

Myth Busting Strategies to Promote Truth Online



Presented by Dawn Crawford
@bcdciideas

Who We Are

- Full-service communications agency that works exclusively with nonprofits across the country
- **20 years** of dedicated nonprofit experience paired with **10+ years** of corporate advertising experience
- bcdcideas.com
- [@bcdcideas](https://twitter.com/bcdcideas)



I D E A S



Causes

Conservation



Public Health



Education



Arts/Culture



Human
Services

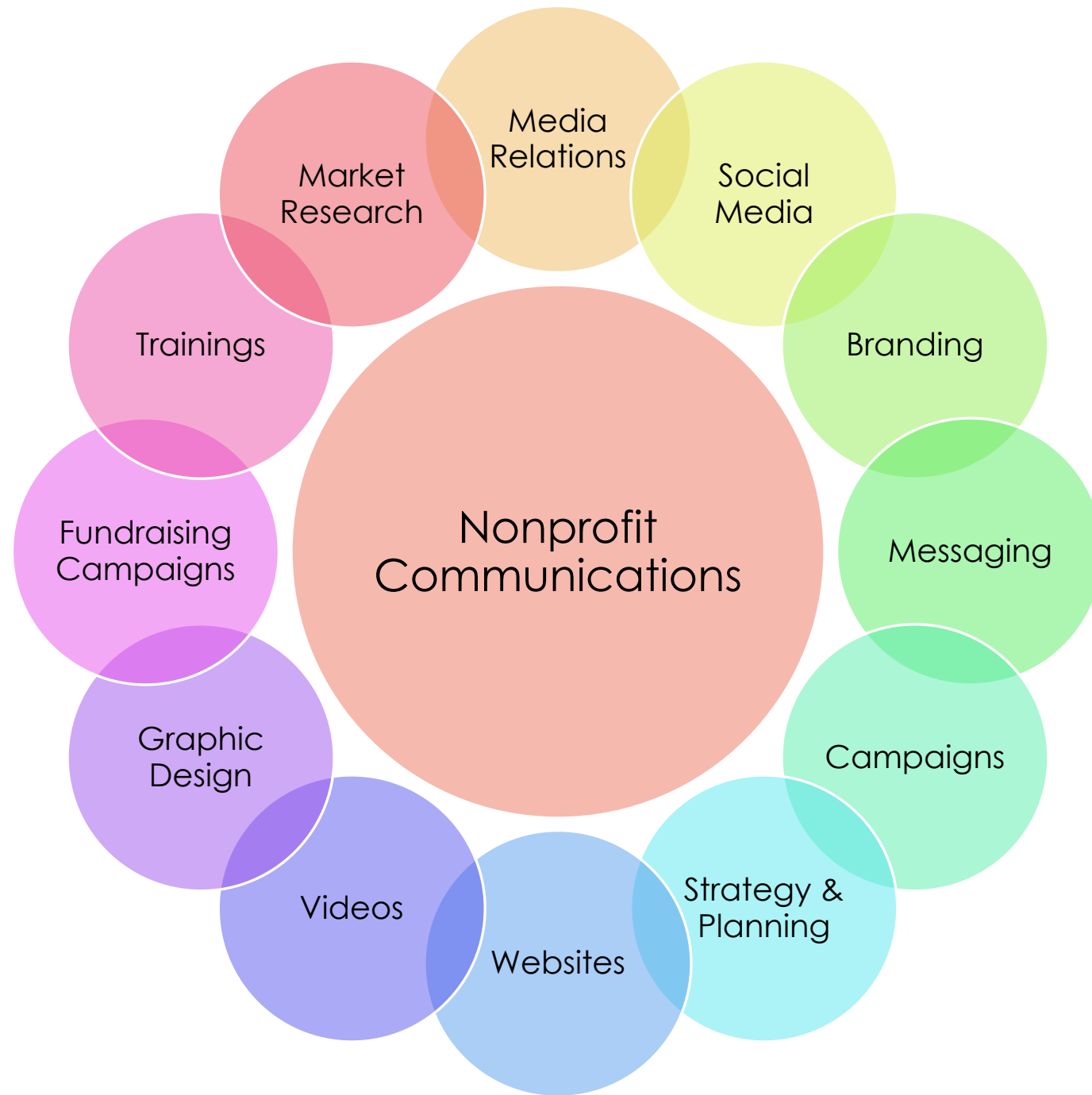


Animal
Welfare



Foundations





Dawn Crawford

- Healthcare and vaccine communications are **my passion**
- Spent every day of the past **20 years** supporting nonprofits to better communicate their mission and change the world
- Worked with over **100 nonprofits** as CEO of BC/DC Ideas
- Still a hands-on practitioner
- Practical-Optimist



Middle School Health Starts Here



Get a routine well visit to check your child's overall health and growth

Keep your child in tip-top shape at MiddleSchoolHealth.org

You are Entering an

IMMUNITY COMMUNITY



Over **80%** of our children and staff are fully vaccinated to protect our community against certain diseases.



YOU ARE POWERFUL!

The power to prevent cancer is in your hands!

HPV vaccination increases 5-fold in August at the peak of back-to-school appointments. It's time to put as many young people as possible on the path to lifelong prevention of HPV cancers.



TAK³ CONTROL

3 VACCINES TO PROTECT ME

GET 1
Tdap Vaccine

GET 2
MMV Vaccine

GET 3
HPV Vaccine

Taking control of your future starts with protecting yourself from five diseases. It's never too late to start.

5/14



WELCOME TO
CAMP Wannaprevent

HPV VACCINATION IS CANCER PREVENTION



Mission: **HPV CANCER FREE TEXAS**



**I'm not a
medical
expert.**

I am a...



Communications strategist
focusing on change
behavior



OG Myth Buster – Spreading
truths online for 15 years



Love to engage with
empathy online

**I'm NOT going to give you
talking points today**

I AM going to give you the strategies to always
have the most “correct” answer.

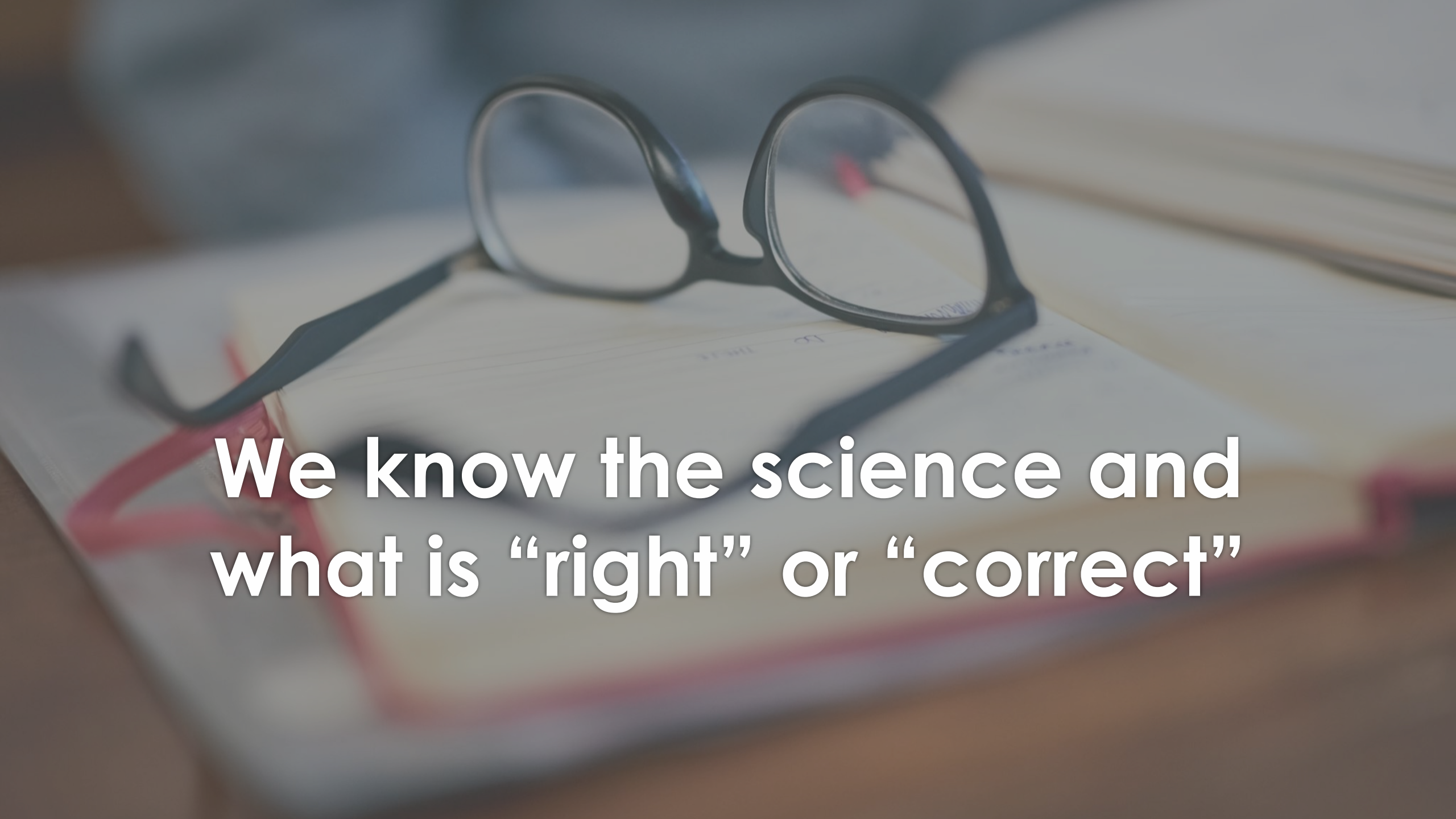


Why Myth Busting is Hard

US

A healthcare professional with dark, curly hair, wearing a white lab coat, stands in a clinical setting. They are smiling and positioned in front of several computer monitors. The largest monitor in the background displays a complex medical image, possibly a CT scan or MRI, with various colored overlays and anatomical structures. To the left, another monitor shows a similar medical image. To the right, a third monitor displays a different medical image. The professional has a name tag on their lab coat that reads "St. George Hospital" and "Dr. Faisal M". The overall scene is brightly lit, and the professional appears to be a doctor or a senior healthcare professional.

Healthcare and Public Health
professionals earned your titles
and earned your knowledge

A pair of black-rimmed glasses with clear lenses is resting on a stack of papers. The papers have some red markings, possibly a red ribbon or a red pen stroke. The background is blurred, showing more papers and a wooden surface.

**We know the science and
what is “right” or “correct”**



**Education + Information = CORRECT
in our minds**

A person's hand is shown pointing at a financial candlestick chart. The chart features blue and white candlesticks, a blue line graph, and a grid background. Several numerical values are visible on the chart: 39, 465, 571, 367, 490, and 48. The text is overlaid on the chart in white.

Science and recommendations change.
ALL THE TIME.
That is the power of science.



THEM



People believe the first thing they see.
Cognitive science research shows people are biased to believe a claim if they have seen it before.



**There is a lot of BAD information out there.
It spreads easily.**



**Change makes people uncomfortable.
Even scared.**



**Uncertainly is uncomfortable.
People make up what they don't have
answers to solve.**



**People feel powerless. It feels like you are
“doing something” when you argue
online.**



**We Are All
Trolls**





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**MAKE
AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN!**



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BIDEN
HARRIS

**OUR
BEST DAYS
STILL LIE
AHEAD**

[LEARN MORE →](#)

We are in an era of

OPINION



Inside The Mind Of A Troll

Why we are seeing more doubt?



Fear dies slowly

People are afraid and it takes time to heal



Nature of scientific reporting

Most online media outlets don't benefit from the quality control of journalists and editors.



Facts don't always work –
remember your own faith

Research shows that bombarding people with evidence about the safety/science may make them more resistant to your message

What are they thinking?



DIFFERENT INFORMATION
+ DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE



PROTECT THEIR
FAMILY/THEMSELVES



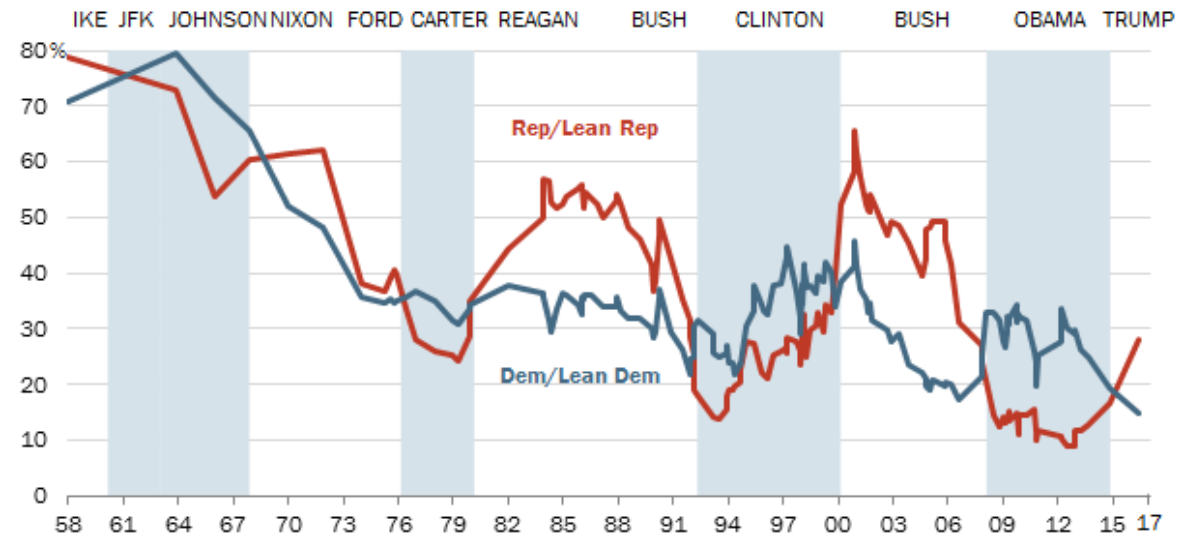
MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED
TRAUMA

Trust shifts

Society changes who they believe and trust.

Trust in government climbs among Republicans, falls among Democrats

Trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time...



Notes: From 1976-2016 the trend line represents a three-survey moving average.

Source: Survey conducted April 5-11, 2017.

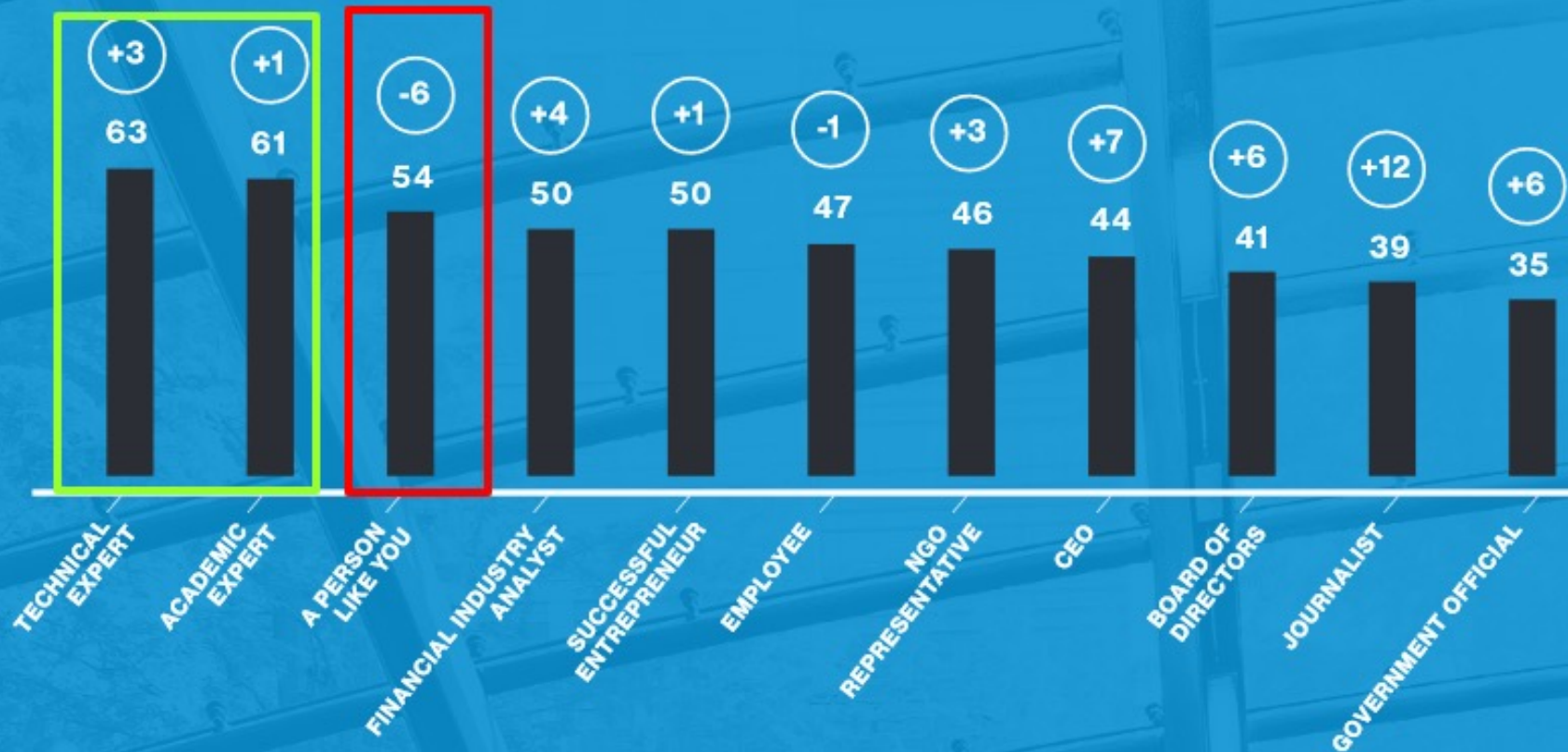
Trend sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

FIG. 10

Voices of Authority Regain Credibility

Percent who rate each spokesperson as very/extremely credible, and change 2017-2018



Edelman Trust Barometer edelman.com/trust-barometer



Less than a Quarter Now Trust Social Media

Per cent trust in each source for general news and information



	2017	2018	Change, 2017 - 2018
Traditional media	48	61	+13
Search engines	54	47	-7
Online-only media	40	45	+5
Owned media	31	26	-5
Social media	26	24	-2
Media as an institution	32	32	0

Traditional media
up 13 points

Source: 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Q1 78-182. When looking for general news and information, how much would you trust each type of source for general news and information? Please use a nine-point scale where one means that you "do not trust it at all" and nine means that you "trust it a great deal." (Top 4 Box, Trust) General Population, United Kingdom, question asked of half the sample



Why Bother

Why it's important to bust myths



Good Experience

Remember that MOST people who support you agree with you! However, there might be some days that you encounter negative comments.



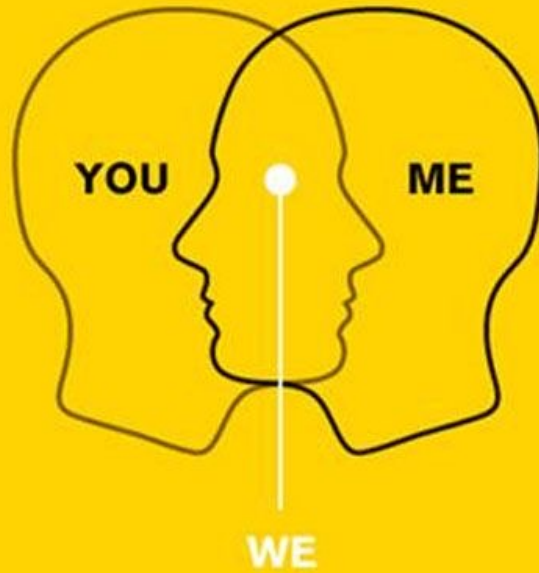
It's Our Duty to Correct Misinformation

It's your duty to protect the credibility of your organization. Sharing misinformation is not acceptable.



We Have Work to Do

You are meeting your mission and there is more work to do. The middle isn't good enough.



Empathy is A
Choice



Myth Busting 101

An aerial photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore. The water is a deep blue on the left, transitioning to white foam as it breaks, and finally to a golden-brown sand beach on the right. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**We are at the mercy of the
tide of information**

RULE 1:
Do Not “Myth Bust”

Myth vs Fact Communications Don't Work

- Cognitive science research shows people are biased to believe a claim if they have seen it before.
- Even seeing it once or twice may be enough to make the claim more credible.
- This bias happens even when people originally think a claim is false, when the claim is not aligned with their own beliefs, and when it seems relatively implausible.
- What's more, research shows thinking deeply or being smart does not make you immune to this cognitive bias.
- Older adults were especially susceptible to this repetition. The more often they were initially told a claim was false, the more they believed it to be true a few days later.
- Repeating a myth may also lead people to overestimate how widely it is accepted in the broader community.

SOURCE: **Seeing is believing: how media mythbusting can actually make false beliefs stronger.** May 25, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/seeing-is-believing-how-media-mythbusting-can-actually-make-false-beliefs-stronger-138515>

The impact of mythbusting sites

What you see:

THE DAILY MYTHBUSTER

Home Topics Coronavirus Subscribe Donate

MYTH:

"The moon is made of green cheese."

FACT:

The Moon formed 4.51 billion years ago, some 60 million years after the origin of the Solar System. Several forming mechanisms have been proposed, including the fission of the Moon from Earth's crust through centrifugal force (which would require too great an initial spin of Earth), the gravitational capture of a pre-formed Moon (which would require an unfeasibly extended atmosphere of Earth to dissipate the energy of the passing Moon), and the co-formation of Earth and the Moon together in the primordial accretion disk (which does not explain the depletion of metals in



What you might remember:

THE DAILY MYTHBUSTER


Home Topics Coronavirus Subscribe Donate

MYTH:

The moon is made of green cheese.

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MYTH #1:

Aphasia is a rare disorder.



TactusTherapy
#aphasiaawareness

MYTH:

COVID-19 is only dangerous
for people 65 or older.



FACT:



Between
14-21%

of patients aged 20-44 who get
COVID-19 will get sick enough to
require hospitalization.

Approximately

12%

of all COVID-19 cases
are serious enough to
require hospitalization.



ORANGE COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

20%

of those hospitalizations
were among patients
20-44 years old.



orangecountync.gov/Coronavirus

RULE 2: You Are Correct



You have science and professionalism on your side.



You have your organization's credibility to defend but getting into an online fight is unpleasant and unproductive.



You got THIS!

RULE 3: Spread Good Information



Have a go to source of information.



Create you're a Truth document/webpage and update monthly.



Know it's okay if things change.

Create Your Own Truth Page



Make this
easy for
yourself

Park
information
and
resources in a
central,
shared space

Make a Truth Page

- **Low Reading Level** – Keep language simple and common usage.
- **Use Concrete Language** – A clear understanding providing precise details and specific identifying information.
- **Repetition** – Use the same talking point in every answer.
- **Connect Information To Personal Experience** – Give testimonials or tell a patient story.
- **Trigger Memory And Emotion** – Make it about their lives and their family.

Myth Based Content

Myths About COVID-19

There are many myths and a great deal of misinformation on the internet about COVID-19. Make sure you get your information from a trusted public health source such as the [VDH](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) or the [World Health Organization](#). Here are some common myths that are making their rounds on the internet and social media.

Garlic and onions: Garlic and onions are healthy foods that may have some germ fighting abilities; however, there is no proof or evidence that eating them will protect you from or cure COVID-19.

Pepper: Pepper added to food does not protect you from or cure COVID-19. Hot peppers might make your nose run so be sure to have tissues on hand when enjoying spicy food!

Truth Based Content

Truths About COVID-19

The scientific information about COVID-19 is changing rapidly as the medical community learns more about this illness. Make sure you get your information about COVID-19 from a trusted public health source such as the [VDH](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) or the [World Health Organization](#).

Here are truths about COVID-19.

Home remedies are not effective in preventing or treating COVID-19. COVID-19 is best prevented with social distancing, face coverings and frequent hand sanitation. Home remedies like eating more garlic, onions and pepper are not known to prevent COVID-19.

FACT:

Eating garlic does
not protect from
COVID-19.

Learn more: emoryhealthcare.org/covid

Adapted from the WHO

EMORY
HEALTHCARE



TALKING POINTS: COVID-19 Resources

- WHO -
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
- CHOP -
<https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/making-vaccines/prevent-covid>
- FactCheck.org -
<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/09/qa-on-coronavirus-vaccines/>



It's okay for things to change

Science is about testing and retesting



Let's Do
Some Myth
Busting!



Step 1: Be Prepared

Community Rules

Before you share any information about your mission on your social media channels, make sure your Community Rules are up to date and easy for **you** to follow.

Unfortunately, you may at times have to block a user. Be clear with yourself and your community when that happens.

RESOURCE!

I have a sample Community Rules in the download area!

EXAMPLE: COMMUNITY RULES

Welcome! This is a Facebook group for HPV vaccine advocates, supporters, healthcare providers and others where you can ask questions and share information and relevant news about HPV cancers and the HPV vaccine.

MISSION:

This group is hosted by The National HPV Vaccination Roundtable which is a national coalition of public, private and voluntary organizations and invited individuals dedicated to reducing the incidence of and mortality from HPV-associated cancer in the U.S.

GUIDELINES FOR POSTING:

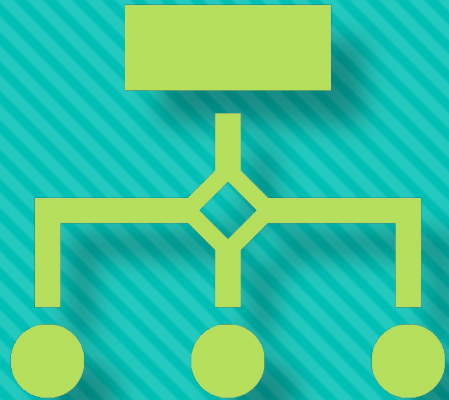
When you post, please provide as much information as possible, such as the organization you represent and your reason for posting.

WE LOVE IT WHEN YOU--

- Are considerate of our mission, and respectful of one another's opinions.
- Ask questions of the "hive mind" of other parents, HPV vaccination experts and advocates
- Share new projects you've launched or read about
- Read and share news headlines about HPV vaccination and innovative education projects

PLEASE—

Use your discretion. Invite members to join our group who will benefit our community.



Step 2: Triage the Question

Relax

The first thing to do if you encounter a negative comment is to...

take a deep breath and stay calm

Remember that you have science and professionalism on your side. You have your organization's credibility to defend but getting into an online fight is unpleasant and unproductive.

**Stop and really listen to the
QUESTION**

Two Types of Negative Comments

Questions Phrased in a Negative Way

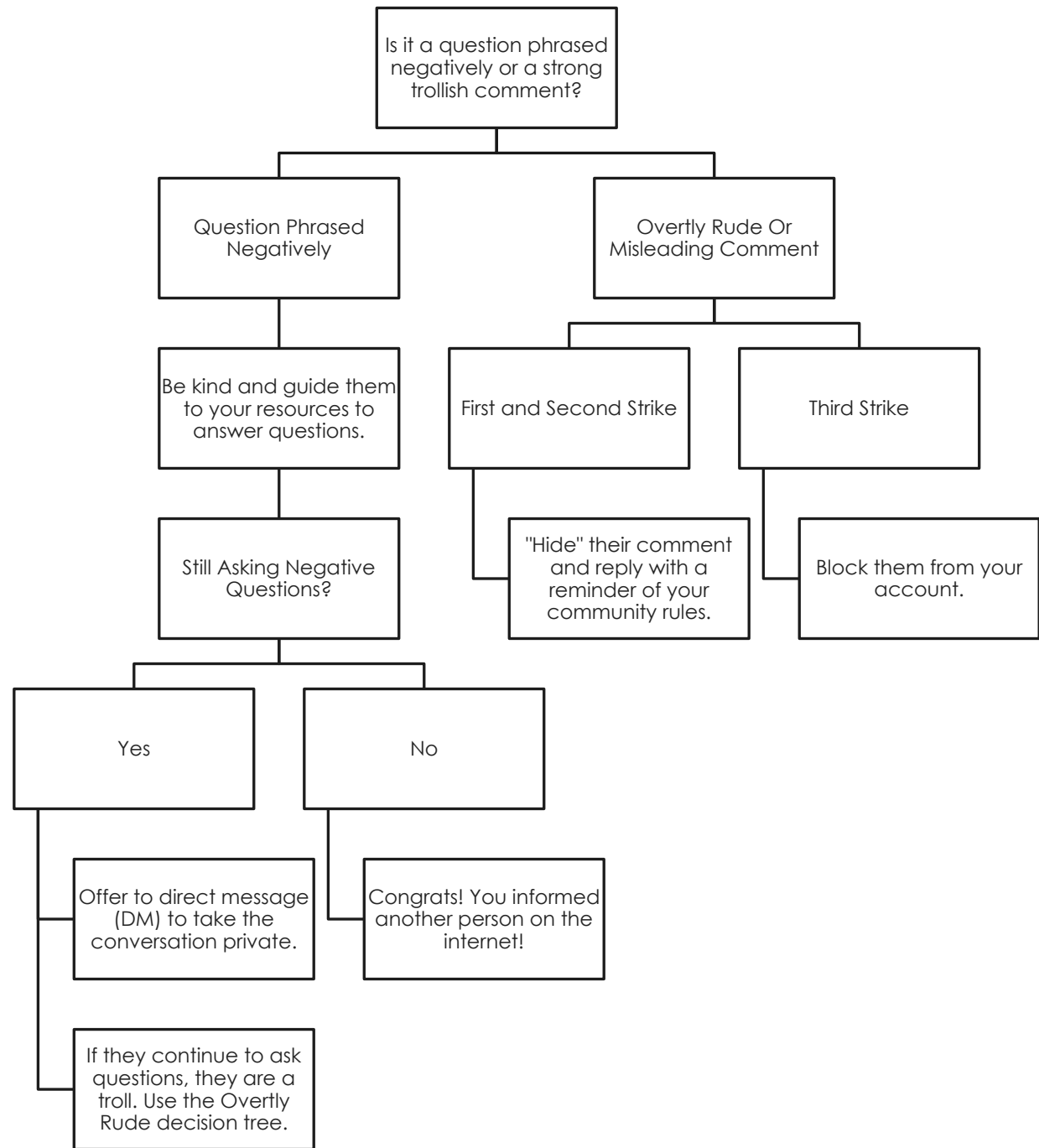
- May be well-intentioned but are antagonistic, provocative or needlessly nitpicking. With these types of questioners, direct them to links on your website or other resources.

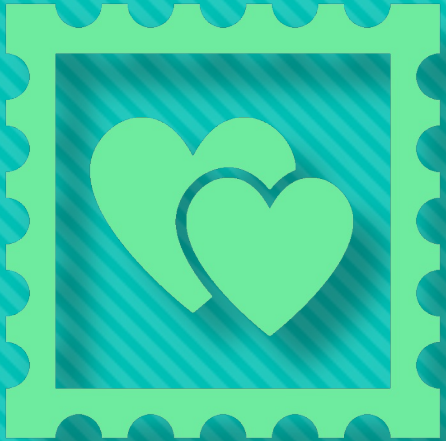
Overtly Rude or Misleading Comments

- Comments that are hostile to your organization, harmful to your community or contain misleading information about vaccination cannot be tolerated. Enforcing the “two strikes you’re out” rule is important for these individuals.

RESOURCE!

I have the Decision Tree in the download area!





Step 3: Answer with Heart



**Speak from a place of
EMPATHY**

Use “I” Statements

Use “I” statements to make a connection. Try saying...

**“I hear your concern. I have some
information from”**

Send them to your website or a credible source to get more information.

You don't have all the answers

Use a phrases to redirect a conversation.

If someone is asking too many questions, say...

“You know, I don't know the answer to that question. But you could....

Check out our website...

Try our partner's website...

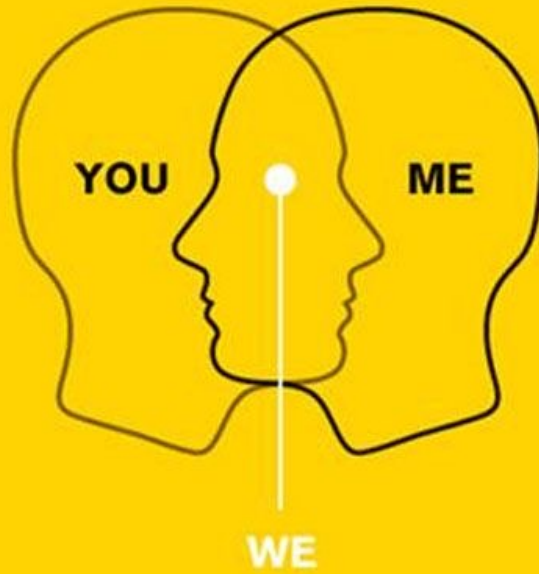
Talk to your doctor....”



Step 4: End the Conversation

Exit Phrase

“Wow – I can see that we are both really passionate about this topic and just want to do what is best for humanity/dogs/kids. I hope you enjoy your day!”



Empathy is A
Choice

Resources

World Health Organization

Best Practice Guidance for Responding to Vocal Vaccine Deniers

https://www.who.int/immunization/sage/meetings/2016/october/8_Best-practice-guidance-respond-vocal-vaccine-deniers-public.pdf

Science Alert

The Real Reason Anti-Vax Beliefs Spread So Fast Online

<https://www.sciencealert.com/the-real-reason-anti-vax-beliefs-spread-so-fast-online-isn-t-about-facts>

Edelman Trust Barometer

<https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>

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