

Finding Trusted Sources and Avoiding Misinformation

There is a lot of information shared which may not be true or completely true. This is called misinformation. You can stop the spread of misinformation by making sure that information is coming from a trusted source.

A source is where information comes from. Some examples of a source are:

People

Books

Social Media Posts

News Articles

What is a trusted source?

A trusted source is a person or organization that is an **expert** on the topics they are talking about. An expert knows a lot about a topic. An expert knows a lot about a topic. They have checked that the information is true. You may hear people call trusted sources **“credible”** or **“reliable.”**

How do I know if I can trust a source?

Figuring out if you can believe a source can be difficult sometimes. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to figure out if you can trust a source or not:

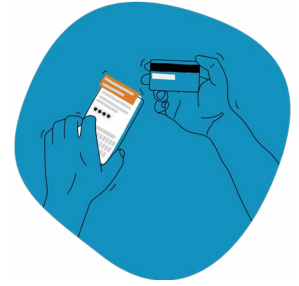


Does the source have experience with the information they are giving? Do they have training on what they are saying?

Trusted sources are people who know a lot about the information they are talking about. For example, you might decide that a disability organization is a trusted source. You trust them because they include people with disabilities in their work. You might also trust a hospital's website. They have many experienced doctors and nurses who you trust that help create the information.

Is the source trying to get you to buy something or do something that costs money?

Not all people or organizations who sell things are bad. However, you should be careful when believing information said by someone who is trying to get you to spend your money.



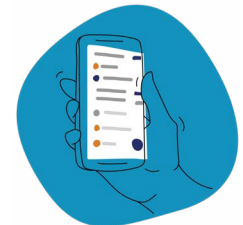
Can you find the same information from another source?



If the information has numbers, look for other sources that use similar numbers. Here is an example. A source says more than 68,000 people in New York died from COVID-19 in the past 2 years. Find another source who has reported the same numbers or close to the same numbers. If the information also includes a quote, look for the quote from another source. Make sure they say the same thing.

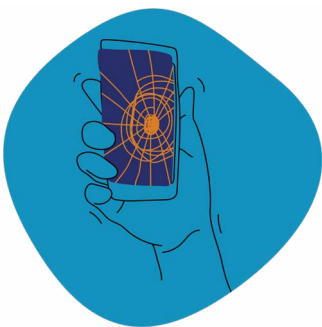
Is the information up to date?

Some people share old information and try to make people believe that it is new. This is misinformation and should not be trusted.



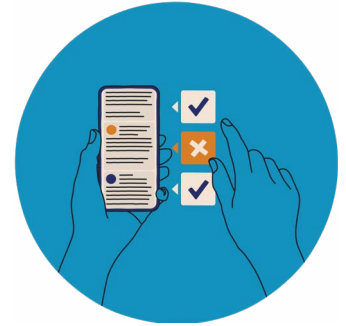
Does the source use words or pictures that make you have strong feelings?

Sometimes sources will try to make people feel sad or angry. When this happens, people might not stop and think about what a source is saying. They might forget to ask questions. This is often how people spread misinformation.



Does the title match what the information is about?

Some titles do not match what the information is talking about. Some titles exaggerate or brag about what happened. They describe something as better or worse than it really is. Read all the information. It can help you see if it is true or not.



Who should be a trusted source for me?

You can decide for yourself who to trust. This may be a family member, a website, a club, a doctor, an advocacy organization, and more. You know best who has given you helpful and true information in the past. However, sometimes people make mistakes and say things that may not be true. People may also tell you that their opinion is a fact when it is not. A good way to check for misinformation is to ask trusted sources about the same information. See if what they say matches what you are hearing from other sources. You should also ask an expert about this information. For example, you should ask a doctor you trust about health information to make sure it is true. Someone like a family member may not have the training or experience needed to make sure health information is correct.

Identifying misinformation can be difficult. When in doubt - if you're not sure, don't share!