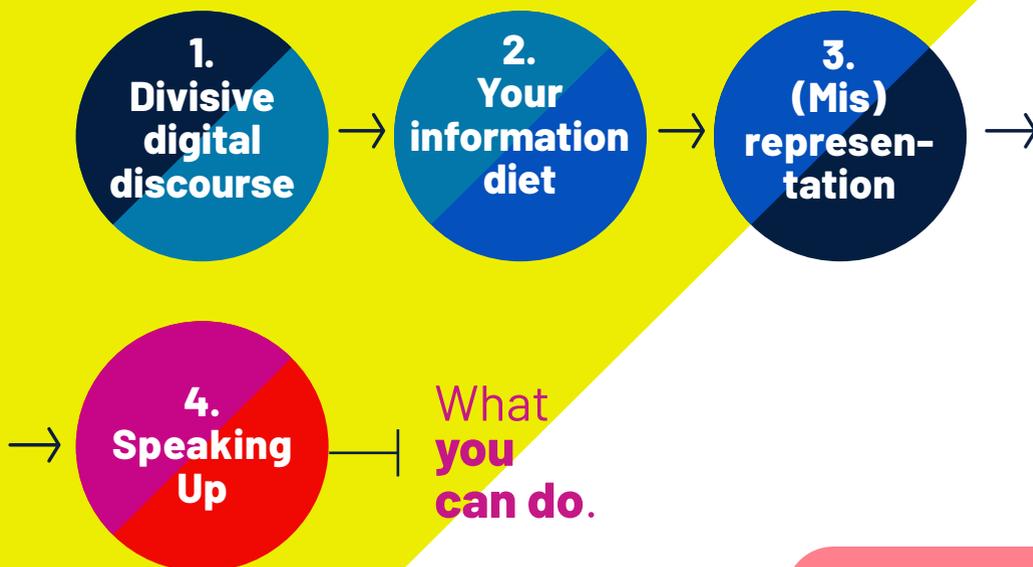


#Citizen Resilience Project

Part 4/4

Our aim is to **empower Canadians** to **recognize** the threats of **false information**, to **fight against it** as informed citizens, and to **engage** in **inclusive, productive discourse**.



About this project

The **Citizen Resilience Project** originated at 6 Degrees Toronto 2019. 6 Degrees is the global forum for inclusion, and a project of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, which convenes leaders from all sectors including arts, civil society, academia, government, activism, and business. Additionally, this project has been developed through research, national polling, and consultations with new Canadian citizens and was made possible by the Government of Canada. We encourage you to ask questions, share your experiences through our [6 Degrees Montréal Digital content](#).

Speaking up

What you can do?

We all have a role in speaking up and countering the spread of false and hateful content online. As more of our conversations, meetings, and experiences take place online due to COVID-19, it is vital that everyone feels like they can participate in inclusive digital spaces. It's up to us to engage to improve online spaces, support diverse viewpoints, and create spaces for marginalized groups to have their voices heard. It's our shared responsibility.

Some organizations, like the [Centre for Countering Digital Hate](#), recommend refusing to engage with hateful content online so as to not amplify that content. This is one perspective. In some cases, however, it's important to take an active role in striving for a better discourse. Sometimes, ignoring is not enough. Avoiding alone doesn't improve fact-driven discourse online, compel the consideration of diverse viewpoints, or carve out space for marginalized or silenced groups to have their voices heard.



→ So how can you help?

While many people are looking for ways to help out and give back during this global crisis — like the “[caremongering](#)” movement in Canada — we encourage you to consider ways you can help make online spaces more inclusive.

Online groups, like #iamhere, have sparked a “counterspeaking” movement around the world. It started in Sweden by Mina Dennert as #jagärhär, and is now a movement of 150,000 people around the world confronting and countering hateful or inaccurate comments on news articles.

“Counterspeaking helps carve out space, so that people who might feel silenced or marginalized have that space to share their thoughts and viewpoints,” Alena Helgeson, the founder of Canada’s #iamhere group, shared with us in a recent interview. Counterspeaking is not about creating an argument or debate, but rather, inserting facts and counter messages into social media posts or news sites’ comment boards that contain harmful or false content.

“It’s about creating an alternative message because we’re seeing a vocal minority that is trying to perpetuate a message that isn’t true,” Helgeson says.

Find out more

- ➔ Read more about why Albertan [Alena Helgeson](#) of #iamhere and Quebec’s [Mathieu Marion](#), of the francophone group #jesuislà consider counterspeak to be important, why they do it, the topics most prone to misinformation or hate, and the rapidly changing context due to COVID-19.



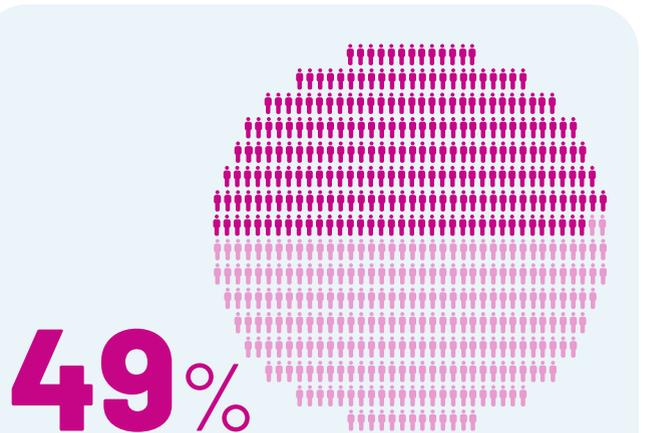
Find out more

- ➔ At 6 Degrees Toronto in September 2019, we spoke to speakers and participants from around the world about building more inclusive online spaces, and the importance of speaking up. Watch this [short video](#) to hear what they have to say.

Calls for improved diversity in media

In addition to speaking up against hateful comments and false information online, we can ensure diverse voices are heard by improving representation and diversity in media. We know that diverse voices can offer new perspectives on complex issues, expose false understandings or misconceptions, and balance biased narratives, but these voices can often be underrepresented. Media has immense power in shaping public thought, and diverse representation in public narratives is as important as diverse representation in our politics and workplaces.

The content we consume in our day-to-day lives often does not show us issues most relevant to minority communities. Indeed, people of colour are notably under-represented in Canadian news media. In response, organizations like the Racial Equity Media Collective, Canadian Journalists of Colour, and Canadian Association of Black Journalists have made calls for more diversity in the production of media, as a way to address some of the problematic framing or coverage of current affairs and related experiences of particular communities.



About **half of all Canadians** said Canadian **online news would be more relevant** to them if there was more **diversity amongst the people producing it**.

➔ Among new **Canadian citizens**, this number jumps to roughly 70%.

Source: ICC-Leger, 2019

Speak up and take action

You can make choices about how you engage online, about which content you consume, and whose voices are heard. We all have a role to play in helping shape public narratives. When we're behind our screens, it can often feel like we're alone, but a silent majority has collective power when we raise our voices, speak up, and reshape the digital commons.

The complete **Citizen Resilience Project** is accessible on our website.

 inclusion.ca

→ Action Items

- Join the online counterspeak movement and support others to speak up, in groups like #iamhere
- Learn more about "**dangerous speech**," and support calls for tougher responses to dangerous speech online that threatens to incite violence against particular groups of people
- Report racism, hate, or harassment on social media. Often, the more people report a post or user, the more likely it will be reviewed quickly and/or removed.
- Donate to trusted and diverse not-for-profit media organizations if you are in a position to do so, or take advantage of your [Digital News Subscription Tax Credit](#), worth up to \$500, to pay for subscription services. Many media outlets have removed paywalls during the COVID-19 crisis to eliminate barriers to accessing reliable and trustworthy information. If we want to continue expanding inclusive access to information, we need to fund these professional journalism outlets.
- Find out if the Canadian news sources that you follow have implemented these [calls to action to diversify newsrooms](#), as suggested by the Canadian Association of Black Journalists and Canadian Journalists of Colour. If they have not, contact them to find out why or to encourage them to do so.



Follow along on social media and share with us your tips for speaking up and combating misinformation or online hate.

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