

# CREATORS SUMMIT ON MENTAL HEALTH

## Visual Misinformation & Interpreting Research

### INTERPRETING RESEARCH

#### MORE PEOPLE ARE SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ONLINE

- Recent research suggests that young people are more likely to seek mental health advice and support online than from health professionals (source: [Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica 2022](#))
- There are more than 45 billion views on the Tiktok hashtag #MentalHealth (source: [TikTok](#))

#### CREDIBILITY = SHARE THE EVIDENCE AND ITS SOURCE

- A research-backed way to convey credibility is to show your audience your sources to build trust
- Cite in creative ways that stay authentic to you: for example, share your sources in a visual/label, in a voice-over, in a video caption, or in the comments section

#### SCIENCE GLOSSARY

- White paper: a white paper is a research report, often compiled by a government agency, a company, or a nonprofit organization. Typically they are used to advocate for a policy or solution or to market a new product.
- Conference proceedings: This is the term scientists use to describe a presentation to other scientists at a conference. The presentation typically covers early stage data that hasn't gone through any formal vetting.
- Working paper or preprint: This is what scientists call a research paper that's in its early stages and hasn't gone through any formal vetting. These outlets are designed stimulate discussion.
- Peer-reviewed journal article: The gold standard. This is what scientists call a research paper that's gone through vetting and editing by other scientists in a process called peer review.

### VISUAL MISINFORMATION

#### VISUAL MISINFORMATION GLOSSARY

- Visual Misinformation: Visual content, typically used alongside text or audio, that contributes to false and inaccurate presentations of information
- Visual Recontextualization: The use of visual content that is untouched, unedited, and generally authentic alongside text or audio that provides inaccurate or misleading information or context
- Visual Manipulation: content that has been modified in some way to guide interpretation of the visual information or the larger message unit
- Visual Fabrication: Visual content that is wholly false, though likely produced with representations of people, events, or things familiar to an audience, appearing as authentic, legitimate information

#### HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS

- As artificial intelligence-powered tools make it easier than ever to make manipulated health images and video, media professionals, including creators, can play an important role in informing their audiences about the prevalence and risk of this kind of health misinformation (example: [@VictoriaBrowne](#))

**CREATOR ASSETS**

---

## TIPS

### #1. UNDERSTAND SCIENCE'S JARGON

- Peer review weeds out studies that aren't up to scientific standards. Generally, if you are evaluating a paper that has been through peer review, you can assume the data and conclusions have undergone some scientific vetting.

### #2. NOT ALL SCIENTIFIC STUDIES CAN TELL YOU ABOUT CAUSE & EFFECT

- Randomized controlled trials compares patients to a control, tell you about cause and effect, and are the gold standard (ie drug approvals)
- Observational studies observe normal behavior and tell you about correlations only.

### #3. THE SAMPLE SIZE MATTERS

- When designing a scientific study, scientists usually must work with a subset of people – generally for reasons of cost or practicality. But if a sample size is too small, it won't reflect the larger population.

### #4. THE POPULATION IN WHICH A SCIENTIFIC STUDY IS CONDUCTED MATTERS

- When evaluating and reporting scientific studies, be mindful of the population the researchers examined, and what it can and can't tell you about other populations, or people in general.
- Sex- and gender-based gaps still exist in clinical trials (source: [Contemporary Clinical Trials 2022, Journal of Clinical Investigation 2021](#))

### #5. FRAME RISKS CLEARLY

- Reporting relative risk (a comparison of risk in two different populations) without absolute risk (a measure of someone's individual risk) is rarely meaningful and can be misleading.

### #6. STAY SKEPTICAL

- A healthy dose of skepticism will help you decide what evidence might buttress the credibility of your content, and what might not.
- Use [reverse image search tools](#) to check for visual misinformation until [image provenance tools](#) become widely available
- New AI tools, like Elicit and Consensus, may make it easier to cut through the jargon and access peer-reviewed research

## CONTENT RESOURCES

- [Tips on reporting on health risk](#) | The Journalist's Resource
- [White papers, working papers, journal articles, what's the difference](#) | The Journalist's Resource
- [Visual health misinformation](#) | Primer
- [How to make sense of a scientific paper](#) | NCCIH
- [Countering health misinformation](#) | 5 Lessons from HSPH
- [Sexual orientation in clinical settings](#) | Guidelines
  
- [The messy middle](#) | Rachel Havekost Substack
- [Mental health for the internet generation](#) | Healthy Gamer
- [Subscribe to best practices for health communication](#) | Center for Health Communication



**CREATOR ASSETS**



# CREATORS SUMMIT ON MENTAL HEALTH



**HARVARD  
T.H. CHAN**

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
Center for Health Communication