

# Shifting Culture Online

How to make challenging content resonate

## BACKGROUND

The Canadian Women's Foundation invited digital creators to join in a virtual knowledge exchange on shifting culture around stigma-associated issues like gender-based violence. Part of a broader series of knowledge sharing events, these conversations aim to strengthen the normalization of abuse by connecting influencers and other creatives.

This document is a compilation of knowledge and best practices shared in our virtual sessions.

The stories we tell shape our beliefs, behaviors, and culture ...

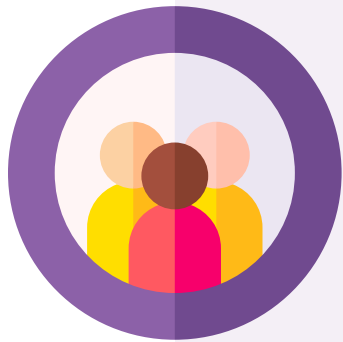


# Personal storytelling and connection

- Sharing **personal stories**, in relation to a difficult issue, can foster a connection with your audience and make your content more impactful.
- Addressing charged issues, like **gender-based violence**, can encourage understanding and empathy among your viewers.
- Using the **right tone** can help to draw in viewers and empower them to pursue meaningful change: e.g. truth telling with a focus on problem-solving.



# Community Building and Support



- Encourage a **sense of community** through your content, especially for marginalized groups like trans individuals and people with disabilities. Sharing stories about your own identity or by engaging in conversations on stigmatized issues can help others to feel less alone in their experiences.
- Provide **support resources** within your content to uplift and empower your audience, including organizations survivors of gender-based violence can reach out to.



# Content strategy and authenticity



- Use **trends and varied content formats** to engage your audience authentically and amplify your posts, such as TikTok songs or popular voiceover edits.
- **Avoid sensationalism** and trauma exploitation; opt for nuanced discussions and genuine representation of lived experiences.
- **Meet your audience where they're at,** rather than assuming their knowledge of a particular issue: break down your subject into simple concepts and use examples from real life to help them relate it to their own experiences.
- **Avoid using specific cultural references** in your content, like current TV shows or movies, which can alienate a broader audience.

# Self-care and mental health awareness



- Manage burnout by **recognizing your personal limits and taking breaks** from social media platforms, discussing challenging content, and creating posts.
- Explore what **self-care techniques** work best for you – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. This might include seeking professional support, such as seeing a therapist, consuming uplifting content, or varying the subject of your social posts.



# Language Moderation

- Pay attention to the language used in your content creation to ensure visibility and **avoid shadow banning**. Community content guidelines, which can restrict certain words, phrases, and subjects, may differ between social platforms.
- **Utilize moderation tools** built into social media platforms to foster constructive dialogue and protect against harmful interactions. It can also be helpful to take breaks from engaging with negative feedback on your content.
- Adding a **content note** to difficult posts allows viewers to prioritize their well-being and avoid triggering content.







## ABOUT THE SIGNAL FOR HELP

There's still a lot of stigma and silence around gender-based violence: 65% of people in Canada have known a woman who has experienced violence, yet only 1 in 5 people feel very confident they'd know what to do or say to help someone experiencing abuse.

The Canadian Women's Foundation created the Signal for Help, a simple one-handed gesture that someone experiencing abuse can use if they need someone to safely check in and support them. We also created Signal for Help resources for "Responders", so people know what to do or say if someone in their life is experiencing abuse.

Learn more at [signalforhelp.ca](https://signalforhelp.ca)



## ABOUT THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

The Canadian Women's Foundation supports women, girls, and gender-diverse people to move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership. We are Canada's public foundation for gender justice and equality. We advance this by growing support for grassroots feminist action, partnering with communities and organizations to improve conditions, and building diverse leadership and knowledge for sustainable change.

Learn more at [canadianwomen.org](https://canadianwomen.org)

## Signal for Help Resources

1. Take the **Signal for Help mini-course** to learn how to support someone in your life experiencing abuse.
2. Sign up to become a **Signal Responder** and download your Action Guide.
3. **Learn the facts** about gender-based violence in Canada.

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