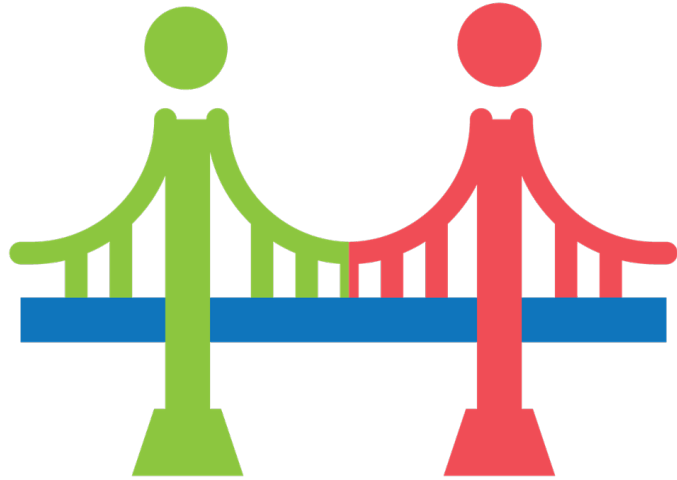




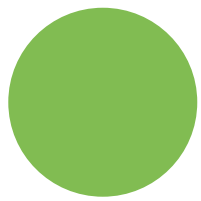
CULTURAL BRIDGES



CULTURAL BRIDGES

Engaging Young People and Youth Workers to develop their Cultural Intelligence for Diverse Online Communities

Topic: Understanding Cultural Intolerance Online



Learning objectives

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced knowledge of the various forms of cultural intolerance online, including hate speech, stereotypes, cyberbullying, and discriminatory behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse online content and interactions to identify instances of cultural intolerance.• Develop a risk assessment plan and mitigation strategy for encountering cultural intolerance online during online campaigns.• Understand the impact of cultural intolerance on individuals, communities and society as a whole.• Recognise the role of social media platforms and digital technologies in perpetuating cultural stereotypes and biases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a commitment to combating cultural intolerance and promoting diversity online.• Commit to providing counter narratives to cultural intolerance online.• Advocate for digital spaces that respect and celebrate cultural differences.• Awareness of one's own online behaviour.• Willingness to contribute to promoting positive online interactions.

Key Concepts



Hate Speech
Online

Cyberbullying &
Ethnicity-and race-
based cyber-
victimisation

Stereotypes and
Cultural bias

Cultural
Discrimination
Online

Digital
Responsibility

Introduction to Cultural Intolerance Online



Definitions:

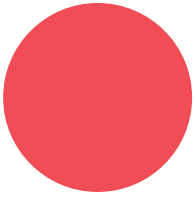
Cultural intolerance refers to negative attitudes, discrimination and stereotypes directed toward individuals or groups based on their culture.

Cultural sensitivity is defined as:

- Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value – positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong.
- A set of skills that allows you to understand and learn about people whose cultural background is not the same as your own.

Examples of Cultural Intolerance Online:

- Negative stereotypes in memes.
- Hate speech in social media comments.
- Online harassment targeting cultural practices.



Forms of Cultural Intolerance Online



Hate Speech:
Content that promotes hate, violence or discrimination.

Stereotypes and bias: Misleading or oversimplified portrayals of cultures.



Ethnicity and race-based cyber-victimisation:
Targeted harassment related to culture, ethnicity or religion.

Cultural discrimination:
Unequal treatment of individuals based on cultural identity.



Forms of Cultural Intolerance Online



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

Hate Speech Online ⚠️

Why is hate speech particularly harmful in online spaces?

Definition: content that promotes hate, violence or discrimination against individuals or groups based on cultural identity, ethnicity, religion or beliefs.



Examples

- Social media comments calling for violence against minority groups.
- Videos/posts/memes promoting racist or xenophobic ideologies.
- Hashtags and forums that perpetuate hate narratives (e.g., "#Anti[GroupName]").

Impact

- Creates a hostile environment for targeted groups.
- Encourages real-world violence and discrimination.
- Undermines efforts to promote inclusivity and understanding online.

Stereotypes and Bias

Definition: misleading, oversimplified or exaggerated portrayals of cultural groups, often reducing them to a single narrative or trait.

Impact

- Perpetuates misinformation and reinforces prejudices.
- Limits understanding of diverse cultural identities.
- Normalises biased perceptions, influencing real-world discrimination.



Can you think of a cultural stereotype you've encountered in media?



Examples

- Videos and media that rely on harmful cultural clichés (e.g., “all Middle Eastern characters as villains”).
- Memes or jokes that portray harmful stereotypes.
- Algorithms promoting biased content.

Cyberbullying, ethnicity and race-based cyber-victimisation



Cyberbullying is an aggressive behaviour which makes use of digital and electronic media to deliberately hurt others or make them feel uncomfortable by repeatedly sending offensive messages or visual materials.

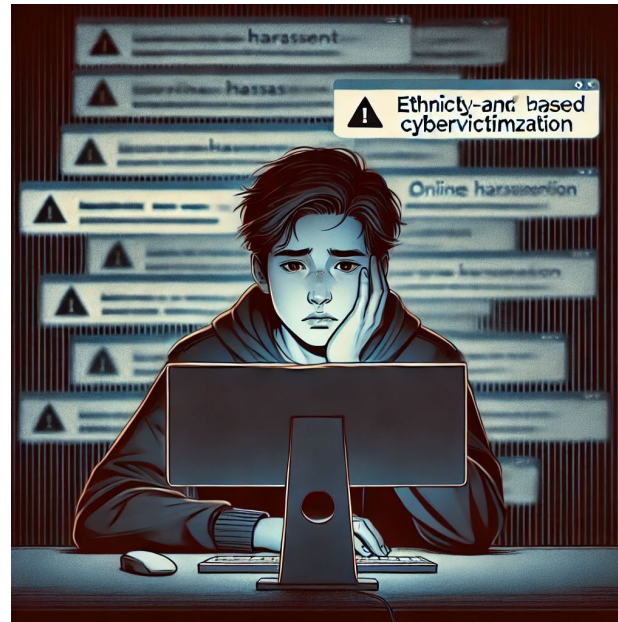
Ethnicity- or Race-Based Cyber-victimisation: the act of targeting an individual through cyberbullying, such as insults, exclusion or harassment online, due to their self-identified or perceived ethnicity, race or cultural group.



Cyberbullying, ethnicity and race-based cyber-victimisation

Impact

- Causes emotional and psychological harm to victims.
- Silences cultural expressions and discourages online participation.
- Contributes to exclusion and isolation for marginalised communities.



Why is ethnicity-and race-based cyber-victimisation more intense in online spaces?

Examples

- Name-calling based on ethnicity.
- Sharing edited photos to mock someone's cultural practices.
- Coordinated trolling against accounts representing cultural or religious events.

Cultural discrimination online

How does online discrimination reflect or reinforce real-world biases?

Definition: Unequal treatment of cultural identities. Treating individuals or groups unfairly based on their cultural identity, ethnicity or religion in online spaces.

Impact

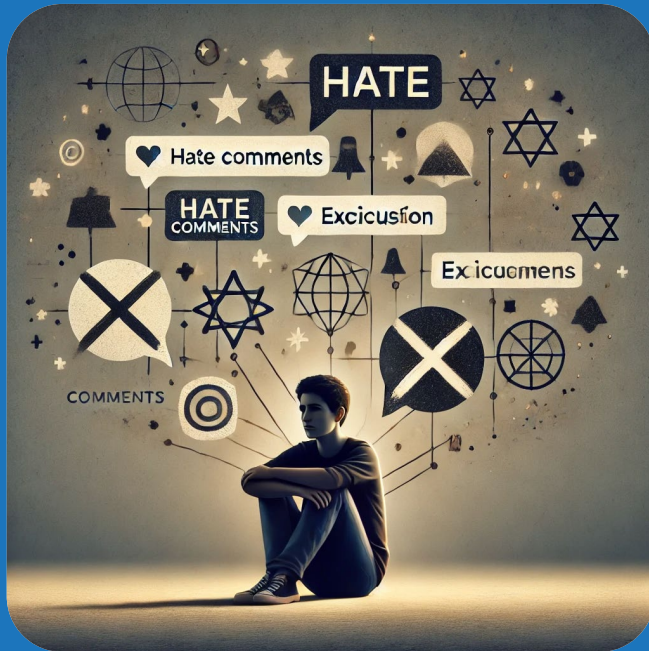
- Limits opportunities for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Reinforces systemic inequalities online and offline.
- Reduces trust and inclusivity in digital spaces.

Examples

- Denying opportunities (e.g., job applications, educational discussions) based on ethnic or cultural names.
- Biased content moderation (favouring certain groups).
- Excluding or silencing voices during online cultural discussions.



Impact of different forms of cultural intolerance online on individuals



Psychological distress:

- Victims may experience anxiety, depression and feelings of exclusion.
- Constant exposure to hate speech or stereotypes can lead to emotional trauma.

Loss of confidence in self and culture:

- Individuals may feel ashamed or pressured to hide their cultural identity.
 - It can erode pride in traditions and heritage.

Impact of different forms of cultural intolerance online on communities



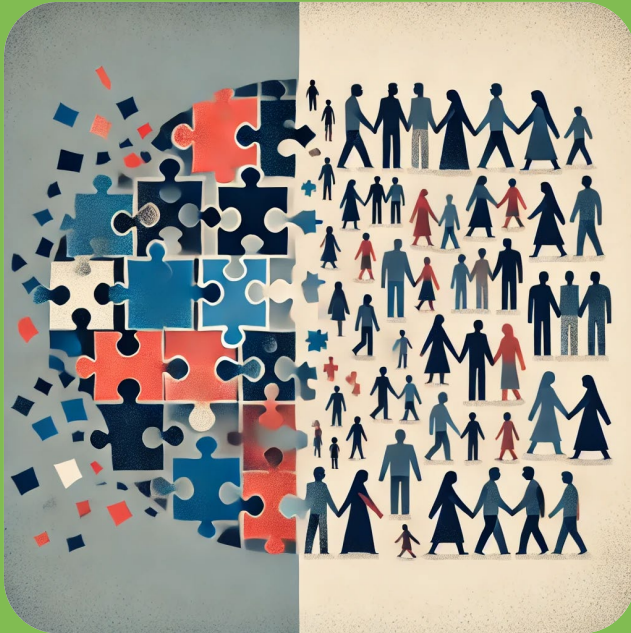
Fragmentation and mistrust:

- Cultural intolerance online creates divisions within communities.
- Mistrust grows as individuals feel unsafe interacting across cultural lines.

Rise in tensions and cultural isolation:

- Communities may become insular, avoiding engagement with diverse groups.
 - Fear of judgment or prejudice reduces intercultural collaboration.

Impact of different forms of cultural intolerance online on communities

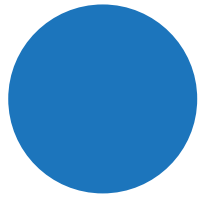


Fragmentation and mistrust:

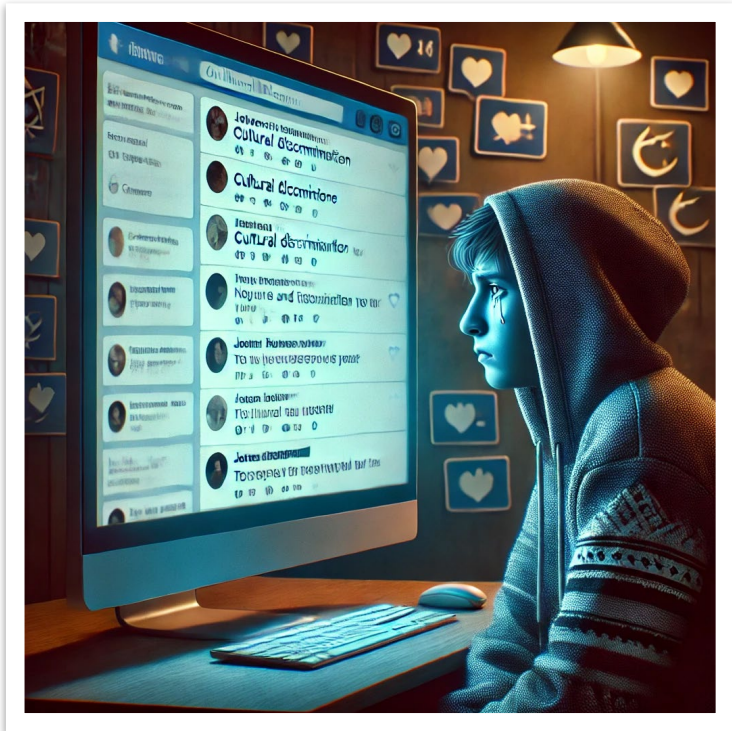
- Cultural intolerance online creates divisions within communities.
- Mistrust grows as individuals feel unsafe interacting across cultural lines.

Rise in tensions and cultural isolation:

- Communities may become insular, avoiding engagement with diverse groups.
 - Fear of judgment or prejudice reduces intercultural collaboration.



Understanding how to cope and respond to different forms of cultural intolerance online



How to cope and respond to different forms of cultural intolerance online



RECOGNISE AND AVOID ESCALATION

Stay calm: Avoid responding with anger or hostility, as this may escalate the situation.

Assess the content: Determine whether it involves hate speech, stereotypes or discrimination.

USE REPORTING TOOLS

Social Media Platforms: Report content using built-in tools (e.g., “Report Post” or “Flag Content”).

Examples of platform tools:

Facebook: Report abusive comments/posts.
Instagram: Use “Report” options for harmful posts/stories.

SEEK SUPPORT

Talk to trusted friends, family, mentors or online communities for emotional support.

For severe incidents, contact professional services or helplines that deal with cyberbullying and harassment.

RESPOND CONSTRUCTIVELY

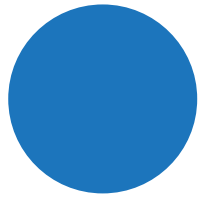
Educate with empathy: Use facts and respectful language to address intolerance (e.g., “Here’s why this perception might be hurtful...”).

Redirect conversations: Shift the focus to promote positive discussions and inclusivity.

PROMOTE POSITIVE CONTENT

Spread and promote diverse voices, stories and cultural celebrations.

Contribute to respectful online interactions by being a role model.



Analysing online content for cultural intolerance



Examples of problematic content:

- Social media posts with stereotypes.
- Viral memes reinforcing bias.



Hate Speech: Offensive or threatening language targeting cultures.

Stereotypes: Generalised portrayals of cultural groups.

Discriminatory content: Unequal treatment in media and comments.

Risk Assessment in Online Campaigns

What is risk assessment in online campaigns?

Identifying potential cultural challenges or negative backlash.

Steps for risk assessment:

- 1. Content review:** Check for stereotypes, biases and language that may offend.
- 2. Audience sensitivity:** Consider cultural nuances and how diverse audiences may respond.
- 3. Pre-testing campaigns:** Share content with diverse focus groups before launching.

Mitigation strategies:

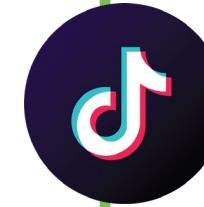
- **Develop responses for backlash** (e.g., apologies, content edits).
- **Promote inclusivity:** Collaborate with cultural experts.



Understanding the role of social media platforms

Social media has transformed global communication, enabling individuals to connect, share and exchange ideas across cultures. While this has promoted inclusivity, it has also introduced significant challenges. Users often need to fully understand the risks of sharing information. Social media platforms have made it easy for stereotypes and fake news to spread rapidly, which can be dangerous and have serious consequences. **Amplification of stereotypes, misinformation and propaganda aimed at particular cultural or ethnic groups can rapidly circulate online, shaping opinions and widening cultural gaps.**

For this reason, it is important to understand how platforms like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok contribute to cultural intolerance and what specific actions these platforms have to take to address these issues.



How social media can contribute to the spread of cultural intolerance online

Amplification of stereotypes

Viral content, such as memes, videos or hashtags, often exaggerate or distort cultural features, unintentionally reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

Algorithms often prioritise high-engagement posts, which may include culturally insensitive or sensationalised material.



Misinformation and Propaganda

Fake news and propaganda targeting specific cultural or ethnic groups can spread quickly, influencing public perception and deepening cultural divides.

Users may not critically evaluate content, leading to reinforcement of biases.

Example: Videos or posts with exaggerated or offensive cultural themes trend more because they provoke comments, likes and shares.

Social media efforts to address cultural intolerance online

Creation of reporting tools

- Facebook, Instagram and TikTok **have implemented warning labels, content removal mechanisms and easy-to-use tools for reporting** hate speech, offensive content and cultural intolerance.
- **Example:** The “Report Post” tool helps flag harmful or insensitive content for review and removal.

Content moderation and guidelines

- Platforms are enforcing stricter community guidelines and using AI moderation tools to detect and remove harmful stereotypes or hate speech.
- **Example:** TikTok’s Community Guidelines explicitly ban content that promotes hate speech, hateful behaviour or hateful ideologies.

Promotion of positive cultural content

- Social media should be used to promote cultural understanding.
- **Example:** Campaigns highlighting cultural celebrations (e.g., #Diwali, #PrideMonth). Usually, these campaigns are marked with hashtags.
- Influencers sharing culturally authentic and positive stories.

Cultural awareness collaborations

- Partners with cultural influencers to promote content celebrating diversity.
- Example: #MyRoots campaign on TikTok, encouraging users to share their cultural heritage positively.

Legal and Policy Measures

Several countries have introduced laws and regulations to address social media's role.



Australia's social media ban

Australia raised concerns about social media due to security risks and the spread of harmful content, has led to stricter content monitoring policies. The new laws, which will come into effect from late 2025, **will completely bar under-16s from accessing social media platforms** such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit and X. Exemptions will apply for health and education services including YouTube, Messenger Kids, WhatsApp and Google Classroom.



The EU Digital Services Act (DSA)

From 2024, it applies to any social media and digital platform. The Act holds platforms legally liable for their users' unlawful behaviour if they are aware of illegal content. Such 'content' includes child sexual abuse material, hate speech or illegal goods and services. The Act focusses on tackling online harassment and cyberbullying, by making sure any non-consensual private images and other abusive content can be quickly flagged by users and removed.

Do you think a complete ban on social media platforms is an effective solution, or could it worsen the problem by driving harmful content underground?

Digital Responsibility – Your Role

1.

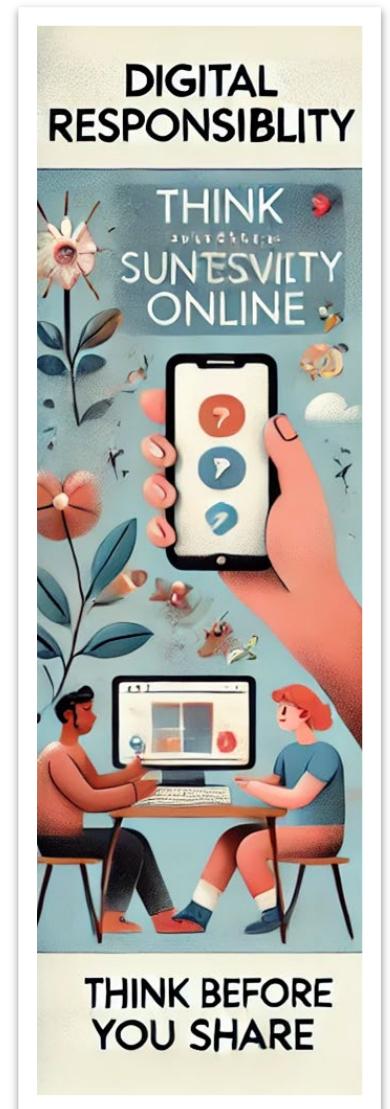
Think before you share

- Assess content carefully:
 - Is the content biased, offensive or misleading?
 - Does it promote stereotypes or cultural misrepresentation?
- Consider the impact:
 - Who might be hurt or marginalised by this content?
 - Could it reinforce cultural intolerance or divide communities?

2.

Promote inclusivity and respect:

- Spread and promote positive voices:
 - Share stories that celebrate cultural diversity and promote understanding.
 - Highlight authentic representations of cultural traditions.
- Challenge harmful content:
 - Respectfully call out stereotypes, hate speech and discriminatory posts.
 - Encourage constructive discussions that promote education and empathy.



Digital Responsibility – Your Role

3.

Create culturally sensitive content

- Do your research:
 - Understand the cultural significance of the elements you use.
 - Avoid appropriation or oversimplified portrayals.
- Involve cultural perspectives:
 - Collaborate with individuals from the community for accuracy.
 - Share authentic voices and real stories.

4.

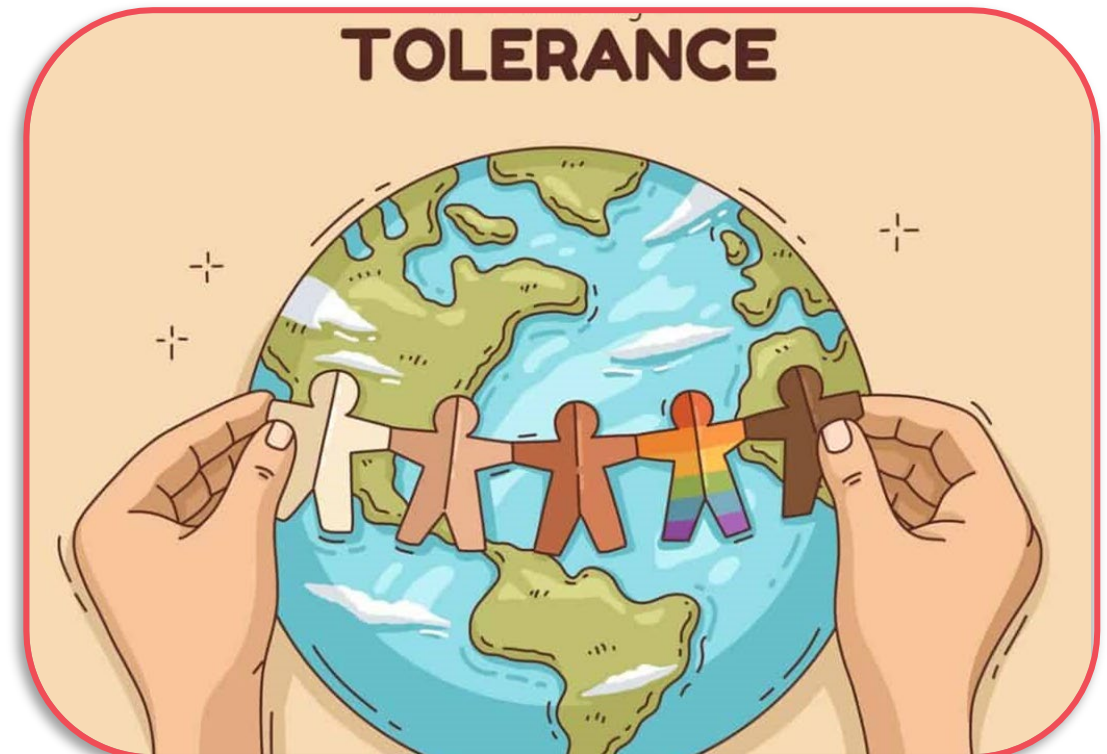
Be a digital role model

- Lead by example by engaging respectfully in online discussions.
- Encourage others to adopt a thoughtful, inclusive digital mindset.
- Support platforms, initiatives and creators promoting cultural appreciation.

Exercise: Reflecting on your online behaviour

Ask yourself:

- Am I contributing to a respectful digital space?
- Have I shared content that promotes understanding?
- What steps can I take to advocate for cultural tolerance?



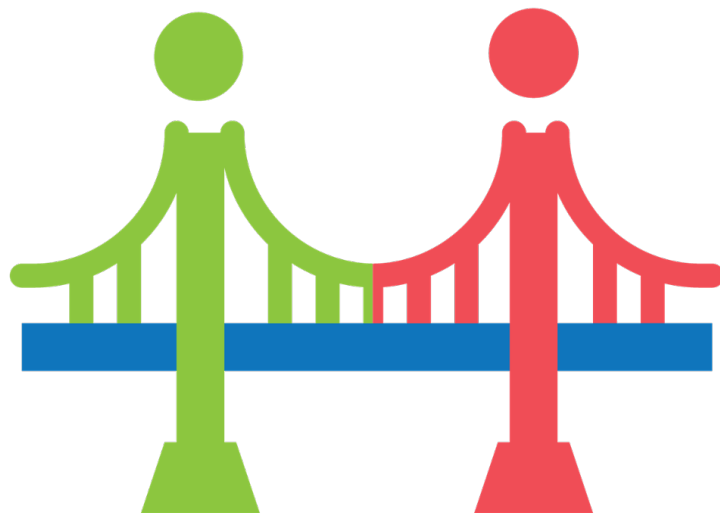
Key takeaways

- **Understanding cultural intolerance online**
 - Cultural intolerance online takes many forms: hate speech, stereotypes and cyberbullying. It harms individuals, divides communities and perpetuates inequality. Recognising these behaviours is the first step toward promoting cultural sensitivity.
- **The role of social media platforms**
 - Social media can be a tool for both harm and positive change.
 - Platforms have introduced tools (e.g., reporting systems) and policies to mitigate harmful content.
- **Promoting positive digital responsibility**
 - Think critically before sharing: Is the content respectful and inclusive?
 - Promote digital responsibility by sharing inclusive, accurate and respectful content
 - Actively call out harmful stereotypes and support content that celebrates cultural diversity.
- **Practical actions**
 - Report harmful content, support marginalised voices and create content that promotes understanding.
 - Digital spaces are powerful tools for education when used responsibly.
- **Impact and responsibility**
 - Cultural intolerance affects individuals, communities and societies, deepening divisions and spreading mistrust. Remember that each of us has a role to play in shaping an inclusive and respectful online environment.



A black and white photograph of several tulip buds. The buds are in various stages of opening, with some showing dark, pointed petals. The background is softly blurred, showing more buds and stems. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Thank You" in a cursive font. The word "Thank" is red, and "You" is green.

Thank You



CULTURAL BRIDGES

Engaging Young People and Youth Workers to develop their Cultural Intelligence for Diverse Online Communities



AKLUB



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project Number: 2023-2-LV02-KA220-YOU-000174659