to join them) to have conversations about issues relevant to people of color, recirculate LinkedIn posts by experts of color, and recruit new hires who are people of color. For example:
  - [Global Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#)
  - [Black Enterprise Networked](#)
  - [National Professional Women of Color Network](#)
- **Create your organization's LinkedIn.** Use your group to increase interactions with people of color.
  - Create free polls with up to five questions that could be used to ask about POC's thoughts on various topics.
  - React and/or comment on the LinkedIn posts of employees of color as an organization to increase recognition and celebrate their achievements.
- **Write LinkedIn articles.** Write about your organization's stance on diversity and/or invite employees of color to write about their thoughts on professional tips and recruitment strategies.
  - This should not be additional, unpaid, labor, but included in the scope of their work.
- **Support POC through LinkedIn recommendations.** Encourage senior staff to provide LinkedIn recommendations to people of color who are in junior positions that can help to establish their credentials.

For more tips from LinkedIn DEI Resource Hub, [click here!](#)



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIFICS:



- **Retweet POC and beyond.** Retweet and like tweets from experts of color that align with your organization’s mission and communications strategy. In addition, consider quoting tweets and provide further comments as to why they are relevant to your organization and followers.
- **Pin important tweets on top.** Highlight a (past or present) tweet by an expert of color when it's timeless and significant for the organization.
- **Use Space to discuss with experts of color.** Have live audio conversations about diversity issues and include diverse experts in your expert discussions that are open to the public.
- **Respectfully follow Black Twitter.** Black Twitter is a space primarily focused on issues of interest to the Black community, typically through #blacktwitter. Those outside of that identity group should be cautious and thoughtful about engaging in this space to show respect.
- **Appropriately use key hashtags.** If you are just starting or building your online presence, hashtags are effective ways to reach a wider audience. Moderately use hashtags (2-3) to obtain new followers and create more impact when you are hosting events and creating actions. Make sure you review other content with the hashtag before using it yourself to ensure you are contributing to the conversation and not producing distractions or simply noise.
  - ReThink’s [article on Twitter tips](#)
  - Use social media analytics to identify diversity-related hashtags:



Source: [RiteTag](#)

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Tweet spotlight:

An important reminder to use these examples as references/starting points to craft your org's messaging.



Use relevant and purposeful hashtags

Include a shortened link to provide more information and connect to the main website

Tag relevant people/orgs for cross-promotion and collaboration

Be mindful of the posting time to reach your target audience

Create a high-quality branded graphic to feature experts of color to increase professionalism and stand out from textual content

Source: NGO Working Group on Woman, Peace and Security

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIFICS:



- **Create consistent posts** about POC-related movements/issues rather than making a one-time post.
- **Co-author posts and co-host live videos with POC.** Utilize different functions on Instagram, such as IGTV and reels, to have conversations and collaborate with experts of color about different issues. You can also use Guides to resurface older posts to feature POC-related content.
- **Make genuine and impactful posts.** Create posts that can help POC by supporting social movements and increasing diverse representations using stats, action-oriented items, and resources. Example post:

### Instagram post spotlight:

Suggest action items in multiple posts

Tag relevant people/orgs on the post

Feature and tag relevant experts of color in the caption

Write meaningful captions that can showcase POC's stories

Source: [Good News by Good Good Good](#)

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is vital for ensuring employees can work effectively and provide needed stability to everyone involved. It can also be used to help foster positive interactions and conversations about DEI issues, with staff of color, and people of color outside an organization. Communication that steers away from stereotypical language will nurture organizational culture and build workplace engagement.

## INTERNAL STRATEGIES:

- **Audit your own communications.** Keep a log of media requests, who fulfilled them, and what was ultimately published. Review your social media/blog and consider both who is “speaking” in your posts and who is being spoken to.
- **Offer institution-wide training.** You can run these yourself or bring in consultants like our friends at ReThink media. Topics include writing and pitching op-eds, on-air interviewing techniques, etc.
- **Share media/guest blogs, op-eds, and conference/panel appearances broadly.** Send them to staff and board, post them to your intranet, and share them on social media with proper tags/credits to the authors.
- **Schedule 1-on-1 meetings with colleagues of color.** Ensure they are equitably included in your organization’s work, communication, and culture.
  - Are they interested in media appearances/writing opportunities? What ideas do they have? What topics are they experts in? What outlets or audiences would they like to reach?
  - Use these sessions to build an internal speakers bureau. Do not reach out to them exclusively for DEI work, or DEI/diversity-related opportunities.
- **Be mindful of tokenism.** Spokespeople should be chosen based on their expertise, not their racial identity alone. If you do not have experts of color to act as spokespeople in your organization, then you should examine your internal recruitment, retention, and promotion policies.
  - One person of color in your organization should not be isolated as a spokesperson to represent all racial groups. Have a conversation with your staff to establish expectations for spokespeople of color.

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:

- **Be aware and alert to times when experts of color are ignored, overlooked, and disrespected.** Some behaviors can undermine people of color's ability to fulfill their tasks, discourage them from speaking, and decrease their self-confidence to speak up in the future.
  - For example, someone simply restates what they just said, someone posts unrelated comments in the Zoom chat box while they are speaking, and people are looking at their phones instead of listening. If possible, call in/out these disruptive/disrespectful behaviors.
  - Be attentive to nonverbal cues, as they can show if people of color are uncomfortable in certain situations.
- **Recognize the voices of people of color.** Avoid aggressively calling people of color out in public spaces. This can embarrass them and invite unwanted attention when they did not seek out help. Rather, offer subtle support that can encourage them to establish their presence.
  - For example, in Zoom meetings, when you notice that when a person of color is not speaking, send a private chat to ask a question that can invite them to speak on the topic, and ensure they are comfortable stepping into the space.
  - Consider that a pattern of reluctance on the part of a staff of color to speak up may indicate a problem with the way meetings are run.





# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:

- **Gather trusted colleagues and friends in an amplification pact.** This can help to ensure fair attribution and recognition of the contribution of diverse staff and prevent any chance of dominant voices claiming the idea as their own.
  - For example, when a person of color makes a key point, the group could speak up to give credit and recognize its importance by adding how their contribution applies and matters to the context.
  - Similarly, you could agree to redirect the conversation after a person of color is interrupted to let them continue their point and claim credit for the idea.
- **Keep a list of experts of color.** Use this list as a source of recommendations when you are asked about job openings and professional opportunities. Continue to actively update the list as there will be more experts of color who will continue to emerge in the future.
- **Use your networks to directly connect people of color to recruiters or other organizations.** Take proactive actions to connect people of color whose expertise fits well with certain job opportunities and/or speaking events without being asked. Provide strong and affirming words of recommendation for the expert as a part of the introduction.



# REFERENCE WORDS

## Important notes:

- We highlighted key terms in relation to race and ethnicity that are frequently used in media. These definitions are compiled based on a combination of these resources:
  - [OiS Recognizing, Understanding, and Defining Systemic and Individual White Supremacy](#)
  - [National Institute of Health](#)
  - [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)
  - [Racial Equity Tools](#)
  - [The Communications Network](#)
- These terms and definitions are meant to be **used as a starting point**. We encourage our readers to have a discussion about these terms with their organization and further educate themselves about how to define and properly use them.

## BASIC DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

---

- **Ally:** Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.
- **Antiracism:** The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.
- **BIPOC (Black and/or Indigenous People of Color):** This modern term explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities.
- **Cultural appropriation:** Theft of cultural elements (e.g., symbols, art, language) for one's own use, commodification, or profit, often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture.

# REFERENCE WORDS

- **Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories.
- **Diversity:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group, or organization. Diversity includes such factors as age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, and expertise, and it is about understanding these differences and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences.
- **Ethnicity:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as a shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.
- **Equity:** Fair and just practices and politics that ensure all people can thrive. It acknowledges structural inequalities that advantage some and disadvantage others.
- **Equality:** A state of affairs in which all people within a specific society or isolated group have the same status in certain respects, including civil rights, freedom of speech, property rights, and equal access to certain social goods and services.
- **Implicit bias:** Negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness.
- **Inclusion:** Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power.
- **Indigeneity:** Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, and, by conquest, settlement, or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition.

# REFERENCE WORDS

- **Intersectionality:** A framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences to understand the complexity of prejudices they face. The term was first coined by law professor and social theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw.
- **Microaggression:** The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.
- **Oppression:** It is the systemic and institutional abuse of power by one group at the expense of others and the use of force to maintain this dynamic. An oppressive system is built around the ideology of the superiority of some groups and the inferiority of others.
- **POC (People of Color):** A modern term primarily used to describe any person who is not white and emphasizes the common experiences of systemic racism. Although there are other terms (e.g., “underrepresented groups”, “racial minorities,” and “non-Whites) to describe this community, POC is a more adopted term that stems from Black leaders in the 1960s. **Note:** While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.
- **Race:** A term used to identify and define individuals as part of a distinct group based on physical characteristics and some cultural and historical commonalities.
- **Racism:** The dominant group carries out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.
- **Systemic racism:** Racism that exists across a society within, and between institutions/organizations across society.

# REFERENCE WORDS

- **Solidarity:** Unity or agreement based on shared interests and objectives; long-term mutual support within and between groups.
- **Tokenism:** The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of racial equality within a workforce.
- **White privilege:** Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally, they experience such privilege and do so without being conscious of it.
- **White supremacy:** A social and systemic manifestation of the belief that white people hold a level of superiority over other races, thus granting them the right to exert dominion over people of other racial groups, by use of both social and systemic structures. This may result in the perpetuation of this ideology, by use of violence, passive, or covert acts with these exertions being exhibited exclusively or in unison with other such actions.
- **Xenophobia:** Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and is a function of White supremacy.



ORGANIZATIONS  
IN SOLIDARITY