

What is media literacy?

Media literacy can be defined as the ability to take a closer look at the news, social media, and any other ‘mass media’ source in order to determine how trustworthy and accurate the information is.

Media literacy means you can spot misinformation and disinformation, as well as judge whether a story comes from a source you can trust.

⚠ MISINFORMATION:

False or misleading information shared by people who **mistakenly** believe that it’s true.

🚫 DISINFORMATION:

False or misleading information **intentionally** spread by people who know that it’s not true, for the purpose of manipulating others.

Why should we care about media literacy?

Why does this matter?

Media literacy is a skill we should all be practicing in today’s world.

The internet and social media have changed the way we learn about things. Algorithms send us content that we are already interested in, and the more we see and hear something, the more likely we are to accept it as true—even when it isn’t¹.

Without the skills to stop and think about how trustworthy a story is, we are vulnerable to bad information that can lead to incorrect conclusions and harmful actions or inactions.

Without media literacy, people may:

- › Trust non-credible sources
- › Believe misinformation or disinformation
- › Spread inaccurate or false stories
- › Make decisions based on bad information

Check out a [quick resource](#) and a more [comprehensive guide](#) on media literacy here.

Media literacy & anti-trafficking work

How does media literacy affect anti-trafficking efforts?

A lot of current anti-trafficking campaigns rely on sensational claims and attention-grabbing stories—the type of information that spreads like wildfire in the news and on social media.

Unfortunately, this information is not always accurate and doesn't lead to the best outcomes for victims and survivors.

If we don't think critically about shocking human trafficking claims, statistics, and stories, they can give people an inaccurate perception of human trafficking and lead to ineffective responses that don't meet victims' and survivors' long-term needs.

See our resources on common [human trafficking myths](#) and [awareness campaigns](#) here.



There's a better way.

By learning about media literacy and applying this skill to the topic of human trafficking, you can tell what's reliable, what's misleading, and what actually helps.

[Learn More Here >](#)

Footnotes

- 1 Psychology Today (n.d.). [Illusory Truth Effect](#).