



# **UNDERSTANDING MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION & MALINFORMATION**

**A FREE MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCE FROM  
LAVENDER LIBRARY PRESS**



**THIS FREE RESOURCE IS DESIGNED TO  
SUPPORT SAFER CONVERSATIONS,  
STRONGER CRITICAL THINKING, AND  
COMMUNITY CARE, ONLINE AND OFFLINE.**



# **WHY THIS MATTERS FOR EVERYONE 2SLGBTQ+ OR NOT**

**MISINFORMATION DOESN'T IMPACT EVERYONE EQUALLY.  
2SLGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES, RACIALIZED GROUPS, DISABLED  
PEOPLE, AND OTHER MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES ARE OFTEN  
DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY MAINSTREAM  
NARRATIVES, MORAL PANICS, AND FALSE CLAIMS.  
UNDERSTANDING HOW INFORMATION IS SHAPED AND SHARED  
HELPS US PROTECT OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER.**



# KEY DEFINITIONS

## MISINFORMATION

- FALSE OR INACCURATE INFORMATION SHARED WITHOUT INTENT TO HARM.
- OFTEN SPREAD UNKNOWINGLY
- CAN COME FROM OUTDATED SOURCES OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS
- HARMFUL IMPACT CAN STILL OCCUR, EVEN WITHOUT BAD INTENT
- EXAMPLE: SHARING AN OLD STUDY THAT HAS SINCE BEEN DEBUNKED.

## DISINFORMATION

- FALSE INFORMATION DELIBERATELY CREATED AND SHARED TO DECEIVE, MANIPULATE, OR CAUSE HARM.
- INTENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC
- OFTEN TIED TO POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL, OR FINANCIAL GOALS
- COMMON IN COORDINATED CAMPAIGNS
- EXAMPLE: SPREADING FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT 2SLGBTQ+ PEOPLE TO CREATE FEAR OR INFLUENCE POLICY.

## MALINFORMATION

- TRUE INFORMATION USED IN HARMFUL OR MISLEADING WAYS.
- INFORMATION MAY BE FACTUAL BUT TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT
- OFTEN USED TO SHAME, HARASS, OR ENDANGER PEOPLE
- CAN INCLUDE DOXXING OR SELECTIVE STORYTELLING
- EXAMPLE: SHARING SOMEONE'S REAL PERSONAL DETAILS TO INCITE HARASSMENT.

### QUICK MEMORY TRICK

- MISINFORMATION → WRONG, NOT ON PURPOSE
- DISINFORMATION → WRONG, ON PURPOSE
- MALINFORMATION → TRUE, USED TO HARM



# TIPS AND TRICKS

- **YOU DON'T NEED TO BECOME AN EXPERT TO PROTECT YOURSELF. A FEW SMALL HABITS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.**
- **PAUSE BEFORE SHARING. STRONG EMOTIONAL REACTIONS (FEAR, ANGER, URGENCY) ARE OFTEN A SIGNAL TO SLOW DOWN.**
- **CHECK THE SOURCE. LOOK FOR WHO CREATED THE INFORMATION, WHEN IT WAS PUBLISHED, AND WHY IT EXISTS.**
- **WATCH FOR PATTERNS. IF A POST TARGETS A SPECIFIC GROUP OR FRAMES THEM AS A THREAT, THAT'S A RED FLAG.**
- **CONTEXT MATTERS. EVEN TRUE INFORMATION CAN CAUSE HARM WHEN SHARED WITHOUT CARE OR CONSENT.**
- **PROTECT YOUR ENERGY. YOU ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO ENGAGE, EDUCATE, OR DEBATE MISINFORMATION ONLINE.**
- **STAYING SAFE ISN'T JUST ABOUT FACTS; IT'S ABOUT COMMUNITY CARE, BOUNDARIES, AND SELF-RESPECT.**