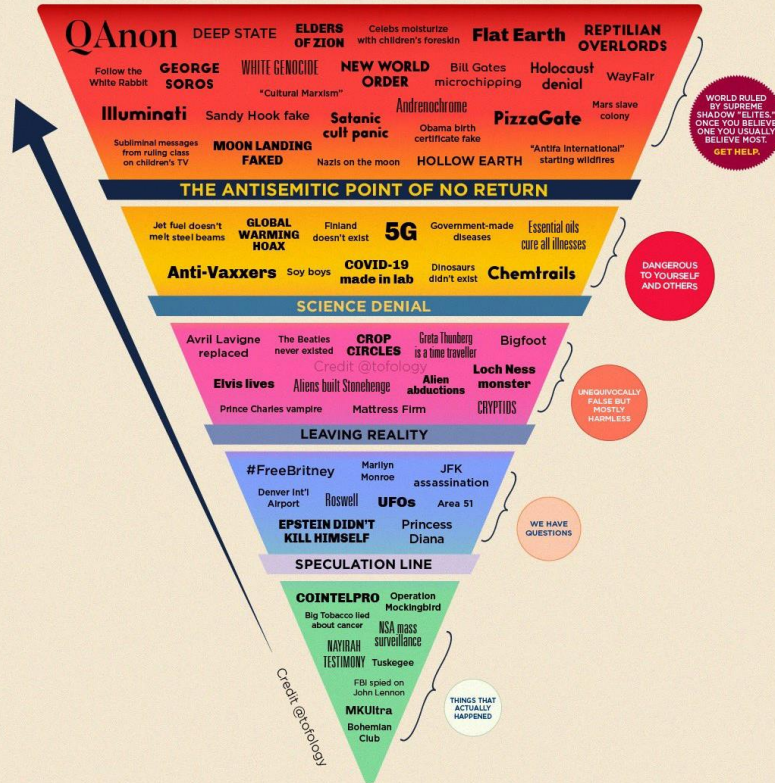


# Conspiracy Theories:

## Helping Yourself and Helping Others

**Five Nations 2021**

## DETACHED FROM REALITY



GROUND  
IN REALITY

- @tofology

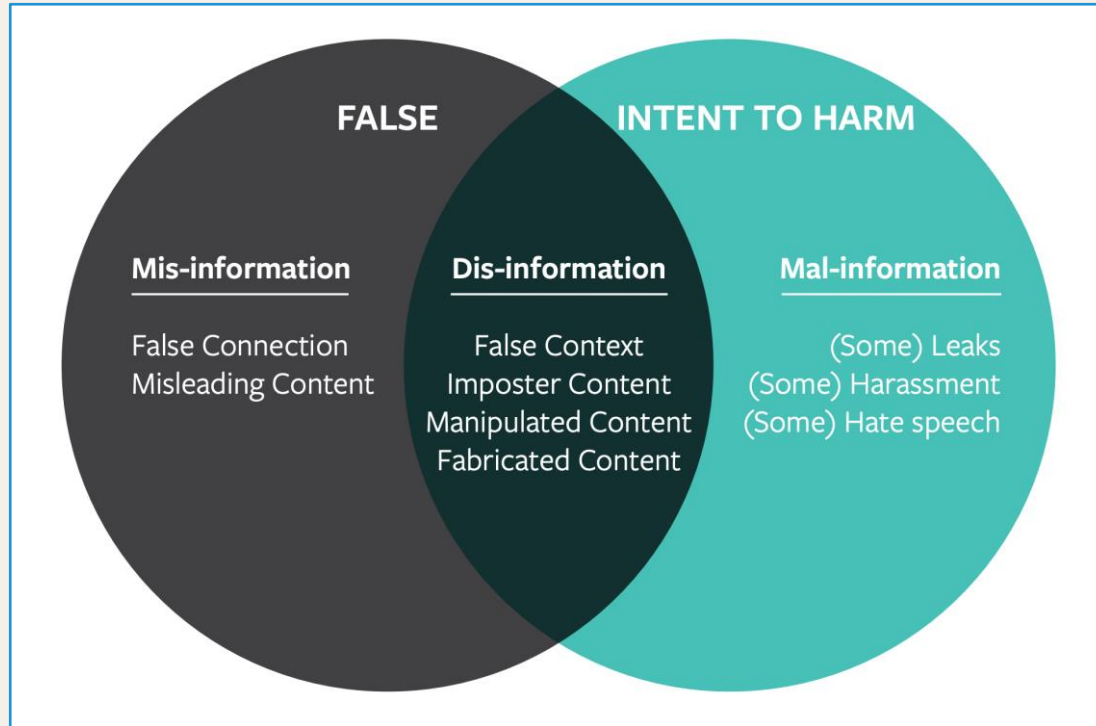
# Media Literacy

*Media literacy is the ability to  
**access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act**  
using all forms of communication.*

- NAMLE

# Helping Yourself

**Taking steps to be more media literate**



- FirstDraft News

## Develop your own media literacy

- Read laterally
- Consider who is publishing or sharing content
- Know how to verify information
- Recognise other points of view
- Take time before sharing content

# Do you REVIEW?

ACT

Blachford & Joy, 2019

R

Reputation



Have you heard  
of the source?

Have they been  
reliable before?

E

Evidence



What facts are  
cited in the story?

Are there holes  
in the story?

V

Verify



Compare to  
other sources

Does everything  
match up?

I

Intent



Why was the  
story published?

Is it factual  
and impartial?

E

Emotions



How do you feel  
about the story?

Are you swayed  
by your feelings?

W

Weigh it up



Think about  
what you know

Does the story  
sound plausible?

## How to verify content

- Use factchecking websites such as FullFact, Snopes, Channel 4 FactCheck and BBC RealityCheck

Before

At least 20,000 people a day with Covid-19 are breaking rules by not self-isolating, MPs warned

After

At least 20,000 people a day breaking rules by not self-isolating, MPs warned

- FullFact

## How to verify content

- Use factchecking websites such as FullFact, Snopes, Channel 4 FactCheck and BBC RealityCheck
- Try a key word search or run a reverse image search to check  
if a photograph actually depicts the event it claims to



December 3 at 11:43 AM · 🌐



A Democrat like Biden is just a liability to the party...too stupid to remember what ankle he hurt for sympathy from Americans.

**FB.**  
**You CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH !**  
**Potato Brain Biden forgets which ankle**  
**he.... 'twisted'**



**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump  
Get well soon!

14:14 · 30/11/2020 · Twitter Web App

87

42 Comments 614 Shares

biden ankle claim



All



News



Shopping



Images



Videos



More

Settings

Tools

About 3,600,000 results (0.46 seconds)

[www.reuters.com](#) > [article](#) > [uk-factcheck-biden-broken...](#) ▼

### Fact check: Biden is not wearing an ankle monitor, but an ...

4 Dec 2020 — In the first week of December 2020, social media posts showing President-Elect Joe **Biden** stepping out of a car with an orthopedic boot on his ...

[www.reuters.com](#) > [article](#) > [uk-factcheck-biden-foot-p...](#) ▼

### Fact check: Altered photograph claims to show Biden wearing ...

Social media users are sharing a photograph that has been digitally altered to show U.S. President-elect Joe **Biden** wearing his orthopedic boot on the wrong ...

[www.independent.co.uk](#) > ... > [Americas](#) > [US politics](#) ▼

### Trump wishes Biden speedy recovery for ankle fracture while ...

30 Nov 2020 — President interrupts his allegations of a 'rigged election' to offer a message of support for Joe **Biden**.

[www.usatoday.com](#) > [news](#) > [factcheck](#) > [2020/12/09](#) ▼

### Fact check: Altered image used to make false claim about ...

Claim: Image shows Biden wearing a boot on the opposite ankle he injured, suggests he is faking injury

Claimed by: Social media users

Fact check by USA Today: Altered

[Feedback](#)



### **The White House is getting its first rescue dog**

When President-elect Joe Biden moves into the White House, he'll bring his German shepherd Major with him, making him the first rescue dog to live there.

**- USA Today**



**“Don’t believe  
everything you  
read on the  
Internet just  
because there’s  
a picture with a  
quote next to it.”**

—Abraham Lincoln

# News Literacy Project

- US-based education charity
- Has a range of resources for personal and classroom use
- Recently expanded to include an app, podcast and interactive e-learning platform
- Offers weekly newsletters including fact-checked stories



# Conspiratorial THINKING

## FIVE REASONS PEOPLE FALL FOR conspiracy theories

### COMPELLING STORIES

Conspiracy theories present exciting, fascinating narratives.

### SIMPLIFIED EXPLANATIONS

Complex social issues and problems are rarely clear-cut. Conspiracy theories provide people with simplified explanations ... and someone or something to blame.

### MOTIVATED REASONING

Believers in conspiracy theories tend to only search for and present information that confirms their theory — and to find far-fetched reasons to dismiss anything that proves them wrong.

### SENSE OF BELONGING

Many conspiracy theory communities provide believers with a sense of connection and purpose that all people need.

### COGNITIVE BIASES

Conspiracy theories seem much more credible and compelling than they actually are because they take advantage of common errors in the ways we think.

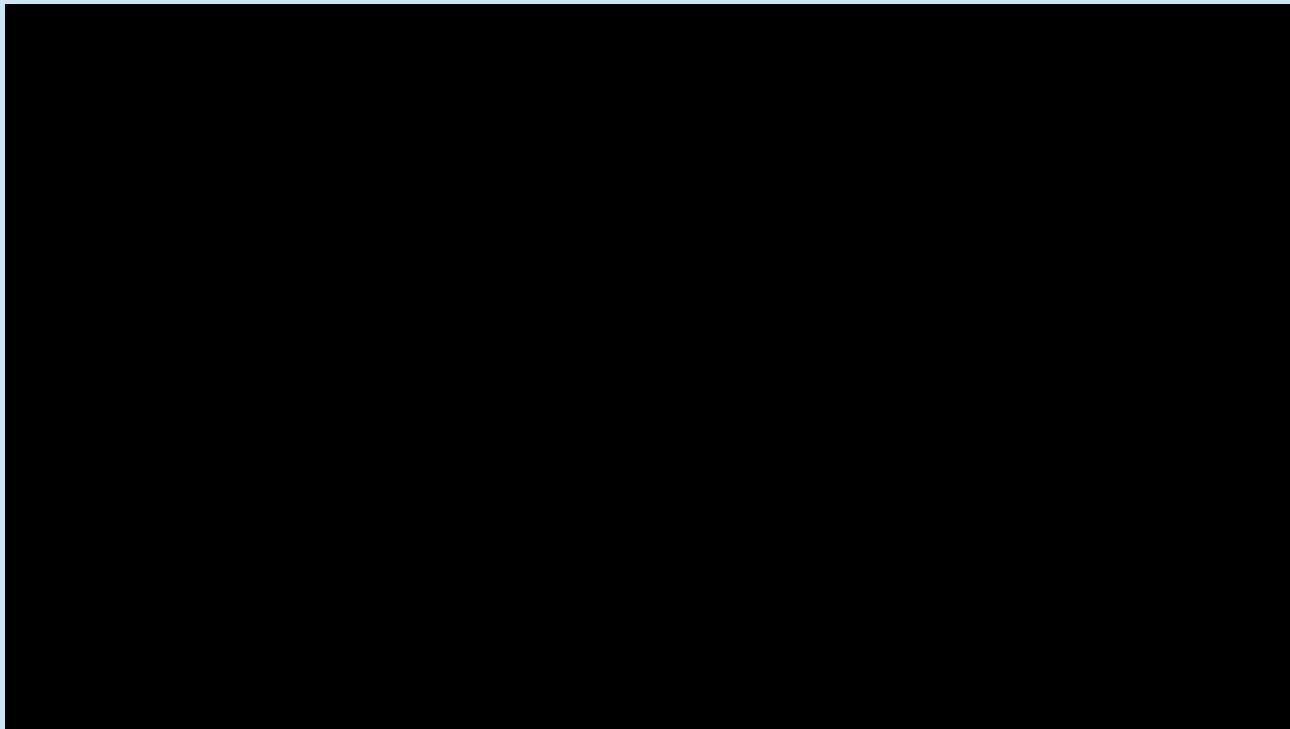


**"PROPORTIONALITY  
BIAS"** is an innate impulse to believe that major problems have major causes.



**"ILLUSORY PATTERN  
PERCEPTION" OR  
"PATTERNICITY"** is a natural tendency to see meaningful patterns and connections in unrelated events and details.

# Checkology: Conspiracy Theories



The  
Economist

EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION

# CRISIS & CONSPIRACIES

Child-led learning resource



- 'The Economist' Educational Foundation

## 'The Economist' Educational Foundation

- Classroom resource about media literacy
- Touches on conspiracy theories and scapegoats

# Helping Others

**Trying to dispel conspiracy theories**

# How to speak up without starting a showdown

Six best practices for talking to friends and family about sharing falsehoods online



checkology®

A future founded on facts  
newslit.org checkology.org

## 1. Be civil

Use an empathetic and respectful tone. Avoid being judgmental or simply telling someone they are wrong. If a person replies with aggressive or sarcastic language, don't respond in kind.



## 2. Take your time

Firing off a knee-jerk response might be tempting, but pause and take a step back. Do your homework. Research the claim and find reputable [fact-checking organizations](#) or credible expert sources to share, which [research shows](#) is key to effectively correcting misinformation online.



! **Remember.** Two links are tougher to dismiss than one.

## 3. Find common ground

Try putting yourself in your friend or loved one's shoes. Why might they have posted this? Did they have good intentions? Consider pointing out shared concerns or feelings in your response.



! Misinformation exploits our beliefs and values to elicit an emotional reaction. But you can also focus on these underlying principles to establish your own good intentions in reaching out.

## 4. Lay out the facts

Rather than simply posting a link to a fact-check, clearly summarize the main findings of the debunk first, then add the link.



! Don't let the conversation get derailed by unwarranted attacks on fact-checking organizations. Leading with the evidence and sharing links to more than one fact-check example can help you avoid being drawn into a fight about the organization itself.

## 5. Public or private?

Decide how you want to post your response. Public comments can reach a bigger audience, but a private message may be more appropriate in some situations.



! **Tip** Even if you opt for a private message, you can still leave a comment calling the original post into question (e.g., "Hmm, I'm not sure about this one.")

## 6. Be patient (and persistent)

[Research](#) shows we're more likely to believe fact-checks from people we know. View fact-checking as an ongoing debate rather than a fight to "win" at all costs. Even when someone seems unconvinced, calling out problematic content over time can plant a seed of doubt and prompt loved ones to work through important questions. While one corrective reply may not stop friends and relatives from sharing misinformation, consistently speaking up can help them think twice before sharing.



! **Remember.** Online trolls are not interested in honest debate. Don't waste your time responding to their insults or chasing their moving goalposts. Be willing to walk away.

## Getting started: Some helpful phrases

Oh, I saw this and initially thought it could be true, too. But ...

Figuring out what's true online can be so overwhelming. But I did some digging and thought you'd want to know that it looks like this is misleading ...

Hmm, this image/meme/article is kind of shocking, but I'm skeptical that it's real ...

Do you know where this information came from? How did you find out about this?

This image looks like it may not actually be what it seems. Here is a link to another version of the image, which shows something different. What do you think?

I know we're all trying to be extra cautious because of all the bad information circulating on [insert subject]. Here is what I found ...

## Resources consulted:

"What To Do If Your Family Or Friends Shares Misinformation On Facebook" (Brittany Wong, HuffPost).

"How to talk to friends and family about disinformation" (Claire Wardle, First Draft).

"PolitFact: How to fact-check your friends, and family, on the coronavirus" (Daniel Funke, PolitFact).

"Americans are fighting coronavirus misinformation on social media" (Leticia Bode and Emily Vraga, Washington Post).

"Opinion: How to Talk to Friends and Family Who Share Conspiracy Theories" (Charlie Warzel, The New York Times).

# - News Literacy Project

## Have a 'PEP' Talk

- Patience
- Empathy
- Persistence



Nice photoshop picture [redacted] Next time maybe pick one that can't be so easily exposed as fake. No wonder Trump loves you morons...you will believe anything.

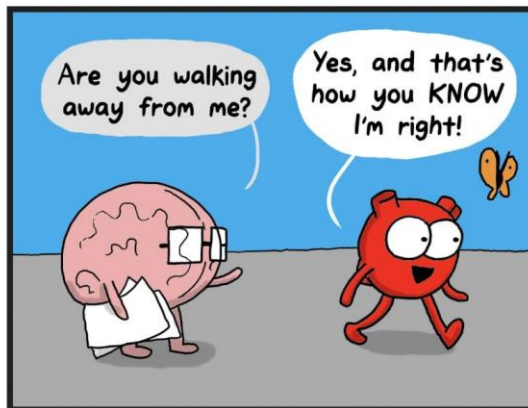
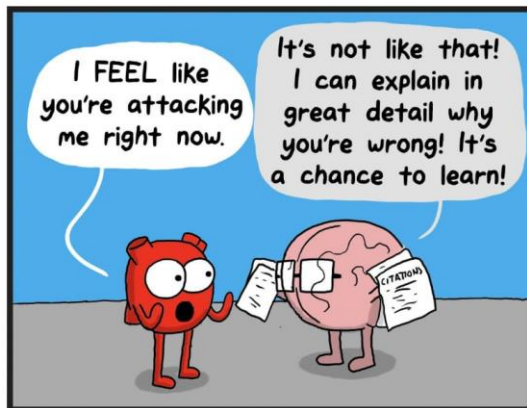
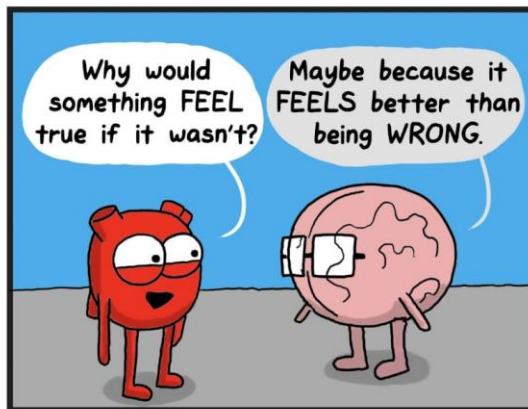
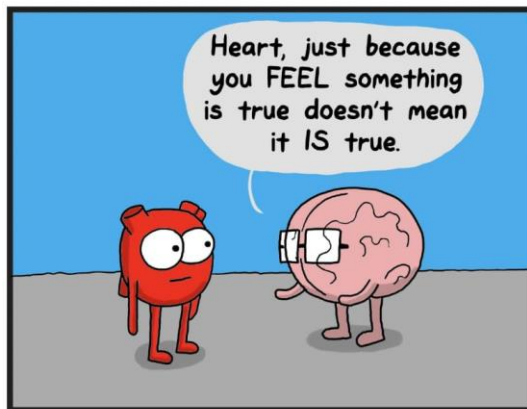


Like · Reply · 2d



## Avoiding Confrontation

- Don't suggest that someone is foolish, gullible or stupid
- Avoid name calling, lecturing or directly refuting the belief
- Show empathy and validate the individual, and then pivot
- Share evidence that they can evaluate for themselves
- Be ready and willing to walk away



**Heart and Brain**

@theAwkwardYeti

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