

being seen

Directives for creating authentic
and inclusive content

“ The checkbox approach to diversity really negates the fact that so many of us have intersecting identities. We're all coming from very different backgrounds. What happens in writing rooms in the dominant media is that they decide on a more diverse approach and it's 'let's check the boxes'. ”

AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING

For Creators, Producers

- + Review storylines, plots, locations and characters for shorthand descriptions that could be perceived as stereotypes or tokens and which fail to explore complexity and Intersectionality.
- + Assess whether there is a need for another trauma-based story from your particular perspective. There could be, particularly if you belong to the same community as the story and if it is a story that few have told. However, if the interest in telling the story could be described as profiting from the pain of others then reconsider whether it is your story to tell. For example, there are few stories about slavery in Canada, however, a white creator or producer should not be telling or profiting from that story.
- + Consider the complexity of characters and settings in every story told. Do not default to white, able-bodied, heterosexuals in your love story, comedy, horror, fantasy, sci-fi, soap opera, documentary, etc.

- + Avoid trying to fit one of every identity (i.e. one Black, one Person of Colour, one Person with a Disability etc.) into a cast or cram multiple identities into one character to leave the others free to be white, able-bodied, straight people.
- + Move beyond addressing underrepresentation with the best friend or sidekick or only secondary characters who have little character development or agency, and only exist to support the narrative and character development of the white, able-bodied, straight leads.
- + Do your research so that you understand the community and characters that you are writing about.
- + Find ways to solve underrepresentation that go further than substituting colour or skin tone for race (see Directive on Authentic Casting)

Quick Fact

Four percent of the Canadian population belong to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community - 2016 Canadian Census

Further Reading

#WriteInclusion Fact Sheets, Think Tank for Equity and Inclusion, Ongoing,
<https://www.writeinclusion.org/factsheets>

<http://www.bso-ben.ca/beingseen>

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