

#DEFYHATENOW

Understanding Mis- and Disinformation

Misinformation and Disinformation

A lot of false information is posted and shared online. We use the terms misinformation and disinformation to talk about false content.

What is the difference?

Misinformation is when incorrect information is shared, but the person does not know that it is false. There is no intent to cause harm. But misinformation still causes harm. The good thing is that misinformation can easily be countered and corrected with accurate facts.

An example: You share information about electricity prices doubling soon, because you heard this from a close friend. You failed to verify this information and it is not true.

Disinformation is when someone purposefully shares incorrect information in order to deceive people. This means that the person posting disinformation is intending to mislead and cause harm. Disinformation cannot be fixed by presenting facts, because the person already knows they are sharing lies.

An example: You see a post that a politician supports closing a local school, which is a lie. The person sharing this wants you to vote against the politician and so is spreading disinformation to influence your vote.

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- Can you, in your own words, describe the difference between misinformation and disinformation?
- Can you give an example of how false information can cause harm to you or your community?
- Who benefits from false content?
- What are some steps we can take to avoid accidentally spreading incorrect information?

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Spotting Mis- and Disinformation Online

Spotting Mis- and Disinformation

Here are a few questions to ask to help spot mis- and disinformation:

- **Question the source:** Who is sharing this information? If it is online, does the website sound familiar? Does it have political affiliations? If it is a person sharing, is this individual a frequent exaggerator? Do they have a job, education, or experience that would give them insider info? Do they seem trustworthy? What do you know about them?
- **Question the motivation:** If you had to guess, why is the person sharing this content? What is their motivation? Is the story balanced and fair? Who gains from you reading the post and acting on it?
- **Check the date:** Old stories are often posted years after they were first written and no longer apply. So check the date, the location, and other facts to see if it is actually relevant to your situation.
- **Cross-check:** If someone is sharing “news,” check if other reliable news sources are reporting the same information. If not, it’s unlikely to be true. Some online sources are more reliable, some less. When it comes to news, Al Jazeera, AllAfrica, and The BBC are very trustworthy. If you are looking for facts, a good site is Wikipedia.
- **Read past the headline:** People create headlines that sound more intense and scandalous than the story really is. Read past the headline and see what the entire article says. When reading, see if the

article is listing its sources. If they are, verify that those sources are accurate. If there is a story and no information on the source, don’t trust it.

- **Question emotionally charged content:** Does the post contain emotionally manipulative language, designed to get you upset or excited? That’s a red flag. Reliable sources let the facts fuel your response, not emotional language.
- **Distrust absolute narratives:** If you come across a post or story claiming something is only good or bad, be careful. If the content sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If the content sounds only bad, it probably isn’t accurate either. Look for a balanced representation of reality.

▶ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- When you see a post online, is your first reaction to question whether it is true?
- Which of the steps above feels easiest to apply? Which requires the most work?
- What are some red flags that tell you a story might be fake?
- How could you encourage others to verify content more closely?



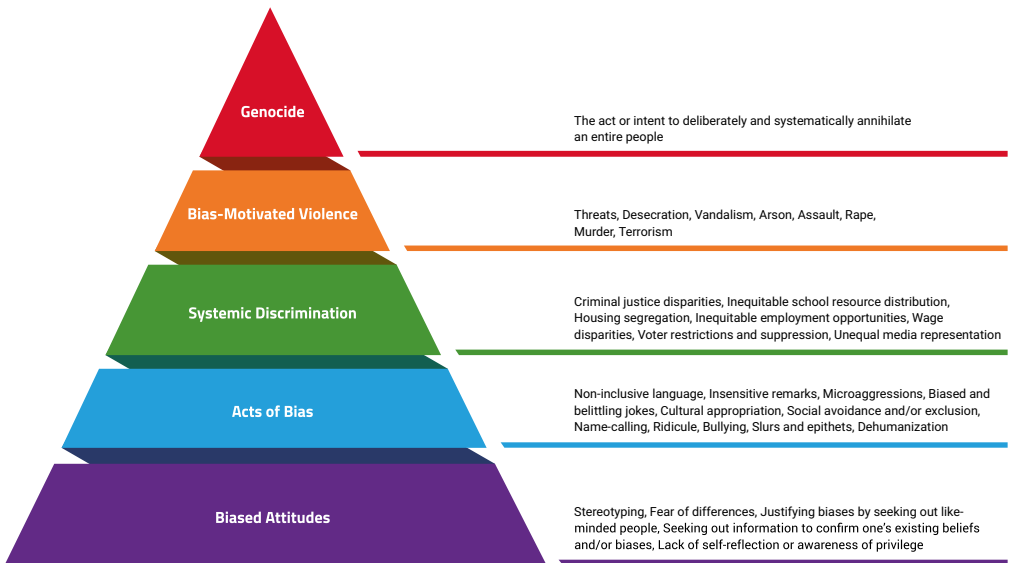
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Pyramid of Hate

Pyramid of Hate

The Pyramid of Hate shows negative behaviors, growing in intensity from the bottom to the top.

Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as acceptable or “normal,” it results in the behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted.



Pyramid of Hate © 2021 Anti-Defamation League

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

Sadly, we have all participated in the Pyramid of Hate at some point in life. The more honest we can be about our previous actions, the better we are at defying hate and instead spreading kindness and peace.

- Looking at the different levels, what actions can you admit to having done?
- What could you do to make up for them?
 - Could you vow to not do them again?
 - Could you apologize to anyone you have harmed?
 - What other options can you think of to help spread peace?



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Identity

Identity

Social Identity Wheel

The Social Identity Wheel is a diagram that shows how identity is made up of many parts.

By thinking about identity not as *one thing*, but made up of *many things*, we can more easily find similarities with others, including those people we often think of as not belonging to our group.



▶ QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- Which elements matter a lot to your identity?
- Which elements do not matter to you?
- Which elements do you first notice about others?
- Talk to everyone in the group and for each person, find at least one element you have in common.



#DEFYHATE NOW

Mental Health, Trauma, and Healing

Mental Health, Trauma, and Healing

Common Myths & Misconceptions about Trauma

Here are some common myths and misconceptions that we would like to dispel:

Only very severe events lead to trauma.

No, smaller events can also lead to trauma. One large event or many smaller events both cause similar trauma reactions in our minds and bodies.

Trauma symptoms manifest immediately after a traumatic event.

No, for many people, the first reactions after a traumatic event are shock or denial. It usually takes a month or two before trauma symptoms are noticeable and at times, if the trauma is repressed enough, it can take years before symptoms appear.

Anyone suffering from trauma is unstable and violent.

No, angry outbursts and violence don't always occur. How a person reacts to a traumatic event varies from person to person. But feelings of anger are also a normal part of the healing process. The important part is to distinguish between feeling anger and acting upon anger.

Trauma is limited to a specific age group

No, all age groups are affected by trauma. Children are often especially vulnerable to trauma, because they do not yet have the mental capacity to make sense of

the world and often assume that they are to blame for the trauma they are experiencing. They often internalize trauma and suffer from a sense of low self-worth. Children can also suffer from PTSD, with most showing symptoms only several years after the traumatic event happened.

Recovery is impossible.

Absolutely not! With the right systems in place, including creating a social support system, learning to use coping mechanisms, and working through your trauma, healing is possible for any and everyone.

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- How many of these myths have you heard?
- What could you do to help spread the truth and dispel these myths?
- How could you help be a support for someone working through trauma?

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Social Media Code of Conduct

Social Media Code of Conduct

Here is a code of conduct that offers guidelines on how to engage responsibly with social media, both personally and professionally:

BE TRANSPARENT

When you post, you should identify whether you are posting on your behalf or on behalf of an organization. The person seeing your post should know why you are posting the content you are sharing.

BE CLEAR

Post clear messages and take responsibility for the content you post, both when people react positively and less positively.

CHECK YOUR FACTS

Before posting, always make sure your facts are correct. If you are reposting information from others, verify your sources. If you can't be 100% positive that what you are sharing is accurate, do not post it.

BE FAIR AND RESPECTFUL

Never post malicious, misleading, or unfair content. Do not post content that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, or discriminatory. Do not post comments that you would not say directly to another person. Always consider how other people might react before you post.

BE POLITE

Stay polite in tone and respectful of people's opinions, especially when discussions become heated. Show proper consideration for other people's privacy.

AMPLIFY THE POSITIVE

Encourage the good and help build connectedness, engagement, and community.

GIVE CREDIT

If you post something that originally came from someone else (like a quote, an image, or an idea), say so in your post.

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- **Can you agree to follow these guidelines? Do you already?**
- **Which guidelines are harder for you to follow? What makes them harder?**
- **Do you feel most people in your life post more positive or negative content?**
- **How could you encourage others to follow these guidelines?**



#DEFYHATENOW

Mental Health

Mental Health

I Am vs. I Feel

It is easy to let our emotions, especially negative ones, take over and fuel conflict.

Very often, this is because we do not take the time to reflect on our emotions or we over-identify with them.

How often have we said something like "I am so angry!" to someone else.

But the problem with this statement is that we are letting anger define our identity. We become the person who is angry - and angry people act out in negative ways.

But if we change the sentence to "I am feeling so angry!," now we are people with complex identities who also feel things, including anger.

Admitting we are feeling something helps us analyze what is going on, whether anger is actually the best word to describe what we are feeling, and we can find healthier ways to address our feelings.

I FEEL leaves us in control of our feelings.

I AM puts the emotion in control.

It might be a small shift, but the more we can apply this idea to negative emotions, the more we can work to find peaceful ways to address our feelings.

I FEEL lets the emotion be acknowledged without becoming part of our identity.

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- How might this idea of changing a sentence from I AM to I FEEL be helpful in dealing with hard emotions?
- What other situations could this be helpful in? Here are some examples to discuss:
 - I am sick - or - I am feeling sick.
 - I can't go on - or - I feel like I can't go on.
 - I am always scared- or - I often feel scared.
 - I am unemployed - or - I am a person who is unemployed.



#DEFYHATENOW

Peace through Art

Peace through Art

Everyone is an artist. We are all born with the desire to create and be creative. And anytime you use this creativity, especially to create something meaningful, that is art.

So how can we use our art to support and bring about peace?

Perhaps you draw pictures of peace and hope and hang them in a school or other building for people to see?

Perhaps you sew or knit something for someone in need?

Perhaps you work together with others to cook meals for newly arriving displaced people?

Perhaps you teach children how to dance in order to express their emotions?

Perhaps you draw to work through your negative emotions?

Perhaps you act as a storyteller, spreading stories of hope and love?

Start small. It all adds up.

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- **When you think of art, what do you think of most? Paintings? Music? Knitting? Dance?**
- **Think about your daily life: What small steps could you take to use your art to spread peace?**



#DEFYHATENOW

Hate Speech vs. Dangerous Speech

Hate Speech vs. Dangerous Speech

A definition of hate speech:

Hate speech is all communication that attacks people and describes them as less valuable, less good, or less deserving of full participation in society because of their membership in a group.

When hate speech is combined with a call to action, it goes from being hate speech to dangerous speech.

Often a few influential speakers work to incite violence.

And that violence is carried out by a small number of people.

But if people do not speak up, it looks like they approve of the violence.

Violence can be countered through simple steps:

1. Try to inhibit speakers who are sharing dangerous speech messages.
2. Teach people how to recognize dangerous speech and why calls to violence should not be listened to, so that these speeches have less impact.
3. If violence breaks out, speak out against the violence. Speak out for peace!

► QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS ◀

- Can you explain the difference between hate speech and dangerous speech?
- If you come across dangerous speech, how could you try to interfere to prevent violence?
- In most cultures, violence is committed by young men. Knowing this, what are some things we could do to prevent these young men from being infected by dangerous speech, if they come across it? What are some preventative steps we can take?

1

2

3

4

5

6

The #defyhatenow Game

This #defyhatenow game is designed to engage players and reinforces the ideas of how to create a #HateFreeCameroon.

- 1 Each player finds a small object (pebble, bottle cap) to play with.
- 2 Place these items on the circle marked 'Start Here' (two people on one knee).
- 3 Use the front of this card to roll the dice.
- 4 Close your eyes!
- 5 Throw a different object (pebble, bottle cap) onto the numbers.
- 6 The number it lands on is the number of squares you move forward.
- 7 Follow the instructions if you land on a square with text [Go back / Go forward].
- 8 Keep rolling the dice until you reach the end marked by the Cameroon flag & #HateFreeCameroon.
- 9 The first player to finish the journey is the winner!
- 10 Post on your preferred social media platform about #HateFreeCameroon.
- 11 Keep playing until everyone has completed all the steps.