AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

APA RESOLUTION on Combating Misinformation and Promoting Psychological Science Literacy

FEBRUARY 2024

WHEREAS the amount of misinformation a person encounters as part of their overall media consumption may vary, there is evidence to demonstrate that up to 20% of political media content can be classified as misinformation (Yang et al., 2023), and other findings that specify health misinformation is highly prevalent and a growing and pernicious threat to public well-being, especially with the potential for rapid spread on social media (Gallotti et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019); and

WHEREAS regardless of prevalence, misinformation has been found to promote discord by increasing political polarization (Van Bavel et al., 2021) and eroding trust in democracy, the media, science, and public health authorities (Calleja et al., 2021; Jones-Jang et al., 2021; Ognyanova et al., 2020); and

WHEREAS the World Health Organization (2020) has declared a worldwide "infodemic" based on the global and rapid spread of misinformation that leads to mistrust and poses a threat to public health, and recommends building resilience to misinformation and engaging and empowering communities to take positive action; and

WHEREAS to fully understand the impact of misinformation, it is necessary to understand the psychological factors that drive people to believe and share it, the levers of manipulation used by its creators, and the network effects induced by today's media and political landscape that impact its spread;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Psychological Association encourages psychologists, educators, researchers, and policymakers to actively engage in efforts to raise public awareness about the psychological mechanisms underpinning the creation and spread of misinformation; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Psychological Association will promote understanding of the psychological factors influencing the acceptance and rejection of health information, and the development of effective interventions to mitigate the impact of misinformation including efforts to restore and maintain trust in science; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Psychological Association calls on stakeholders to collaborate with psychologists and other experts to develop and implement strategies that promote accurate health information, science literacy, and counteract misinformation; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Psychological Association encourages the inclusion of psychological science perspectives in public health campaigns, educational programs, and policy initiatives addressing health misinformation; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the American Psychological Association commits to actively disseminate psychological science findings and recommendations across its networks and to promote ongoing dialogue among psychologists, policymakers, and the public to address the multifaceted challenges posed by misinformation and to promote psychological science literacy.

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