

Analysis and Response Toolkit for Trust: Call for Contributors

March 15, 2023

When a contentious and complicated topic, like vaccine efficacy, arises in online conversations, how should health communicators engage in order to build trust and steer the conversation away from false or misleading ideas? While correcting someone who is misinformed is one option, there are other tested and proven methods that can be used to build mutual understanding. What solutions do experts have to offer? And can these lessons from academics and experienced practitioners be boiled down for easier use?

The [Analysis and Response Toolkit for Trust](#) project is focused on helping health communicators, like local and national health officials, moderators of online communities, journalists, librarians, and front-line health care workers engage in trust-building ways when discussing vaccine efficacy and other difficult topics online. The work will culminate in an online tool that will help health care communicators answer the question, “what do we say, and how do we say it?”

To help build this project, [MediaWell](#) is partnering with the developer of ARTT, [Hacks/Hackers](#), to bring together researchers who are exploring the question of how to improve information exchanges, both online and in person. The MediaWell team will collate their insights into a research catalog that will power the online tool.

The project kicked off with a workshop, held in March 2023, that brought together experts in psychology, disaster communications, mass communications, psychology, and other fields to discuss the relevant literature. Through their discussions, the workshop attendees went beyond the question of creating messaging that might resonate with particular people toward the question of which strategies for community engagement can create bonds between public health practitioners and the diverse communities they serve, in order to de-escalate conflict, increase understanding, and build common ground.

Hacks/Hackers and SSRC are now looking to broaden the conversation to include new scholars, and scholarship on negotiating contentious topics, including but not limited to vaccines. We are inviting scholars with expertise in psychology, conflict resolution, communications, anthropology, media literacy, rhetoric, and related fields to help build the

tool by contributing relevant references to the research review. If you would like to contribute, email mediawell@ssrc.org.

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