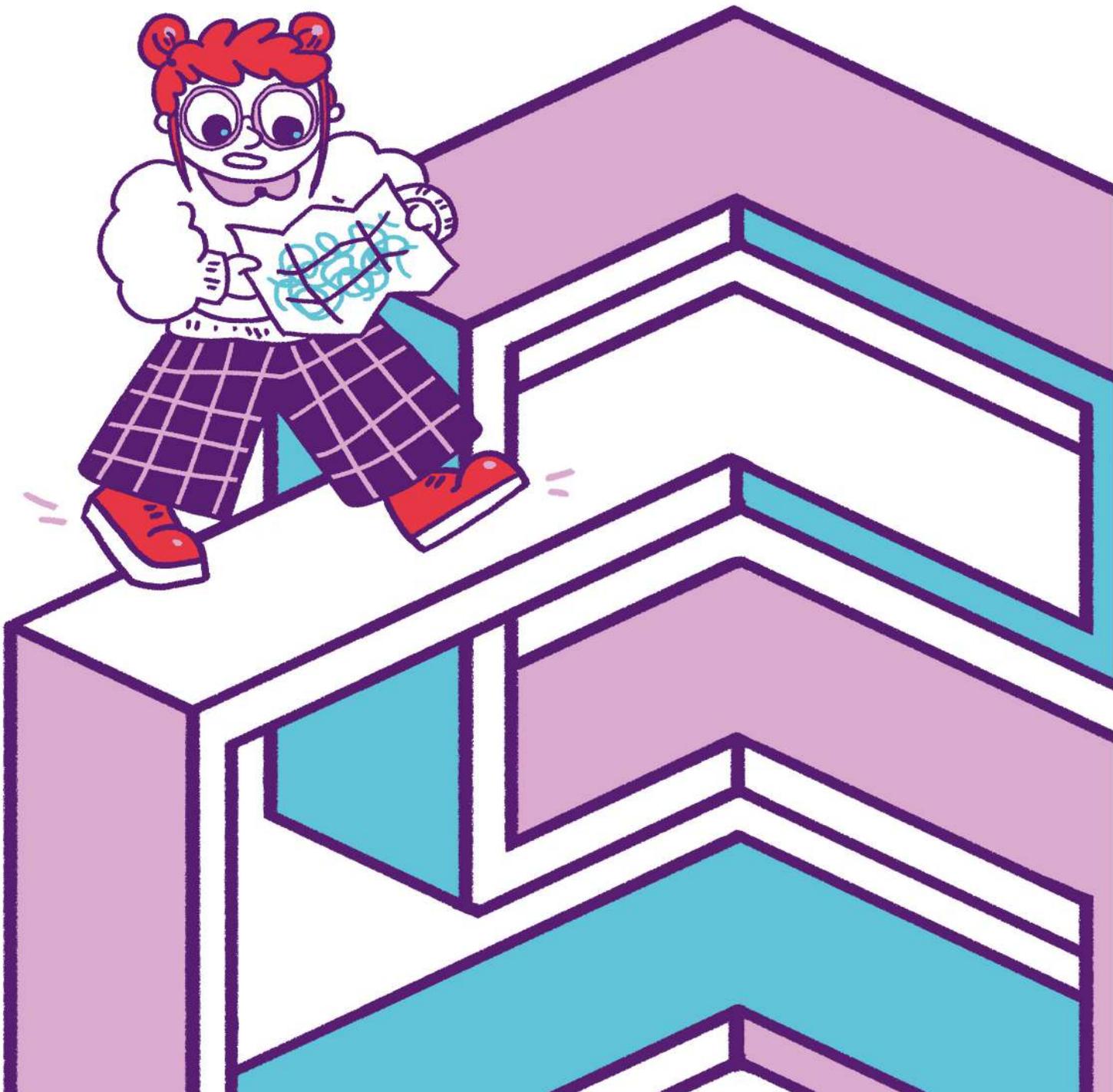


# NAVIGATING THE NOISE

A Handbook for Youth Workers  
on mis- and disinformation



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Rialtas na hÉireann  
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**YOUTH2030**  
GLOBAL YOUTH WORK

# A Handbook for Youth Workers

Empower young people to uncover the truth, challenge disinformation, and build a more informed digital future.

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# Introduction

This resource was developed in response to the expressed needs of youth workers across the sector who are dealing with a rise in harmful narratives and misbeliefs which deeply affect the young people they work with. Youth workers, who are tasked with creating safe and inclusive spaces for young people in an increasingly polarised world, often find themselves in a battle with the constant stream of noise from social media. The promotion of unhealthy beauty standards and products aimed at distorting young people's self esteem in order to make money, the misogynistic, anti LGBTQI+ and racist narratives in order to divide and isolate young people, and the deliberate disinformation in order to provoke hatred, division and violence make creating safe and inclusive places where young people can thrive increasingly difficult.

This resource is intended to give Youth Workers a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanics of digital distortion i.e. the strategies deployed by those who spread misinformation, conspiracy theories and harmful narratives, the psychology of how young people process it, and strategies that empower and inoculate young people against its most harmful effects.

This guide is also intended to offer practical tools to support the development of both youth work staff and young people themselves, so that youth projects can become proactive centres of digital literacy and critical thinking - supporting the wider communities they are part of to become less vulnerable to digital manipulation and misinformation.





# Building a Youth Work Approach

Youth workers are uniquely well placed to tackle the growth of digital manipulation amongst young people, and the wider communities they work within. Taking a youth work approach to the spread of online misinformation; which centres the needs and experiences of the young person, builds trusting relationships, and supports young people to develop their critical thinking skills, is key to overcoming the threat posed to young people by misinformation and manipulation on social media.

Young people are living in increasingly precarious times, with the basic foundations of life such as affordable homes, health care and meaningful employment increasingly out of reach because of Government policy. Young people, quite rightly, are looking for answers as to why life is difficult for them, their families and their wider communities. Research into misinformation shows that stress and inequality make people particularly vulnerable to conspiracies and misinformation, as our brains are primed to look for stories we can relate to - with simple villains, heroes and easy explanations.<sup>1</sup>

The growth of these simple narratives — **which turn the wrong people into villains** — particularly people from **marginalised groups**, pose a challenge for youth workers who are already dealing with limited resources. However the Youth Work approach also offers unique strengths and opportunities for dealing with digital manipulation.

<sup>1</sup>**Ariely, D. (2023).** *Misbelief: What makes rational people believe irrational things.* Harper.

# Strengths & Opportunities of the Youth Work Approach

## 1. Relationships:

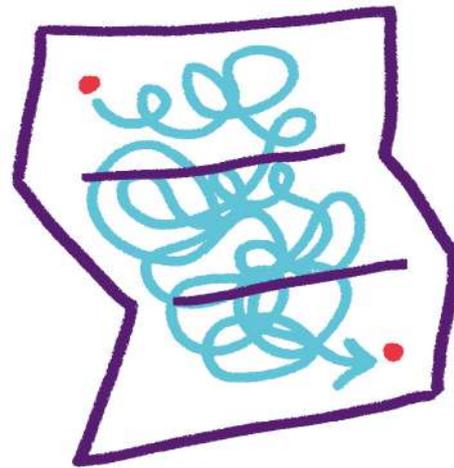
The voluntary and informal nature of the relationship between youth workers and the young people they work with is a huge strength when dealing with misinformation. Research shows that people are more likely to change their minds on an issue if they speak to someone they trust about it.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Critical and Social Education:

Youth work's commitment to building the personal and critical social development of young people helps them to understand the systems under which they live, helping them to develop the skills to step and critically evaluate the information they receive, and the sources they receive it from.

## 3. Practise and Modelling of Values:

The youth work approach puts values such as respect, empowerment and equality into action, helping model inclusive behaviour and critical thinking. When youth work is explicit about its values, youth workers can use this environment as a means of supporting and challenging young people to navigate digital manipulation.



# Challenges of the Youth Work Approach

## 1. Conflicting Messaging:

Young people who engage with youth work services don't exist in a vacuum. Often, they are hearing misinformation from multiple trusted sources, such as friends and family. It can be difficult to challenge misinformation that comes from a young person's home or trusted people in their community directly.

## 2. Time & Timing:

Dismantling misinformation and challenging the harmful values that underpin it takes time and resources. Often, harmful narratives surface in youth projects in the middle of other activities, and youth workers don't feel equipped to handle it in the moment.

## 3. Information Overload:

The volume and speed at which misinformation floods young people's lives can be overwhelming, and it can be difficult for youth workers to keep up with what is true and what isn't. Youth workers cannot become 24/7 fact checkers – but instead must support young people to develop their own critical thinking skills.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, B. (2015). *Youth work: A manifesto for our times*. Youth & Policy Press. & Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). *Communication and persuasion: Psychological studies of opinion change*. Yale University Press.

# A Brief History of Lies

While social media has provided fertile ground for the growth of disinformation and manipulation, the mechanisms of lies and rumours spreading throughout communities is nothing new. Human brains are primed to believe things that feel real, and aren't as good at stopping to slowly and critically evaluate the truth.

From moral panics to witch hunts — disinformation has driven chaos and division in communities for thousands of years. But just the same, community leadership, storytelling and relationship building have evolved as ways for communities to inoculate themselves against the worst harms posed by the spread of misinformation.

## The Parable of Truth and Lie

*One day a woman named Truth and a woman named Lie stood by a river just outside of town. They were twins. Lie challenged Truth to a race, claiming she could swim across the river faster than Truth. Lie laid out the rules to the challenge stating that they both must remove all their clothes and at the count of 3, dive into the freezing cold water and swim to the other side and back.*

*Lie counted to 3, but when Truth jumped in, Lie did not. As Truth swam across the river, Lie put on Truth's clothes and walked back into town dressed as Truth. She proudly paraded around town pretending to be Truth. Truth made it back to shore, but her clothes were gone and she was left naked with only Lie's clothes to wear. Refusing to dress herself as Lie, Truth walked back to town naked.*

*Truth, naked and cold, had been turned away from every door in the village. Her nakedness frightened the people. When Parable found her she was huddled in a corner, shivering and hungry. Taking pity on her, Parable gathered her up and took her home. There, she dressed Truth in story, warmed her and sent her out again. Clothed in story, Truth knocked again at the doors and was readily welcomed into the villagers' houses. They invited her to eat at their tables and warm herself by their fires.*

## Old Story, New Medium

Lies spreading through communities are nothing new. As this ancient parable shows us, the lie can often spread much faster than the truth, because it doesn't play by the same rules as the truth. The lie will present itself, cloaked as the truth, whilst the truth is still hurrying to catch up.

This is particularly true in times of great stress and uncertainty – think of the Salem Witch Trials, which many historians believe may have come about after harsh winters causing the crops to fail and the community to become impoverished.<sup>3</sup> People were looking for someone, or something, to blame. This gave rise to the lie – that witches were to blame for all the bad things that befell the community. It travelled quickly and the truth couldn't compete, causing hysteria and division, with people who were already 'othered' by the community being accused of witchcraft. By the time truth and reason had caught up, many people had already been executed.

When the truth finally does come to the village, it is often naked – i.e. presented as facts and figures, which most people will reject as they've already been emotionally manipulated by the lie. Facts bounce off of frames – and when someone is in a highly emotional frame of mind, afraid for their safety or angry at a perceived injustice, all the facts and figures in the world won't convince them to change their mind.

However, when we stop to cloak the truth in story, we have a much better chance of being heard. Even better, if we were to warn the villagers that the lie is planning to come to the village pretending to be the truth, we could make sure that the villagers thought twice about accepting the lie in the first place.

This is why we have the term 'witch hunt' as a negative today – it helps us point to a time in the past where hysteria and lies drove great harms – helping us to tell a story that slows people down and helps them be more critical of what they're hearing.

While we often think of disinformation as a brand new danger, really all that has happened is that social media has given new life to an old phenomenon that takes advantage of how people think both as individuals and in groups. This helps give us an insight into how we can tackle falsehoods in our digital era.

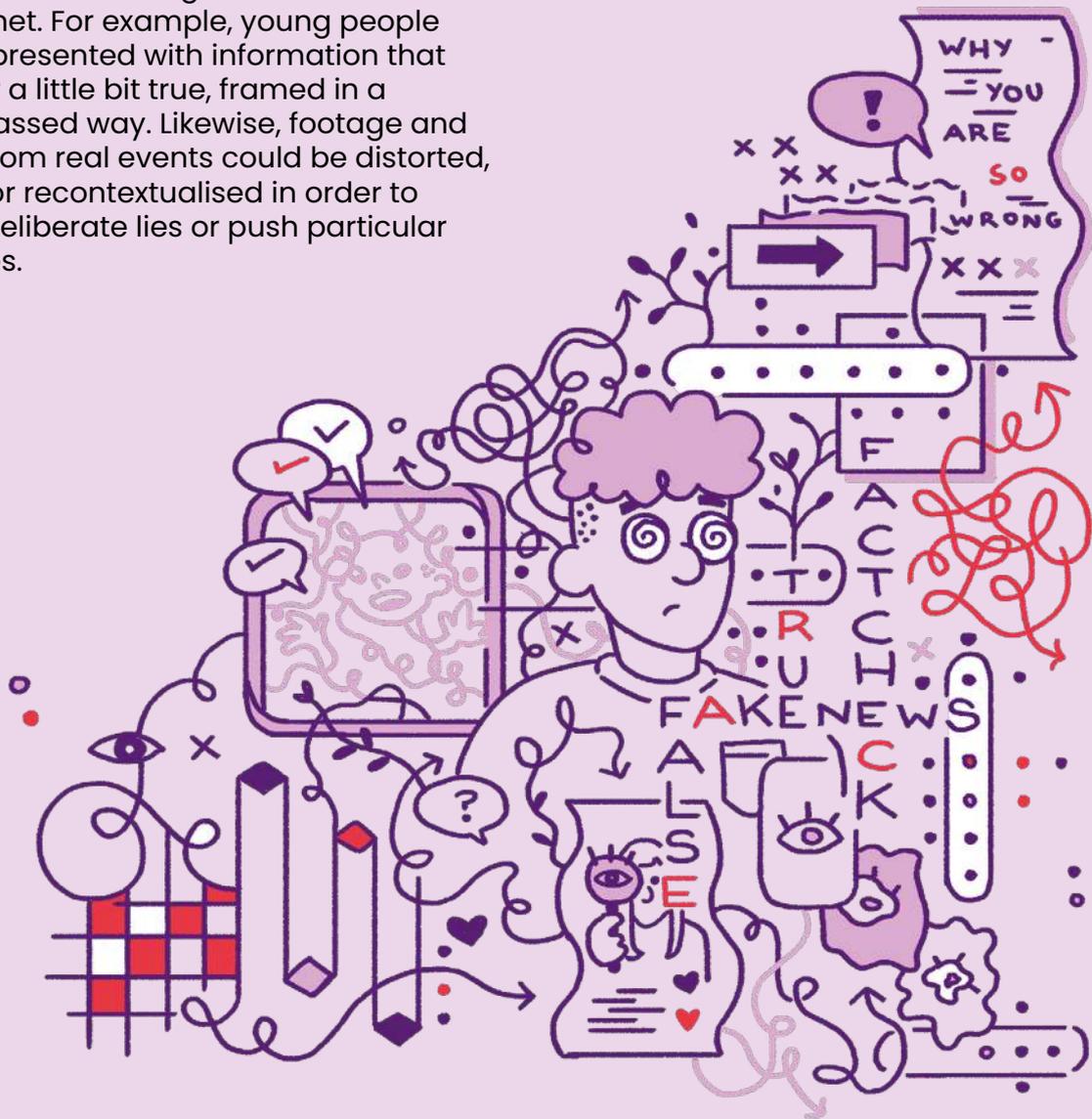


<sup>3</sup>Ray, C. (2023). *What caused the Salem Witch Trials?* The Collector. Available at: <https://www.thecollector.com/what-caused-the-salem-witch-trials/> [Accessed 10 Mar. 2025].

# The (Dis) Information Ecosystem

Often when people talk about the types of digital distortion or ‘information disorder’<sup>4</sup> that happens online, they will use terms like ‘fake news’ or ‘misinformation’, but it’s a little bit more complex than that.

False information or ‘fake news’ is just one way that information gets distorted on the internet. For example, young people may be presented with information that is true, or a little bit true, framed in a highly biased way. Likewise, footage and photos from real events could be distorted, clipped or recontextualised in order to spread deliberate lies or push particular narratives.



<sup>4</sup>We Make The Future. (n.d.). *Combating Disinformation: A Resource from Race Class Narrative Action*. Available at: <https://www.wemakethefuture.us/resources-docs/rcn-combatting-disinfo> [Accessed 10 Mar. 2025].

Here are some definitions to help you understand the differences<sup>5</sup>:

### Disinformation:

Disinformation is the deliberate spread of false or misleading information with the intent to deceive. It differs from misinformation, which refers to incorrect or false information shared without the intent to mislead.

#### Example:

A man called Sam personally does not agree with vaccines. He notices some people aren't sure about getting the Covid-19 vaccine. He wants to make sure these people hear negative things about the vaccine, and decides to make up a lie that the Covid -19 vaccine causes infertility. He makes up a study and makes a Tik Tok video telling people not to get it if they want a baby.



### Misinformation:

False information that is shared, but not necessarily with the attempt to mislead.

#### Example:

Sarah is in a group chat with her friend Amy, who is planning on taking the Covid-19 vaccine. Sarah knows Amy is planning on having children and remembers that she saw something online linking the Covid-19 vaccine and infertility. She forwards Sam's Tik Tok to the friend group on Whatsapp.

<sup>5</sup> Cook, J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U.K.H. (2020). *The Debunking Handbook 2020*. Center for Climate Change Communication, George Mason University. Available at: <https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/DebunkingHandbook2020.pdf> [Accessed 10 Mar. 2025].

## Malinformation:

True information that bad actors weaponise in order to harm, this includes identifying information about individuals, recontextualised media, or revenge porn.

### Example:

Sam's claims have been debunked by a prominent doctor on television. Sam shares the clip, saying that this doctor is known for making his patient's infertile at his clinic and can't be trusted. He shares the clinic's address and encourages people to harass the doctor.



## Fake News:

False information, often of a sensational nature, that mimics news media content.

### Example:

Sam buys the website domain [www.realvaccinenews.ie](http://www.realvaccinenews.ie). He publishes articles and cites made-up studies that link the Covid-19 vaccine and infertility. The site is designed so they look like real news articles and then Sam tweets them out from an X account, where he pretends to be a concerned doctor called Dr. Sam.



## But, there is more to manipulation.

Manipulation can happen even when the information that is being shared is not factually incorrect. Media outlets and content creators can choose to deliberately distort an issue through framing it in a particular way, only showing one viewpoint on an issue, by repeating simple messages often enough, or by relying on confirmation bias.



## Here are some common ways people are manipulated by tactics that manipulate truth:



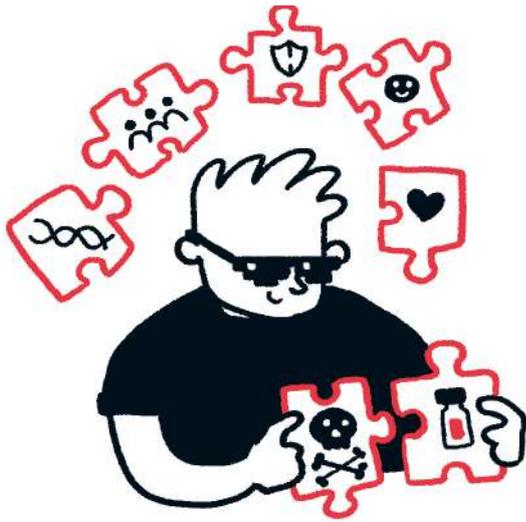
### Confirmation Bias:

Confirmation bias is people's tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with their existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional, and it results in a person ignoring information that is inconsistent with their beliefs.

#### Example:

Sam sees how American anti-vaxxers are successfully sowing mistrust amongst minority communities, by weaponising their well-founded mistrust and fear of the Government. Sam decides to do the same here, and starts making content that claims the vaccine will make people from the Traveller community infertile. The content also references the long history of mistreatment of the Traveller community by the Irish Government - drawing on real experiences to make his claims about the vaccine *feel real* by using confirmation bias.

*He knows more people will share his content if they are outraged by content that confirms what they already believe about the world is true.*



### Biased Framing:

A frame is like a mental model of the real world. They dictate how we expect things to work and what the cause and remedy to a problem is. Often, content creators will choose to frame an issue in a way that suits their narrative, by only focusing on a small part of the story that supports their world view and choosing what words and images they want to associate with a particular issue.

**Example:** Sam wants to go broader with the communities he's targeting with his vaccine disinformation. He knows that by linking the word vaccine and the word death he will reinforce the frame of vaccine=death in people's minds. He creates a set of infographics on Instagram that show an increase in deaths in the years after the pandemic. He chooses to leave out any information or evidence that disproves that the Covid-19 vaccine is the cause or that presents other causes. People share the information because it looks legitimate and they are worried and angry.

### Infotainment:

Also called soft news as a way to distinguish it from serious journalism or hard news, is a type of media, usually television or online, that provides a combination of information and entertainment.

**Example:** John runs a weekly podcast that covers a wide range of topics. Lately, his listenership has taken a dip so he looks for topics that are trending on Twitter. He sees Sam's infertility video getting shared and invites him on the podcast. He assumes Sam is the expert he says he is and doesn't fact check him. His podcast gets 200,000 downloads that week.

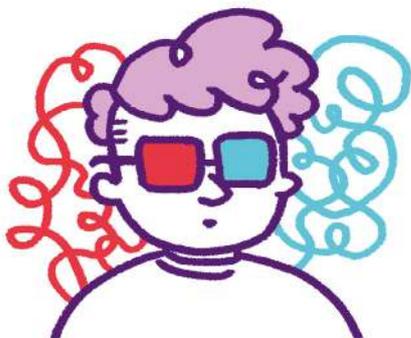


# Mechanisms of Manipulation

**Emotions are the foundation of 'misbelief'.**

People who deliberately create divisive disinformation are often following a playbook that relies heavily on the manipulation of real and intense emotion. People are more likely to fall for false information when they experience high levels of stress and young people experiencing issues around housing, family addiction, poverty, and inequality are particularly at risk.<sup>6</sup>

Young people, who may feel powerless in their own lives, may begin to align themselves consciously or unconsciously with narratives and groups that make them feel powerful. They often seek out and believe information that 'feels real' because it aligns with their experiences and their reality, and as young people they are exploring and forming identities to find what fits. Content that lifts one group up and at the expense of another group can be attractive for young people who want to feel as though they belong, and that they have an easy answer for their problems.



Most people use their intuitive evaluation to make decisions and reach conclusions about the world, relying on 'gut instinct', emotions, experience and mental shortcuts about 90% of the time<sup>7</sup>. Research has shown that in order for us to use our 'analytical evaluation' i.e. the part of our brain that stops to consider alternative viewpoints and questions our beliefs - we need to be given the space and prompted to slow down.

As youth workers, understanding that there is an emotional need being met by the consuming and sharing of false information, and that people rely on intuitive evaluation most of the time, unless prompted, helps us to take a step back and create space for young people to explore their beliefs, their identities and their values in a safe and inclusive environment.

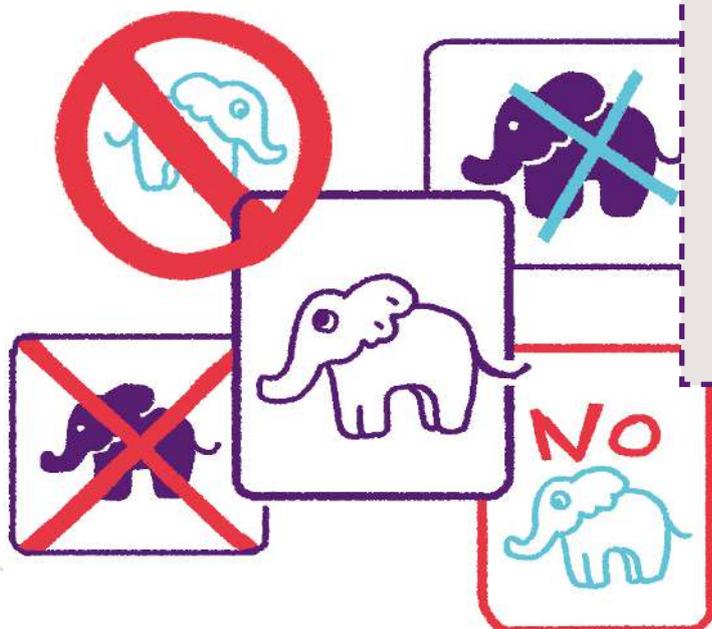
<sup>6</sup> Ariely, D. (2023). *Misbelief: What makes rational people believe irrational things*. Harper.

<sup>7</sup> Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

## Agenda Setting

The Agenda setting media theory suggests that the media can shape public opinion by determining what issues are given the most attention, and has been widely studied and applied to various forms of media, including social media.<sup>8</sup>

People who spread disinformation understand that being the first group to frame a particular story or make content about a particular theme, gets to set the agenda. A bit like Lie jumping out of the pool before Truth, the lie often dominates the air waves (and our screens!) first – meaning that the truth has to catch up, and is often doing it on Lie’s terms.



**The best example of this is 'Don't Think of an Elephant'.**

**It's impossible, right?**

**When young people are repeating false information, it can be very tempting to keep the entire conversation about the issue they've raised. Instead, bringing our own values as youth workers, leaning into the relationship and encouraging critical thinking will help the young person reframe the issue and move into a more analytical form of thinking.**

<sup>8</sup> **McCombs, M.E. & Shaw, D.L. (1972).** *The agenda-setting function of mass media.* Public Opinion Quarterly, 36(2), pp.176-187.

## Framing vs Fact Finding

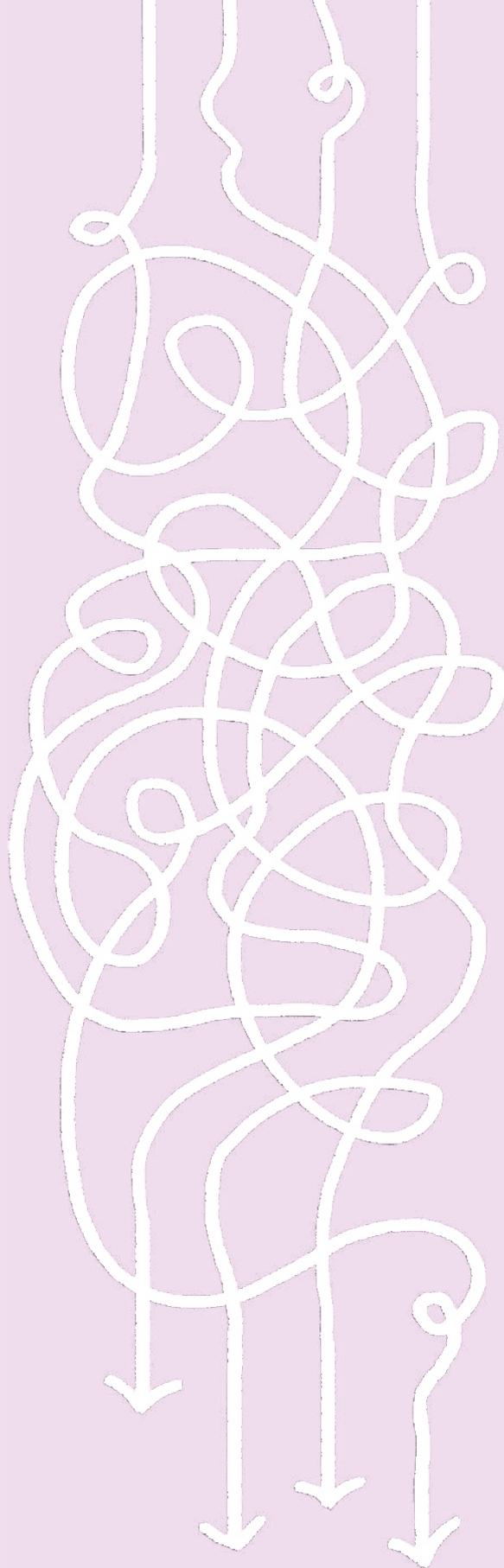
Frames are like mental shortcuts – they help us to predict what might happen, diagnose the cause of issues, and come up with solutions. The words we use trigger frames to be brought forward in our minds and these can trigger our values. It is often a tactic of hateful extremists who spread disinformation to get us to repeat their frames in order to provoke a more conservative set of values. For example a tactic might be to relate people who seek asylum coming into communities as a danger or a risk, making people invoke the value of security – rather than openness, curiosity or welcome.

Youth workers may feel compelled to fact check the belief that there is 'risk' – giving lots of facts and reassurance as to why people seeking asylum pose 'no more risk' than anyone else.

However, when we jump to fact checking, rather than reframing – we strengthen the link in the person's mind and reinforce the underlying values of security over welcome. As Youth workers and Youth Organisations, it's important that we know what framing and what values we want to strengthen within our organisation and in our practice and that we can address the underlying value of security, whilst painting a broader picture of what makes communities safe for everyone who lives there, no matter who they are or where they were born i.e. affordable homes, local services, and getting to know your neighbours.

We need to think about how to wrap the truth in a cloak of story that people will hear, engage with and repeat.

**Let's figure out how to do that together in the next section.**



# Tools for Responding

These exercises are designed to help you explore, with the young people you work with, how people come to believe what they believe. They are designed to help young people to learn *how to think* in a world where false information is rife, rather than *what to think*.

The goal is to help young people navigate the noise online – and in doing so spread these skills and tools into their wider community.

## For 1 to 1 Youth Work

### TEAsing out

(For casual conversations over tea)

#### Encouraging Curiosity & Reflection

- That’s an interesting take—where’d you first come across it?
- What is it about this that makes sense to you?
- Have you looked into it much yourself? What did you find?
- Why do you reckon some people believe this, but others don’t?

#### Prompting Critical Thinking

- How do you usually suss out if something’s true or not?
- If someone wanted to spread a lie, how do you think they’d go about it?
- What kind of proof would make you think twice about this?
- Who do you think benefits if this is true? And what if it’s not?

#### Encouraging Dialogue & Empathy

- How do you think this kind of thing affects the people it’s about?
- Have you ever changed your mind about something big before? What made you rethink it?
- If someone you really trust told you they didn’t believe this, what would you say?
- What do you think is the best thing to do when we’re not sure if something’s true?

# For Group Youth Work

You don't have to do all these activities at once, or even in the sequence they are here.

## Misinformation Role Play

**Role Play** (15–20 minutes)

### Step 1: Assign Roles

Give each participant a card with their role.  
(If there are fewer participants, some can take multiple roles.)

### Step 2: The Game

1. The Rumour Starter whispers the original story to the first person.
2. Each person then whispers it to the next, following their assigned role.
3. The final person says the rumour out loud to the group.



### Roles & How to Play Them:

#### 1. The Gossip (Rumour Starter)

Starts the story but adds a little excitement.

- **What to do:** Whisper the original story but make it sound more dramatic (e.g., “Did you hear that the school is changing uniforms? Apparently, the teachers are arguing about it!”).
- **What to say when asked why they believe it:** “I heard it from a friend—everyone’s talking about it!”

#### 2. The Exaggerator

Makes the story wilder.

- **What to do:** When repeating the rumour, exaggerate key details (e.g., “The school is changing uniforms AND making students pay £100 for them!”).
- **What to say when asked why they believe it:** “It makes sense, doesn’t it? Schools always want more money!”

### 3. The Worrier (Catastrophiser)

Assumes the worst.

- **What to do:** Turn the rumour into something alarming (e.g., “The school is changing uniforms because they’re selling our old ones to cut costs! What if they start cutting lunch next?”).
- **What to say when asked why they believe it:** “Things like this always lead to something worse. Just wait and see!”

### 4. The Know-It-All

Acts like they have insider information.

- **What to do:** Pretend to have extra details, even if they’re made up (e.g., “My cousin’s best friend’s sister works at the school office—she says teachers have already seen the designs!”).
- **What to say when asked why they believe it:** “I have connections. I know things before everyone else!”

### 5. The Fact-Checker

Questions the rumour.

- **What to do:** When they hear the rumour, they should ask, “Where did you hear that?” and “Has anyone actually checked with the school?”
- **What to say when asked if they believe it:** “I don’t share things unless I know they’re true. Let’s check first.”

### 6. The Calm Thinker

Suggests verifying the story before spreading it.

- **What to do:** When they hear the rumour, they say, “Let’s check if it’s true before telling anyone else.”
- **What to say when asked why they don’t believe it yet:** “Not everything we hear is true. It’s better to check first.”

## **Discussion** (10-15 minutes)

### **Step 1: Compare Stories**

- Ask the final person to say the rumour out loud.
- Compare it with the original version.
- Ask: "How did it change? Why?"

### **Step 2: Reflection Questions**

- How did your role impact what you said about the story?
- How do you think misinformation spreads online in a similar way?
- What happens when people don't fact-check information before sharing?
- What can we do to make sure we don't spread misinformation?

### **Step 3: Key Takeaways**

- Misinformation spreads easily – even small changes add up.
- People distort stories for different reasons – excitement, fear, wanting to sound informed.
- Fact-checking is important – always verify before sharing.

## **Outcomes**

Young people learn how misinformation can change and spread rapidly, making them more aware of the need for fact-checking and careful communication, especially online.

## Red Car Exercise

**Note:** You'll need to send the young people out for a quick walk, or if that's not possible, look out the window. If you aren't near a road or town, you show them a video of traffic. Split the group in two, ask Group 1 to count how many red cars they see, and tell Group 2 to simply enjoy the walk (or video!).

**Intro:** This activity simplifies the ideas of agenda setting and biased framing and helps young people recognize how media coverage can affect their opinions. The Red Car Theory (once you notice something, you start seeing it everywhere) will show them how certain issues are made more visible by the media, just like red cars seem to appear everywhere once you start looking for them.

**Duration:** 45-60 minutes

**Materials:** Examples of headlines or articles (printed or digital)  
Pens and paper for notes

### Step-by-Step Guide:

#### 1. Introduction: The Red Car Theory (5-10 minutes)

Explain the Red Car Theory: Split the group into the young people who were asked to count red cars and those who weren't. Notice and point out the difference between the two groups.

#### 2. Discussion

Ask them:

- Do you think there are less red cars where you (i.e. the group who weren't asked to notice red cars) live?
- Ask them why the group who was asked to notice the red cars saw more?

#### 3. Link to Media

Relate this to media: when the media focuses on certain topics, those topics seem to appear everywhere and feel more important. This is called agenda setting.

#### 4. Discussion

Ask them:

- Have you noticed a topic being reported everywhere recently? Why do you think that is?
- "Have you ever started seeing a news story everywhere and felt like it was the biggest issue in the world?"
- "But then, a few weeks later, the news moves on and suddenly, no one is talking about it anymore."

## Outcomes

Understand that what we focus on influences what we notice (e.g., the group told to count red cars saw more of them).

Recognise that the number of red cars didn't change—only their awareness did.

## Spotting Media Agendas

**Note:** It's good to do this activity with a group who has already had a chance to warm up, introduce themselves, and everyone is used to speaking a bit in the group.

### Warm-Up Activity: "What's in the News?" (5 minutes)

**Objective:** Get young people thinking about how news spreads and what topics are currently capturing media attention.

#### Instructions:

**1. Pair up or form small groups.**

**2. Ask:**

"Can you name a news story you've heard about this week?"

- It can be from TV, social media, a friend, or anywhere else.

**3. Discuss (briefly in pairs/groups):**

- Where did you hear it? (TikTok? A news site? Someone told you?)
- Did you see it more than once?
- Do you think it's a big story, or just something people are talking about a lot?

**4. Share back:**

Ask a few groups to share their stories with the whole group.

**Debrief:**

- Point out that some stories get repeated everywhere, while others don't.
- Link this to what we notice vs. what gets attention—this leads into the Red Car Theory and how the media shapes what we focus on.

**Outcomes:**

- Recognise that media decides which stories get attention and how this shapes public perception.
- Understand the agenda-setting effect—topics that get repeated feel more important, even if they aren't the most critical issues.
- Be able to question why certain stories dominate the news cycle while others are ignored.
- Recognise that seeing a story everywhere doesn't necessarily mean it's the full picture.

**Activity: Agenda Setting (30-40 mins)**

**Note:** You'll need some newspapers

**Instructions:****1. Small Groups**

Divide participants into groups of 3-4.

**2. Provide News Headlines**

Give each group 5-6 different headlines on various topics (e.g., celebrity news, health issues, politics).

**3. Task**

Ask each group to rank the headlines from most important to least important based on how the media makes them sound.

**4. Group Discussion**

Why do you think some topics are made to seem more important? Are there any important issues you think are missing from the headlines? What issues are important to young people? Are these issues coming up in the media that you see?

**5. Explain**

The media doesn't cover everything. By choosing what to talk about, they influence what people think is important. This is agenda setting.

## Activity: Identifying Biased Framing

### Instructions:

#### 1. New Task

Now, give each group two headlines about the same topic but from different sources (e.g., one positive and one negative). *There are some sample headlines on the back of this resource.*

#### 2. Compare

Ask them to compare how the same story is told in different ways. Have them think about:

- What kind of words are used (positive, negative, neutral)?
- Is one side of the story being emphasised more?

#### 3. Group Discussion

- How do different headlines make you feel about the same issue?
- Does the way the story is told affect your opinion of it?

#### 4. Explain:

This is called biased framing—when the media tells the same story differently to make you feel a certain way about it.

### Wrap-Up and Reflection (10 minutes)

#### Whole Group Discussion:

- Can you think of other examples where the same issue was reported in different ways?
- How can we be more aware of how media influences what we think is important or how we feel about things?

**Takeaway:** Encourage them to think critically about what they read or see in the media. Ask questions like:

- What have you seen recently in the media?
- Who do you think decides how a story is covered?
- Why is this topic being covered so much?
- How are they trying to make me feel about it?
- Where could you get more trustworthy information about the subject?

**Outcomes:**

- Understand Agenda Setting: Media makes certain issues more visible, like seeing red cars everywhere after buying one.
- Recognize Biased Framing: How a story is told can change how we feel about it, even if the facts are the same.
- Critical Thinking: Be more thoughtful about the news and stories they see and ask why certain issues are getting more attention.

**Newspaper headline examples:**

# Breaking News

VOL. XI - no. 4350 NEW ISSUE

## Young People Will Suffer

In a shock move by The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 50% of youth work funding is to be cut. Youth workers and young people are organising a protest to demand a reversal of the cuts “*Youth work is too important, we need more investment, not cuts!*” says a young person.

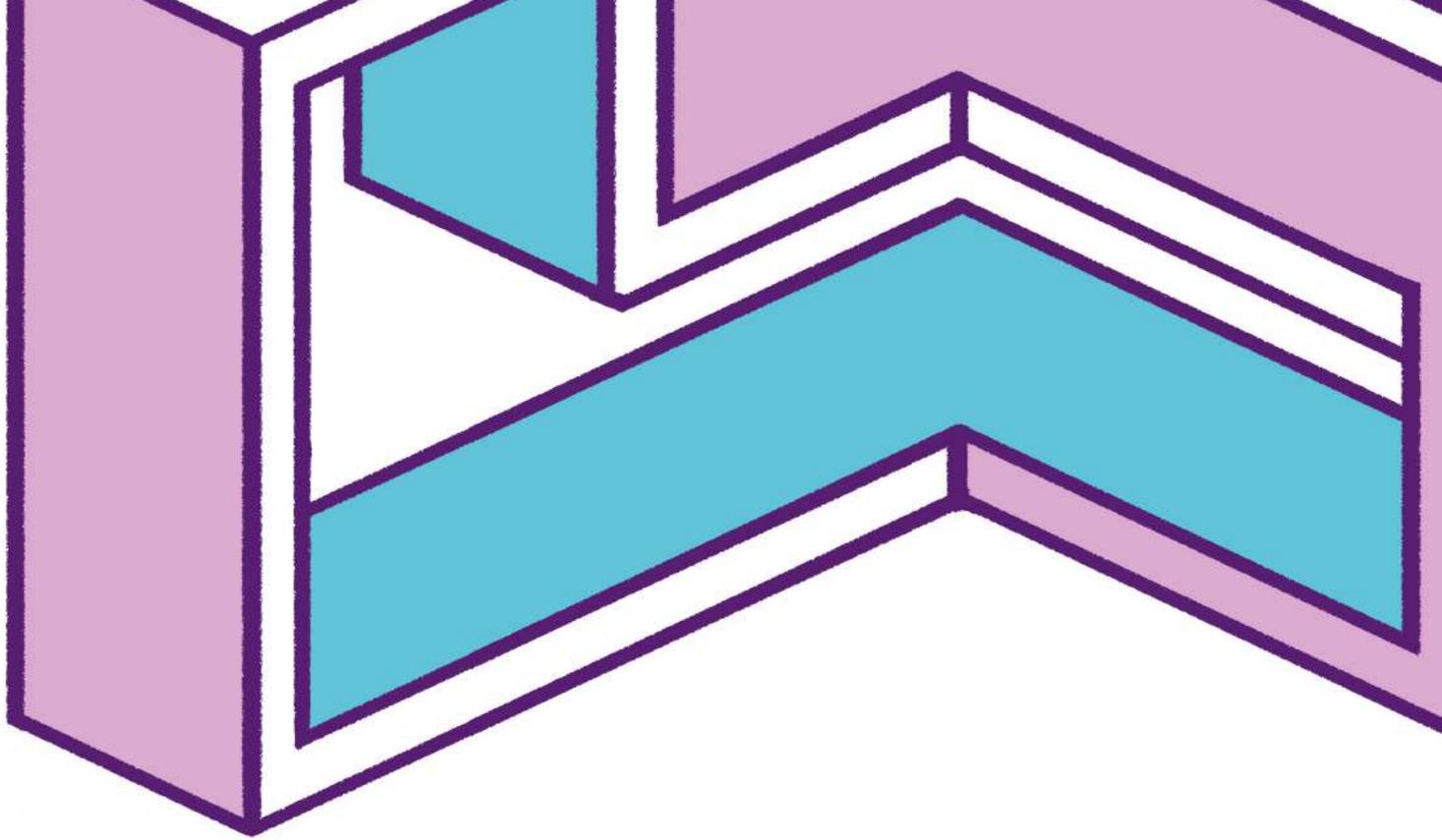
# Breaking News

VOL. XI - no. 4350 NEW ISSUE

## Government praised for big savings

A business group has commended the Government for slashing overspend, especially the Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs who have saved over 50% on unnecessary extracurricular activities for young people. “*In my day, you went to school, and then you made your own fun. We don’t need youth work*” said Big business man.





# Youth Work Changes Lives

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**Nyci** National  
Youth  
Council  
of Ireland



**Irish Aid**  
An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



**pobal**  
government supporting communities



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland