**CSOs’ Response to Disinformation: Practical Guidelines**

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**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.**

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