

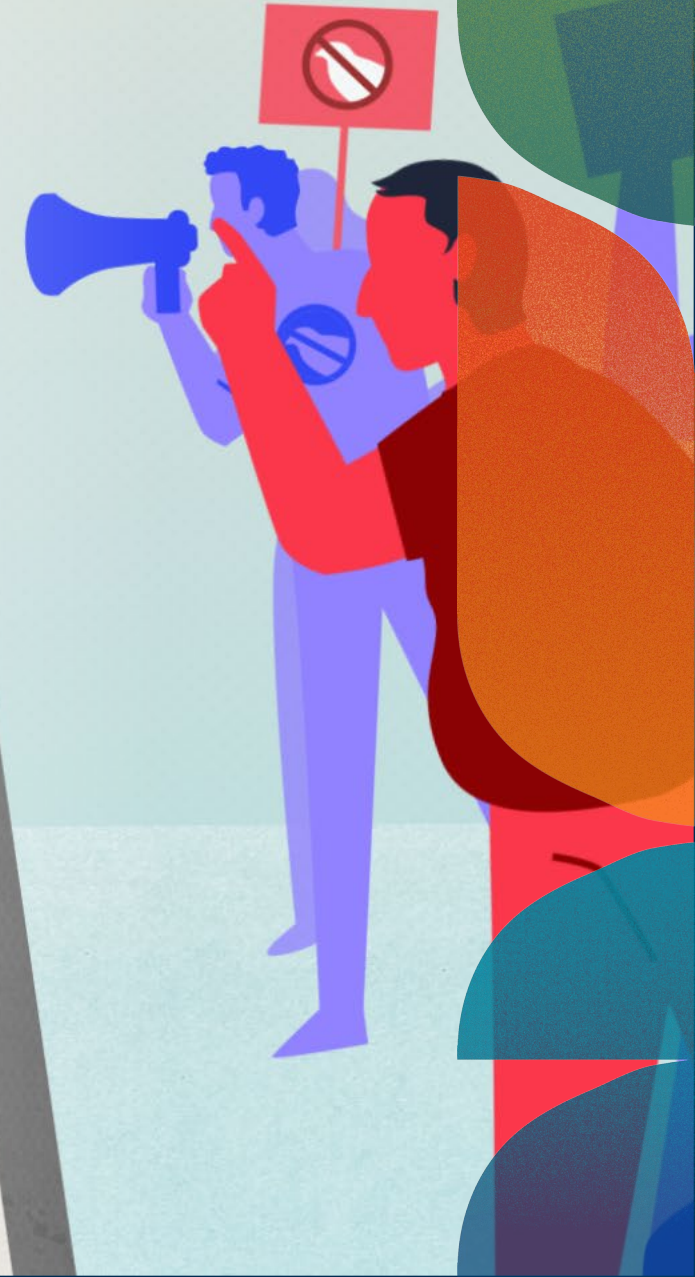


British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

Misinformation: Can you **STOP** it?

Mini bite 4

We can all STOP
the spread of misinformation



Learning goals

- consider strategies to protect ourselves and others from misinformation
- explore and practice using the STOP tool to identify and stop the spread of misinformation

Reflect and record

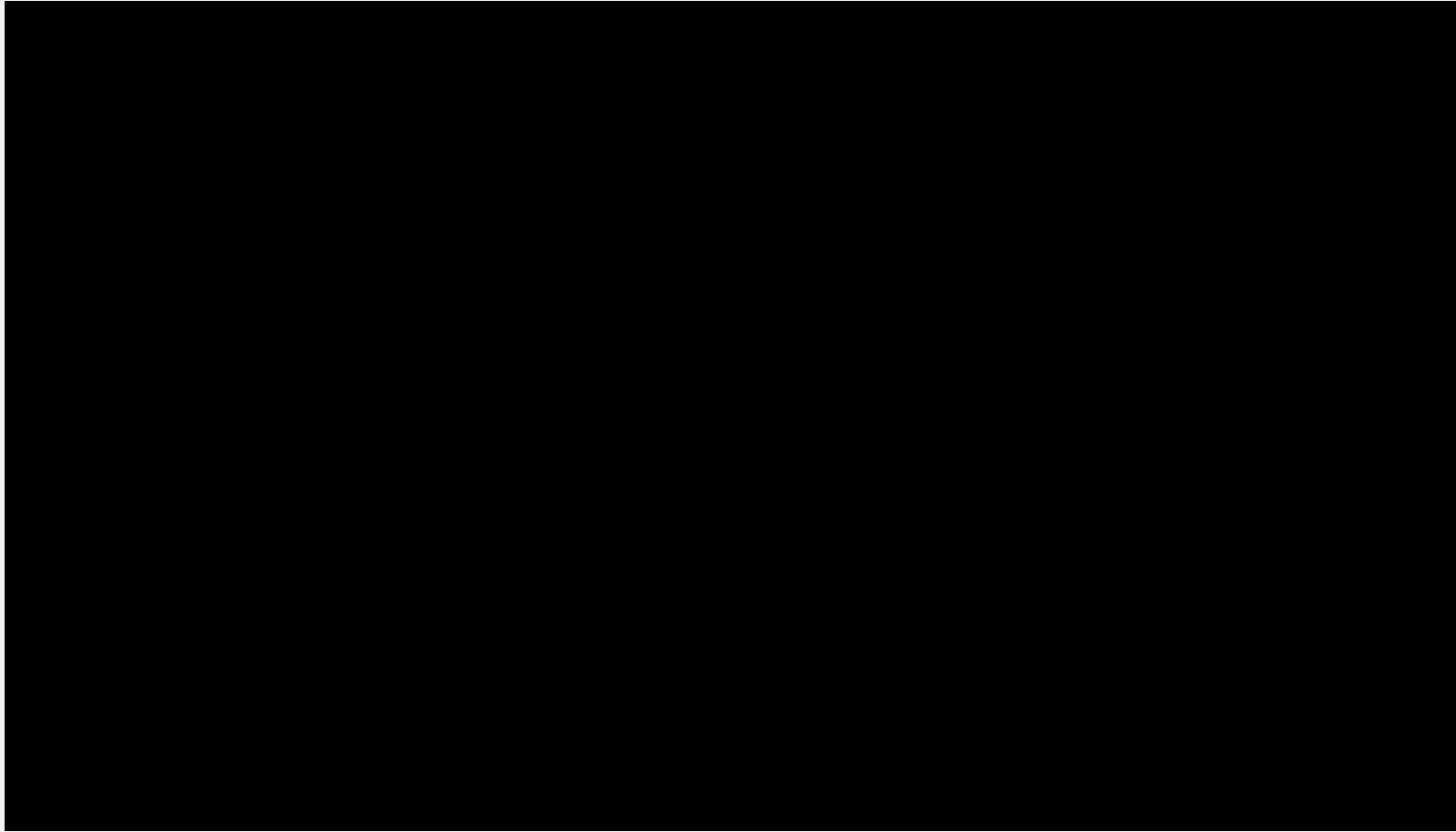
What strategies are you using to identify and stop the spread of misinformation?

Which of these strategies work well?

What support would be helpful to you?



Some strategies others are using



[Video link: https://youtu.be/OP11PPFTfol](https://youtu.be/OP11PPFTfol)

Overcoming disinformation strategies

Strategies used by creators of disinformation

- modifying information and creating content that looks real
- benefitting from social media processes to reach people with shared values and fears
- building on shared values and fears to capture our attention
- provoking strong emotions that make it feel urgent to act
- overwhelming us

Actions to overcome these strategies

- limit misinformation we encounter
- identify and STOP the spread of misinformation
- protect others from misinformation

Limiting misinformation we encounter

Use social media in ways that limit harms

- focus on social media as a tool to build connections
 - with friends, colleagues and family members
 - with groups with shared interests
- ignore posts that claim to share information

Develop a list of trustworthy sources

- bookmark trusted sources in internet browser
- fact check issues as you encounter them online

Include multiple sources with different viewpoints

- for subjective content, including points of view
- include sources that provide viewpoints different from the ones you hold
- counters polarization and provides understanding of opposing views

Use the **STOP** tool



Share (only) when you're sure
Is this really true?



Track down the truth
Do other reliable resources have the same information?



Outsmart the outrage
Have strong feelings about this? Are those feelings based on facts?



Poke at the point of view
What's it trying to say? Who's saying it? Who benefits from it being said?

Share only when you're sure

What it involves

- general guideline for interacting with all information
- take time to make sure the information is true before sharing

Disinformation strategies it addresses

- creating information that looks real
- provoking strong emotions that make it feel urgent to share
- overwhelming us

Share only when you're sure: Example

Has the kitty litter box been removed from the high school bathroom or do we still need to acknowledge this mental disorder?

- many quiz participants believed this post was real
- looks and feels real
- resembles news stories with similar content or personal accounts
- similar posts appeared in Canada and United States
- used by American anti-trans election candidates to support campaigns
- consistently proven to be false
- school districts confirmed they don't provide kitty litter boxes to students
- no evidence of kitty litter boxes in schools

Potential impacts of sharing post

- accessibility measures ensure washrooms for students with mobility devices
- gender neutral washrooms provide safe spaces for trans and non-binary users
- kitty litter misinformation ridicules people and minimizes importance of accessibility measures
- may provoke confusion, ridicule and harm
- wrongly compares gender identity with non-human identity

Reflect on a post you shared recently

Did you confirm that it was true before sharing it?
Why or why not?

Can you identify potential harms this post could cause if it's not true?

What could you do to be sure content is true before sharing?



Track down the truth

What it involves

- identifying whether content is true or misinformation

Disinformation strategies it addresses

- using AI-modified or generated images or videos
- misrepresenting the context
- misidentifying the source of a problem

Steps to track down the truth

- verify the source
- consult reliable sources

Track down the truth: Example

RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM **COPY**

DOB: [REDACTED] File #: [REDACTED]
DQA: [REDACTED] 5

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|
| Start-Up Allowance | |
| STAPLES | \$475 |
| CLOTHING | |
| Adult (17-64) | \$600 |
| Dependent (18-64) | \$750 |
| TELEPHONE IN HOME | \$45 |
| TRANSPORTATION | |
| Adult (17-64) | \$70 |
| Dependent (18-64) | \$60 |
| Allowance for Dependent Children | |
| SCHOOL SUPPLIES (4-17) | \$150 |
| TELEPHONE (4-17) | \$150 |
| Regular Monthly Benefits | |
| FOOD AND INDEMNITY (BASIC NEEDS) | \$401 |
| BASIC NEEDS (18 YEAR OLD) | \$750 |
| RENT | \$246 |
| TRANSPORTATION | |
| Senior: \$50 | \$1,399 |
| Security Loan | |

“This is what one illegal refugee gets with the federal assistance program, \$3874 per month.”

MISINFORMATION:
CAN YOU STOP IT?



Share (only)
when you're sure



Track down the
truth



Outsmart the
outrage

- disinformation commonly targets refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers
- used to support views of groups advocating for policies to limit immigration
- provokes anti-immigrant conspiracy theories, discrimination and hate
- impacts our ability to make informed decisions
- may limit our ability to make informed decisions, including how we vote

Verify the source

What the strategy involves

- identify source and determine if it is reliable

Findings

- no evidence that the person who posted has expertise on Refugee Settlement Assistance Program
- no explanation of how they obtained the document
- similar posts are linked to groups advocating for immigration limits

Use a fact-checking tool

What the strategy involves

- use tool to identify whether commonly shared content is true
- Snopes
 - identifies commonly shared content as true, false or unverifiable
 - enter key words from content in search box
 - select post from list of possibilities

Findings

- representation of content identified as false
- payment for family of five
- legally settled refugees, not “illegals”
- mostly of funds were one-time settlement payments, not monthly payment
- example of malinformation that misrepresents the context

Consult reliable sources

What the strategy involves

- consider whether drive for profit may influence news sources
- identify which sources offer more bias-free reporting
- may include public, not-for-profit, scientific and government agencies
- assess accuracy of content and potential bias using Media Bias/Fact Check
- confirm whether reliable sources provide the same information

Findings

- from Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- government provides settlement funds to government sponsored and joint sponsored refugees
- payment for family of five
- majority of refugees sponsored and settled by private sponsors
- monthly, individual RAP rates for government sponsored refugees lower than those is post

Reflect on a post you shared recently

Did you use any of these strategies to “Track down the truth”?

- identify the source
- use a fact checking tool
- consult reliable sources

Can you identify harms this post could cause if it isn't true?

Which of these strategies could you use in the future?



Outsmart the outrage

What it involves

- recognize emotions that disinformation provokes
- avoid automatically sharing posts that provoke these emotions
- Do I have strong feelings?
- Are those feelings based on facts?

Disinformation strategies it addresses

- benefitting from social media processes
- building on shared values and fears
- provoking strong emotions that make it feel urgent to share

Strategies

- notice the feelings the post is provoking
- acknowledge those emotions may be intentionally provoked
- track down the truth to confirm whether our emotional reaction is justified

Outsmart the outrage: Example



MISINFORMATION:
CAN YOU
STOP IT?



Share (only)
when you're sure



Track down the
truth

- post spread rapidly on social media
- creator of this post shared a similar post unjustly blaming immigrants for a fire in Wales
- officials still investigating source of fire
- no evidence that Muslims were involved
- impacts include provoking discrimination, hatred and conspiracy theories against Muslims

Outsmart the
outrage

Be at the
front of view

Human Rights

Steps to take to “Outsmart the outrage”

Notice the emotions the post is provoking

- sadness, fear or anger directed against Muslims
- identifying these emotions is an important first step

Pause and acknowledge emotions may be intentionally provoked

- disinformation benefits from tendency to react quickly in response to strong emotions
- pause to consider this possibility
- helps us to take control of actions and avoid manipulation

Track down the truth to confirm whether our emotions are justified

- if post is true, accept emotions as valid and act with more certainty
- if post is misinformation, choose not to share it
- simple fact check identifies this post as misinformation

Reflect on a post that provoked strong emotions

Did you use any of these strategies to “Outsmart the outrage”?

- notice emotions the post is provoking
- acknowledge emotions may be intentionally provoked
- track down the truth to confirm whether the emotions are justified

Can you identify harms this post could cause if it isn't true?

Which of these strategies could you use in the future?



Poke at the point of view

What it involves

- identifying point of view of source and potential for influence on content
- What is it trying to say? Who is saying it? Who benefits from it being said?

Tendencies and disinformation strategies it addresses

- disinformation created to achieve goals of those who develop it
- we tend to believe information that corresponds with our understandings and values
- benefits from social media processes to target people with shared values and fears

Strategies

- identify the message
- consider your own point of view
- examine the source
- track down the truth

Poke at the point of view: Example



“The world is asking for Canadian energy.”

MISINFORMATION:
CAN YOU STOP IT?



Share (only) when you're sure



Track down the truth



Outsmart the outrage

- complaint launched by Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
- Canada's advertising regulator ruled ads are “inaccurate, misleading, and distort scientific data”
- impacts of ad include limiting ability to make informed choices and harming democracy
- health impacts of climate change include heat illness, increased asthma and depression

Steps to take to “Poke at the point of view”

Identify the message

- What is the post trying to say?
- “Canadian LNG exports will reduce global emissions”

Consider your own point of view

- How does this message align with my views?
 - possible alignments: important to cut green house gas emissions and invest in green energy
- Could these views provoke accepting the message without verifying it?
 - alignment with the ad messages may lead us to accept ad as true

- reflect on disinformation strategy of building on our values
- consider potential for manipulation
- Could I consider different points of view?
 - disinformation contributes to polarization
 - considering only one point of view limits ability to make informed choices
 - investigate arguments in favour of and against using LNG as an energy source

More steps to poke at the point of view

Examine the source

- Who is the source?
 - Canada Action
 - “grassroots organization that encourages Canadians to work together to take action to support our vital natural resource sectors and the communities and families they support”
 - received \$100,000 from oil and gas company ARC Resources
 - Canada Action is supported by individuals connected to oil and gas industry
- How might they benefit from convincing us of their message?
 - confirm potential benefits to consider whether post may be disinformation
 - Canada Action funders benefit from support for LNG exports

Track down the truth

- use fact checking tool and consult alternate sources
- several news articles report Ad Standards ruling on Canada Action ad

Reflect on a post you shared recently

Did you use any of these strategies to poke at the point of view?

- identify the message
- consider your own point of view
- examine the source
- track down the truth

Can you identify harms this post could cause if it isn't true?

Which of these strategies could you use in the future?



Practice the STOP strategies

- Share only when you're sure
- Track down the truth
- Overcome the outrage
- Poke at the point of view

Identify posts you have recently received.

Use each of the STOP strategies to identify whether the post is safe to share.

Enter examples of disinformation in Handout 3



Quiz and STOP tool

English

MISINFORMATION:
CAN YOU STOP IT?

You'll see four posts.
Decide to share each post (or not) based on whether you think the information is true.
It's that easy! Or is it?

Let's go!

MISINFORMATION: CAN YOU STOP IT?

S Share (only)
when you're sure

T Track down the
truth

O Outsmart the
outrage

P Poke at the
point of view

Help others to identify and stop the spread of misinformation

Which of these strategies could you use to help other people to identify and STOP the spread of misinformation?

Can you identify additional strategies that might be helpful?

Minimize resistance

- acknowledge values and fears: Mini Bite 1 and 2

Prioritize your efforts

- focus on disinformation that may cause harm: Mini Bite 3

Avoid blaming

- highlight how creators of disinformation are skilled at misleading us: Mini Bite 2

Highlight the importance of taking action

- consider how misinformation harms human rights: Mini Bite 3

Provide tools

- share strategies to STOP the spread of misinformation: Mini Bite 4

Next Mini Bite

Examples of actions



Thank you

Visit bchumanrights.ca for more
resources or find us on social media
[@humanrights4bc](https://twitter.com/humanrights4bc)

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