5 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMENT SECTION

1. Reduce Incivility
   - Focus on reducing incivility in the whole comment stream, not just in the first few comments
   - Acknowledge – rather than dismiss – a commenter’s emotions when redirecting behavior

2. Support Your Moderators
   - Encourage journalists to help out by engaging in comment sections
   - Give moderators other tasks along with moderation
   - Give moderators a mix of civil and uncivil comments, rather than having them focus exclusively on uncivil content

3. Guide Journalist Engagement
   - Answer legitimate questions from commenters
   - Ask commenters to weigh in on questions related to the post topic
   - Encourage and highlight good discussions
   - Provide additional information, like a link to a news story

4. Delete Comments Thoughtfully
   - Focus on deleting hate speech more than on deleting profanity
   - Explain in detail why content was removed
   - Avoid general explanations like “this did not meet the rules for our website”

5. Consider Your Comment Platform
   - Platforms can make a big difference for users and for newsrooms
   - The platform can affect the number of toxic comments
   - Turning off comments completely can reduce time people spend on the site and make the experience worse for users