# Disinformation Awareness

Kids need to be aware that disinformation and manipulative content await them online. They need to think about why people post things. *Who is behind the information? Why are they sharing it? Are they trying to influence me?* When we *don't* ask such questions, we remain vulnerable; when we *do*, we grow more independent and resilient. Teachers can help students develop "disinformation awareness" – a healthy level of skepticism about online content.

Applications

- Use **questions** to cultivate disinformation awareness. For example: *Do people put things online to get us to do stuff? Like what? Are they trying to help you or fool you? How can you tell when someone is trying to fool you?*

- Have students find and **discuss** online examples. *Would you trust this source? Why?*

- Teach students to recognize the **Tactics of Disinformation.**[1]
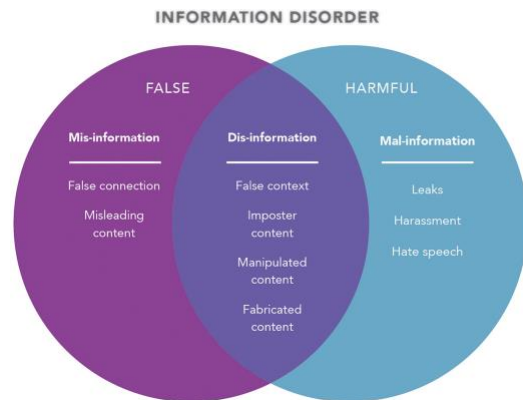
Notes

It's important to understand the motive(s) behind the message. Signs of manipulative intent can be subtle, but resilient human beings pick up on them. Monitoring for underlying intent should become second nature. It's important, though, that kids not become cynical or indiscriminately skeptical; there are many genuinely honest and helpful sources out there.

Many find these categories useful:
"Misinformation misleads. It is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm. Disinformation deceives. It is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate... Malinformation sabotages. It is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate."[2] (CISA)

Learn More

"Finland is winning the war on fake news. What it's learned may be crucial to Western democracy"[3]

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[1] CISA, Tactics of Disinformation

[2] These are the definitions from the CISA's Information Manipulation Infographic

[3] CNN, Finland is winning the war on fake news

What Works to Build Mental Immunity *a resource for teachers* by CIRCE