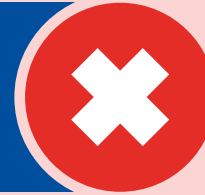


# CSOs' Response to Disinformation: Practical Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

## DON'Ts



### Engage directly with the spreaders of disinformation e.g. on social media

This can provoke even more attacks.

### Repeat the disinformation content ('the myth') before providing the correct information

This might be deliberately misused as a confirmation of the disinformation provided.

### Rush to reply in the event of negative attacks

Carefully plan the next steps by designing credible, well-documented responses.

### Mention directly the disinformation message/name of the spreader

when it is not necessary.

### Be afraid to debunk disinformation

Debunking will not typically cause a backfire effect, except in limited circumstances when people's worldviews are challenged.

## DOs



### Warn people that they might be misinformed

Preventing disinformation from taking root helps to discredit it later.

### Decide whether to respond

Some fake stories are insignificant or have low exposure and can be ignored.

### Keep it simple and use plain language

Your audience might not understand the specific field or spend little time reading your message.

### Explain why the disinformation is incorrect

This is more effective than simply labelling it as false.

### Respond on your channels with a neutral tone, focusing on the accurate information

Avoid direct contact with the spreaders.

### Partner with trusted organisations/ personalities and amplify your response via their channels

When similar information comes from multiple sources, it has a higher chance of being seen and trusted.

### Use alert verification/ fact-checking platforms.

### Use disinformation detection tools to track mentions of any given term or topic

These tools can also help identify supporters who have influence in their online communities.

### Educate people on critical assessment of content they see online

### Train local professional news outlets in best practices for searching for official statistics and factchecking before publishing stories.

<sup>1</sup> The material is based on *The Debunking Handbook 2020*, the *Rules of engagement for handling disinformation* and *Arizona State University* source.