**Misinformation & Media Literacy:**

Navigating the COVID-19 “Infodemic”

Student Exercises

This exercise is intended to be completed after teaching NewsGuard’s COVID-19 Media Literacy lesson but may also serve as a standalone assignment. Students may complete this worksheet on their own or by working in pairs or small groups. Start with the transparency exercise and move onto the credibility exercise and extension activity if you have time. To see how student source assessments compare to those of NewsGuard, download the browser extension and check each site, or refer to slides 40 and 41 of the accompanying presentation.

Transparency Exercise:

Select one of the following four sites and evaluate its **transparency** using NewsGuard’s transparency criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Health.com**
 | * **HomeNaturalCures.com**
 |
| * **MedicalNewsToday.com**
 | * **DoctorDavidFriedman.com**
 |

1. Does the site disclose its ownership and source(s) of financing? Explain your reasoning.
2. Does the site clearly label advertising? Explain your reasoning.
3. Does the site reveal who is in charge of content (such as its editor), including any possible conflicts of interest? Explain your reasoning.
4. Does the site provide the names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information? Explain your reasoning.

**Discussion Question:** Pick one of these four **transparency** criteria and explain why it is important.

Credibility Exercise**:**

Using the same website you evaluated in the transparency exercise, evaluate its **credibility** using NewsGuard’s credibility criteria:

1. Has the site repeatedly published false content?
2. Does the site gather and present information responsibly?
3. Does the site regularly correct or clarify errors?
4. Does the site handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly?
5. Does the site avoid deceptive headlines?

**Discussion Question:** Pick one of these five **credibility** criteria and explain why it is important.

Claim Evaluation Extension Activity (optional):

Pretend that your friend sent you this message: “**Good news! There is a treatment that has cured some people of the coronavirus. It’s called Miracle Mineral Solution.**”

Your task is to figure out: **Is this true**?

To investigate this claim, find three credible sources that discuss the topic. Explain what each source says and explain why you think it is a trustworthy source.

**Source 1 Name:**

Why is this source credible?

What does the source say?

**Source 2 Name:**

Why is this source credible?

What does the source say?

**Source 3 (name):**

Why is this source credible?

What does the source say?

**Conclusion: What do you think – is Miracle Mineral Solution a cure for coronavirus?**