

Misinformation: Can you STOP it?

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Mini bite 3 handouts

# Reflection questions

Use this fillable form to record your reflections.

1a. Why is misinformation a human rights issue? (Slide 3)

b. How does it harm you and those you care about?

c. How does it harm specific groups?

d. How does it harm all of society?

2. Can you think of an issue in which polarization has divided our society? How did misinformation contribute to this polarization? (Slide 7)

3. Can you think of examples of misinformation that used any of these strategies? (Slide 24) Can you identify prejudices, stereotypes and biases that have contributed to conspiracy theories, discrimination, hate crimes and radicalization in our province? What role did misinformation play? (Slide 17)

4. Can you think of examples of decisions that may have been impacted by undermining our shared sense of truth and/or excluding important voices? What role did misinformation play? (Slide 22)

# Sources

The following sources were used as examples of misinformation in Mini Bite 3.

## Contributes to the spread of COVID-19 conspiracy theories

- [Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C.](#) , BCOHRC, August 19, 2024, p.55
- [From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), BCOHRC, March 2023, p. 49 and 164–165
- [WHO Scientific advisory group issues report on origins of COVID-19](#)

## Provokes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

- [Report Launch – “Students feel safer here, and more included:” Evaluation of SOGI 123 in BC | Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre \(SARAVYC\)](#)
- [Report on the Second Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools](#), Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2021

## Provokes hate

- [From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), BCOHRC, March 2023
- [Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C.](#) , BCOHRC, August 19, 2024, p. 25

## Contributes to radicalization

- [From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), BCOHRC, March 2023, p. 180–182
- [Rights in Focus: Lived realities in B.C.](#) , BCOHRC, August 19, 2024, p. 22 and 55

## Pushes out voices of impacted groups

- [Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C.](#) , BCOHRC, August 19, 2024, p. 54 and 81

## Provokes distrust in information from mainstream media, scientists and government

- [The spread of misinformation: A multivariate analysis of the relationship between individual characteristics and fact-checking behaviours of Canadians](#)

## Limits our ability to make informed choices

- [Canada loses its measles elimination status — as it happened](#)

## Reduces trust in government and organizations that hold them accountable

- [Concerns with misinformation online, 2023](#)
- [The spread of misinformation: A multivariate analysis of the relationship between individual characteristics and fact-checking behaviours of Canadians](#)

## Impacts the results of elections

- [Majority of Canadians say misinformation affected federal election: poll - National | Globalnews.ca](#)
- [John Ivison: The election was a hotbed for disinformation. The next one will be worse - Yahoo News Canada](#)

## Limits democratic transparency and accountability

- [Commissioner releases statement on toxic drug crisis, calls on government to put politics aside to save lives | BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner](#)
- [Trump's marathon press briefing at one year mark of his second term](#)

# Human rights impacts of misinformation

The following table provides a description of the different ways misinformation, disinformation and malinformation harm human rights and democracy. After participating in Mini Bite 3, consider examples of misinformation contributing to these impacts that you have noticed and/or shared on social media.

Enter your examples in this fillable form.

## Human rights impact

## Examples you have noticed or shared on social media

### Promoting divisiveness and polarization

Misinformation benefits from periods of crisis to deepen polarization. It widens societal divisions by targeting groups on one side of a given issue with misinformation that amplifies their values and beliefs and discredits the values and beliefs of other groups. Groups on both sides of any given issue can be targeted.

It may lead people with shared values and fears to more extreme content.

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Contributing to the spread of conspiracy theories

Misinformation places the blame for serious, often tragic, issues on a group of people with no evidence that the group blamed is actually responsible. Goals include targeting a specific group in order to discredit or harm them and/or shifting our attention away from the real source of a problem. Impacts include harming the targeted group and preventing us from focusing on and addressing the real source of the problem.

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Reinforcing prejudice, biases and stereotypes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Misinformation reinforces existing prejudices and contributes to the spread of biases and stereotypes against marginalized groups.

This contributes to the development of harmful attitudes and behaviours, which can provoke discrimination, hate crimes and radicalization.

### Discrimination

Discrimination is harm experienced by a group or groups based on their protected, personal characteristic. Discrimination can include creating barriers to participation, causing harms and increasing disadvantages that a marginalized group already experiences.

### Hate crimes

Hate crimes, including hate speech, are based on one or more of the victim's personal characteristics. Hate speech is expressed publicly, targets a person or group of people with a protected characteristic and uses extreme language to express hatred towards that person or group of people because of their protected characteristic. It describes the targeted group in a way that is likely to expose them to detestation and vilification.

### Radicalization

Radicalization is the development of extreme political, social or religious views that are in opposition to those that are generally accepted in a society. When these views target specific groups based on their identity, radicalization can lead to increased acts of discrimination, hate and violence.

## Human rights impact

### Limiting our ability to make informed decisions

By undermining our shared sense of truth and excluding important voices, misinformation makes it increasingly difficult to ensure that the information we are basing our decisions on is true.

### Undermining our shared sense of truth

Misinformation often takes advantage of the growing and misguided belief that opinions are as valid as facts in all matters, to misrepresent opinions as the truth. It also builds on an unfounded notion of “free speech.”

While freedom of expression is a constitutional right in Canada, freedom of expression is subject to reasonable limits. Hate speech, and discriminatory speech in certain contexts, such as employment, are prohibited and not protected under “freedom of expression.”

### Excluding important voices

Misinformation excludes important voices that could contribute to the decisions we make. It pushes out the voices of marginalized, impacted groups because of discrimination or hate, including threats of violence.

It also creates distrust in information from mainstream media as well as scientific and government sources. Excluding these voices limits our access to valuable information that may influence the choices we make.

## Examples you have noticed or shared on social media

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Human rights impact

### Harming democracy

In addition to undermining our shared sense of truth, misinformation harms democratic processes by reducing our trust in government and the organizations that hold them accountable, impacting the results of elections and limiting the transparency and accountability of democratic societies.

#### Reducing trust in government and “watch dogs”

Misinformation can reduce trust in governments and the organizations that hold them accountable. This loss of trust makes it challenging for governments to implement policies to meet our needs. It also contributes to increased public resistance to government policies.

#### Impacting the results of elections

Loss of trust in governments can lead to the spread of misinformation that influences our vote. Misinformation targets all political parties and impacts the results of elections.

#### Limiting transparency and accountability

Misinformation can influence the decisions made by government, leading them to make policy decisions that are not evidence-based and not in our best interest, or the best interests of minority groups. Misinformation can also be used by some governments to misrepresent the results of their failed policies. This can lead us to believe that these failed policies were successful.

## Examples you have noticed or shared on social media

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Where can I get support?

We've provided a list of resources for those experiencing distress. This list is not exhaustive and may not include the most appropriate resource to meet your needs. If you require assistance and don't see a program here that's right for you, please feel free to contact our Office by emailing [info@bchumanrights.ca](mailto:info@bchumanrights.ca).

## **Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of BC**

Immediate access to barrier-free, non-judgmental, confidential support and follow-up through 24/7 phone lines and online services.

**Call:** 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)

**Chat:** [www.crisiscentrechat.ca](http://www.crisiscentrechat.ca)

## **VictimLinkBC**

Toll-free, confidential, multilingual service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Call or text:** 1-800-563-0808

**Email:** [VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca](mailto:VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca)

## **KUU-US Crisis Line Society**

24-hour crisis line for Indigenous adults, elders and youth: First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples helping First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples.

**Call toll-free:** 1-800-588-8717

**Adults and Elders call:** 250-723-4050

**Children and Youth call:** 250-723-2040

## **310 Mental Health Support**

Toll-free province-wide access to emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health, available 24/7.

**Call:** 310-310-6789) – no need to dial an area code

## **Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service**

Free, confidential information and referral services to British Columbians in need of support with any kind of substance use issue (alcohol or other drugs). Free, multilingual telephone assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Call:** 1-800-663-1441

## **Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society**

Crisis support for Survivors, families and communities, offering emotional, mental, and spiritual support, available 24/7.

**Call:** 1-800-721-0066

### **Black Youth Helpline**

Professional, culturally relevant youth and family assessments and intervention

**Call:** 1-833 294 8650

### **Native Youth Crisis Hotline**

Answered by staff 24/7. Available throughout Canada and US.

**Call:** 1-877-209-1266

### **Kids Help Phone**

Canada-wide 24-hour bilingual counselling and information services for children and youth between 5 to 20 years old. Services can be accessed via telephone, mobile app, and online.

**Call:** 1-800-668-6868

### **Islamophobia Hotline**

Free confidential legal advice if you feel that you have been discriminated against, harassed, or faced violence because you are Muslim or are perceived to be Muslim.

**Call:** 604-343-3828

### **S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Chinese Help Lines**

Serves callers in the province of British Columbia who speak Mandarin or Cantonese.

**For Cantonese, call:** 604-270-8233

**For Mandarin, call:** 604-270-8222

### **Prideline (Gay and Lesbian Helpline)**

Peer support, information and referrals for anyone in BC, available weeknights (Monday to Friday) from 7 pm to 10 pm

**Call:** 1-800-566-1170

### **Trans Lifeline**

Grassroots hotline offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis: for the trans community, by the trans community.

**Call:** 1-877-330-6366

### **Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) Crisis Line**

Provides emotional support to women experiencing gender-based domestic violence and/or uncertainty during these difficult times. Takes calls from Monday to Sunday, 24 hours a day.

**Call:** 1-855-687-1868

**Text:** 604-652-1867

**Email:** [intake@bwss.org](mailto:intake@bwss.org)

### **Seniors Distress Line**

Free and confidential telephone support service for seniors, their caregivers or anyone concerned about a senior. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by highly trained, non-judgmental and caring volunteers.

**Call:** 604-872-1234