The Colorado Health Foundation™

Fighting Falsehoods: Simple Ways to Stop the Spread of Misinformation

Accurate information is essential to advancing health equity. When each of us has access to reliable information, we're better equipped to make informed decisions and advocate for our needs and the needs of our communities.

The ability to tell if the information we receive is fact or fiction is crucial. Misinformation (false or misleading content shared without harmful intent) and disinformation (deliberately deceptive content) can spread rapidly, shaping beliefs, fueling division and influencing everything from public health to elections. Identifying and confronting misinformation and disinformation are vital skills for protecting our communities, our democracy, and our collective health and well-being.

The problem of mis- and disinformation can feel overwhelming, leaving you unsure of how to make a difference. But you can make a difference! In this blog post, I share a few tips that you can use to help stop the spread of falsehoods and promote the spread of more accurate information.

Find your trusted news source.

Finding trusted sources for news and information starts with knowing what credibility looks like. Look for outlets that have a strong track record of accuracy, clearly cite their sources and separate news from opinion. The News Literacy

Project offers five steps for vetting a news source and a tool like The Media Bias Chart can help you quickly assess a source's reliability and bias.

Verify information before you share it.

Many of us regularly visit social media sites. Most of these sites use algorithms that prioritize content likely to generate strong emotional reactions, like anger or fear, because those emotions drive engagement. The more a social media post is shared, liked or commented on, the more the algorithm pushes it to others, creating a feedback loop of emotionally charged content. This design means false or misleading information that sparks outrage or excitement can spread faster and wider than the truth.

Before you share a post that sparks a strong reaction or accept the post as fact, pause. That viral meme or shocking claim might be missing context or might be false. So, take a moment to scrutinize the post. How? Start by checking out the source. Ask yourself, is the author/original poster real and are they qualified to speak on the topic? If you've never heard of the source or are unsure of their qualifications, verify the information using your trusted news source.

Stopping the spread of mis- and disinformation doesn't end with social media. It also means being mindful of how we communicate in real life. Whether you're repeating a story you read on social media or discussing current events with loved ones via text or chat, consider the accuracy of the information you're sharing. Mis- and disinformation can spread just as easily through everyday casual conversations, especially when it's emotionally charged.

Spread the truth.

If you are comfortable doing so, share accurate information with your networks. When you see false or misleading information, speak up respectfully. Instead of arguing, offer a fact-checked correction and link to a trustworthy source. A calm, kind approach makes others more open to listening. Even if they don't change their mind right away, you're planting a seed and helping others who may be reading. Small, respectful interventions like this help create a culture of truth.

Together, we can push back against the spread of mis- and disinformation.

At a time when false information can travel faster than ever, each of us plays a role in protecting the truth. By choosing trustworthy sources, pausing to verify information before sharing, and spreading the truth, we help create a more informed community. The choices you make about what you share and how you engage with information matter.

Check out these additional resources.

- AP Fact Check: Verify the latest news with AP Fact Check. AP fact-checkers combat misinformation by debunking false and misleading claims.
- FactCheck.org: FactCheck.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics.
- Lead Stories: Lead Stories is an innovative fact-checking website at the intersection of big data and journalism.
- Politifact: PolitiFact is a nonpartisan fact-checking website to sort out the truth in American politics.
- Snopes: Snopes' fact-checking and original investigative reporting light the way to evidence-based and contextualized analysis.

TYPE

Blog

POST DATE

Jul 22, 2025

BY

David Proper