

Misinformation: Can you STOP it?

Mini bite 5

Examples of actions to STOP
the spread of misinformation



Learning goals

- explore examples of actions taken by community members
- consider BCOHRC actions at the systemic level

Reflect on an example impacting your community

Can you think of an example of misinformation that has impacted your community?

Which group or groups were impacted?

Are you aware of actions taken to address this issue?

Can you think of other actions that might address it?



Community amplifiers' projects

- 50 community amplifiers across the province
- First Nations organizations, youth groups, schools and community organizations
- identified local human rights issues related to misinformation
- developed campaign or project to raise awareness
- provided community-based insights into local issues and actions
- developed independently and do not necessarily reflect Commissioner's views

Misinformation and Indigenous businesses

Amplifier and issue

- *Stó:lō Community Futures Corporation*
- business supports for Indigenous entrepreneurs and community-owned businesses
- project addresses discriminatory misinformation on Indigenous business owners

Community amplifier project

- miscommunications survey for Indigenous business owners
- majority of survey respondents experienced harmful impacts of misinformation on business
- 37.5% subjected to misinformation about “free funding”
- harms include emotional stress, financial loss and reputational harm
- misinformation often originates from within communities
- need for culturally sensitive approaches, public education, community support and tools

Resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs

- rack card and educational resource
- harms caused by misinformation
- tips to respond with clarity, respect and confidence
- STOP tool with specific tips for each STOP letter
- strategies to address misinformation and protect businesses and reputations
- culturally appropriate advice for responding to misinformation
- contact information for further support

Before You Respond: **STOP**

S – Share(only) when you're sure

How a business can respond:

- Pause before responding publicly (especially on social media)
- Confirm details using your own records (pricing, policies, funding, contracts)

T – Track down the truth

How a business can respond:

- Check trusted sources (your own documents, partners, funders, official websites)
- Clarify directly with the person or organization involved

O – Outsmart the outrage

How a business can respond:

- Take a step back before reacting emotionally
- Avoid responding in anger, especially online
- Choose a calm, professional tone
- Talk to Stó:lō Community Futures!

P – Poke at the point of view

How a business can respond:

- Consider the source – Is it based on misunderstanding, assumption, or conflict?
- Ask respectful questions when appropriate: “Can you share where that information came from?”
- Identify whether the issue is: Miscommunication → clarify, or Conflict → address privately
- Decide if a response is necessary—or if it's better to disengage

Misinformation and people with disabilities

Amplifier and issue

- Fort Saint John Association for Community Living (FSJACL)
- promotes inclusion, equal opportunities and community opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities
- project challenged misconception that people with developmental disabilities

Community amplifier project

- multi-episode mini-series within FSJACL's Shining Brighter podcast
- identifies and challenges myths and misconceptions
- misinformation in employment, independence, mental health and community inclusion
- self-advocates, support workers, leadership, families and community partners
- centers lived experiences, authentic voices and storytelling
- replaces misinformation with understanding, respect and accurate representation

Myth vs. reality social media campaign



<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1BPEYURA6w/>

Misinformation about climate change

Amplifier and issue

- qathet Climate Alliance, Powell River
- partnerships, projects and campaigns to benefit community, reduce emissions and increase resilience to climate change
- project developed to address climate change denial and misinformation

Community amplifier project

- two talks to raise public awareness and Q&A sessions with experts
- Jennifer Nathan: Connections between anti-climate groups and fossil fuel interests
- Solution: Promotion of critical thinking skills to expose hidden agendas and vested interests
- Blair Weber: Misinformation and conspiracy narratives arising during wildfire evacuations
- Solution: “Deep canvassing” through in-person conversations to overcome misinformation

Impacts of public talks

- raised awareness of misinformation about climate change
- encouraged attendees to become more actively involved
- raised qathet Climate Alliance's profile and identified future collaborators

"I had no idea how insidious the reach of the climate disinformation machine was before [this event]...The program left me inspired to learn more and to work with qathet Climate Alliance... to create healthy and just communities starting with where I live."

Anti-SOGL misinformation

Amplifier and issue

- Advocacy Canada, Kelowna
- strengthen inclusion and counter harmful narratives through education, advocacy and community engagement
- project focused on misinformation about SOGI 123 as a source of confusion and stigma

Community amplifier project: Transform the Words

- accessible, trauma-informed, non-confrontational spaces to explore SOGI misinformation
- encouraged creativity and reflection rather than debate
- coordinated 13 community organizations to create a community installation
- individual reflections and group conversations on positive and harmful online content
- 1,577 paper cranes created and assembled into large rainbow curtain installation
- displayed at Downtown Kelowna Library
- ended with public gathering

Transform the words

“Each crane represents the time, energy, and presence of real people who showed up in their own way.”



Reflect on the issue you identified in your community

Do any of the community amplifiers' examples inspire you to take action?

Which elements of these actions could you use to address this issue?

What would you do differently?



BCOHRC's systemic approach

Systemic approach

- misinformation not only due to individual, accidental or intentional spread of lies
- online misinformation can result in gaps in laws and policies
- online and offline misinformation can be part of broader approach to public policy and dialogue
- individual actions address specific issues related to misinformation
- systemic actions address root causes by identifying laws, policies and practices that enable the development and spread of misinformation

Components of a systemic approach to addressing misinformation

- identifying laws, policies and practices that enable the development and spread of misinformation
- developing law, policies and practices to address harms
- providing information to counter widely accepted misinformation

BCOHRC's systemic actions

- highlighting the importance of evidence-based information in public debates
- putting forward recommendations to social media companies
- publishing evidence-based reports and position papers to counter misinformation
- raising awareness of misinformation and its impacts
- providing tools to identify and STOP the spread of misinformation

Importance of evidence-based information

- misinformation increasingly present in debates around human rights-related policies
- healthy debate is vital to a functioning democracy
- misinformation limits access to information needed to make informed decisions
- policies shaped by misinformation can have harmful impacts on human rights of targeted groups

Return to the facts

Commission's call for a "Return to facts"

- Commissioner's mandate to protect human rights
- human rights impacts of misinformation
- role of healthy debate in functioning democracies
- importance of evidence-based decision making
- responsibilities of public and elected officials to protect human rights

Examples of "clouds of misinformation" in public debate impacting human rights

- colonization and its impacts
- School-based materials on sexual health and gender identity
- free speech and the laws governing it
- the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)
- what is up for debate: shared concerns and policy approaches
- what isn't up for debate: evidence-based facts

From Hate to Hope Inquiry recommendations

BCOHRC's mandate

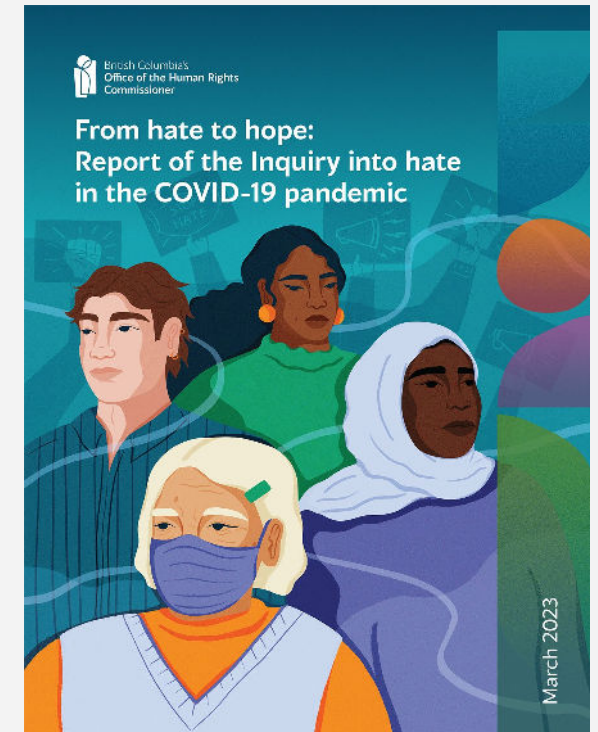
- recommendations to government and organizations under jurisdiction of Human Rights Code
- encourage government and organizations to meet responsibilities

From Hate to Hope recommendations

- recommendations targeting hate stemming from misinformation on online platforms
 - kindergarten to grade 12 public education system
 - social media companies' policies, processes and platform design

Potential impacts of recommendations

- minimize spread of misinformation that:
 - promotes divisiveness and polarization
 - strengthens prejudices and stereotypes
 - contributes to the spread of conspiracy theories
 - provokes discrimination and hate



Changes to the K to 12 education system

Recommendations

- provide skills and tools to improve digital literacy
- Implement curriculum to develop knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that limit vulnerability to misinformation

Social media companies and misinformation

Policies and processes contributing to spread of hateful misinformation

- replacement of independent fact-checking with user monitoring and comments
- changes to hate speech policies
- inadequate enforcement of policies limiting hate speech
- use of algorithms to target people with shared values and fears

Platform design contributing to spread of harmful misinformation

- placing advertisements beside harmful misinformation
- anonymity that allows people to post misinformation with no consequences

Recommendations to social media companies

BCOHRC recommendations

- ensure enforcement of rigorous policies and process to address hateful content
- reform algorithms to favour less divisive, discriminatory and misleading content
- end placement of advertisements beside hateful content
- allow independent audits of risks of increased hate created by platform design

Jurisdiction

- regulation of social media companies under federal jurisdiction
- From Hate to Hope recommendations made directly to social media companies

Countering misinformation

Publishing evidence-based information

- BCOHRC reports and position papers with evidence that counters misinformation
- address misinformation that:
 - contributes to human rights-related harms
 - limits ability to make informed choices
 - harms democracy

Examples of misinformation-related themes addressed

- health
- policing, including School Liaison Officers
- media access to information

Misinformation on toxic drug crisis

Toxic drug crisis

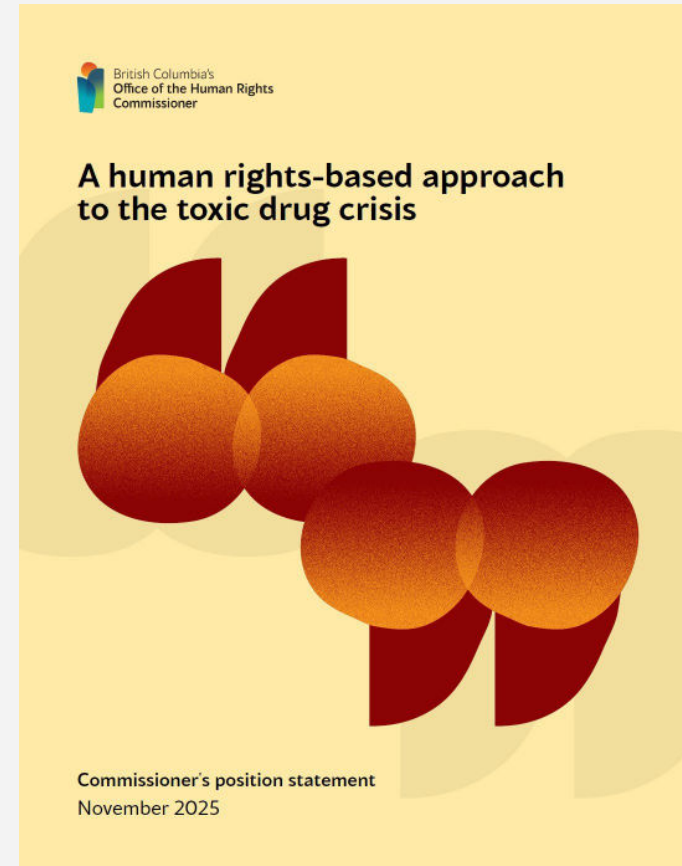
- public health emergency declared in 2016
- 18,000+ deaths from drug poisoning between 2016 and 2026
- unregulated drug toxicity leading cause of death in B.C. for people age 19 to 59
- 5.3 unregulated drug deaths per day as of September 2025

Impacts of misinformation

- contributes to government policy decisions that do not effectively address the crisis
- stigmatizes substance users as having moral failings
- blames current crisis on safe supply models
- advocates for non-evidence-based interventions, including criminalization and ending safe-supply services

Toxic drug crisis position statement

- A human rights-based approach to the toxic drug crisis, November 2025
- counters misinformation guiding current substance use policies
- advocates for implementation of evidence-informed, human rights-based policies
- provides evidence on wide-scale impacts of toxic drug crisis
- includes evidence to counter stigma around substance use
- explains that prohibition, and not safe supply, is responsible for the toxic drug crisis
- advocates for adoption of regulated and/or prescription-free alternatives to toxic drug supply to immediately prevent deaths
- cites studies that demonstrate how harm reduction and safe supply approaches reduce deaths and serious harms.
- highlights importance of selecting approaches that are effective in saving lives and respecting human rights



Misinformation: Can you STOP it campaign

Toolkit of educational resources

- Misinformation: Can you STOP it quiz
- webpage
- video and conversation guide
- Community Amplifiers' projects
- Mini Bites

Individual impacts

- builds awareness and strengthens skills to address individual instances of misinformation

Systemic impacts

- Equips public with knowledge and skills to identify and address all forms of misinformation

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Track down the
truth



Outsmart the
outrage



Poke at the
point of view

Reflect on the human rights issue you identified earlier

Can you think of an action to address it at the systemic level using one or more of these strategies?:

- highlighting the importance of evidence-based information in public debates
- recommending changes in policies and practices
- providing evidence-based information to counter widely-held beliefs
- raising awareness or misinformation
- providing tools and skills to identify it and stop its spread



Thank you

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