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Identifying and Addressing Health Misinformation



Presenter:
Loren Halili, MPH



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Land Acknowledgement & Disclaimer



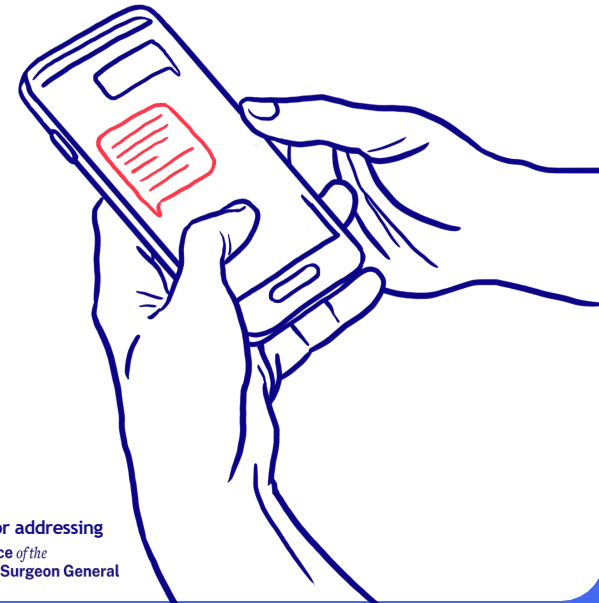
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We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

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Identifying and Addressing Health Misinformation

Loren Halili, MPH
August 18th, 2022



Adapted from “A Community Toolkit for addressing Health Misinformation” by



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General

Learning Objectives



Understand what misinformation is
and how it is spread



Be able to identify the different types of
misinformation



Explain the role of healthcare and public health
professionals in dispelling misinformation

What is Misinformation?

Misinformation

Information that is **false, inaccurate, or misleading** according to the best available evidence at the time



What is Misinformation?

Notes from the Surgeon General

"**Misinformation** can **sometimes** be spread intentionally to serve a malicious purpose, such as for financial gain or political advantage.

This is usually called "**disinformation.**"

Many people who share misinformation **aren't trying to misinform.** They may be raising a concern, making sense of conflicting information, or seeking answers to honest questions."

Can you tell the difference between **misinformation** and **disinformation?**



[illegible]

How is Misinformation Spread?

Health misinformation is often posted on the internet or shared via text messages or emails



How is Misinformation Spread?

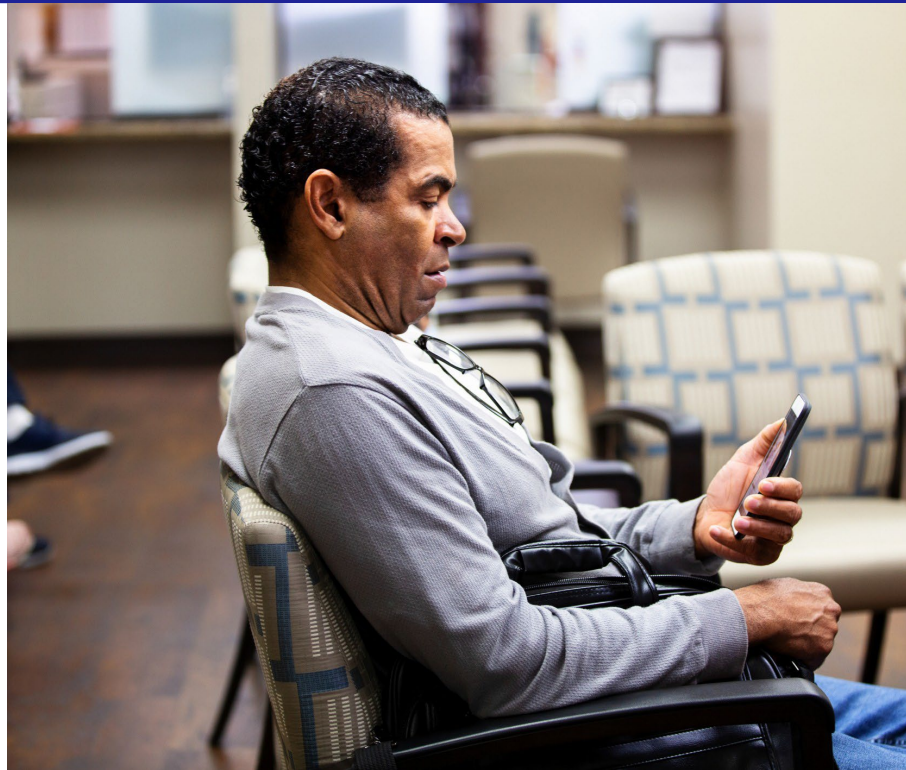
Health misinformation can also appear in

- Speeches
- Pamphlets or posters
- News outlets
- Advertisements



How is Misinformation Spread?

Misinformation can
be shared by
ANYONE!



How is Misinformation Spread?

Many people who share misinformation may be

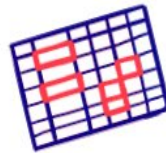
- Raising a concern
- Making sense of conflicting information
- Seeking answers to honest questions





What types of misinformation exist?

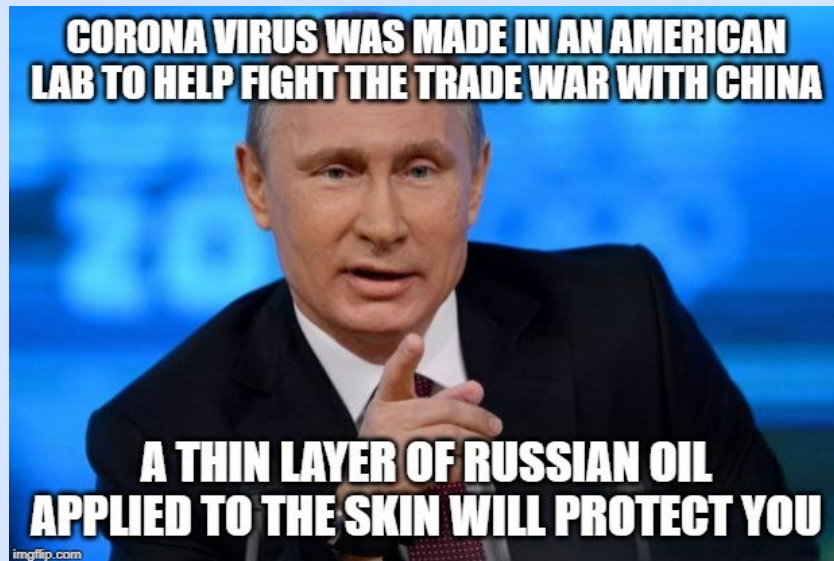
7 Common Types of Misinformation



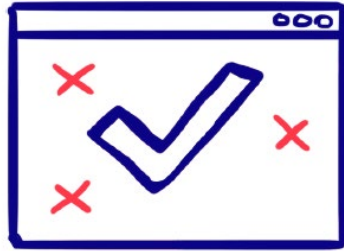
What types of misinformation exist?



Memes (fun, colorful images or graphics) that were created as a joke, but people started re-sharing thinking it was true.



What types of misinformation exist?



Websites that look professional (often designed to look like news sites) but the stories are all false or misleading. They have sensational headlines designed to make us click on them



What types of misinformation exist?



Quotations where the beginning or the end have been deleted to change the meaning. The person did say that, but without the full context it's not a fair representation of what they said

Quotation from The Cleveland Clinic:

“getting the COVID-19 vaccine can cause infertility.”

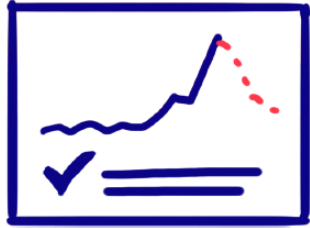
What types of misinformation exist?



Old images that recirculate as if they are very recent.

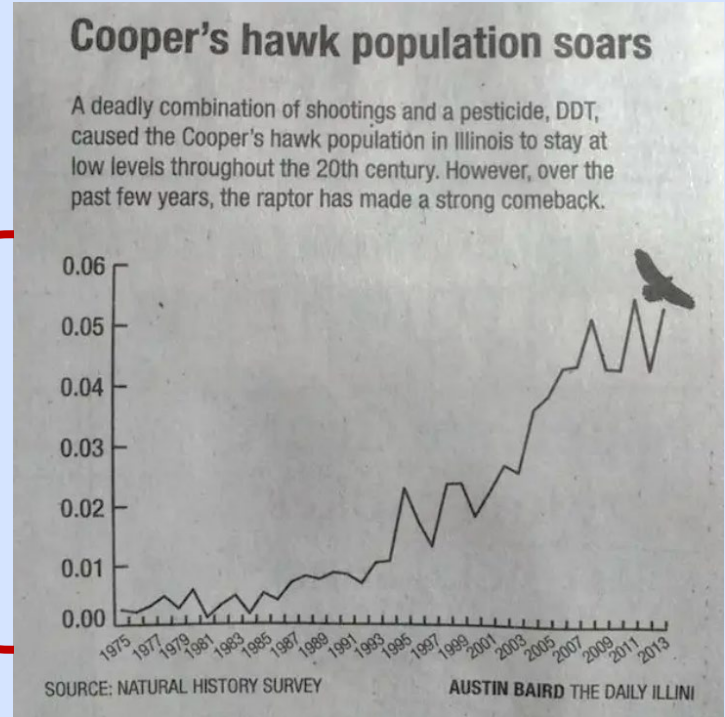


What types of misinformation exist?

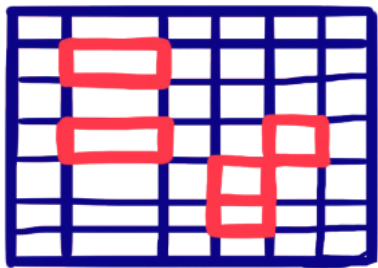


Misleading graphs or diagrams that look official but don't tell the whole story

Look at the scale of the y-axis...



What types of misinformation exist?



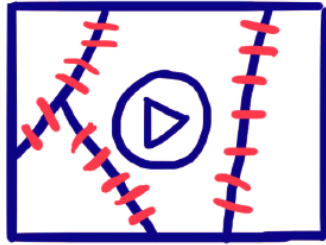
Cherry-picked statistics. Too often we see people choosing the number that supports what they want to argue, but without sufficient data, they haven't provided all the context.



“Four out of five dentists surveyed recommended sugarless gum for their patients who chew gum”

- **How and with whom was the survey conducted?**
- **$n = ?$**
- **What about the fifth dentist?**

What types of misinformation exist?



Videos that have been edited to change the meaning.

Why Is It So Tempting to Share Health Misinformation?

1. We like to feel that we have new information that others don't know.

The doctors are hiding important information about the virus! Listen to what this one nurse has to say about it...



2. We want to protect the people we care about. Often when people are asked about their online sharing habits, they will say things like:

I admit it. Sometimes I share things I see without checking first, but honestly, I feel that it's better to be safe than sorry.



Why Is It So Tempting to Share Health Misinformation?

3. We may be seeking explanations or wanting to share information that helps us make sense of events.

Have you seen this video? I don't know who made it, but everything seems to make sense now!



4. We want to feel connected to others.

Hey there Parker, Claire, Hanna, Kyla, Jacob, Ann! How's everyone?



What is the cost of spreading misinformation?



What is the cost of spreading misinformation?

Misinformation can influence someone's behavior, response, and decision making, which then...

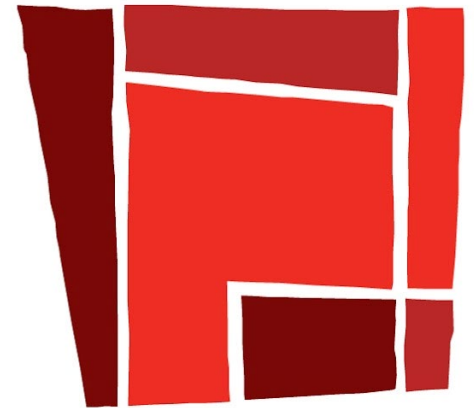
- Erodes trust in science and the government
- Burdens the healthcare system
- Increases morbidity and mortality
- Undermine public health efforts



Local Resources for Trustworthy Information

Arizona Department of Health Services has a hub of health information available to the public.

*“Our team is committed to providing up-to-date information and resources to keep Arizonans safe, including **extensive data** about COVID-19 in our state.”*



ADHS

Local Resources for Trustworthy Information

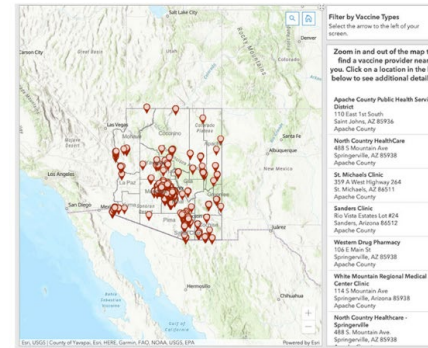
The ADHS website provides COVID-19 resources, like:

- Vaccine locations
- Testing locations
- Dashboards
- Guidance
- Communication
- Key facts
- Data

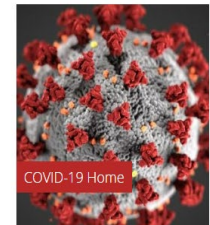
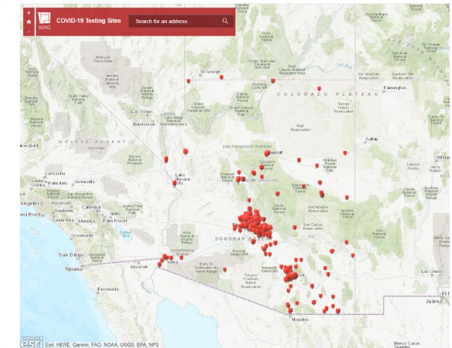
Other trusted local sources of information:

- Local health department or hospital
- Covidlatino.org
- CEAL

COVID-19 Vaccine Locations



COVID-19 Testing Locations



SIFT Your Resources!

5 W Questions:

- Who is the author?
- What is the purpose of the content?
- Where is the content from?
- Why does the source exist?
- How does the source compare to others?

NAVIGATING TODAY'S INFORMATION LANDSCAPE



- ❶ Who is behind the information?
- ❷ What is the evidence?
- ❸ What do other sources say?

SIFT helps you think about these questions.

S

Stop.

I

Investigate the source.

F

Find better coverage.

T

Trace the claims, quotes and media back to their original context.

Adapted from
University of Oregon Libraries

Oregon
Health
Authority

Misinformation: Special Considerations in Rural Communities

Rural areas have different beliefs regarding health, due to...

- Poverty
- Lack of access to healthcare
- Low literacy levels
- Lower availability of broadband internet access



Misinformation: Special Considerations in Rural Communities

Previous studies have shown that rural communities have...

- Lower overall vaccination rates
 - **58%** rural vs. **75%** urban vaccine uptake
- Relationship with the government
 - **68%** of rural individuals say government restrictions aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19 is holding back economic growth
- Increase hesitancy in getting the vaccine
 - **38%** of individuals will 'wait and see' how the vaccine affects others before getting it themselves



Kirzinger, A., Munana, C., and Brodie, M. (2021, November 16). *KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: October 2021*. KFF. Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-october-2021/>

Hannel, L., Lopes, L., Kirzinger, A., Kearney, A., Stokes, M., & Brodie, M. (2021, November 16). *KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: October 2021*. KFF. Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-october-2021/>

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals



Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

Addressing misinformation requires more than just attempting to discredit misconceptions

Health professionals must:

- Proactively engage with patients and the public on health misinformation
- Partner with community groups and other local organizations
- Use technology and media platforms to share accurate health information with the public



Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

1. Listen

Listen to their fears and beliefs

Focus on the wider issue and how they feel

Remember that 'fact-check' can often shut down a conversation

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

2. Empathize

Emphasize the fact that you understand why people find it difficult to trust

Ask questions to understand

Talk about times where **you have fallen for misinformation**

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

3. Point to Credible Sources

Underscore that finding accurate information **can be hard**

Emphasize the need to find credible sources

Remind them that an expert on one topic might not be the best in another topic

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

4. Don't Publicly Shame

Try to have conversations **one-on-one**

Having conversations in the comments under a post has the potential to backfire

Be gentle in your replies; **be empathetic**

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals

5. Use Inclusive Language

Use language that makes it clear that you see yourself being impacted

Show how **you** sometimes struggle

Our Role as Healthcare and Public Health Professionals: Agencies, Institutions, and Organizations

- Invest in long-term efforts to build resilience against misinformation
 - Media, science, digital, data, and health literacy programs
 - Trainings on how to address misinformation to account for patient's diverse needs, concerns, backgrounds, and experiences
- Convene federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, private, nonprofit, and research partners



All of us are vulnerable, and all of us can help!



Access the ToolKit
from U.S. Surgeon
General



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General



American Medical
Association Misinformation
Resources





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Please remember to complete the webinar survey.

Thank you!



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