

## BREAK THE FAKE: CORRECTING DISINFORMATION

What can you do when you see false information online?

There are good reasons why you might not want to say anything. It might be a friend or a family member who's sharing it, or you might worry that you'll just spread the false information.

But there's always something you can do.

Here are three ways to respond to false info online:

### 1. ASK A QUESTION

If the false info is coming from a friend or a family member, or you're worried that your reply might help spread the false info, you can just **ask a question** like "Are you sure that's true?" or "Is that source reliable?".

That nudges them to think more about whether what they're sharing is true, and shows other people that you don't agree with the bad info.

Research has found this works almost as well as correcting or debunking false information!

If you don't want to do this where other people can see, you can always send it as a private message.

Try saying:

- "Are you sure that's true?"
- "Where did you hear that?"
- "Is that source reliable?"
- "I think that might just be an urban legend."

### 2. CORRECT IT

You can also correct false information by just giving accurate info on the topic. You might choose this if a lot of people will see what you post, or if you're worried about making things worse by repeating the false information.

You don't even have to mention the bad info to correct it, and you don't have to tell someone they're wrong. Just share accurate info that shows the truth.

Make sure your info is coming from a legitimate, trusted source, and show where it came from.

Remember that less is more! Keep it simple and give just enough to correct the bad info.

Try saying:

- "Health Canada has studied cellphone radiation for years and set guidelines to make sure it stays under safe levels."
- "Statistics Canada says that the crime rate is a lot lower than it was twenty years ago."

### 3. DEBUNK IT

If you can clearly show that the info is false, you can **debunk it** by saying it's wrong and showing why. You might choose to do this if the false information has already spread widely or if the person sharing it has a bigger audience than you do.

You can use our fact-checking search engine, [bit.ly/fact-search](https://bit.ly/fact-search), to find out if something has already been debunked. Or you can visit [breakthefake.ca](https://breakthefake.ca) to learn how to check it yourself.

Make sure to say how you found out it was wrong. That way, the person who shared it – and everyone else who sees your post – sees how to avoid sharing bad info.

If you're replying to someone you don't know, don't link to the bad info. Use a screenshot instead. Visit [take-a-screenshot.org](https://take-a-screenshot.org) to find out how to do that on different devices. And make sure you don't repeat a hashtag that's being used to spread bad info.

Stick to the facts: keep cool and don't be rude. Start with "I" so you don't sound like you're picking a fight.

Try saying:

- "I checked Snopes and they say that video is fake."
- "I did a reverse image search and that picture is actually from after a rock concert, not a protest march."

Remember, you may not convince the person who shared false info, but you can keep others from believing it. There's always something you can do to help break the fake.