



Media & Information Literacy: Challenges & Opportunities for Public Health

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The Information Environment in the AI revolution

The communication landscape is changing – more drastically, and rapidly than any other time in human history.



The Key Question:

How can public health professionals cut through the information noise, build public trust, and empower people to make good decisions about their health and safety?



Two types of information problems:

MISinformation

- Spreading false information but believing it to be true
- Spreading false information (knowingly or otherwise)
- Reporter errors, satire, rumors, misunderstanding of original message

DISinformation

- Created deliberately to be misleading or false
- Spread to influence public opinion or obscure the truth
- Propaganda, hoaxes, conspiracy theories, "fake news"

MISinformation

DISinformation

(can be)

**Not all misinformation is
disinformation!**

We can all be distributors and
receivers of misinformation.


**All disinformation is
misinformation.**

It relies on low information
literacy skills, layering in fact with
fabricated information, empty
claims, emotional appeals, etc.


(always)

A missing critical skill

Knowing the difference
between **FACT** and **OPINION**.



**observable,
can be verified
by others**



**expression of
attitudes or
beliefs, subjective
viewpoint**

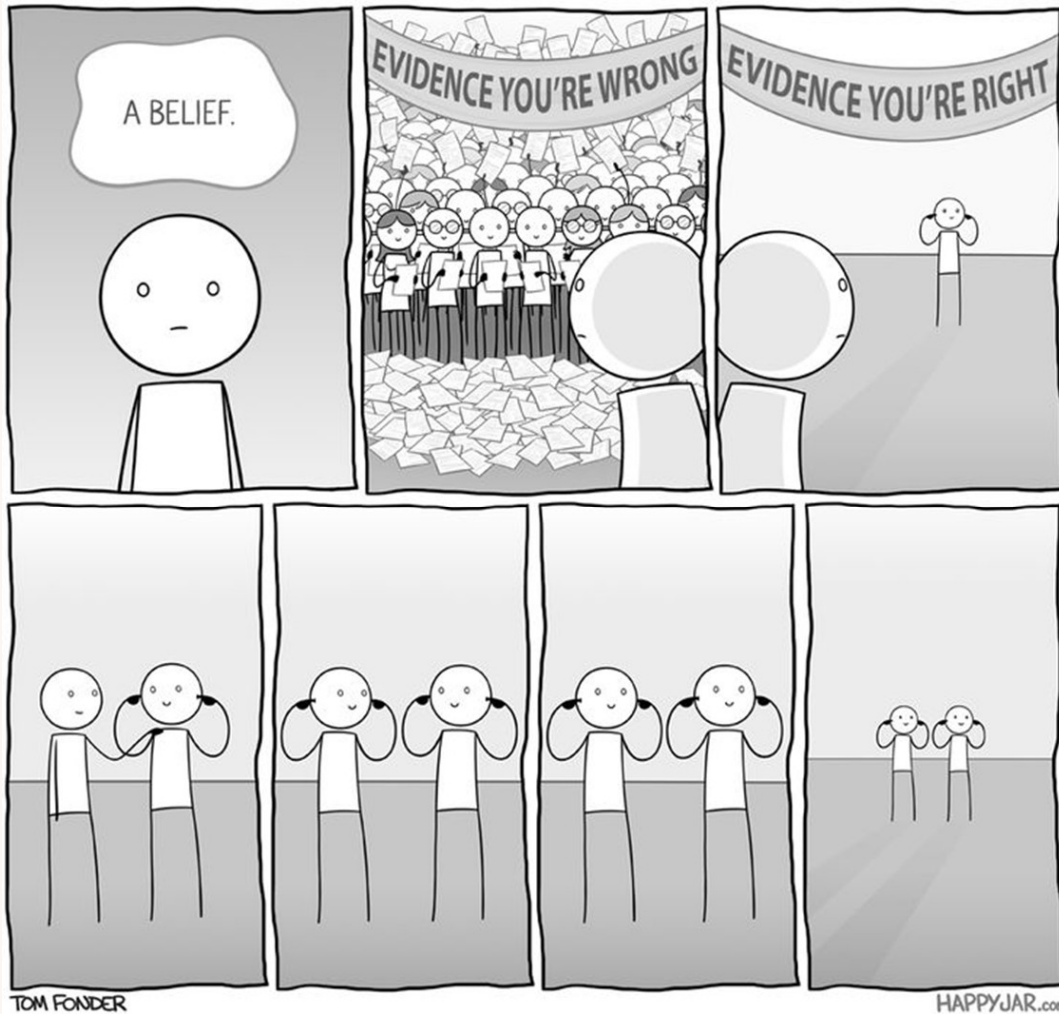
“ **Today, facts are
labeled as
'opinions in
masquerade.'** ”

~ Michael Schudson,
journalism historian

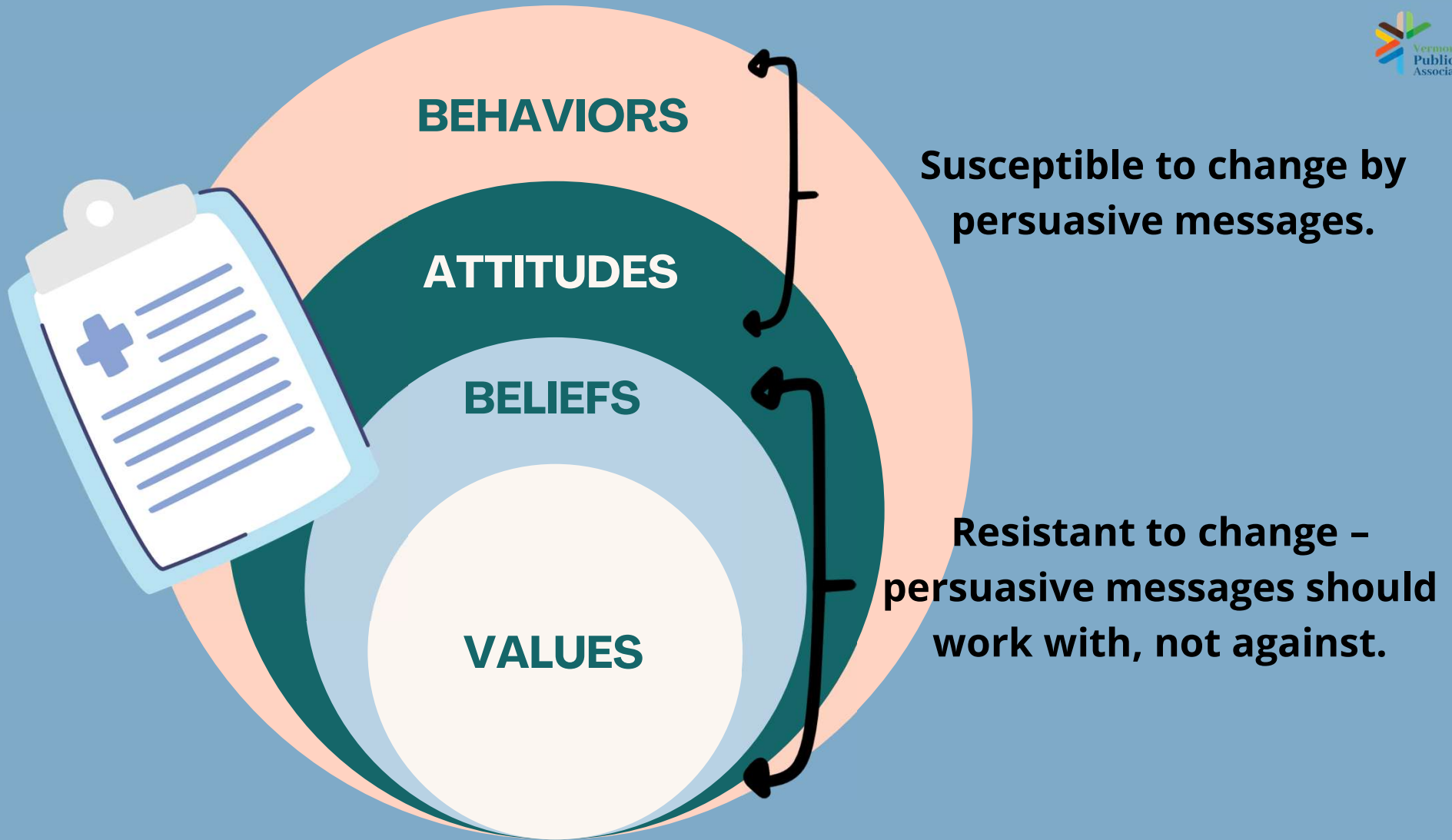
A pernicious bias: Confirmation bias

A tendency to pay attention to, interpret, and remember information that supports what we already believe to be true.





Confirmation bias is **deeply entrenched** in our emotional responses to information.



The bottom line



People often fall for mis/disinformation because:

They don't fact check or do lateral reading.

The information supports their own position or beliefs.

The amount of information is just too overwhelming and info "sounds right."

The bottom line

Mis/disinformation is DANGEROUS.

A stylized illustration of a red heart with a blue ECG (heart rate) line overlaid on it, positioned to the right of the text "DANGEROUS".

It is creating confusion about basic facts and current events. It can spiral out of control and lead to violence, health risks, and disruption to our democratic institutions.

The bottom line

We CAN contain and mitigate the harmful effects of mis/disinformation.

