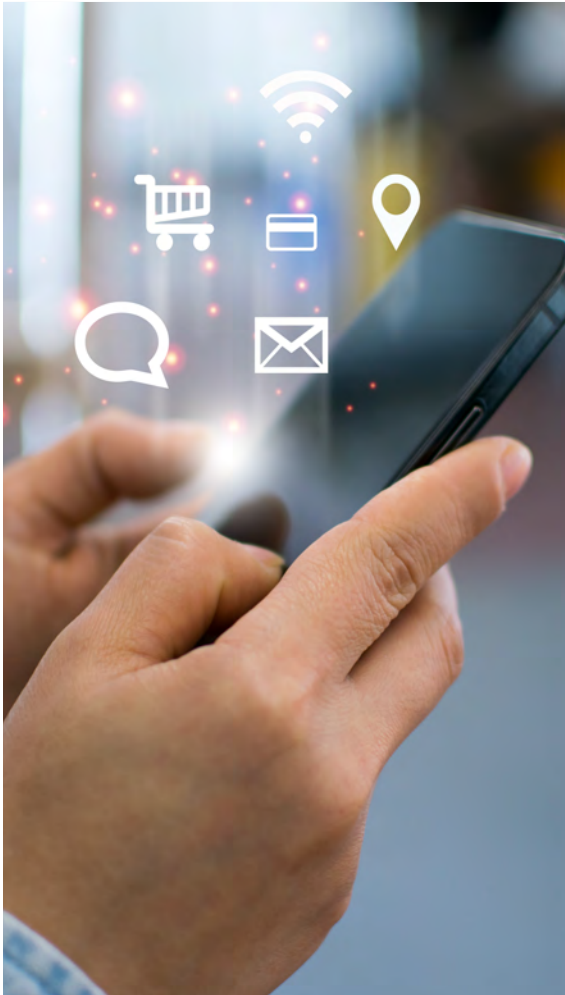# Identify and combat the effects of disinformation

Social media is a powerful tool through which many people share and exchange information. While being able to access information at the click of a button can be convenient, we don't always know who is sharing the information, what their motivations may be, or how accurate the information is. Essentially, we could inadvertently be exposing ourselves to "disinformation".

Disinformation is a term which describes "deliberately misleading, biased, or manipulated narrative or facts". Immersing yourself in disinformation can negatively affect your mental health by creating unnecessary anxiety, fueling uninformed anger, and can place strain on relationships. The following are strategies that can help you identify and avoid the disinformation trap.

- **Pay attention to where your information is coming from.** Remember that information that you read on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) is not coming directly from that platform. Be curious, and ask yourself "Who is this information coming from?", "Who does it benefit?", "Is the source material being referenced reliable?"

- **Get your news from a variety of sources.** If what you are reading is evoking an extreme emotional reaction, this is a sign that you should read further and dig deeper. Disinformation is often intended to elicit strong emotions such as fear or anger, which may not be based on credible facts.

- **Read beyond the headline.** Headlines are intended to grab your attention amidst a sea of information. They can be misleading, and may not accurately capture the context of the article. Ensure that you read the whole article carefully prior to jumping to a conclusion based solely on the title.