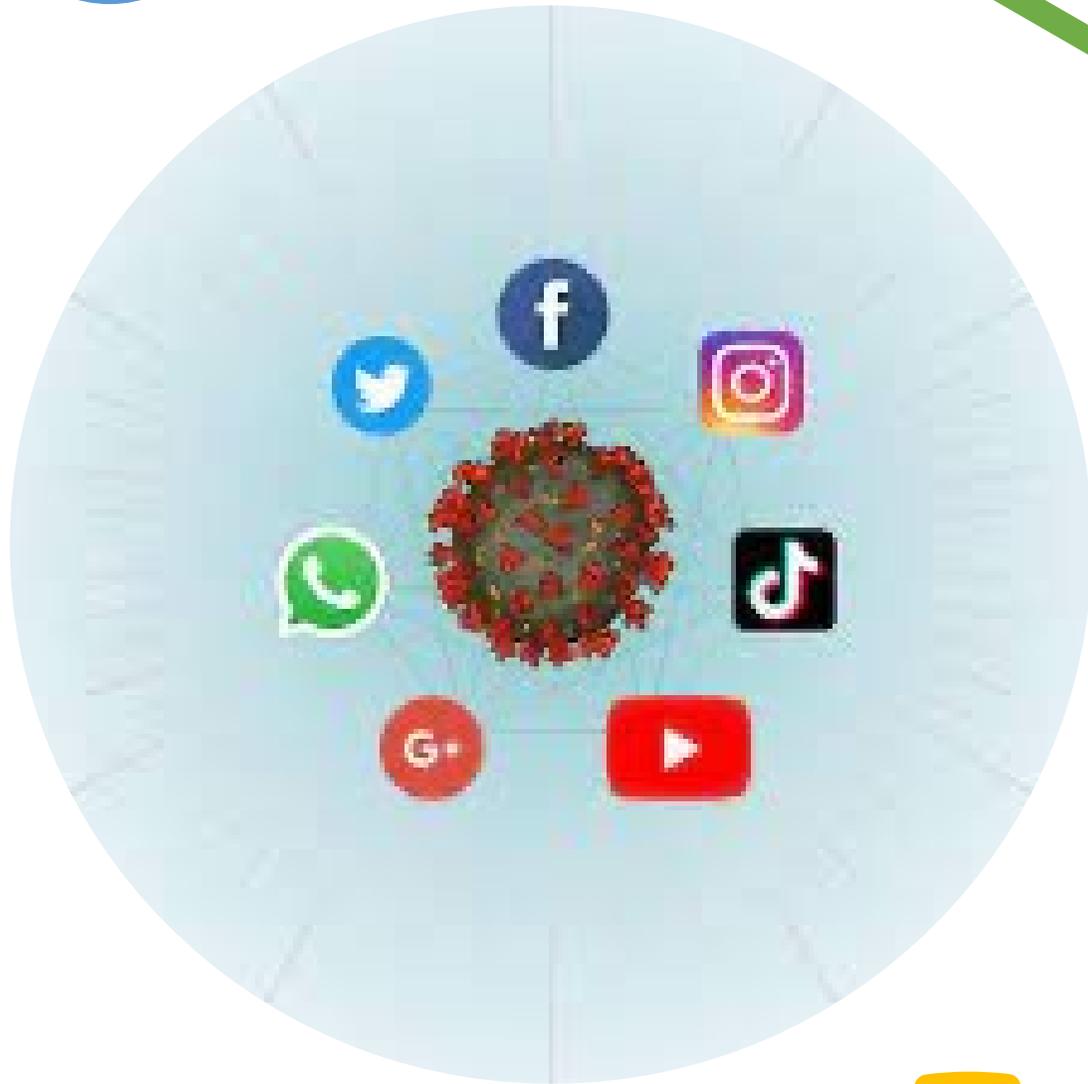


COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation: How to Deal with it Effectively



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Social Media and the COVID-19 Vaccine



- Social Media has had a profound influence and effect on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy
- **Misinformation**: Information that is incorrect but is not spread to cause harm
- **Disinformation**: Information that is incorrect but is spread to cause harm
- The Difference is **Intent**

Setting the stage: Medical Misinformation

- We have a training gap
- Disinformation spreaders: organized early and saw COVID 19 as an opportunity
- **The information Cascade**
 - Breaking out of the “Echo Chambers”
 - What messages resonate
- Winning the “fence sitters”
- **Time**
 - 15-20 minutes with a provider
 - 2.5 hours daily on Social media
- No one is making videos of their perfectly normal COVID 19 vaccine experiences
 - “The asymmetry of passion”
 - Social media videos often have emotional weight

Stanford Medcast Episode 29: COVID-19 Mini-series - Empowering Physicians to Combat Vaccine Misinformation <https://stanford.cloud-cme.com/course/courseoverview?P=0&EID=42449>



Social Media Medical Misinformation and Disinformation



- How the COVID-19 virus spreads **parallels** how misinformation and disinformation spreads
 - There can be “super spreader” events for misinformation and disinformation
 - Large platform, many followers
 - Hydroxychloroquine /Ivermectin
- Why can misinformation/disinformation spread faster than correct information?
 - The promise of Certainty and the alleviation of Fear
 - Science, especially during a pandemic, asks us to wait for the data and the facts and that is uncomfortable (Data void time)
 - It is a novelty
 - Status in sharing information that is “Novel”

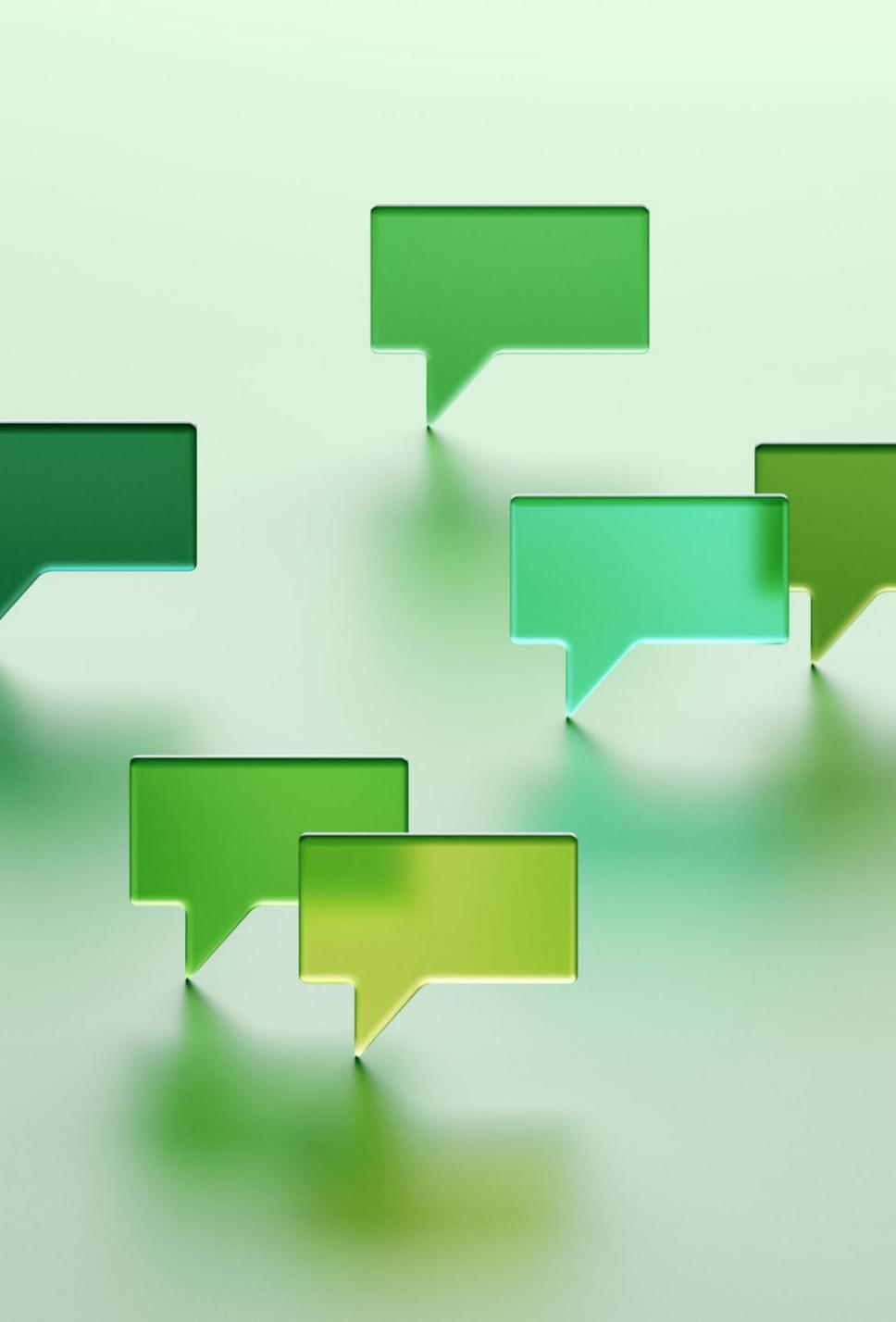
Dr Seema Yasmin, https://edhub.ama-assn.org/stanford-medicine-cme/audio-player/18592150?utm_source=silverchair_edhub&utm_campaign=activity_alert-edhub&utm_content=weekly_batch&cmp=1&utm_medium=email

Jim Pavlik, MA CTPP Sr. Program & Policy Analyst, BHWP 12 August 2021. Infectious Disinformation Inoculation. <https://www.bhwellness.org/wp-content/uploads/Infodemic-BHWP.pdf>

Vaccinate (Inoculate) People against Misinformation and Disinformation!

- Warn others about misinformation and disinformation
- Provide defenses
 - Use Fact-checking – review trusted sources of information (CDC, NIH, You)
 - Find the motive behind the information source (sensationalism, fame, harm)
 - Is the science sound
 - Talk about the **scientific process**: ask a question then look at data for answers
 - This process is happening now
 - Some questions don't have answers yet, misinformation fills that "Data void"
- Discuss techniques for deception (and that we are all vulnerable)
 - Fake experts (often these can even be experts, just not in this field)
 - There is often a mixture of facts and lies to make the lies more believable





Misinformation Debunking for Communities

- Trusted messengers from the community
- Messaging that is Authentic for the community
- Messaging in different languages

Strategies to Address Social Media and Medical Misinformation



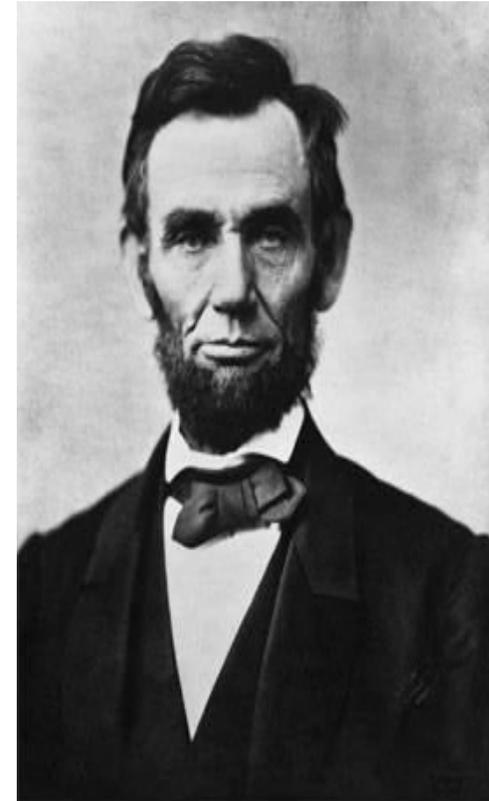
- Don't take the misinformation personally
- Listen first. People want to be heard
 - Validation of a fear/emotion without validating the misinformation
- Show respect (anger and frustration are not effective)
- Celebrate the fact that the person trusts you enough to have a conversation
 - Find common ground
 - Build trust
- The goal is not to prove them wrong (education alone will not debunk the misinformation)

Brian Southwell, PhD, https://edhub.ama-assn.org/jn-learning/audio-player/18571804?utm_source=silverchair&utm_campaign=jama_network&utm_content=covid_weekly_highlights&cmp=1&utm_medium=email

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How to Address Social Media Misinformation

- Why is the information is speaking to the person, what are the underlying reasons this information is sticking
- Take the opportunity to redirect them to more trustworthy information sources and explain to them what we know medically
- Ask them to consider:
 - Where is this information coming from?
 - Is it gaining popularity because it is sensationalized?
 - Is it scientifically sound and been confirmed?



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

—Abraham Lincoln

WeKnowMemes

Other Tools in our Toolbox to address Misinformation



- Debunking misinformation needs to have **2 elements**:
 - Why it is now clear that the information is false
 - What is true instead
- Encourage a **“buyer beware”** stance towards all information on social media
 - Slowing down and thinking about the information provided, and evaluating its plausibility in light of possible alternatives

Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Ecker, U. K. H., Albarracín, D., Amazeen, M. A., Kendeou, P., Lombardi, D., Newman, E. J., Pennycook, G., Porter, E., Rand, D. G., Rapp, D. N., Reifler, J., Roozenbeek, J., Schmid, P., Seifert, C. M., Sinatra, G. M., Swire-Thompson, B., van der Linden, S., Vraga, E. K., Wood, T. J., Zaragoza, M. S. (2020). The Debunking Handbook 2020. Available at <https://sks.to/db2020>. DOI:10.17910/b7.1182

Leading a Conversation about Social Media COVID-19 Vaccine Content

- Acknowledge the concern
 - “I see you have been thinking about this a lot”
 - Encourage discussion. Don’t shut them down
- Ask Questions
 - “Tell me where you heard about this information”
 - “Do you trust the source?”
- Never be condescending, this is a person who is trusting you to have a conversation. Avoid using strongly negative words like “No” or judgmental responses like “That’s crazy!”
- Offer to trade sources. “This is where I get my information...”
- Explain what you know medically and where you found the information
 - “That is a good question, let’s talk that through.”
- Again, the point is not to prove them wrong



Strategies to Promote Vaccine Confidence: “This is our Shot” campaign

- 3 step method:
 1. Listening for the emotion
 2. Validate the concern
 3. Find their compelling personal reason to get the vaccine
- **Lead with listening** (leading with facts does not work unless they have questions)





Thank you
