Building Resilience to False Information: A Toolkit for Engaging Students

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The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.

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Misinformation and Disinformation

Misinformation

- Misinformation is information that is false but *unintentional* and not intended to cause harm (Agarwal & Alsaeedi, 2020)
- Often incomplete, vague, uncertain, and/or ambiguous (Cooke, 2018)

Disinformation

- Disinformation is false information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the express purpose to cause harm.

Project Purpose & Audience

- The primary purpose of this toolkit is to assist University of Calgary faculty members in engaging with their students on the topic of misinformation

- The primary audience for this toolkit is University of Calgary faculty members, staff, and students, as well as any other users who are seeking to build resilience to misinformation.

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Guiding Principles

Based on ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

- *Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the **reflective discovery** of information, the **understanding** of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in **creating new knowledge** and **participating ethically** in communities of learning (ACRL, 2016)*

- **Evidence-informed** (focus groups and literature review)
- **Collaborative** (librarians and faculty working together)
- **Adaptable and flexible** (low-tech, easily modified)
- **Open Access** (access to all and easy to use)
- **Sustainable and able to be continually revised** (assigned to Digital Literacy Librarian)
- **Assessment and feedback** (components throughout)

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Research Process

- Focus groups
- Literature review
- Data analysis
- Result was a design structure based on themes developed from focus groups and literature review

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Themes: Development of Content

Overarching Themes:

- Individual responses
- Positionality
- Landscape
- Encounters with Disinformation
- Information Literacy
- Barriers/challenges

Final Developed Modules:

- Encounters with Misinformation
- Information Response
- The (Dis)Information Landscape

- Each module could be a stand alone depending on class & interest
- There is a progression through the modules, but links provide opportunity to move from one to the other.

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Module Descriptions

- *The (Dis)information Landscape*
  - Focuses on False Experts: opportunities to amplify & disseminate false information, identifying false information actors & techniques
  - Developing students understanding how viral disinformation impacts the information landscape

- *Encounters with Information*:
  - Focuses on Sources: accessing & processing information, how social media & news sources are designed, & how exposure to information shape our worldview
  - Exploring strategies of how false information is shared

- *Information Response*:
  - Focus on Individual: self-awareness, confirmation bias, how beliefs & values influence our response to information.
  - Developing students' critical assessment skills

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Misinformation Toolkit

A toolkit for Faculty to use with instructing students in information literacy

- **Home**
- Welcome!
- Introduction
- How To Use This Guide
- The (Dis)Information Landscape
- Encounters with Misinformation
- Information Response
- Conclusions
- Glossary
- Resources and External Links
- Faculty: Instructions for Faculty
- Contact Us

Building Resilience to Misinformation: An Instructional Toolkit

Building Resilience to Misinformation: An Instructional Toolkit

A presentation from Libraries and Cultural Resources at the University of Calgary

What does this module cover?
[Link for profs to click to access]

[Presenter's name]
[Presenter's title, job description, etc.]
Faculty of [insert name].

[Semester]

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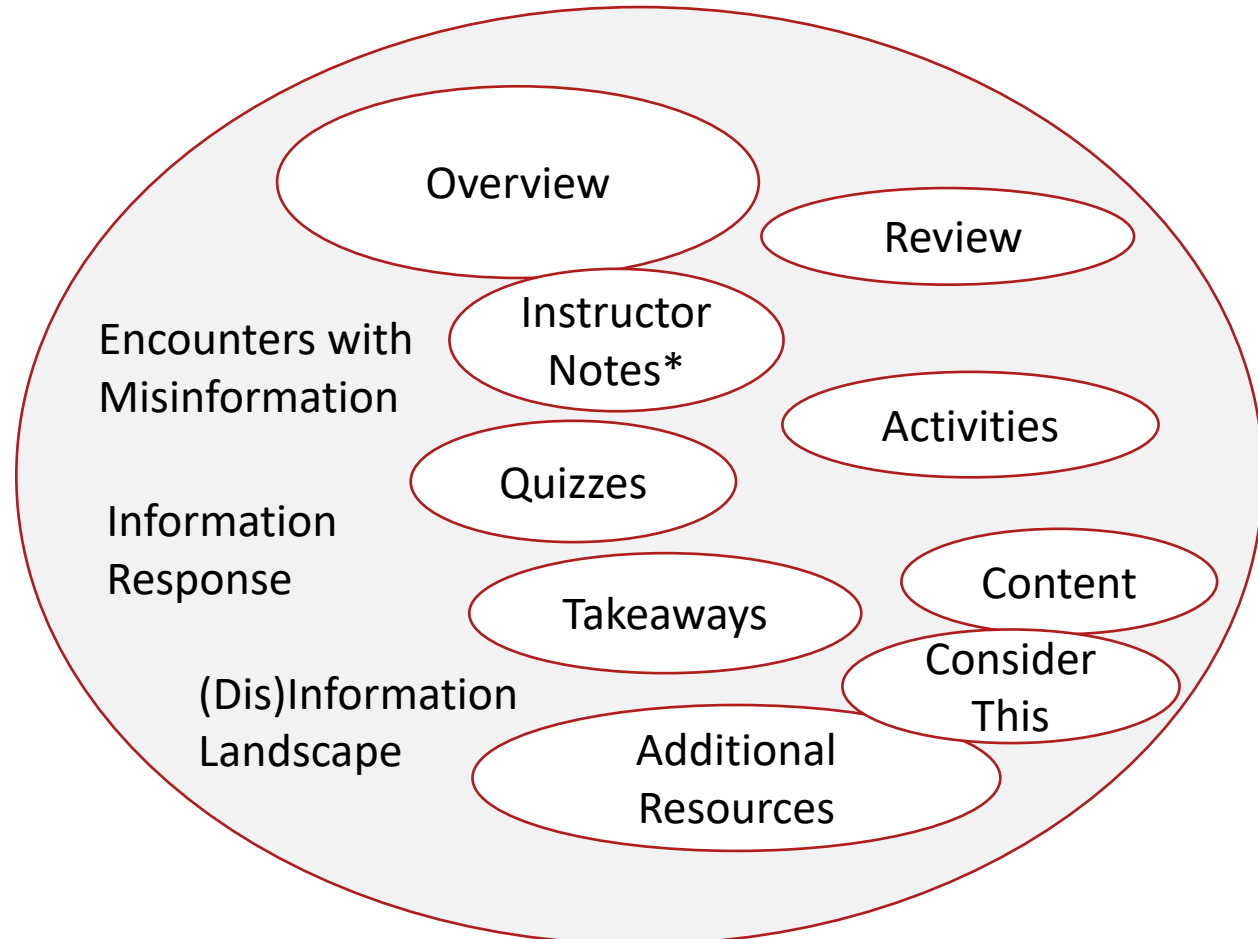Welcome to 'Building Resilience to Misinformation: An Instructional Toolkit'!

This toolkit consists of a series of modules, including an Introduction, a 'How To' Guide, a Glossary with

Creating the Toolkit

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Consider
This

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Example Slide: Viral Disinformation and Truth Decay
## Viral Disinformation Is Not New…

- "Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it, so that when men come to be undeceived, it is too late; the jest is over, and the tale hath had its effect" Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

- "On Twitter, false news travels faster than true stories"
  - Vosoughi et al., 2018

- Russia created the world's first disinformation office in 1923; Stalin is credited with coining the term "disinformation" (Liu, 2022)

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Example Slide: ... However social media is!

New technologies have significantly increased the ability to:

- Communicate
- Publish material
- Manipulate medias (e.g., photos, videos etc.)
- Target audiences
- **AND quickly reach large numbers of people**

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Example Slide: Activity #1: Breaking Harmony Square
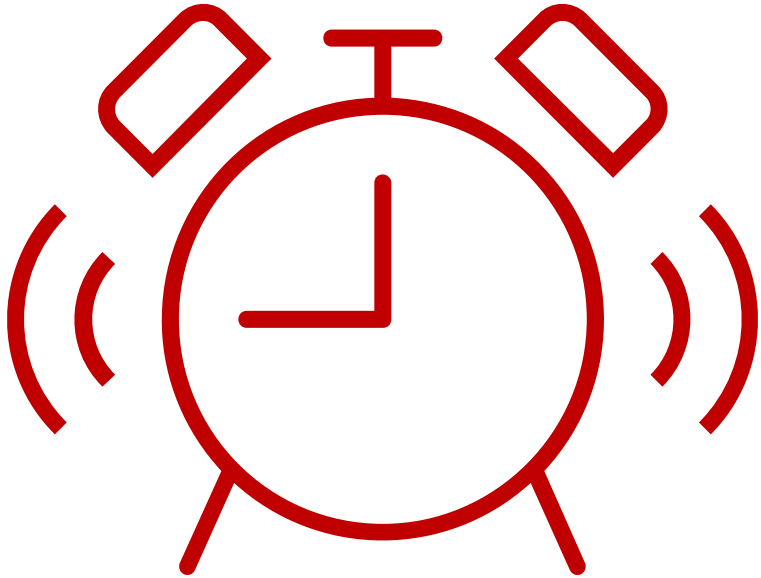
- [Breaking Harmony Square](#) is a short online game that "inoculates" players against political [disinformation](#) by having them role-play a "Chief Disinformation Officer" who uses common disinformation tactics to harm a fictional political opponent.

- Click the link to play. ***Be as bad as you want to be***!

- Time: 10-15 minutes

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FLICC Techniques

- FLICC (Cook, 2020) is a taxonomy of disinformation techniques. The taxonomy was created to explore climate denial disinformation techniques. However, FLICC techniques can be used to identify other types of disinformation.

- The five branches of the FLICC taxonomy are:

    F – Fake experts
    L – Logic fallacies
    I – Impossible expectations
    C – Cherry picking
    C – Conspiracy theories

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Example Quiz Question

Quiz #1: Identifying Disinformation Using the FLICC Technique

This opinion piece by columnist Rex Murphy appeared in the National Post newspaper on Feb. 10, 2021. Murphy presents an argument that climate change is not something to worry about, because Western Canada was experiencing extremely cold temperatures at that time.

Is this an example of:
(required)

○ Fake Experts

○ Logical Fallacies

○ Impossible Expectations

○ Cherry Picking

○ Conspiracy Theories

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Future Steps

- Consult with expert panel
- Pilot in classroom Summer 2023
- Revise using faculty, expert and student feedback
- Launch in Fall 2023
- Assess again!
- Promotion and support ongoing

Funding

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QUESTIONS?

Thank you for attending!

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Activities/additional tools and resources

- Breaking Harmony Square: Users are able to play as a 'Chief Disinformation Officer' and are tasked with operating an online disinformation campaign.

- Edelman Trust Barometer 2023: Based on a trust and credibility survey, this report helps readers understand forces that lead to polarization, trust (and distrust) in various institutions, and more (Edelman Trust Institute)..

- FactCheck.org: Specializing in fact-checking. Operated by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. (UPenn)

- FLICC: The 5 Techniques of Science Denial: A breakdown of the five most prominent denial techniques fromJohn Cook, an assistant professor at George Mason University specializing in misinformation about climate change.

- Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review: A peer-reviewed, scholarly publication that 'fast-reviews' content from misinformation scientists and scholars. (U of T)

- International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN): Includes a list of media corporations that are verified signatories to the IFCN's code of principles.

- Politifact: a fact-checking website operated by the Poynter Institute. Specializes in fact-checking, media literacy and journalism ethics training. (UPenn)

- Snopes: Snopes.com is an online fact-checking website that also posts articles that fact-check popular news stories. (U of T)

- Ulrichsweb: A site that helps identify if a source is an *Academic/Scholarly* source or a *Consumer* (non-scholarly) source. (UBC)

- *The Washington Post* Fact Checker: A section of *The Washington Post*'s website dedicated to fact-checking relevant news stories and uncovering 'The Truth Behind The Rhetoric.' (UPenn)

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