

Guarding Against Misinformation



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Words to know

CDC

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A part of the government that deals with diseases, like COVID.

Misinformation

Information that is bad. Information that tries to make you not think clearly.

Troll

Someone who spreads misinformation on purpose because they think it is funny.

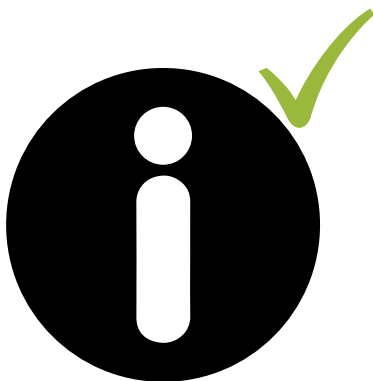
What is misinformation?



Misinformation is like lying.



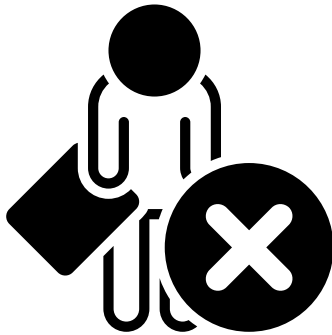
Misinformation looks like something that is true but it is not true.



The opposite of misinformation is good information.

Good information is true. Good information tells you lots of details.

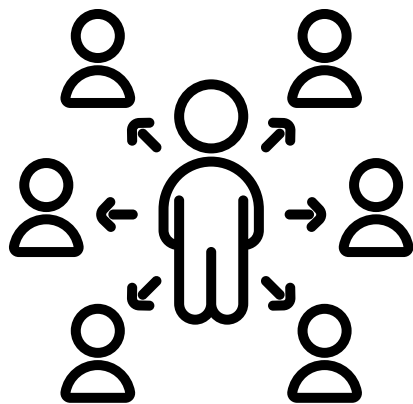
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Most people who spread misinformation don't realize that they spread misinformation.

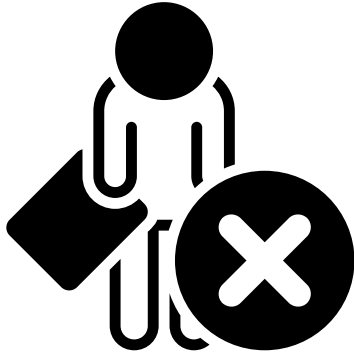


Most people who spread misinformation think that they are spreading good information.

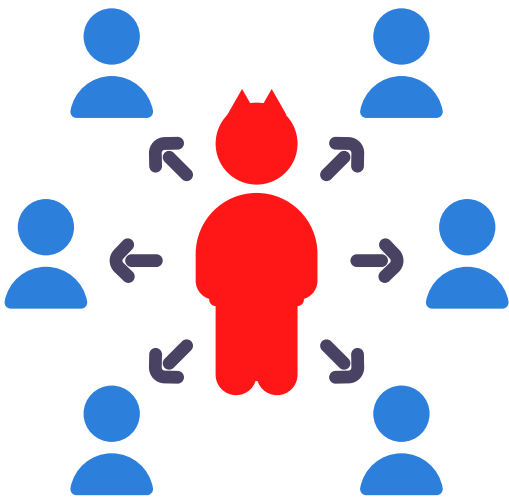


People spreading misinformation might also think it is important to tell people about the misinformation they learned.

OOPS

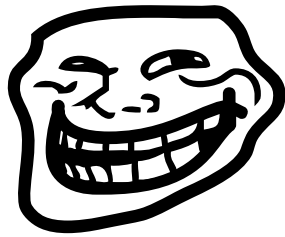


Most people do not spread misinformation on purpose.



But some people **DO spread** misinformation on purpose.

Those people spread misinformation for different reasons.



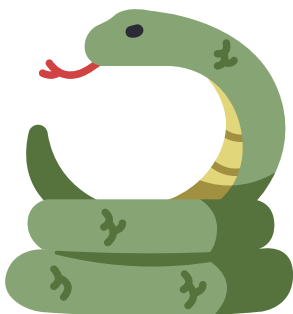
Some people who spread misinformation are trolling.



Trolls think it is funny to spread misinformation.



Sometimes trolls think it is funny when people get hurt by their misinformation.



Trolls are lying.



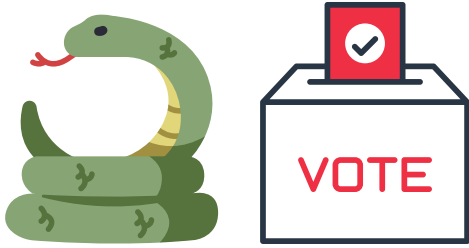
Some people want to spread misinformation because it can make them money.



Some people spread misinformation to help them politically.

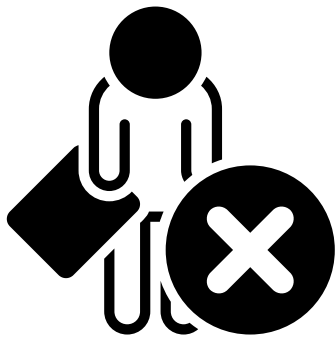


People who spread misinformation because it makes them money are lying.



People who spread misinformation because it helps them politically are lying.

OOPS



But, it is important to remember that most people do not realize they spread misinformation.



Sometimes, your friends and family believe misinformation.



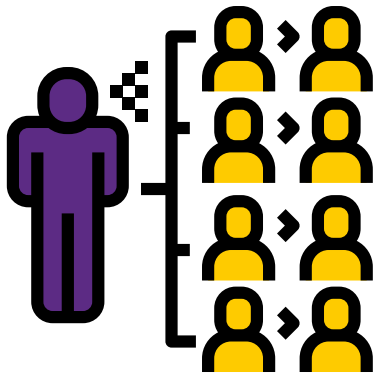
They might have seen it from their friends or family.



They think the misinformation is good information.



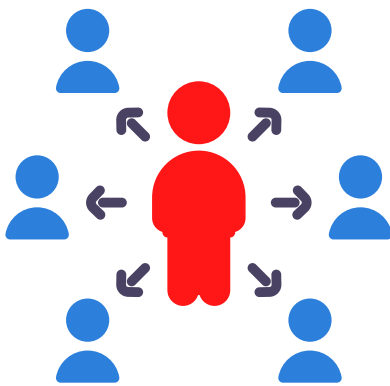
Since we normally trust friends and family, we might not realize when we hear misinformation.



That helps
misinformation
spread.



People who want
to spread
misinformation
know this, too.



They rely on
ordinary people to
spread their
misinformation.

How to tell good information from misinformation

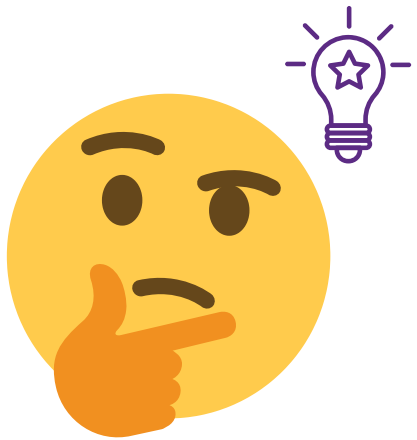


It can be hard to tell when something is misinformation.

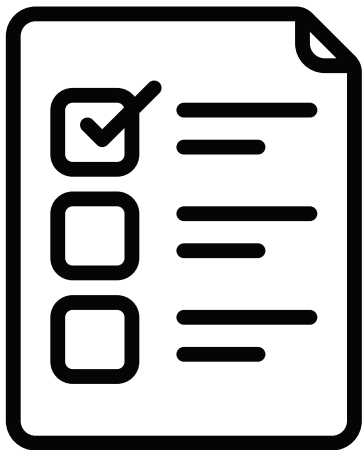
There is no one way to tell if something you are reading or hearing is misinformation.



But, here are some tips that can help you.



First, ask yourself some questions about what you are reading or listening to.



Questions like:

Who said it?

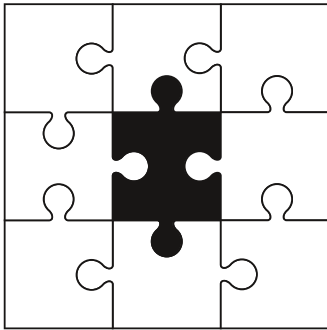
Was it a friend or family member?

Was it an expert on the issue?

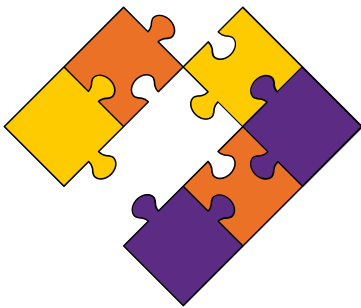
Is it a newspaper or news station?



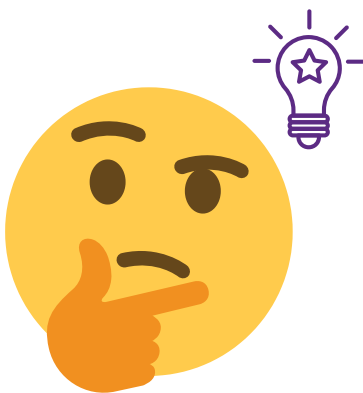
Knowing the source of information can help you figure out if it is good information or misinformation.



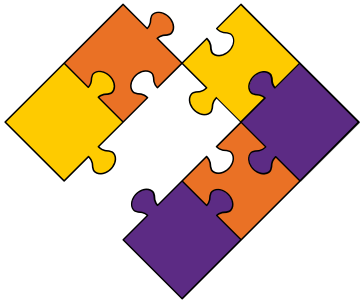
Second, a lot of misinformation leaves out key details.



It does not tell the whole story.



Ask yourself whether what you're reading or listening to is telling the whole story.



If something is not telling the whole story, it might be misinformation.



A lot of the time misinformation wants you to believe something hard to believe happened.

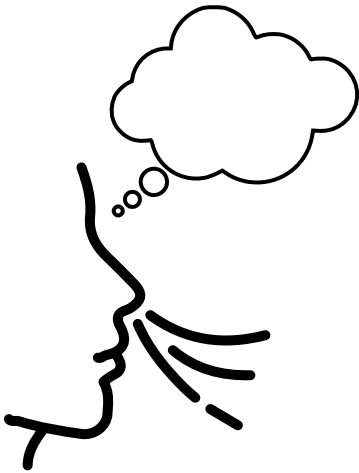


You do not have to believe stories that sound hard to believe.

If something sounds hard to believe, that might be because it is not true.



A lot of
misinformation
wants you to feel
too angry and
upset to think.



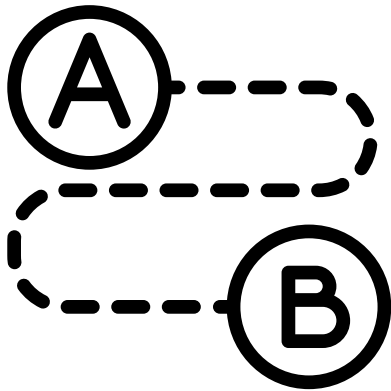
If a story makes you
feel very angry and
scared, try to take a
deep breath and
think about it.



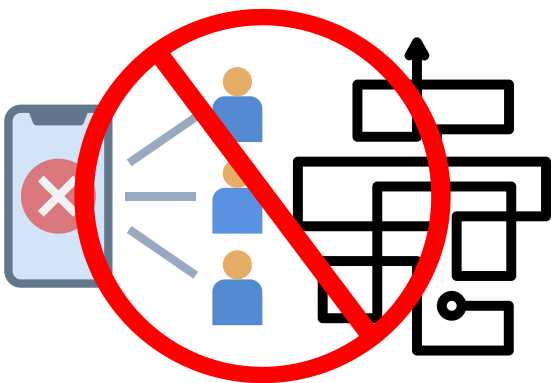
A lot of the
misinformation
you see tries to
make you feel
scared.



And it tries to make you want to trust the people spreading misinformation.



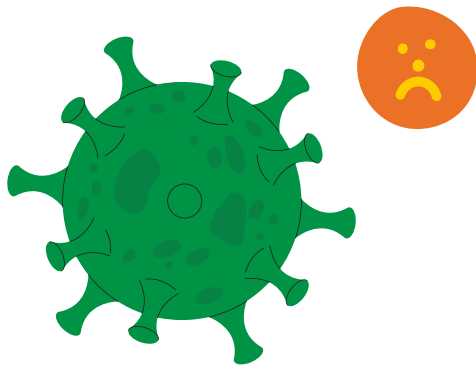
Usually, the misinformation is a very simple story.



The world is very complicated, but misinformation is not complicated.



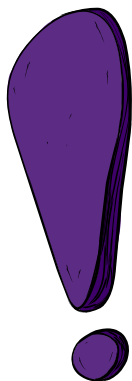
All this said, there is a lot of good information out there that is upsetting.



COVID-19, for example, is upsetting.



Natural disasters are also upsetting.

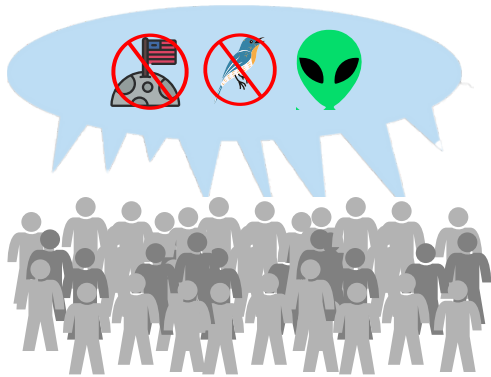


Something being scary doesn't make it misinformation.



But, if a post tells a story that is really scary and upsetting, it is a good idea to check to see if it is true.

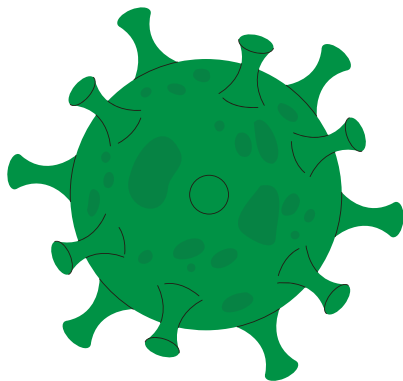
Is there COVID-19 misinformation?



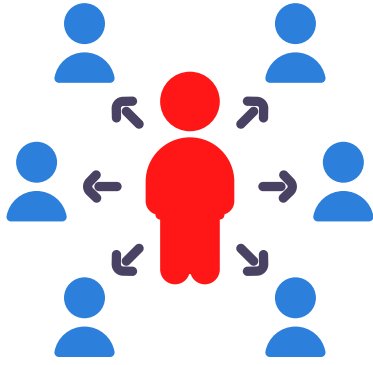
A lot of people spread misinformation about big events.



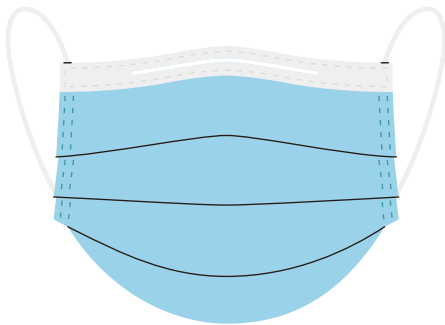
Sometimes, this kind of misinformation is called a **conspiracy theory**.



The COVID-19 pandemic is a big event. It has hurt everyone.



A lot of people have spread misinformation about COVID-19.

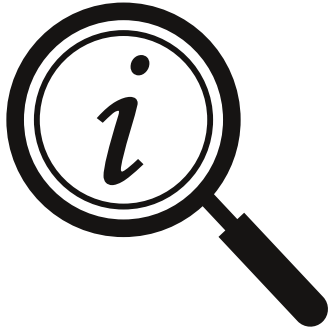


A lot of people have spread misinformation about masks.

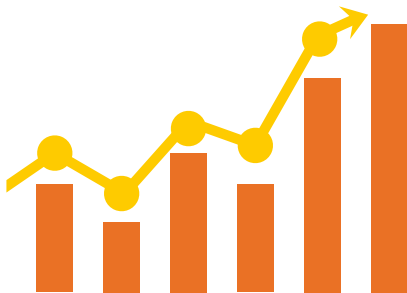


A lot of people have spread misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines and the COVID-19 boosters.

Where can I find good information on COVID-19?



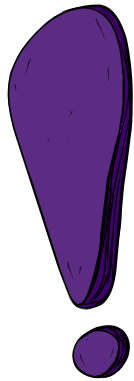
There are a lot of places to get good information on COVID-19.



Remember, good information will give you lots of details and not try to make you too upset to think.



In King County, you can go to King County Department of Public Health.



You can check how many people tested positive for COVID-19 or how many people are in the hospital with COVID-19.



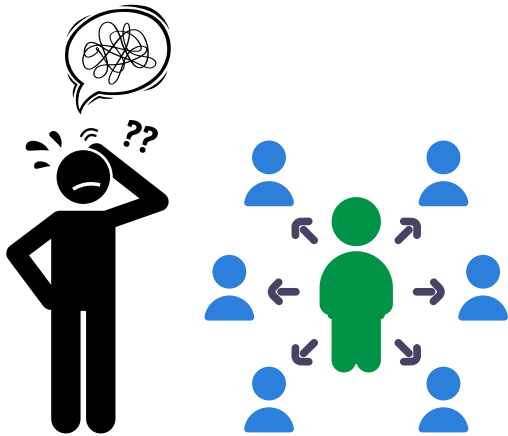
Another great site is the CDC.

The CDC is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

How to confront misinformation



If you figured out that something is misinformation, it is hard to tell other people about it.



It is hardest to tell friends and family that they spread misinformation.



But it is okay to do that!

OOPS



They probably did not realize they spread misinformation.



Make sure when you tell people that they spread misinformation that they know you are not angry with them.

OOPS



That will help that person feel safe enough to admit they made a mistake.

Misinformation Resources

- [Snopes.com](https://www.snopes.com)
- [TruthOrFiction.com](https://www.truthorfiction.com)
- [PolitiFact.com](https://www.politifact.com)
- theconversation.com/10-ways-to-spot-online-misinformation-132246
- ischool.syr.edu/5-ways-to-spot-misinformation-and-disinformation-online/