

# Evaluating Health Information Influencing Health Decisions related to Vaccinations

*Activity*

**Resource:** Vaccination Talks Toolkit

**Grade(s):** 11 12

**Division(s):** Senior

## What Is It All About?

Participants use questions to assess the credibility of sources for health information while identifying potential sources of “fake news”, misleading/false information and the implications on health decisions. Participants refine their critical thinking skills while evaluating various sources of health information.

## Curriculum Connections

1, C1, C2, C3

## Why Do It?

Providing participants with strategies to evaluate sources of health information and identify misleading or false information increases their awareness of how information impacts their choices and decisions and improves their ability to make evidence-informed decisions about their health and well-being as they become more independent.

## How Do We Do It?

- Use an **Elbow Partner** strategy and the following question for participants to generate ideas about where they would most likely access information to answer questions they have about their health. “You have a concern or need to make a decision concerning your health. Where would you go to access the health information you need to address your health concern or make an informed decision, and why? (Participant responses might include their local health clinic, health websites, electronic and print posters/brochures, social media, peers, adults). Invite participants to share their ideas and thinking with the large group.
- Gather and post various statements about an emergent health topic such as vaccinations, some that are accurate/true and some that are inaccurate/false. Continue using an Elbow Partner strategy for participants to decide which statements they think are accurate/true and which are inaccurate/false and why. Invite participants to share their ideas with the larger group.
- Review with participants the benefits and risks of digital technology, including easy access to credible, evidence-informed health information while also being a source for inaccurate information or “fake news”. Share the following definition of “fake news” with participants. “Fake news is news stories that are false. The story itself is fabricated, with no verifiable facts, sources or quotes. Sometimes these stories may be propaganda that is intentionally designed to mislead the reader or may be designed as “clickbait” written for economic incentives (the writer and/or organisation profits on the number of people who click on the story)”.<sup>1</sup>
- Remind participants of the importance of knowing how to assess the credibility of health information by asking themselves questions to evaluate information to make informed choices and decisions about their health.
- Share the sample questions participants may ask themselves to guide their evaluation of health information:
  - Is this information relevant to my question?
  - Is any information missing (e.g., a point of view or voice not represented)?
  - Who is the author of the source? Would they be considered to be an expert on the topic?

- How do I know my sources are credible?
  - Do I trust the information to be reliable and valid?
  - Do I detect bias in any of the sources?
  - Does the information gathered confirm what I think I already know or challenge my ideas about the topic?
  - Do I have enough information from various sources to answer the question?
  - Do I have other questions?2
- Provide participants with a tool such as [Graphic Organizer for analyzing sources](#) and sufficient time to search for information about vaccinations. Have participants work individually or in small groups to evaluate a source of their choice.
  - Invite participants to share their evaluation of their chosen source of information about vaccinations. Use the sharing to clarify and extend participant understanding of the importance of assessing the credibility of the information to make informed choices and decisions to maintain their health and well-being as they become more independent.
  - Have participants identify the information they might explore further to support them in making evidence-informed decisions about available vaccinations to maintain their health and well-being as they become more independent.

## What Else Do We Need?

- Statements (accurate or false) about an emergent health topic such as vaccinations
- Graphic Organizer for analyzing sources (optional)

## How Do We Get Creative?

- Have groups prepare and present a media product to educate an audience of their choice about the importance of knowing how to distinguish between accurate evidence-informed information and fake news and the implications for personal health decisions.

- Have participants create social media messaging or a Public Service Announcement advocating to stop the spread of misinformation that targets an audience of their choosing (e.g., peers, adults, media).

<sup>1</sup>University of Michigan Library, (2022) *"Fake News," Lies and Propaganda: How to Sort Fact from Fiction.*

Extracted from: <https://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=637508&p=4462356>

<sup>2</sup>Ophea's *Inquiry Based Learning in Health and Physical Education* <https://www.ophea.net/inquiry-based-learning>