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**Truth or trick?**

**Spotting lies and conspiracies**

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Facilitator's  
guide

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# Introduction

Since September 2015, further education and skills providers have been under a legal duty to have due regard to the risk of learners being drawn into terrorism and they must also actively promote fundamental British values.

Young people's age and cognitive development can make them particularly susceptible to extremist ideas and targeting, which in turn can mean they are more vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Further education providers are vital in helping young people find a place in their local community, to instil values, and to build resilience to extremist ideologies to prevent learners from being drawn into terrorism.

DfE has commissioned SINCE 9/11 to deliver a suite of four teaching packs and accompanying guidance to meet the specific needs of students and teachers in further education and training settings. The resources cover extremism, online traps and targeting by extremists, lies and conspiracies, and British values.

You know your learners best. These resources are designed for flexible delivery across a wide range of learning contexts – helping you tailor your approach to your students' needs. They are designed to be used as either standalone lessons or as bitesize sections in tutorial time, and include:

- Ready-to-use lesson plans
- Practical guidance
- Flexible teaching resources
- Podcasts
- Videos

## Underpinning principles

Underpinning principles are the core values, beliefs, or foundations that guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of learning practice and delivery. In this context their purpose is to provide a clear, consistent, and values-based foundation that guides thinking, planning, and action across ALL delivery and practice.

All four resources in this series are based on the following underpinning principles:

1. **Safeguarding** is an underpinning principle because it is a fundamental value and guiding force in creating safe, supportive, and protective environments, especially for young people, and vulnerable individuals.
2. **Relationships, Sex and Health Education** (RSHE) is not typically considered an underpinning principle itself, but rather a curriculum subject or statutory educational requirement in England. However, it is a curriculum area shaped by and delivering principles such as equality, inclusion, and personal responsibility.
3. **Resilience** is an underpinning principle because it supports the broader goals of education and safeguarding by fostering emotional strength, adaptability, and personal growth in young people and adults.
4. **Respect and tolerance** are essential underpinning principles in education and safeguarding, forming the basis for inclusive, safe, and values-driven environments that promote mutual understanding and positive social interaction.



# Learning outcomes

## Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

| Core learning outcomes<br>Levels 2 and 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Explain</b> the difference between misinformation and disinformation</li> <li>2. <b>Identify</b> online manipulation tactics (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)</li> <li>3. <b>Explain</b> how online conspiracies link to radicalisation and recruitment to groups</li> <li>4. <b>Use</b> fact-checking tools and source evaluation strategies</li> </ol> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Level below/SEND considerations<br>Pre entry – Level 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Stretch and challenge outcomes<br>Experienced [ADULT] learners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Simplify language, focus on recognition, description, and basic application. Use multi-sensory, visual, and role-play approaches.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Push towards analysis, application, demonstration, workplace relevance, and critical thinking.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recognise</b> that not all information online is true</li> <li>• <b>List</b> basic signs of fake news or scams</li> <li>• <b>Use</b> one simple fact-checking tool (with support)</li> <li>• <b>Explain</b> why checking facts is important</li> </ul>                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiate between misinformation, disinformation, and professional reporting.</li> <li>• Assess the credibility of online sources, content and claims.</li> <li>• Apply fact-checking strategies in professional and personal settings.</li> <li>• Reflect on how confirmation bias and algorithms influence beliefs</li> </ul> |

## Differentiation

Differentiation is essential when delivering education to post-16, further education, and adult learners because this group has diverse abilities, experiences, motivations, and learning preferences.

### Why differentiation is important for post-16 learners

**Diverse academic backgrounds** - Learners may have varying levels of prior knowledge. Some may have recently completed GCSEs, while others may be returning to education after years away. Differentiation helps ensure all learners are appropriately challenged and supported.

**Varied learning needs** - This age group may include learners with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), English as an Additional or Second Language (EAL/ESOL), or different cognitive and emotional needs. Differentiation ensures inclusion and accessibility.

**Different learning styles and preferences** - Some learners may prefer visual aids, others hands-on tasks or group work. Differentiated methods help cater to multiple intelligences and learning preferences.

**Motivation and engagement** - Post-16 learners are more autonomous, but they need learning to be relevant, meaningful, and tailored to their goals. Differentiation helps maintain motivation and improves outcomes.

**Preparation for work or higher education** - Differentiated tasks can be used to develop independence, critical thinking, and transferable skills that are key to future progression.

### Common mistakes in differentiation

- **One-size-fits-all lessons** - Delivering lessons as if all learners are at the same level leads to disengagement or frustration.
- **Only differentiating by task difficulty** - Focusing solely on easier vs harder work misses other valuable methods of differentiation like varying outcomes, support, process, or groupings.
- **Labelling or singling out learners** - Making differentiation too obvious can embarrass or stigmatise some learners.

- **Overcomplicating planning** - Trying to create entirely separate lesson plans for each learner is unsustainable and unnecessary.
- **Neglecting stretch and challenge** - Failing to extend more advanced learners can lead to boredom and underachievement.

## Top tips for effective differentiation

- **Use tiered activities** - Create core tasks with extension or support options built in – same objective, different levels of complexity.
- **Flexible grouping** - Mix learners strategically for peer support, collaboration, or challenge and change groups regularly.
- **Scaffold learning** - Provide templates, sentence starters, checklists, or visual aids for those who need them – remove as confidence grows.
- **Use formative assessment** - Use questioning, quick checks, and peer/selfassessment to adjust pace and pitch in real time.
- **Offer choice** - Allow learners to choose how they demonstrate understanding (e.g. write an essay, make a video, present findings).
- **Know your learners** - Use ILPs (Individual Learning Plans), diagnostics, and ongoing observation to tailor your approach.
- **Differentiate process, not just product** - Vary how learners access material – e.g. some may use a podcast, others a written article, some may need 1:1 explanation.
- **Embed universal design for learning** - Plan from the outset to meet a variety of needs rather than retrofitting support later.

Differentiation is key to making post-16 learning inclusive, challenging, and relevant. It's not about creating 20 different lesson plans, but about knowing your learners and using smart, flexible strategies to meet their needs. When done well, it improves **engagement, attainment, and learner confidence**.

## Strategies for learners with autism

Social stories are narratives made to illustrate certain situations and problems and how people deal with them. They help children with autism understand social norms and learn how to communicate with others appropriately. Social stories can help

young learners adjust to new routines, participate in conversations, develop certain life skills, or learn how to interact with peers. Whatever the situation might be, social stories can help tell kids what to expect and what might be expected of them. Find out more by visiting: How to Write a Social Story (A Step-By-Step Guide) -

<https://lifeskillsadvocate.com/blog/how-to-write-a-social-story/>

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has published the following resources to support learners with autism:

- Making British values meaningful for learners with autism - <https://www.etfoundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/3.2-JG1125-Natspec-ETFdocuments-British-Values.pdf>
- Helping learners with autism understand how to keep safe from radicalisation and extremism\_ - <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/3.7-JG1125-Natspec-ETF-documents-Keeping-safe-from-extremism.pdf>

## **Context**

### **Prevent duty**

The Prevent duty is a statutory obligation placed on specified bodies, including schools and further education providers, under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It requires them to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The duty applies to all schools, FE colleges, training providers, and academies. Its key function is to safeguard individuals from radicalisation and extremism by identifying and supporting those at risk before they commit criminal acts. The Prevent duty places a legal responsibility on schools and education providers to act proportionately and reasonably to prevent radicalisation. Compliance is monitored by Ofsted and other regulatory bodies.

### **Fundamental British values**

Fundamental British values (FBVs) is the name given to a set of core principles; under the Education Act 2002 (Section 78), educational settings in England and Wales are legally required to provide a curriculum that promotes these values. The values aim to support young people to understand and appreciate democratic processes and the rule of law; to build resilience against extremism and radicalisation by fostering

respect and tolerance; and to prepare learners for participation in British society as responsible citizens. The promotion of British values is a statutory part of the Prevent duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015). The Department for Education (DfE) sets out this requirement in 'Keeping children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) and associated Prevent guidance.

## **Online Safety Act 2023**

The Online Safety Act 2023 is a UK law that sets out legal obligations for online platforms to protect users, especially children and young people, from harmful, illegal, or abusive content on the internet. It is one of the most comprehensive internet safety laws ever introduced in the UK and gives the communications regulator, Ofcom, the power to enforce compliance, including through fines, site blocks, or criminal charges for serious breaches.

The key purposes of the act are to:

- Protect children and young people from harmful content (e.g. pornography, selfharm, bullying, grooming).
- Hold tech companies accountable for illegal content (e.g. terrorism, hate speech, abuse).
- Create a safer digital environment while protecting freedom of expression.
- Empower users with more control over what they see online (e.g. filters, reporting tools) and act swiftly in response to harmful or false content (including deepfakes and online scams).

## Related areas

During the delivery of this resource, you may have opportunities to link to other subjects and/or build in opportunities to embed other areas for discussion. These may include:

### Digital literacy

The ability of individuals to use digital technologies effectively, safely, and critically to access, manage, create, and communicate information. It encompasses a range of skills, including understanding how to use devices (like computers, smartphones, tablets), navigating the internet, evaluating online content for reliability, protecting personal data, and engaging responsibly in digital environments. The UK government and educational frameworks emphasise digital literacy as essential for participation in modern society, education, and the workforce. For example, the [UK's Digital Skills Framework](#) and initiatives like the [Digital Capabilities Framework](#) developed by Jisc outline competencies required to thrive in a digital world.

### Influencers

Individuals who have the power to affect the opinions, behaviours, and purchasing decisions of their followers through social media platforms, blogs, or other digital channels. The key roles of influencers for young people in the UK are given below:

1. **Trendsetters and role models:** Influencers often introduce young people to new fashions, music, technology, and lifestyle choices. They can become role models whose behaviours and values young audiences might emulate.
2. **Information sources:** Many young people turn to influencers for advice or information on topics ranging from beauty and fitness to mental health and social issues. Influencers can raise awareness and educate their followers on important matters.
3. **Community and identity:** Influencers help young people, especially those who may feel marginalised or underrepresented, to feel connected to communities. They can create spaces for shared identity and belonging.
4. **Shaping opinions and behaviours:** Influencers can influence attitudes towards social, political, or cultural issues, encouraging activism or social change among young audiences.

5. **Potential risks:** Because young people are impressionable, influencers' messages can sometimes lead to unrealistic expectations, peer pressure, or exposure to harmful content.

## Grooming

This refers to the process by which individuals or groups build trust and manipulate vulnerable/at-risk people, often young people, to influence, exploit, or control them. In the UK, grooming in the context of radicalisation specifically involves persuading or coercing someone to adopt extremist views or to support or engage in terrorist activities.

Key aspects of grooming for radicalisation are given below:

- **Targeting vulnerable individuals:** Groomers identify individuals who may feel isolated, confused, or disenfranchised and exploit these vulnerabilities.
- **Building trust and relationships:** Groomers often use friendship, emotional support, or shared ideology to create a sense of belonging and loyalty.
- **Gradual indoctrination:** Radicalisers may slowly introduce extremist ideas, normalising violent or extremist beliefs over time.
- **Use of online and offline channels:** Grooming can happen through social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, or face-to-face interactions.
- **Manipulation and coercion:** Victims may be manipulated into participating in extremist activities or spreading extremist messages.

## Bullying

This is repeated, intentional behaviour that is meant to hurt someone emotionally or physically. It can involve threats, teasing, exclusion, spreading rumours, or physical harm. Bullying can occur in-person or online (cyberbullying). Bullying may involve any or all of the factors below:

- **Social isolation and vulnerability:** Victims of bullying may feel excluded, angry, or misunderstood - making them more susceptible to extremist narratives that offer a sense of identity or belonging.

- **Search for identity and revenge:** Some individuals who are bullied may become drawn to ideologies that promise empowerment or retaliation against perceived injustices.
- **Exploitation by extremist groups:** Extremist recruiters may exploit the emotional distress and isolation caused by bullying to build trust and manipulate individuals toward adopting radical beliefs.
- **Online environments:** Victims of cyberbullying may encounter extremist content online or be approached in online spaces where radicalisation efforts are active.

## Gender variance

While anybody can be vulnerable to radicalisation, the pathways, ideologies, and tactics used by recruiters often differ based on gender or gender identification. For example:

### Boys/young men

- More often targeted by male-dominated extremist groups, such as far-right or Islamist networks.
- Recruited through violent or hyper-masculine narratives, such as heroism, honour, or defending their group or community.
- Are often groomed in key online gaming communities, YouTube, and Reddit-style forums
- May be drawn to extremist ideologies that offer status, belonging, or a sense of power.

### Girls/young women

- May be groomed through emotional manipulation, promises of love, friendship, or belonging.
- Extremist groups may use romantic or religious narratives, such as becoming a 'bride' or moral guardian (e.g. cases involving ISIS).
- Often radicalised through social media platforms, especially where identity and appearance are central (e.g. Instagram, TikTok).
- May be targeted for non-violent extremist roles (e.g. propaganda, logistics, or recruitment).

## **LGBTQ+**

- May be rejected by family, peers, or community which can create feelings of loneliness and alienation.
- Often explore identity in digital spaces where radicalisers also operate; grooming may occur via private messaging or forums disguised as safe spaces, but which push extremist narratives (e.g. anti-establishment, anti-West, or even extreme gender ideology)
- May experience internalised shame or guilt; in religious or conservative environments, LGBTQ+ youth may experience identity conflict.
- Extremist recruiters (including Islamist or religious fundamentalist groups) may exploit this by offering 'redemption' or purpose through ideological submission or conversion

# Key concepts to consider/underpin your practice

## Trauma-informed practice

This is an approach that recognises and responds to the impact of traumatic experiences on individuals' behaviour, emotions, and learning. It involves understanding that trauma can affect how people engage, process information, and react to sensitive topics.

Key principles of trauma-informed practice:

- **Safety:** Creating a physically and emotionally safe environment for learners
- **Trustworthiness and transparency:** Building trust through clear communication and consistency
- **Peer support:** Encouraging supportive relationships
- **Collaboration and empowerment:** Involving learners in their own learning and decision-making
- **Cultural, historical, and gender awareness:** Recognising how background and identity affect trauma and responses.

Potential impact when delivering sessions on extremism and radicalisation:

- **Recognising vulnerabilities:** Learners exposed to trauma (e.g. violence, discrimination, abuse) may be more vulnerable to extremist narratives or distrustful of authority.
- **Sensitive delivery:** Sessions need to be delivered with care to avoid retraumatising learners or triggering distress; they also need to avoid language or content that may provoke fear, shame, or alienation.
- **Building resilience:** Trauma-informed approaches help build emotional resilience by providing support and coping strategies.
- **Enhancing engagement:** When learners feel safe and understood, they are more likely to engage openly and critically with challenging topics like extremism.

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

This refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social state. It influences how individuals think, feel, and behave, and how they cope with stress, relate to others, and make choices.

## **Emotional resilience protects against extremism**

Learners with strong mental wellbeing are more likely to think critically, resist manipulation, and make informed decisions. Poor mental health may increase vulnerability to extremist messages that promise a sense of identity, belonging, or purpose.

## **Early support helps safeguard learners**

Sessions that support emotional wellbeing can uncover underlying issues such as anxiety, trauma, loneliness, or social isolation - all of which may heighten the risk of radicalisation.

## **Encouraging safe dialogue**

A mentally healthy environment allows learners to explore sensitive topics openly and respectfully. It reduces stigma and promotes thoughtful discussion, reducing the fear or shame that may lead to disengagement or secrecy.

# **Facilitator's guidance**

This facilitator's guide has been designed to support to deliver these Let's Discuss resources in a flexible and practical way. You have the freedom to pick and choose the activities to suit the needs, experiences and maturity of your learners. While two suggested session plans are provided for convenience (see [Appendices](#)), you are encouraged to adapt, combine, or replace activities as appropriate.

## **Overview of the resources**

This is the third resource in a series of four. The titles in the series are given below:

1. What is extremism, really?
2. Online traps: how extremists target you
3. Truth or trick: Spotting online lies and conspiracies
4. British values: protecting and promoting

Each resource pack contains:

Facilitator's guidance (which includes: introductory guidance, 6 x activities, 2 x 60 min lesson plans and a glossary)

PowerPoint slides (covering all 6 activities)

Facilitator's handouts (containing optional photocopiable resources for use with learners)

Each guide contains a range of activities: a starter, picture stimuli, a debate, a quiz, videos and a case study. These are all supported by key discussion points and questions for reflection.

## **Session plan approach**

If you have sufficient time and would like a more structured approach, you can use the session plans, found in the [Appendices](#). These offer a ready-made path, but you do not need to follow every step if it doesn't suit you or your learners.

## **Pick and mix approach**

You may prefer to select the activities that best fit the age, needs or interests of your group. You don't even need to follow a linear order. This means you could start with a starter or quiz from one resource, incorporate a case study or group discussion from another and finish with the debate activity from a third resource.

## **Delivering online**

You can also upload any of the activities onto your online learning platform to help in your delivery. Additional guidance can be accessed here: Creating a safe space for online teaching and learning online, ETF: [https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/06/ETF001\\_SafeSpace\\_2021.pdf](https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/06/ETF001_SafeSpace_2021.pdf)

## **Needs of the group**

Activities should work with different sizes of groups, and with young people in different settings.

Ensure the subject matter and level of challenge in the activities matches your learners' academic level. Also consider if the activities are relevant and accessible for everyone in the group, and be mindful of their experiences and any triggers. We have provided suggestions for differentiation, where possible, but you can also adapt to suit your learners.

## **Safeguarding and parental involvement**

Before delivering sessions that cover potentially sensitive topics, always refer to and follow your organisation's procedures for involving parents and carers. This ensures trust, transparency, helps address any concerns, and can create supportive partnerships between school and home.

Also make sure that you communicate with your pastoral team, if you have one – they may be able to come into the session and support discussions around some of the more sensitive issues addressed. It is also important to make sure that your safeguarding team is aware of what you intend to deliver as they may have information about your learners that you don't.

Always remind learners of the safe space they are in and be prepared to follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures if any disclosures arise.

## **Additional guidance**

Here is a series of four podcasts to help you in your delivery. The links are given below:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvnfxJ6uhLqDdi7WqykpxX3QdUcfpDLKY>

## **Starter activity**

**Time:** 5 - 10 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 4 – 7

## **Facilitator preparation**

This activity involves a quiz which is hosted online here: <https://www.dw.com/en/real-or-fake-fact-checking-quiz-fake-news-ai-fake-aiimage-detection-debunking-verification/a-72104848>

*NB: As this is an external link you may find it expires. If this happens, do a search for an alternative online 'Fact or fake' quiz – there are usually plenty to choose from.*

## **Running the activity**

Using the online quiz 'Fact check: Real or fake – can you tell the difference?' and ask the learners if they think that each image shown is real or fake.

There are 26 pictures in this quiz but you don't need to do them all.

Once you have a general consensus, click that as the answer. Once the learners have responded, you can also 'fact check' using the embedded link in the answer.

## Key discussion points

Ask learners:

1. Which images surprised you the most?
2. Can you believe everything you see?
3. Do you know how to use the Google Reverse Tool?

If you have time, introduce your learners to how to do a reverse image search:

<https://www.howtogeek.com/352687/how-to-reverse-picture-search-with-googleimages/>

## Differentiation activities

| Pre-entry Level 1                                                                                      | Stretch and challenge outcomes<br>Experienced [ADULT] learners                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Group work: this is a good opportunity to get people working together to support knowledge and skills. | Having completed the quiz, to stretch the activity further, we suggest you ask learners to take one image and use the reverse image search to check it. |

## Safeguarding and wellbeing

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)
- If disclosures occur, **follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately.**

## Picture stimuli activity

### Why use emotive images with learners?

- **To engage interest:** Visual content can capture attention more powerfully than text alone.
- **To stimulate critical thinking:** Images evoke personal reactions that can be discussed, analysed, and questioned.
- **To encourage empathy and perspective-taking:** Young people can consider how others might feel or think.
- **To support inclusive participation:** Visual prompts help those who may struggle to express ideas verbally or in writing.

**Time:** 10 – 20 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 8 - 13

**Facilitator's handouts:** pages 1 - 4

### Facilitator preparation

Review the images in advance (PowerPoint slides 9 - 12) and make notes. If using printed copies, make one of each image per group (Facilitator's handouts, pages 1 - 4).

### Running the activity

#### Prepare the environment

- Explain the purpose: 'We will look at some powerful images to help us explore different views and feelings.'
- Revisit or set the ground rules: respect, listening, no judgment, confidentiality if sensitive topics arise.
- Provide opt-out options: allow young people to step out or take a break if overwhelmed.

#### Present the image thoughtfully

- Give young people a moment to look quietly, then ask open-ended questions:
  - What do you notice first?
  - How does this image/quote make you feel?
  - What story do you think is behind this image or quote?

- Who might be affected by what is shown here?
- Avoid leading questions that assume a 'correct' response.

### **Encourage different viewpoints**

- Invite contributions from everyone (consider using small groups or pairs first).
- Validate different feelings - there is no 'wrong' reaction.
- Prompt reflection: 'Can anyone see this differently?'
- Use scaffolding language: 'Some people might think... others might feel...'

### **Manage strong emotions**

- Be prepared for emotional responses - allow space for learners to process these.
- Model calm, non-judgmental reactions.
- Provide reassurance if young people feel upset.
- Follow up privately if needed (especially with safeguarding concerns).

## **Suggested key discussions**

Encourage learners to reflect on how they felt about the activity, images and whether they feel differently now.

### **Image 1: Key discussion points**

**Image description:** Man in tinfoil hat holding a sign saying 'The Earth is flat'.

(PowerPoint slide 9, Facilitator's handouts, page 1)

### **Critical thinking and media literacy**

- Information online and in the media needs to be assessed for credibility.
- Conspiracy theories often rely on selective evidence or unproven claims.

### **Psychology of belief**

- Confirmation bias can lead people to believe in conspiracies.
- People often turn to conspiracy theories during times of uncertainty or fear.

### **Impact on society**

- False beliefs (e.g. that the Earth is flat) can erode trust in science and institutions.
- Algorithms can spread conspiracies rapidly.

## **Group influence**

- Like-minded online communities can reinforce fringe ideas.
- Conspiracy theories often promote distrust and division.

## **Image 2: Key discussion points**

**Image description:** Image of Malcolm X, with his quote – 'If you are not careful the newspaper will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.' (PowerPoint slide 10, Facilitator's handouts, page 2)

## **Who was Malcolm X?**

Malcolm X was a prominent African American Muslim minister and human rights activist. He was a powerful voice during the civil rights movement, known for his advocacy of Black nationalism and self-defence. Malcolm X strongly believed that freedom is not a gift, but something that must be actively pursued and taken. He emphasised that true freedom requires self-determination, a willingness to fight for it, and a rejection of oppression in all forms.

## **Critical thinking and media literacy**

- The media can shape public opinion by choosing what stories to tell and how to tell them.
- Headlines, word choice, and imagery can influence how we view groups or events.
- It is important to ask *what's not being shown* or *whose voices are missing*.

## **Power and control**

- Consider how governments, corporations, or interest groups may influence media agendas.
- Consider historical and modern examples of media being used to justify unjust systems.

## **Social justice and inequality**

- Oppressed groups are often misrepresented or vilified in mainstream media.
- Independent journalism and grassroots movements challenge dominant portrayals.

### **Image 3: Key discussion points**

**Image description:** Boy in Harry Potter costume reading the Daily Prophet magazine.

(PowerPoint slide 11, Facilitator's handouts, page 3)

#### **Media manipulation in fiction and reality**

- The Ministry of Magic in Harry Potter used the Daily Prophet to silence dissent and control public opinion.
- Certain governments or groups today try to suppress truth or spread disinformation (e.g. during elections or conflicts).

#### **Critical thinking and questioning the source**

- How do we know which sources are reliable?
- Discuss fact-checking and cross-referencing with other sources.
- Who gains from spreading certain narratives or leaving out information?

#### **Narrative framing and bias**

- Headlines and articles in the Daily Prophet were used to paint Harry, Dumbledore, and others as 'dangerous' or 'unstable'.
- The media plays on public fears and uses 'us vs. them' thinking.

### **Image 4: Key discussion points**

**Image description:** AI generated image of a hooded person sitting at a laptop with a background of conspiracy theory headlines.

(PowerPoint slide 12, Facilitator's handouts, page 4)

#### **Critical thinking and online literacy**

- Consider the role of social media, forums, and YouTube algorithms in promoting conspiracies
- Repetition, emotional appeal, and confirmation bias influence what people trust.

#### **Sense of belonging and control**

- Conspiracies often give people a feeling of having 'insider knowledge' or purpose.

- They often offer black-and-white explanations for confusing or frightening events.

### **The role of the internet**

- Algorithms and filter bubbles expose users to similar content, reinforcing beliefs.
- Online spaces can allow people to explore extreme ideas without accountability.

### **Ethical and social impacts**

- Explore some of the real-world consequences e.g. QAnon, or climate denial.
- Bad actors (e.g. foreign governments or extremist groups) use conspiracy theories to manipulate public opinion.

### **Differentiation activities**

| <b>Pre-entry Level 1</b>                                                  | <b>Stretch and challenge outcomes<br/>Experienced [ADULT] learners</b>    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role-play or scenario work: explore decisions or reactions depicted       | Role-play or scenario work: explore decisions or reactions depicted       |
| Reflective journals: write or draw feelings and thoughts after discussion | Reflective journals: write or draw feelings and thoughts after discussion |
| Creative expression: create posters or collages on related themes         | Debate preparation: research facts behind the issue shown                 |

### **Safeguarding and wellbeing**

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)
- If disclosures occur, follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately.

### **Debate activity**

#### **Why use debating activities with learners?**

- They can build confidence in speaking.
- They can help learners develop critical thinking and listening skills.
- They can reinforce British values around respect and tolerance.

- They allow learners to practice reasoned argument rather than personal disagreement.

**Time:** 20 – 30 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 14 - 19 **Facilitator's**

**handouts:** page 5

## Facilitator preparation

If you are unfamiliar with how to run a debate with your group, you may find this YouTube video helpful: Teaching a Class Debate (<https://youtu.be/KCDePzmPB8?feature=shared>).

Print copies of the Debate reflection handout (Facilitator's handouts, page 6) to use with learners.

**Debate motion: It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than ignore them.**

You could change the motion to be more local or topical. However, if you do we would advise that you follow the points given below:

- Select a subject relevant and appropriate for your group's age and maturity.
- Ideally, pick something that:
  - Has more than one valid perspective;
  - Is engaging or current;
  - Is suitable for discussion in a safe environment.
- To make this activity longer, you could set the question in advance and ask learners to go and research the topic in groups before they debate.

## Running the debate - formal

Introduce the motion and set up the discussion by using three or four of the discussion points below to spark thinking and conversations:

- Why might someone believe in conspiracy theories?
- Might ignoring their belief make the situation better or worse?

- What are the risks of challenging someone directly?
- How can you challenge someone respectfully?
- Is it ever OK to stay silent if you think a belief is harmful?
- Can you separate the person from the belief?

### **Revisit or set the ground rules**

Explain the expectations for the activity clearly:

- Respect all speakers
- Listen carefully
- Avoid personal comments
- Stick to time limits
- Raise hands to contribute

### **Explain the structure of the debate – formal debate** A

simple format could be:

- Introduction by chairperson (facilitator)
- Welcome everyone
- Introduce the motion and the teams
- Explain the structure and timings

### **Organisation**

Split the group into the following two teams:

**FOR: It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than to ignore them.**  
and

**AGAINST: It is better to ignore a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than challenge them.**

Each team will need time to prepare by:

- Discussing their arguments
- Nominating a speaker or take turns to share views

- Considering how to respond to points made by the other group

### **Opening statements**

- Proposition (for the motion): 2 - 3 minutes.
- Opposition (against the motion): 2 - 3 minutes.

### **Main arguments**

- Each team presents their points (alternating speakers)
- Each speaker has 2 - 3 minutes

### **Questions/challenges**

- The other team can ask questions or challenge points
- Speakers respond briefly

### **Closing statements**

- Proposition (for the motion) sums up
- Opposition (against the motion) sums up

### **Vote**

- Hands up or written votes to decide which team was more persuasive.

### **Facilitator role**

- Facilitate the discussion – add comments where needed but refrain from taking over. Keep learners focused on being respectful.
- Step-in if comments become personal or unsafe.

### **Learner roles**

- Be respectful of others' opinions.
- Listen carefully to opposing views.
- Ask questions to clarify or challenge ideas.
- Support your arguments with examples or evidence.
- Use language that reflects tolerance and respect.

### **Running the debate - dynamic**

You could find a more informal approach would work better with your group. If this is the case then you could follow the guidelines below:

### **Set up the discussion**

Set up the discussion using three or four of the following prompts:

- Why might someone believe in conspiracy theories?
- Might ignoring their belief make the situation better or worse?
- What are the risks of challenging someone directly?
- How can you challenge someone respectfully?
- Is it ever OK to stay silent if you think a belief is harmful?
- Can you separate the person from the belief?

### **Delivery considerations**

- Use seating arrangements to your advantage - circles or semi-circles promote more inclusive discussion.
- Stay observant - keep an eye on body language, side chats, or disengagement.
- Redirect distractions calmly - address off-task behaviour subtly to avoid embarrassment.
- Keep a calm, confident tone - your demeanour sets the tone for the room.
- Use names to maintain attention and personalise interaction.
- Balance freedom with boundaries - allow open dialogue but step in if the discussion goes off-topic or becomes inappropriate.
- Reinforce positive behaviour - acknowledge thoughtful contributions and respectful listening.
- Have a plan B - if the discussion stalls or becomes unproductive, be ready to switch gears (e.g. small groups, written reflection).

**In both formats you need to:**

### **Encourage participation**

- Check that all learners have an opportunity to speak
- Prompt quieter participants with questions if they are comfortable to contribute

## Reflection

After the debate, encourage learners to complete their Debate reflection sheet individually. Then facilitate group reflection:

- What went well?
- What was challenging?
- What did you learn about the topic and about debating?

## Differentiation activities

| <b>Pre-entry Level 1</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Stretch and challenge outcomes<br/>Experienced [ADULT] learners</b>           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ensure that groups are mixed in this activity and that you encourage peer support.                                             | Use reflective journals to write or draw feelings and thoughts after discussion. |
| Give opportunities for learners to access the focus of the debate in advance, to help them think through areas for discussion. | You could extend the discussion by asking 'what If' questions.                   |

## Safeguarding and wellbeing

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)

- If disclosures occur, **follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately**

## Quiz activity

### Why use quiz activities with learners?

Using a quiz enables you to check initial awareness and understanding, and used as a refresher, it helps to give you a sense of how much knowledge has been retained by the group or individuals.

**Time:** 5 -10 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 24 - 26 **Facilitator's**

**handouts:** pages 6

### Facilitator preparation

If using printed copies of the quiz, print enough copies in advance (Facilitator's handbook, page 6) You could also display the quiz using PowerPoint, which has the correct answers animated (slide 25), or simply just read the questions out aloud to the group (see [Quiz activity with answers](#) in the Appendices).

You can also access a copy of this as an online quiz here:

<https://wordwall.net/resource/94755240>.

*NB: If using the online version, you will not have access to your learners' answers.*

### Running the activity

Read out the statements in the quiz and ask the learners to shout out collectively 'fake' or 'fact'. Ask after each one: 'Why do you think it's fake or fact?'

### Differentiation activities

| Pre-entry Level 1                                                                      | Stretch and challenge outcomes<br>Experienced [ADULT] learners                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete the quiz by working in groups. Create posters to reinforce previous learning. | Use the quiz questions as a basis for additional research and encourage learners to share additional knowledge. |

### Safeguarding and wellbeing

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)

- If disclosures occur, **follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately.**

## Video activity

### Why use video activities with learners?

Videos can simplify complex concepts and support learners to develop some more abstract ideas. They often feel more dynamic and relatable, especially if they include real-life scenarios, expert interviews, or storytelling, and learners are more likely to stay focused and absorb information when the format is stimulating and responsive to different learning styles.

**Time:** 10 - 20 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 27 - 35 **Facilitator's**

**handouts:** page 7

### Facilitator preparation

Always watch the video in advance of the session and make notes for your own reference (PowerPoint slide 29) or visit [Educate Against Hate's YouTube Channel:](#) ). It is important that you check that the content will not potentially trigger individuals in your group. You should always ensure that learners are informed of the content within the session so they can exercise choice about if and how to engage.

Access the written script (Facilitator's handbook, page 27) and ensure there are copies available for learners if needed.

### Running the activity

Ensure the group is divided into small groups initially, balancing ability and confidence appropriately. The video can be watched by individuals but is best when there is a group working together as it encourages discussion and different perspectives.

To introduce, share the quote and discussion points on the PowerPoint (slide 28) and encourage learners to reflect on what it means.

***'A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.'***

*Mark Twain*

This quote sets the tone for discussing:

- How fast misinformation spreads.

- Why lies can be more attractive than truth.
- The difficulty of uncovering and responsibility to uncover reliable information

Move on to explain the purpose of the session: 'We will be looking at a video with powerful imagery and comments to help us explore different views and perspectives'.

Present the video (2:45 min run time). You may choose to pause it at points to open up discussion or wait until the end to do so. Give learners enough time to watch and then make their own notes, then ask them to discuss the video in groups.

Ask open-ended questions, for example:

- What did you notice first?
- How did this video make you feel?
- What is the story behind this video?
- Who might be affected by what is shown here?

Invite the groups to discuss the video and then share their thoughts with the wider group.

## **Key discussion points**

### **What makes conspiracies appealing?**

- Sense of superiority or 'insider knowledge' – like the character in the video who believes they're 'better' for not accepting mainstream information.
- Community and belonging – following influencers who validate your views (e.g. 'proper insiders' with big followings).
- Distrust in authority – the character mocks teachers, textbooks, and the news.

**Group prompt:** Why might someone trust an influencer over a qualified professional?

### **The difference between healthy scepticism and misinformation**

- Healthy scepticism asks questions and checks evidence from a range of trusted sources.

- Conspiracy thinking rejects anything that contradicts personal belief and seeks only confirming information.

**Group prompt:** Can you be open minded if you always think you already know the truth?

### **Echo chambers and confirmation bias**

- The video suggests confirmation bias, which is when you only trust people who say what you already believe.

**Group prompt:** Why might someone believe something just because many others do?

### **The role of social media in spreading lies**

- Fake news spreads faster on social media than news that is factual.
- 'A lie can travel...' is reflected in how quickly false information spreads online.

**Group prompt:** How can we check the source, evidence, and intent behind a post before trusting it?

## Optional video activities

Below are some suggestions of alternative, or additional, videos that you could use with your young people.

*NB: These videos are all hosted externally to Educate Against Hate and therefore could be moved, or taken off-line at any time.*

### 1) **How to understand misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, Shout Out**

**UK:**

<https://youtu.be/HD5MmuLDeFE?feature=shared> (2:53 mins)

**PowerPoint slide 32**

### 2) **Fake news: how to spot it, BBC:**

<https://youtu.be/Pj4w0J6odJE?feature=shared> (6:18 mins)

**PowerPoint slide 33**

### 3) **A Neuroscientist Explains What Conspiracy Theories Do to Your Brain, Inverse:**

<https://youtu.be/z98U1nMFrJQ?si=gDE6AkZuhsFoy68b> (5:30 mins) **PowerPoint slide 34**

## Suggested key discussion points

Invite the groups to discuss the video and the following questions and then share their thoughts with the wider group.

- What is the difference between misinformation and disinformation?
- What tactics did you notice (clickbait, emotional language, repetition)?
- Why do some people spread conspiracy theories - and how do they become dangerous?

## Safeguarding and wellbeing

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)
- If disclosures occur, **follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately.**

## Case study activity

### Why use case studies with learners?

Using case studies helps to introduce and reinforce vocabulary and the main steps of radicalisation in an easy-to-relate-to format.

**Time:** 20 - 40 mins

**PowerPoint slides:** 36 - 42

**Facilitator's handouts:** pages 8 - 12

### Facilitator preparation

Read through the case study below and Glossary of terms (Appendices) in advance. Make copies of the case study (Facilitator's handouts, page 8) for learners to use, or use the case study on PowerPoint (slide 37). There are comic strip versions of the case study which might be more suitable for some young people (Facilitator's handouts, pages 9 - 12, PowerPoint slides 38 - 40).

#### Case study, Lee's story

Lee, 17, enjoyed listening to podcasts during college commutes. What started as comedy shows soon led to discovering channels focusing on 'hidden histories' and 'unfiltered news'. A favourite podcast host often accused mainstream outlets of censorship and claimed that organisations were changing information to suit them and those in power.

Lee wanted to know more so joined the listeners' group chat, where people recommended more radical podcasts, shared unverified claims, and posted misleading memes. The conversation regularly blurred fact and fiction, with some group members pushing conspiracy theories and disinformation about current and historical events. Lee started challenging teachers' lessons, claiming 'the real truth' isn't allowed in colleges, and reposting inappropriate soundbites across social media.

When Lee's friend questioned these posts or tried to recommend Lee fact check them first, Lee rejected them and argued, 'Open your mind – stop accepting everything as fact.'

## Running the activity

Give each group the case study handout, Lee's story, or display it on the screen. Give the groups a key discussion point each (PowerPoint slide 41) and ask them to discuss the questions and form their answers. Advise learners that they need a spokesperson to give feedback to the wider group. Allow time for learners to feed back.

## Suggested key discussion points

### Understanding the content

- What's the difference between misinformation and disinformation in Lee's experience?
- What online tactics were used to pull Lee in (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)?

### Spotting the link to extremism

- How did Lee's beliefs shift from alternative opinions to potential radicalisation?
- What warning signs can you spot?

### Building resistance

- What could Lee or their friends have done differently?
- What fact-checking or source-checking strategies could have helped?
- How might echo chambers have affected their view?

## Differentiation activities

| Pre-entry Level 1                                              | Stretch and challenge outcomes<br>Experienced [ADULT] learners                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role playing could be used to help bring the case study alive. | Learners could create some social media dialogue. They could swap them with another group, for them to respond to the remarks and close down the conversation. |

## **Safeguarding and wellbeing**

- Be aware of any known triggers for individuals.
- Signpost to support (pastoral support, trusted adults, helplines)
- If disclosures occur, **follow your organisation's safeguarding policy immediately.**

# Appendices

[Opening script](#)

[Closing script](#)

[Suggested ground rules](#)

[Quiz activity with answers](#)

[Session plan 1: 60 mins](#) [Session](#)

[plan 2: 60 mins](#)

[Glossary of terms](#)

## Opening script

Good morning/afternoon everyone, and welcome to today's session. In this lesson, we're going to explore how to tell the difference between **misinformation** and **disinformation**, and why that matters. We'll look at some real examples of how people are influenced online.

This session is part of our work around safeguarding, digital literacy, and the Prevent duty. It's not about telling you what to think – it's about helping you learn how to think critically, evaluate sources, and stay safe online.

Please remember this is a safe space: we're going to have discussions, look at some case studies/images, and you are always welcome to opt out or take a break if anything feels overwhelming. Respect for each other's views is essential, even when we disagree.

So, let's get started.

## **Closing script**

Thank you for taking part in today's session about mis and disinformation.

We've looked at how online content can be used to manipulate, mislead, and even radicalise people - and how that can affect individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Hopefully, you're leaving today with some practical tools: how to spot fake news, how to fact-check sources, and how to challenge harmful ideas respectfully.

Remember: not everything you see online is true - and just because something gets lots of likes or views doesn't mean it's trustworthy.

If anything we've talked about today has made you concerned – for yourself, a friend, or in response to something you've seen online – please speak to your tutor, a trusted adult, or the safeguarding team.

I will stay here for a few minutes if anyone wants to ask questions privately or talk one-to-one.

Thank you

## **Suggested ground rules**

Below are our suggested ground rules for the sessions. Facilitators can display these on a slide or read them aloud:

### **Do:**

- Respect, listen, and let others finish
- Share ideas, not others' personal details
- Pass if you wish
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Use respectful language
- Keep things private unless safety is at risk
- Ask questions

**Don't:**

- Interrupt
- Share private information about others
- Use offensive/extremist language

You may also want to work with your group to develop their own ground rules. This article from FE News has advice on how to do so:

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/exclusive/establishing-ground-rules-with-your-learners/>

## **Quiz activity with answers**

### **1) Clickbait headlines often use emotional words to grab attention.**

Fact: Clickbait uses dramatic or emotional language to grab your attention and get more clicks—even if the content is misleading.

### **2) A news report which starts with: 'Shocking video of aliens landing in London!' is reliable.**

Fake: Reliable news outlets avoid sensational or unverified claims. This sounds more like fake news or clickbait.

### **3) A bot can automatically post fake news to thousands of accounts.**

Fact: Bots are automated accounts used to spread disinformation quickly and widely, especially on social media.

### **4) Echo chambers mean that you get to hear lots of different opinions.**

Fake: An echo chamber is when you're only exposed to ideas that match your own beliefs, making it harder to hear other perspectives.

### **5) Reverse image searches can check if a photo is real.**

Fact: A reverse image search helps you check if an image has been edited, reused, or taken out of text.

## Session plan: Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies (part 1)

### **Aim of session**

To develop learners' ability to recognise online manipulation tactics and to equip them with practical skills for verifying information and evaluating online content critically.

### **Learning outcomes**

- 1) Identify online manipulation tactics (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)
- 2) Use fact-checking tools and source evaluation strategies

### **All learners will be able to:**

- 1) Explain the difference between misinformation and disinformation
- 2) Identify online manipulation tactics (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)

### **Some learners will be able to:**

- 3) Differentiate between misinformation, disinformation, and professional reporting.
- 4) Assess the credibility of online sources, content, and claims.

### **Facilitator preparation:**

Read through the Facilitator's guide and the accompanying slides. Familiarise yourself with the Opening and Closing scripts in the Appendices.

If using paper copies, print enough of the following from the pack Facilitator's handouts: Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

- Images (pages 1 - 4)
- Debate reflection sheet (page 5)

| Timing | Activity                          | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                      | Monitoring and feedback | Resources                                            |
|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 mins | <b>Opening script</b>             | Opening and introduction to the content. Read the Opening script and introduce the learning outcomes. | Q&A                     | <a href="#">Opening script</a><br>PowerPoint slide 2 |
| 3 mins | <b>Establish the ground rules</b> | Refer to listed ground rules on PowerPoint or agree these with learners.                              |                         | PowerPoint slide 3, Flipchart , IWB                  |

|         |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                              |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10 mins | <b>Starter activity</b> | <p>Split group into smaller groups of 2 to 3.</p> <p>Using the online quiz 'Fact check: Real or fake - can you tell the difference?' ask the learners if they think the image is real or fake.</p> <p>Once you have a general consensus, click that as the answer.</p> <p><b>ASK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which images surprised you the most?</li> <li>• Can you believe everything you see?</li> <li>• Do you know how to do a Google reverse image search?</li> </ul> <p>If you have time, and they don't already know, introduce your learners to how to do a reverse image search: <a href="#">How to Reverse Image Search with Google Images</a>:</p> | Q&A, Review answers as a group. | PowerPoint slides 4 - 7, IWB |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|

| Timing | Activity | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                  | Monitoring and feedback | Resources |
|--------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
|        |          | <a href="https://www.howtogeek.com/352687/how-to-reversepicture-search-with-google-images/">https://www.howtogeek.com/352687/how-to-reversepicture-search-with-google-images/</a> |                         |           |

|         |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                              |                                                                                            |
|---------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 mins | <b>Picture stimuli activity</b> | <p>Keep the group in their pairs or small groups. Lay images on the tables or share them on the screen and ask for discussion, prompting as you go around.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from the images/quote?</li> <li>• How do they make you feel?</li> <li>• Do you feel differently about anything having seen and discussed these?</li> </ul> <p>Encourage each group to write their notes down and then feed back their top three points. Encourage learners to reflect on how they felt about the activity and whether they feel differently after the activity.</p> | Q&A, Discussion              | PowerPoint slides 8 - 13 or print outs of the images (Facilitator's handouts, pages 1 – 4) |
| 20 mins | <b>Debate activity</b>          | <p><b>Debate motion: It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than ignore them.</b></p> <p>Set up the discussion and use two or three discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why might someone believe in conspiracy theories?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Q&A, Discussion, Observation | PowerPoint slides 14 - 18, Flipchart, IWB                                                  |

| Timing | Activity | Facilitator and learner activity | Monitoring and feedback | Resources |
|--------|----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
|--------|----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Might ignoring the situation make it better or worse?</li> <li>• What are the risks of challenging someone directly?</li> <li>• How can you challenge someone respectfully?</li> <li>• Is it OK to stay silent if you think a belief is harmful?</li> <li>• Can you separate the person from the belief?</li> </ul> <p>Split the group in half. One team is given:</p> <p><b>FOR: It is better to challenge a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than to ignore them.</b> and the other is given:</p> <p><b>AGAINST: It is better to ignore a friend's conspiracy beliefs rather than challenge them.</b></p> <p>Each team should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss their arguments</li> <li>• Nominate a speaker or take turns to share views</li> <li>• Respond to points made by the other group</li> </ul> <p>Discuss roles, as shown on the PowerPoint, with the group. Hold the debate.</p> |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

| Timing | Activity                 | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Monitoring and feedback              | Resources                                                                          |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 mins | <b>Debate reflection</b> | <p>Ask the learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from the other team?</li> <li>• Did anyone change their mind or adjust their view?</li> </ul> <p>Hand out the Debate reflection sheet for learners to complete.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Q&A, Feedback in discussion, Handout | PowerPoint slide 19, IWB, Debate reflection sheet (Facilitator's handouts, page 5) |
| 3 mins | <b>Let's discuss</b>     | <p>Ask learners the following (they should respond using Padlet, on sticky notes or aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some online 'tricks' that we have discussed today?</li> <li>• What will you do now to check if an image is real or fake?</li> <li>• What will you do to check if something is misinformation or disinformation?</li> <li>• How can help prevent fake news and disinformation from spreading?</li> <li>• What one thing are you going to take away from today?</li> </ul> | Q&A, Discussion                      | PowerPoint slide 20, Padlet, sticky notes                                          |
| 2 mins | <b>Closing script</b>    | <p>Read the Closing script.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding reminder:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Q&A                                  | <a href="#">Closing script</a>                                                     |

| Timing | Activity | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Monitoring and feedback | Resources |
|--------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
|        |          | <p>If you have any concerns about a learner, <b>follow your internal safeguarding procedure</b>.</p> <p>Do not promise confidentiality – explain that you may need to share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).</p> |                         |           |

## Session plan: Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies (part 2)

### **Aim of session**

To help learners spot false information online, understand how it can lead to harmful beliefs, and learn ways to check if things are true

### **Learning outcomes**

1. Explain the difference between misinformation and disinformation
2. Identify online manipulation tactics (e.g. clickbait, bots, echo chambers)
3. Explain how online conspiracies link to radicalisation and recruitment
4. Use fact-checking tools and source evaluation strategies

### **All learners will be able to:**

- Explain how online conspiracies link to radicalisation and recruitment to groups
- Use fact-checking tools and source evaluation strategies

### **Some learners will be able to:**

- Apply fact-checking strategies in professional and personal settings.
- Reflect on how confirmation bias and algorithms influence beliefs

**Facilitator preparation:**

Read through the Facilitator's guide and the accompanying slides. Familiarise yourself with the [Opening](#) and [Closing](#) scripts in the Appendices. Familiarise yourself with the videos and decide which you feel is best suited to your learners.

If using paper copies, print enough of the following from the pack Facilitator's handouts: Truth or trick? Spotting lies and conspiracies

- Quiz (page 6)
- Case study: Lee's story (pages 8-12)

| Time   | Activity                        | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                           | Monitoring and feedback | Resources                                            |
|--------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 mins | <b>Opening script</b>           | Opening and introduction to the content. Read the Opening script and introduce the learning outcomes.                                                                                      | Q&A                     | <a href="#">Opening script</a><br>PowerPoint slide 2 |
| 3 mins | <b>Revisit the ground rules</b> | Facilitator to refer to listed ground rules in PowerPoint or agree with learners                                                                                                           | Discussion              | PowerPoint slide 3, Flipchart , IWB                  |
| 5 mins | <b>Quiz activity/recap</b>      | Share the statements shown on PowerPoint slides. Ask the learners to shout out collectively 'fake' or 'fact' in response to each. Ask them to tell you why they chose the answer they did. | Q&A,                    | PowerPoint slides 24 - 26, IWB,                      |

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| 25 mins | <b>Video activity</b> | <p>Start with sharing the quote with your learners and encouraging them to reflect on what it means.</p> <p>Play selected video to the learners.</p> <p>Facilitate a discussion based on the questions suggested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you notice first?</li> <li>• How did this video make you feel?</li> <li>• What is the story behind this video?</li> <li>• Who might be affected by what is shown here?</li> </ul> | Q&A,<br>Discussion | PowerPoint slides<br>27 - 35,<br>IWB, |
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| Time | Activity | Facilitator and learner activity | Monitoring and feedback | Resources |
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| 20 mins | <b>Case study activity</b> | <p>Divide learners into smaller groups.</p> <p>Give each group the Case study: Lee's story or display it on the screen. Assign a different heading and its questions to each group and ask learners to discuss and prepare for feedback.</p> <p><b>Understanding the content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's the difference between misinformation and disinformation in Lee's experience?</li> <li>• What online tactics were used to pull Lee in (clickbait, bots, echo chambers)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Spotting the link to extremism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did Lee's beliefs shift from alternative opinions to potential radicalisation?</li> <li>• What warning signs can you spot?</li> </ul> <p><b>Building resistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What could Lee or her friends have done differently?</li> <li>• What fact-checking or source-checking strategies could have helped?</li> <li>• How might echo chambers have affected their views?</li> </ul> | Q&Q,<br>Discussion,<br>Observation | PowerPoint slides 36 - 41, IWB, Case study: Lee's story (Facilitator's handouts, pages 8 - 12) |
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| Time   | Activity             | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Monitoring and feedback      | Resources                                 |
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|        |                      | <p>Ask each group to nominate a spokesperson and share their main points of discussion.</p> <p>Offer prompts and encourage learners to talk through their reasoning.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                              |                                           |
| 5 mins | <b>Reflection</b>    | <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you respect someone's right to an opinion while still calling them out?</li> <li>• How might misinformation you see online affect your own beliefs or decisions?</li> <li>• What can you do to make sure you're sharing information that is truthful?</li> </ul>                                                                      | Q&A, Feedback in discussion, | PowerPoint slide 42, IWB,                 |
| 3 mins | <b>Let's discuss</b> | <p>Ask learners the following (they should respond using Padlet, on sticky notes or aloud):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are misinformation and disinformation different?</li> <li>• How can conspiracy theories lead to harm?</li> <li>• What are some of the dangers of echo chambers?</li> <li>• What are some ways you can use to 'fact check' information?</li> </ul> | Q&A, Discussion              | PowerPoint slide 43, Padlet, sticky notes |

| Time   | Activity              | Facilitator and learner activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Monitoring and feedback | Resources                      |
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|        |                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What one thing are you going to take away from today?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                                |
| 2 mins | <b>Closing script</b> | <p>Read the Closing script. <b>Safeguarding reminder:</b></p> <p>If you have any concerns about a learner, <b>follow your internal safeguarding procedure.</b></p> <p>Do not promise confidentiality - explain that you may need to share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).</p> | Q&A                     | <a href="#">Closing script</a> |

| Glossary of terms            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <b><u>Algorithms</u></b>     | <p>Automated sets of rules used by digital platforms (like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, or Google) to decide what content users see, based on their behaviour, preferences, and engagement patterns.</p> <p>In the context of misinformation (false or misleading content shared without intent to harm) and disinformation (deliberately false content shared to deceive or manipulate), algorithms play a critical role in how that content is amplified, spread, and consumed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b><u>Clickbait</u></b>      | <p>Online content that uses sensational, exaggerated, or misleading headlines and thumbnails to encourage people to click on a link.</p> <p>Key points from DfE guidance on digital literacy and online safety (e.g. <i>Teaching Online Safety in Schools</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clickbait often overstates or distorts the actual content to attract attention</li> <li>• Clickbait can lead to low-quality, misleading, or harmful information.</li> <li>• Clickbait is frequently used to generate advertising revenue through page views ('clicks').</li> </ul> <p>It may also be used to spread misinformation or extremist material.</p> |
| <b><u>Disinformation</u></b> | <p>Deliberately false or manipulated information shared with the intent to mislead, cause harm, or influence opinion or behaviour. It is often used to fuel division, undermine trust in institutions, or radicalise individuals.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <b><u>Fact checking</u></b> | <p>The process of verifying whether information, claims, or stories are accurate, reliable, and supported by evidence.</p> <p>Key points highlighted in DfE and related guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves comparing information against credible sources</li> <li>• Helps distinguish facts from opinions, rumours, or deliberate misinformation</li> <li>• Is an essential skill in media literacy and critical thinking education.</li> </ul>                                              |
| <b><u>Fake news</u></b>     | <p>Information presented as news that is false or misleading, often deliberately created to deceive, misinform, or manipulate people.</p> <p>Key characteristics highlighted in DfE materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be entirely fabricated or distort real events.</li> <li>• Often designed to provoke emotional reactions or influence opinions.</li> <li>• Can spread quickly on social media.</li> <li>• Sometimes used to promote extremist ideologies or conspiracy theories.</li> </ul> |

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| <b><u>Media literacy</u></b> | <p>Media literacy is 'the ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts', Ofcom.</p> <p>Media literacy enables learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think critically about what they see and read.</li> <li>• Recognise bias, propaganda, and fake news.</li> <li>• Understand algorithms, influencers, and targeted advertising.</li> <li>• Participate safely and responsibly in the digital world.</li> </ul> <p>It supports British values, safeguarding, and digital citizenship by empowering young people to be informed, safe, and active participants in society.</p> |
| <b><u>Misinformation</u></b> | <p>False or misleading information shared without the intent to deceive. It is often spread by individuals who believe it to be true but may lack the skills or knowledge to verify it.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

**Propaganda**

Information, ideas, or messages that are spread deliberately to influence people's opinions, emotions, or behaviour, often in a biased or misleading way.

Key features:

- It is overtly persuasive - the goal is to promote a particular cause, viewpoint, or ideology.
- It can be based on facts, half-truths, or lies.
- It often uses emotional appeals, repetition, and selective information.
- It is common in political campaigns, advertising, and extremist recruitment.

DfE examples: Terrorist groups using videos to recruit supporters; extremist materials that glorify violence; or political ads that distort opponents' records.

**Trusted adult**

A responsible, safe, and approachable adult whom a young person feels comfortable turning to for support, guidance, or disclosure of concerns. In educational settings, this may include tutors, pastoral staff, safeguarding leads, or any member of staff who has built a consistent, respectful, and supportive relationship with the young person.

The role of a trusted adult is to:

- Listen non-judgmentally and take the young person's concerns seriously.
- Provide appropriate support or reassurance and help the young person understand their options.
- Act in line with safeguarding procedures, including referring concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and confidentiality, explaining when and why they may need to share information.

The DfE encourages all schools and colleges to ensure every student knows who their trusted adult is and feels confident in accessing them.