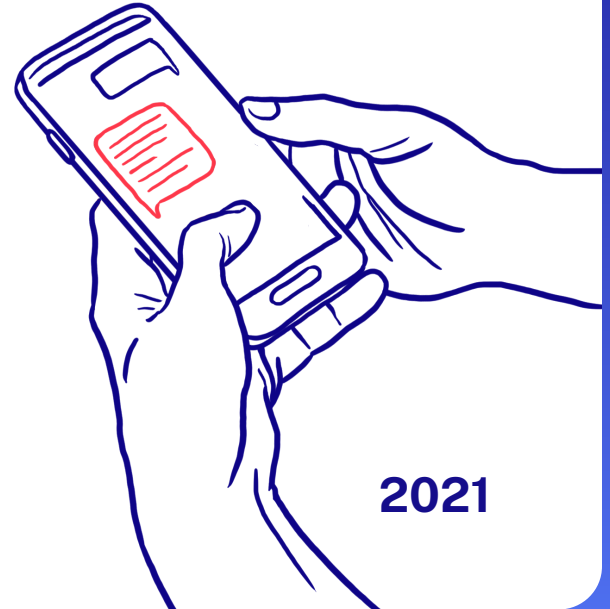


# A Community Toolkit for Addressing Health Misinformation



**Office of the**  
**U.S. Surgeon General**

**2021**

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1. Sit back, relax, and read! (Take 5 min to download and review the toolkit at [surgeongeneral.gov](https://surgeongeneral.gov))

2. Introduce yourself in chat, and share how misinformation is impacting your community

Let's get started...

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1. Practice

2. Brainstorm

3. Bring it home

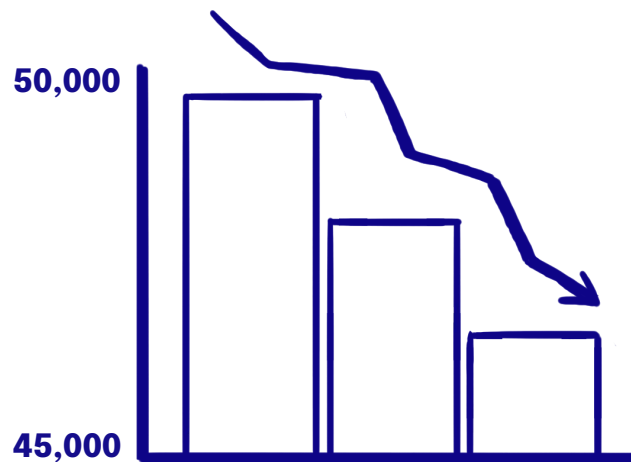
3. Wrap up

# If You're Not Sure, Don't Share!

Misinformation can often be hard to detect. Try to identify the common types of misinformation below. What might you consider before sharing with others?

EXAMPLE A

**A stark decline in flu vaccine uptake in University students over three months**



## Practice 4

## If You're Not Sure, Don't Share!

### EXAMPLE A

A stark decline in  
vaccine uptake in  
University students  
over three months



**This is a graph that misrepresents the data.**

EXAMPLE B

**Are they crazy?  
A maskless  
crowd spotted at  
a music festival  
last weekend**

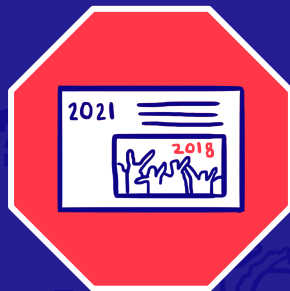


## Practice 4

## If You're Not Sure, Don't Share!

### EXAMPLE B

**Are they crazy?**  
**A maskless**  
**crowd spotted at**  
**a music festival**  
**last weekend.**



**This is an old image that is recirculating**  
**as if it's current.**



EXAMPLE C

*Health News  
Now: The most  
cutting edge  
health news in  
the country*

*8 herbal recipes to  
cure skin ailments*

*Boost your natural  
immunity with  
this easy trick*

*How to lose 30lbs  
in a week*



## Practice 4

## If You're Not Sure, Don't Share!

### EXAMPLE C

*Health News  
Now: The most  
cutting edge  
health news in  
the country*



**This is a website that looks professional  
but the stories are all false or misleading.**



## Learn These Common Disinformation\* Tactics.

Go online and see if you can find any of these common disinformation tactics. Discuss why they are effective.

\*Learn more about disinformation on page 7.

We normally rely on these kinds of mental cues to quickly make sense of the world. But those who are trying to mislead us use these same cues to fool us. It's a really good idea to learn these tactics, so you can spot them and protect yourself and those you care about.



Including the logo of an established organization, like adding the CDC or a news network logo to a post



Using visual cues like someone wearing a white coat or holding a stethoscope



Creating a professional, slick looking website as our brain sees that visual cue as a "proof" of trustworthiness



Including in a post something like: "My brother works for the government and has inside knowledge. He just told me that..." or "My sister is a nurse and just called me from the ICU to tell me..."



Using unique or rare terms so that when someone searches for content connected to that term, there are fewer links and therefore it is less likely that there will be available fact-checks or debunks



Creating content that looks like a first person experience. It's very difficult to "fact-check" someone who says, "This happened to me." Those trying to push disinformation will therefore deliberately create content that looks like real life stories from real people when it's all made up

### Practice 3

## Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

### Note from the Surgeon General

We normally rely on these kinds of mental cues to quickly make sense of the world. **But those who are trying to mislead us use these same cues to fool us.** It's a really good idea to learn these tactics, so you can spot them and protect yourself and those you care about.



### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

Including the logo of an established organization



### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

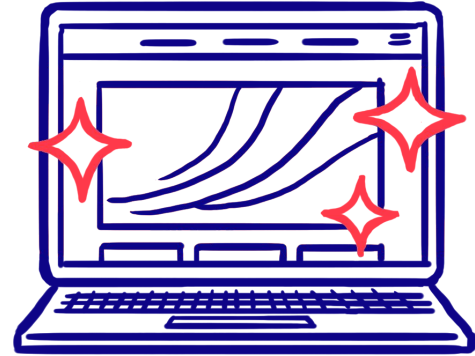
Using visual cues like  
someone wearing a white coat  
or holding a stethoscope



### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

Creating a professional,  
slick looking website



### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

Including in a post: “My brother works for the government and has inside knowledge. He just told me that...”





### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

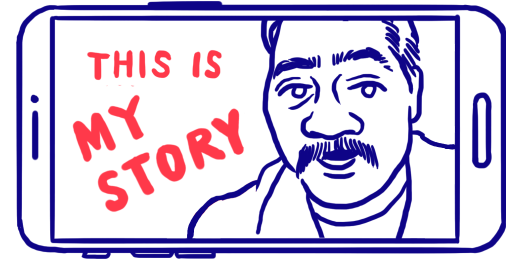
Using unique or rare terms



### Practice 3

### Learn These Common Disinformation Tactics.

Creating content that looks like a first person experience



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# Discuss

Do you recognize any of these tactics from content you've seen in your feeds recently?

Why do you think they are so effective?

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# Discuss

How do you think these types of activities will work with your communities?

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# Pick and Mix!

Brainstorm uses for the toolkit

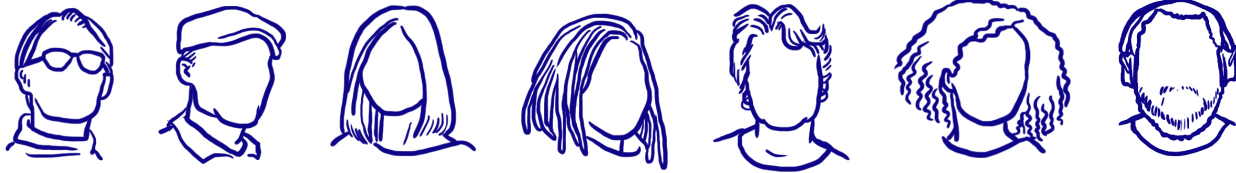
**What are some ways you  
could use this toolkit?**

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# Take it home!

Share how you will bring this to your community

**How might you bring this back to your community?**





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Q/A

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# Wrap up

Brown School of Public Health  
Additional Resources

## Further Resources

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Access the toolkit(pdf), infographics, and other social media graphics that you can easily share with your community at **[SurgeonGeneral.gov/HealthMisinformation](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/HealthMisinformation)**



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U.S. Surgeon General