Take Care of YOU

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Protect yourself and others from misinformation

Become a Fact-Checker

- **Verify the URL.** Watch out for websites and email addresses that mimic real ones, and look for .gov, .edu, and .org domains.

- **Look for the same story on multiple reputable sites.** If the story is true, it will most likely be reported by more than one trusted source.

- **Find the contact information.** Legitimate organizations usually offer clear contact details, which you can call to verify.

- **Be slow to share.** Information spreads like wildfire, so take a moment to verify what you're reading or hearing before sharing it with others.

In a world overflowing with information, the spread of misinformation, often referred to as 'fake news,' has become increasingly common, leading to feelings of anxiety and confusion for many of us. Misinformation can be hard to spot, especially with the rise of AI-generated content, but our best defense is to practice critical thinking and take the time to verify the information we encounter.

Critical thinking is a disciplined skill that involves proactively evaluating information. When you come across a story or claim that seems questionable, dig deeper to verify its authenticity. Following this process will guide your beliefs and actions, helping you and others avoid falling prey to false information.

1. **Start by questioning the source.** Who is providing the information? What are their credentials? Are they biased? Do they cite their sources? Was it linked to an ad or clickbait?
2. **Next, scrutinize the content.** What date was it published? Does it seem sensationalized or one-sided? Is it emotional, satirical, or inflammatory? Does it contradict your own experience?
3. **Finally, be aware of personal biases.** Are you looking to confirm your own opinion? Are you relying on only one source? Are you seeking out diverse viewpoints?

When consuming information on the internet, remember that not all websites are created equal. Search for nonpartisan websites, established news outlets, and academic journals. Use fact-checking websites like FactCheck.org and browser extensions like NewsGuard to verify content, and use reverse image search tools to authenticate images and videos. For health information, refer to trusted sources that are known for providing evidence-based information such as MayoClinic.org, WebMD.com, NIH.gov, and WHO.int.

Share these strategies with your loved ones and those you care for, and together, by practicing critical thinking, verifying information, and asking the right questions, we can navigate the digital world with confidence, stay accurately informed, reduce anxiety, and help others do the same.