

Diversity Checklist:

Top Ten Hints for Getting the “Other Voices” into Political Stories

1. Once again: Know thy community.

Who are the “other voices”? Who gets left out? Why?

2. Break out of your social routines.

Go for dinner or lunch at local places outside of your usual haunts. Find ways to meet people who aren't like you: Different churches, different festivals, different hang-outs. Join a social group with an interest unlike any of yours. Take the bus some place once a month.

3. Read ethnic, alternative and community newsletters, newspapers, Websites. Listen to/ watch electronic news outlets that serve different groups, interests, perspectives.

These at least tell you what some members of the different groups/communities consider important to their audiences.

4. Find other “windows” into different communities: A barber shop. A coffee shop. A gas station.

5. Create a database / file / “source book” of folks from different communities, with different perspectives.

Call them occasionally. Go out for coffee, drinks, lunch. Invite them to dinner with you and friends. Ask them about story ideas. Discuss what's in the news – do they know something you don't?

6. Take care with your language – but don't become a hostage in the “language wars.”

Is it “Latino” or “Hispanic”? Is it “pro-life” or “anti-abortion” or “anti-abortion rights”? Is Katie Couric “perkie”?

7. Be aware of your own stereotypes – and ALWAYS question them.

She has a Southern accent: She must be bigoted, ignorant or at least poorly educated. Right? Asian women are short, right?

8. For every issue or story, ask: Who are the stakeholders?

Who's affected by this? How? Are they represented in my story?

9. Beware of the “subtext” in images and stories.

If minorities are only in the news as victims or as those accused of crimes, that's a distorted image of them – and of society.

10. Remember that diversity means more than race and ethnicity: It's gender, socio-economic status, culture, geography, attitudes.

Attitudes toward guns, for example, often differ by geography and gender. But not every woman is a gun-hating nurturer.