P4HE Workshops – Moving to Action:
Fostering Trust in Information Environments by Identifying Misinformation

PARTNERS for ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

How to Use this Resource

This resource is meant to help you move to action and combat misinformation in the pursuit of health equity.

For more context on Fostering Trust by Identifying Misinformation

To get the most out of this resource, Partners for Advancing Health Equity (P4HE Collaborative) recommends reviewing the level-setting resources provided to participants during this workshop sprint, listed in the text box below. For more background information on health misinformation see _Approaches for Health Equity: Fostering Trust in Informational Environments by Identifying Misinformation_.

Level Setting

New to combatting misinformation? Below are level setting resources recommended by the workshop facilitator.

Read
- › Misinformation Interventions
- › Case Study: Fighting COVID Misinformation
- › Americans' Trust in Scientists in 2024
- › Combatting Medical Misinformation and Rebuilding Trust in the USA
- › Trust in Public Health Agencies and Vaccine Falls Amid Republican Skepticism

Play
- › Misinformation Escape Room
- › Bad News Game

Watch
- › Infodemic Management: Misinformation and Disinformation

P4HE Resources
- › P4HE Level Setting Dialogue
- › P4HE Resource Spotlight
- › Engaging Constructively to Counter Health Misinformation and Advance Truth-Telling

Have a resource you would like to share on this topic?
- › Recommend resources and topics for our library

Workshop Focus

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted a three-series workshop sprint on fostering trust in information environments by identifying misinformation, led by Dr. Rachel Moran and Dr. Maddy Jalbert from the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public. The series explored how misinformation spreads, why it resonates, and how to build trust in health information through practical strategies and interventions.

› **Session 1:** Speakers introduced the foundational concepts of misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, and shared how the Center has applied techniques to address misinformation. The session also explored how misinformation spreads, why it feels believable, and the role of trust, emotion, and information environments in shaping public understanding.

› **Session 2:** Speakers examined the emotional and structural drivers of health misinformation, including how it disproportionately impacts communities already facing health inequities. They emphasized the importance of trusted messengers, culturally relevant communication, and the need for accessible, community-informed responses.

› **Session 3:** Speakers guided participants through a discussion-based approach to designing interventions that support trustworthy health communication, with a focus on empowering communities to seek, share, and sustain credible health information.

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Moving to Action

Below, we have outlined ways to disrupt traditional approaches for health equity through effectively responding to and developing interventions to mitigate health misinformation. While these recommendations are tailored for organizations, individuals can adopt and adapt many of these strategies to combat misinformation effectively in their daily interactions and personal networks.

Responding to Misinformation

› Decide Whether to Intervene

Effectively addressing misinformation begins with a decision: whether or not to intervene. Not every situation requires a response. In some cases, engaging with misinformation can unintentionally amplify it. However, when misinformation is actively harming community trust or public health, intervention becomes necessary. Before responding to misinformation, consider the context and potential impact of your engagement. Consider:

- › Is this the right moment to engage?
- › What is the goal of this intervention?
- › What is the emotional context of the conversation?

› Understand the Information Ecosystem

Different generations and communities engage with information in different ways. They rely on distinct platforms, news sources, and social networks. This makes it difficult to have shared conversations about health information. When designing interventions, consider:

- › Where does your audience get their information?
- › What platforms do they trust?
- › How can you bridge generational or cultural divides in communication?

Also consider the role of technology. AI and automation have made it easier and cheaper to create and spread misinformation. Fake studies, doctored images, and misleading headlines can be generated quickly and shared widely. Effective interventions should consider:

- › What policies or partnerships can help reduce the spread of AI-generated misinformation?
- › How can we educate our communities about identifying and questioning AI-generated content?

› Build Trust Before Debunking

People are more likely to believe information from sources they trust. Before correcting misinformation, focus on building relationships and understanding the emotional drivers behind belief. Consider:

- › Why does this feel true to them?

> What need is this information meeting?

> What shared goals can we build on?

› Use conversational strategies to guide conversations

Motivational interviewing is especially effective in culturally sensitive or emotionally charged contexts. For example, when discussing safe infant sleep practices with young parents, practitioners can use this approach to respectfully navigate differences between medical guidance and traditional family practices.

Steps for motivational interviewing:

> Summarize what you heard to confirm understanding.

> Ask permission to share additional information.

> Offer accurate information.

> Ask for the person's thoughts or reactions.

Another effective way to reduce defensiveness is the truth sandwich. This approach starts with the truth, then addresses the misinformation, and reaffirms the truth and invites further discussion.

Skill building to Combat Misinformation

Informational literacy empowers people to verify claims, identify misleading content, and make informed decisions. Even small steps like quick online searches can help reduce the spread of misinformation. Skill building interventions should aim to build confidence in evaluating and discussing health information—not just deliver facts. Creating a space where people feel less judged and more open to reflection is key. This is especially important when addressing emotionally charged topics like vaccines, nutrition, or chronic illness. Consider incorporating the following approaches into your training or community engagement efforts:

> **Lateral reading** encourages individuals to investigate a source while consuming it. This includes opening a new tab to look up the organization or author, checking their credibility, and seeing what others say about them. The SIFT method, developed by Mike Caulfield, is one technique for lateral reading.

S I F T

Stop — Investigate the source — Find better coverage — Trace claims, quotes and media to the original context

> **Game-based learning** offers a low stakes, engaging way to build media literacy and spark conversation. These tools simulate misinformation tactics and help participants recognize misleading narratives in a safe, interactive environment. For example, the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public partnered with UW Medicine to develop a simple

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game that helped people identify misinformation tactics related to vaccines. The game was used in training sessions and Zoom presentations to stimulate discussion about clickbait headlines and vaccine hesitancy. It was often paired with a debrief to connect the experience to real-world examples.

› **Community-informed training** can be especially effective when grounded in real conversations. For example, in Santa Clara County, California, JSI Research and Training Institute developed a childhood vaccination campaign targeting parents and caregivers of children under five. The campaign included a training curriculum for service providers and community health workers, designed to address vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. The curriculum was informed by real questions and concerns from the community.

Intervening in the Misinformation Cycle

Interventions can be proactive such as creating educational materials or building media literacy, or reactive like responding to a misleading claim in conversation or online. To bridge these efforts effectively, organizations must consider their capacity and readiness to engage with their communities in meaningful and impactful ways. Before taking steps to intervene in the misinformation cycle, organizations should consider:

› Do we have a clear communication strategy?
› Are our staff trained in respectful engagement?
› Do we have trusted messengers or community partners to collaborate with?
› Are we prepared to respond to backlash or misinformation about our own work?

Interventions can take many forms from including skill building, social media campaigns, and resource generation (e.g., toolkits or conversation guides for frontline staff). Organizations that have established trust with their communities can use their platforms to share accurate, accessible information. This might include:

› Short videos or infographics that are visually engaging and easy to share.
› Stories that resonate emotionally and factually.
› Collaborations with local influencers or trusted messengers.

For example, in Louisiana, the Office of Public Health developed an immunization campaign that included a trusted messenger video series. Community influencers were provided with scripts to create accurate, culturally relevant content. A follow-up series featured subject matter experts who were given more flexibility to speak from their expertise. Though the campaign was ultimately paused due to administrative changes, it demonstrated the value of pairing trusted messengers with expert voices to reach diverse audiences.

If your organization isn't positioned to create content directly, consider supporting others by producing frameworks, templates, or training materials that can be adapted to different contexts. For

example, Johns Hopkins developed a practical playbook for addressing health misinformation that can be adapted by organizations seeking to build their own interventions.

Designing Interventions

Interventions don't need to be large-scale to be effective. Many of the most impactful strategies are community-based, low-cost, and designed to meet people where they are. Whether you're working with a team, a community partner, or independently, consider how your intervention can be tailored to your audience's needs and context. Before designing an intervention, consider:

- › What is most appropriate for this professional or community context?
- › What resources do we have available to support this work?
- › What are our key learning objectives?
- › Who is our audience, and how are they showing up?
- › How will we share the resource once it's created (e.g., in person, online, through partners)?

These questions can help clarify whether your intervention should be a conversation framework, a training, a guide, or a piece of content.

Frameworks such as **R.O.A.M.** can help clarify your goals and guide the design process:

- › **Resource** – What are you creating? (e.g., guide, video, training, conversation framework)
- › **Objective –** What is the main goal? (e.g., increase trust, correct a false belief, build skills)
- › **Audience** – Who is it for? (e.g., patients, parents, community leaders, staff)
- › **Medium** – How will it be shared? (e.g., in person, online, through partners)

› Try It Out: Practice Designing a Misinformation Intervention

Designing an intervention doesn't have to start from scratch. Use this section to test ideas, sketch out a plan, or adapt an approach to your own context. This section can be used as a worksheet, a brainstorming space, or a facilitation tool. Adapt it to your needs and revisit it as your intervention evolves.

Practice activities:

- › Draft a conversation guide for frontline staff responding to vaccine misinformation.
- › Create a short training for community health workers on lateral reading and the SIFT method.
- › Design a social media post or video script using the truth sandwich approach.
- › Build a game-based activity to help participants identify misleading headlines.

Questions to guide your design:

- › What does our community need to feel informed and supported?
- › What misinformation are we seeing most often?
- › What trusted voices can we partner with?
- › What resources do we already have—and what do we need?

To learn more about these issues, or Partners for Health Equity's calls to action, a resource library including a full recording of this, and all previous P4HE Workshops, can be found on the P4HE website.