SEPTEMBER 2022

Training resources for combating mis/disinformation targeting women in leadership

EMILYs LIST
ACTION ☑

How does disinformation hurt women in leadership?

- Threatening safety and peace of mind

- Wasted time and resources

- Loss in support and credibility over time

- Barriers to achieving outcomes

- Suppressing opinions, the vote, civic participation

- Reinforcing historic racism, xenophobia, and discrimination

Disinformation often aims to break down **TRUST** over time

TRUST *in people, leaders, candidates*

TRUST *in institutions and organizations*

TRUST *in processes and systems*

TRUST *in long-held beliefs; making knowns turn into unknowns*

DEFINITIONS TO KNOW:

MISINFORMATION:

False or misleading information shared without intent of harm or deception

INAUTHENTIC OR MANIPULATED ACTIVITY:

Online activity making metrics, accounts, or content appear different than what it really is

DISINFORMATION:

False or misleading information intentionally shared with the intent of harm or deception

TOPIC MOMENTUM:

Having both increasing reach and engagement over multiple days on social media

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TATICAL DEFINITIONS TO KNOW:

DOXING:
Search for and publish private or identifying information about (a particular individual) on the internet, typically with malicious intent.

DEEPFAKES:
Manipulated video content falsely claiming to show a person saying or doing something

HASHTAG HIJACKING:
Pairing popular hashtags with a post to achieve better promotion from social media algorithms

BOTS:
Automated social media accounts programmed to take specific actions like retweet a certain account or post specific content

SOCK PUPPETS:
Often used by trolls, these are accounts posing to be someone they are not

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SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BREAKDOWN IN THE US

[Percent of US Adults using platforms according to Pew Research]
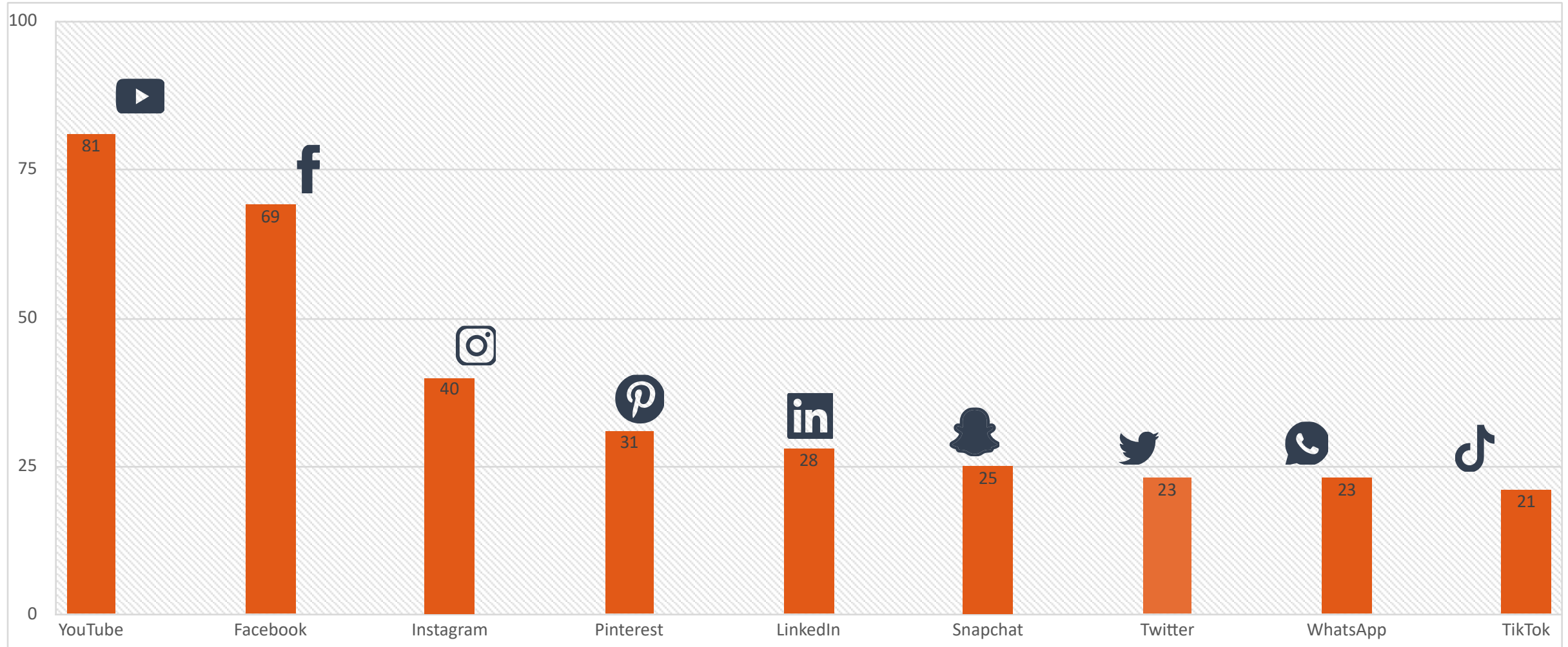
Gendered disinformation often includes character attacks which are harder to debunk with a fact check

- Untrustworthy, liar, corrupt

- Silly, stupid, incompetent

- Angry, power hungry

- Crazy, unhinged, radical

- Sexual objects

Steve Tarrow ✓
28m · 🌐

Wow! Shows the American people where her PRIORITIES are.

Female Senate candidate from Oklahoma can't be bothered to debate Republican nominee because she's too busy 'Fixing her lipstick'

Women, especially **women of color,** face more online harassment and hate than their male counterparts

Big Tech Pledges To Do Better Battling Internet Violence Against Women. History Suggests They'll Come Up Short.

For Female Candidates, Harassment and Threats Come Every Day

One Of The Men Charged In The Michigan Governor Kidnap Plot Gets 6 Years In Prison
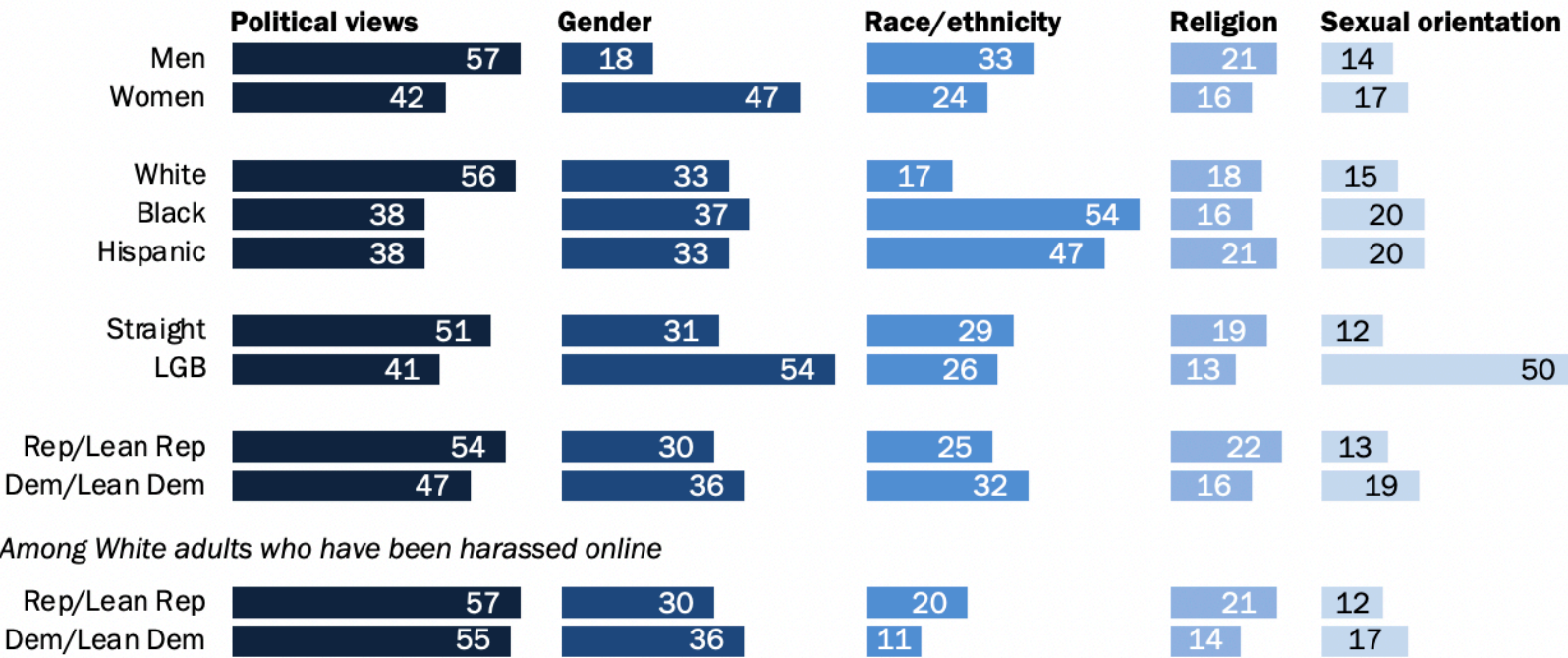
August 26, 2021 · 12:47 AM ET

New Study Confirms That Black Women Are Most Abused Group on Twitter

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Black, Hispanic targets of online harassment more likely than their White counterparts to say they've been harassed online because of their race, ethnicity

Among the 41% of U.S. adults who have personally experienced online harassment, % who say they think their online harassment was a result of their ...

	Political views	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Religion	Sexual orientation
Men	57	18	33	21	14
Women	42	47	24	16	17
White	56	33	17	18	15
Black	38	37	54	16	20
Hispanic	38	33	47	21	20
Straight	51	31	29	19	12
LGB	41	54	26	13	50
Rep/Lean Rep	54	30	25	22	13
Dem/Lean Dem	47	36	32	16	19

Among White adults who have been harassed online

	Political views	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Religion	Sexual orientation
Rep/Lean Rep	57	30	20	21	12
Dem/Lean Dem	55	36	11	14	17

Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. LGB indicates those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Total may not add to 100% because respondents could select multiple options. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 8-13, 2020.
"The State of Online Harassment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Women of color more likely to say they experience harassment because of their **race or identity**

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Research shows Black women face more hate online

According to a 2018 study:

"Black women were 84 percent more likely than White women to be disproportionately targeted. One in ten tweets mentioning Black women was abusive or problematic, compared to one in 15 for White women. Women of color were 34 percent more likely to be targeted."

- Black women are more likely to be sexualized in attacks

- Black people often face discrimination from social media and tech algorithms

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Resources for staying safe online

PEN America's [Online Harassment Guide](#) offers suggestions for preparing for the worst, documenting harassment and hate speech when it happens, and what to do:

1

PREPARE:
Cyber-security protections and support channels

2

RESPOND:
Documenting, reporting to platforms and safety officials, blocking and considerations for response.

3

PRACTICING SELF-CARE:
Seeking support and practical tips for taking care

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Dealing with harassment in direct messages & emails

A direct email or message takes online harassment away from the public forum, where at least there are witnesses, and makes it feel laser focused and intensely personal. If you have received abusive emails or direct messages, but do not feel that you or your loved ones are in danger, here are some steps you can take:

- Screenshot, archive, and/or print the message in case future threats appear. You will want to have all abuse documented should it escalate and/or should you decide to inform law enforcement. Be sure to follow PEN America's Field Manual's steps for documenting your abuse.

- Report the abusive email or message to the host platform. If the message comes from a free messaging service such as Gmail, Hotmail, Facebook, etc. you should be able to report it to the host.

- Do not forward the email. If you need to share it, copy and paste the content instead. Forwarding the email might cause you to lose important routing data encoded in the original email—data that law enforcement may require later on.

- Use the "block sender" feature in your email service. This may not put an end to the abusive emails entirely, as a sender can always create a new email address from which to message you, but it's a place to start and will offer you a momentary reprieve.

- Set up filters in your email service. If you prefer to stay vigilant against your online harasser and/or plan to enlist a friend to help you monitor your abusive messages, consider setting up an email filter that will direct abusive emails into a separate or dummy email account. This way you don't have to see the abuse on a regular basis, but if you or your trusted confidant need to check the status of emails a harasser is continuing to send your way, you'll have a place to store them.

- Only reply to the sender in very specific circumstances. Unless you feel confident that the content of the message is not directly threatening, it is best not to engage your attacker in any manner. Such exchanges are rarely productive   and can often elicit further abuse.

Dealing with disinformation attacks

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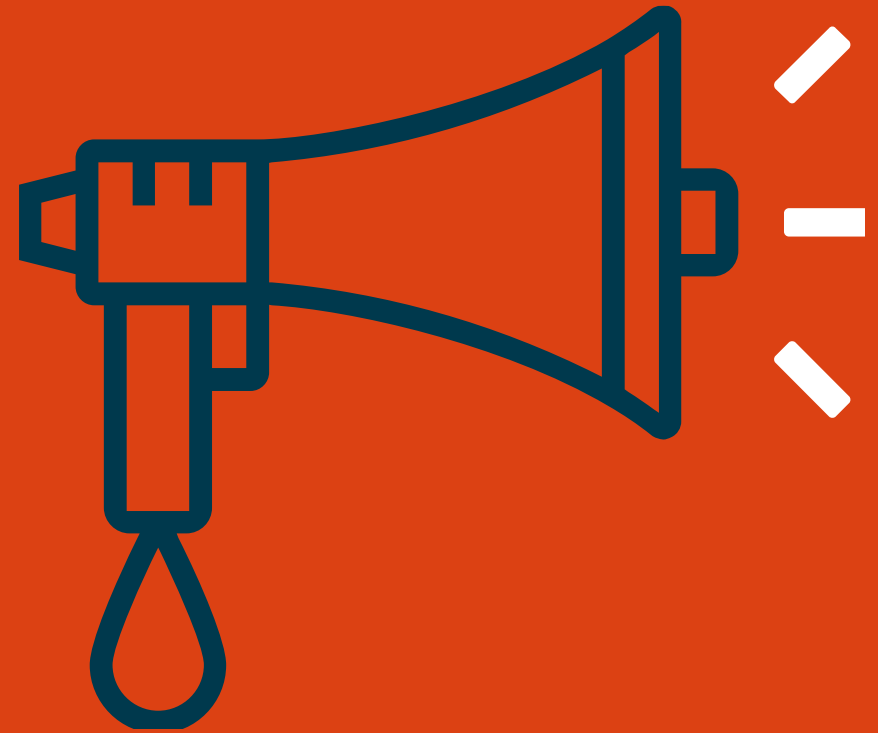
Teams need both

PROACTIVE

and **REACTIVE**

strategies to combat disinformation

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Know your online turf

Do not wait to map out your online turf!

Identify who is likely to attack your principal/candidate. Consider:

- Who might attack her based on her identity and race

- Her political opponents

- Special interest groups opposed to her policy stances

- Partisan media, especially local sources

- Foreign actors (state governments, commercial actors)

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Know your online turf

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Once you know your enemies – map their presence online:

- Pages, groups, accounts, channels and follower/member counts

- Spending history on advertising platforms (Google, Facebook)

- Commonly used words, hashtags, strategies

- Call EMILY's List Action for support

Proactive: Inoculating against mis/disinformation

The best time to mitigate the threat of disinformation and online harm is in advance of it reaching critical moments.

- Know your **social listening baselines**

- Run proactive, **creative, cross-platform, two-way communication**

- Build **trust** with voters on and offline

- Identify platform and law enforcement points of contact in advance

- Review **threat matrix** with full team to prepare for responding

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When should you respond?

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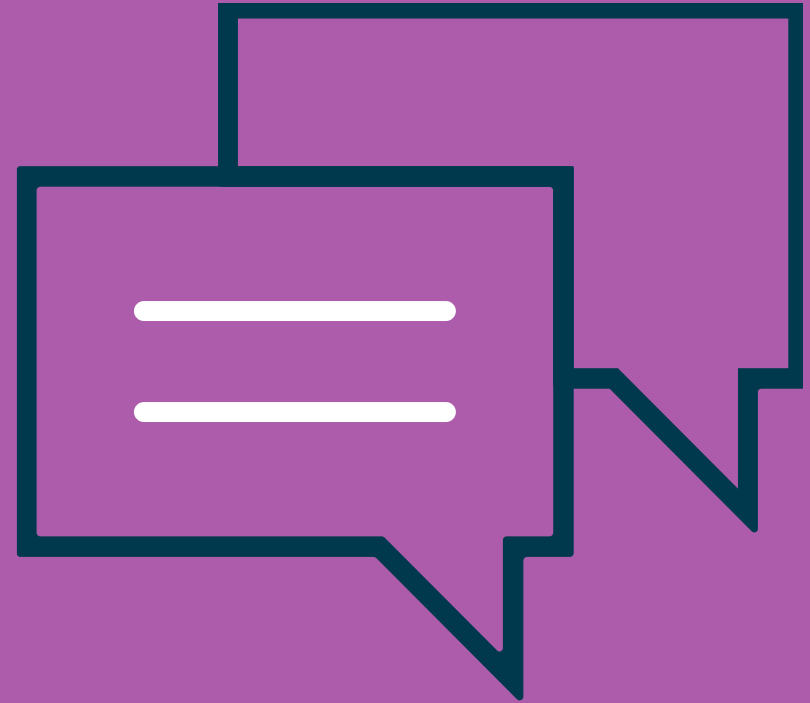
REACH CONSIDERATIONS:

Is the narrative reaching your key constituencies?

+/- baselines

Topic momentum

Cross-channel or single-channel

Financial Resources

Messenger reach

Field insight

Stakeholder insight

IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS:

What do we really know about how this narrative will impact your key constituencies?

Historical insight

Polling and research insight

Messenger trust

Financial Resources

Field insight

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THREAT MATRIX FOR RESPONSE

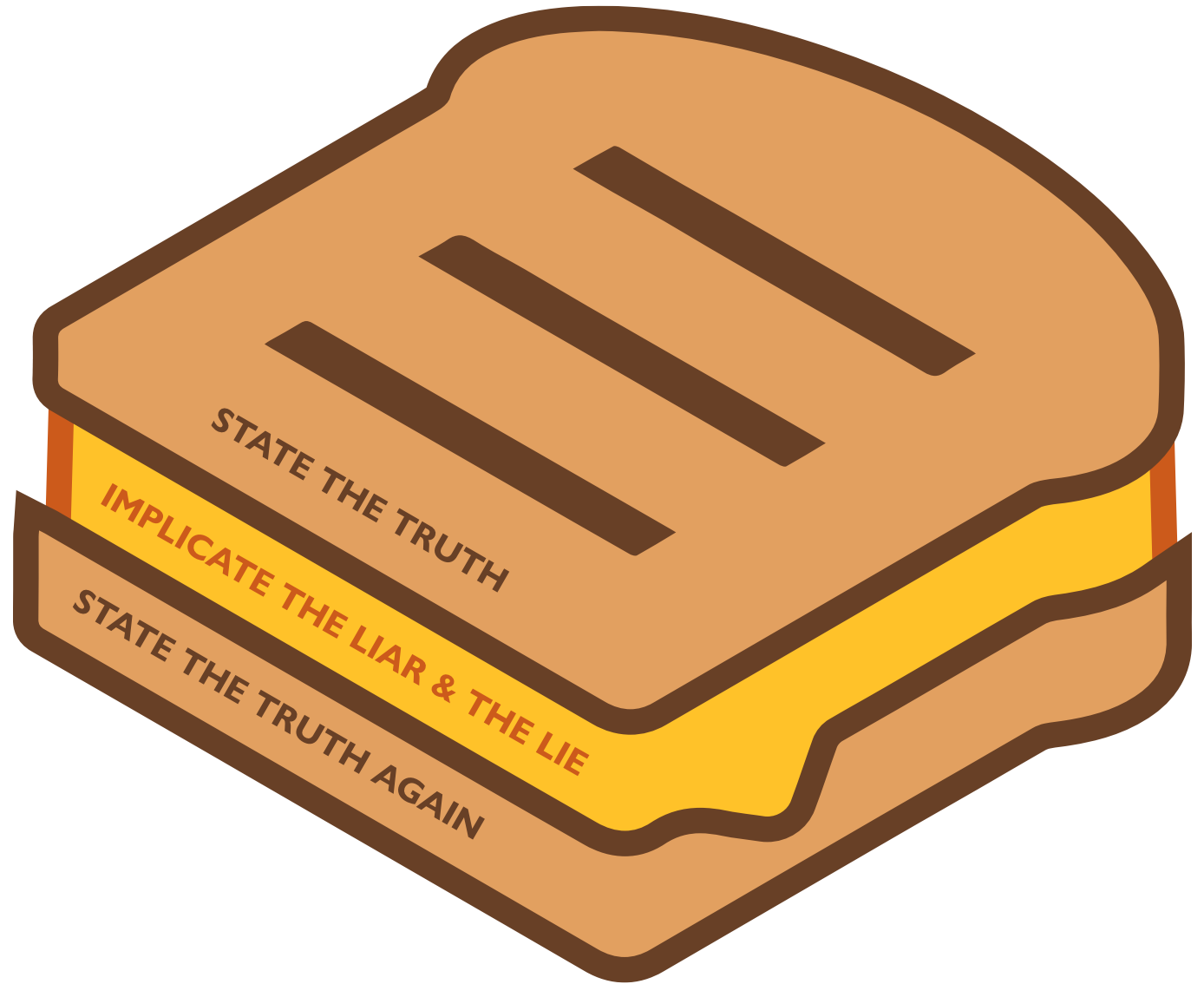|		REACH: Likelihood of disinformation is reaching voters		
		High	**Med**	**Low**
IMPACT: Likelihood voters have inaccurate information about voting**	**High**	• Change the subject • Request platform action • Issue a press statement • Hold an earned media event • Highlight the motive of the messenger • Provide heads up to targeted communities • Run a paid ad campaign • Deploy trusted messengers with talking pts. • Monitor for topic momentum • Consider emergency litigation • Report to law enforcement, federal agencies	• Reroute to fact-based information • Damage control with national and local media, where necessary • Press statement or earned media play • Run paid campaign • Deploy trusted messengers (community leaders, digital organizers, etc.) • Outreach to specific communities • Monitor for topic momentum • Request platform action	• Reroute to fact-based information • Monitor for topic momentum • Consider platform action
	Med	• Reroute to fact-based information • Highlight motive of the messenger • Arm surrogates with talking points and/or inoculation messages • Consider reaching out to the local media • Consider paid campaign options • Request platform action	• Reroute to fact-based information to affected communities • Arm surrogates with talking points and/or inoculation messages • Get handle on press/opinion elite if needed • Check in with regional/target influencers on the ground for pick up • Monitor for escalation; put field leads on alert	• Reroute to fact-based information • Monitor for escalation
	Low	• Monitor for change to impact • Request platform action • Request outreach to affected communities for awareness ONLY if appropriate/time	• Flag for monitoring team • Monitor for escalation	• Monitor for escalation

THREAT MATRIX FOR RESPONSE

IMPACT: Likelihood disinformation will cause harm	REACH: Likelihood of disinformation reaching voters	
		High
High	High	• Change the subject • Request platform action • Issue a press statement • Hold an earned media event • Highlight the motive of the messenger • Provide heads up to targeted communities • Run a paid ad campaign • Deploy trusted messengers with talking pts. • Monitor for topic momentum • Consider emergency litigation • Report to law enforcement, federal agencies

Make them stand on YOUR stage

Bad actors want you to stand on their stage and use their talking points. Put them on defense by putting YOUR talking points into the conversation:

Women like Vice President Harris are [insert positive traits about women in power]

Women are attacked twice as much, so we'll be twice as loud.

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SCENARIO:
They say:

"

"She's a liar. She hasn't done anything for her constituents!"

Responding to sexist character attacks based in disinformation in person

Acknowledge a shared truth. *"I get frustrated with feeling it's hard to trust politicians too but in this case my understanding is there are people repeating false information to try to paint her in this way. This tactic is often used on women without much substance behind it."*

Question the motive of the messenger while indicating any specific lie. *"That source is known for sharing information with unverified facts."*

Discuss the facts and your process for understanding the truth. *"My understanding is she has a record of bringing truth to power and standing up for her constituents. For example, [highlight experience/record].*

Direct them to trusted information – local when possible

Avoid arguments and/or confrontation; *you may deepen their belief*

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SCENARIO:
A pundit attacks your candidate saying…

"

"She's totally unhinged. She wants borders to be 100% open for everyone & expects taxpayers to pay!"

Responding to sexist character attacks based in disinformation <u>in a press release</u>

Share common ground with audience + state the truth. *"I am very clear that our community wants to see this country have an immigration policy that works. Here's what that means [insert specific policies]."*

Question the motive of the messenger while indicating any specific lie. *"That source is known for name-calling and sharing information with unverified and exaggerated facts to advance a specific political agenda or back a specific candidate."*

Repeat the truth and bring it back to your constituents. *"My vision for immigration in this country is [X]. In [state/community] constituents can count on me to listen to their input and give them the truth about my approach to the problem. "*

Avoid condescending language and attack the liar, not the lie. *People may relate to the lie and may be turned off if your messaging immediately discounts it. Emphasize the problem with the messengers choice to lie, mislead, deceive and find common ground with your audience.*

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SCENARIO:
They say:

"

"She's a liar. She hasn't done anything for her constituents!"

Responding to sexist character attacks based in disinformation <u>in a post</u>

Lift up positive, fact-based information to counter the attack instead of amplifying the lie.

Question the motive of the messenger and mobilize around facts:

Bad actors are LYING and using sexist attacks on Kamala Harris because they know what an effective leader she is.

Bad actors are shaking in their boots and using lazy, sexist attacks against Kamala. Flood the feeds with facts about Harris!

Do the people attacking Kamala Harris with lies and mischaracterizations have something they are trying to distract Americans from? Like their lack of credible plans or their record on supporting access to healthcare?

Use humor and engaging content to make your content go further online.

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Leveraging social media platform policies

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Smart engagement with social media platforms

- Identify a point of contact or liaison for each platform

- Know the policies relevant for your situation

- Use the tools available to you

- Keep track of failed policy enforcement

- Keep track (via screenshots) of repeat offenders to highlight patterns

PLATFORM POLICIES:

Meta recently updated its policies ahead of the midterm elections. Read the full update here.

Civic Integrity:

Prohibits content that may mislead viewers about how to participate in a civic or political process (elections and census), for example false information about election dates, times, polling places, qualifications for voting, and whether a vote will be counted. Posts that mislead people on where, when and how to vote, or that call for violence based on the voting or election outcome, according to a statement Tuesday. Ads that push people not to vote or that question the legitimacy of an election will be removed.

Bullying/harassment:

For public figures: prohibits "severe" attacks against public figures as well as some attacks where the individual is tagged.
For private individuals: prohibits content that is meant to degrade or shame someone.
For sexually explicit content/harassment: prohibits sexually explicit, non-consensual intimate images, and sexual harassment. For example, "derogatory terms related to sexual activity, like "slut," violate Meta's Community Standards for bullying and harassment because we want to ensure a baseline of safety for all members of our community, regardless of intent."*

Hate speech:

Prohibits attacks against people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religious affiliation, caste, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity and serious disease, including the use of violent or dehumanizing speech and stereotypes that have historically been used to intimidate, attack, or marginalize.

Impersonation:

Prohibits accounts or pages that impersonate another person, including public figures.

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FACT-CHECKING ON:

FACEBOOK f **INSTAGRAM** ⊙ **WHATSAPP** ⊙

Facebook's Fact-checking Program allows specific news outlets to fact-check claims and if false, diminish the reach of those claims on the platform

Develop relationships with Facebook fact-checkers - far more constituents are on Facebook products than anywhere else online. **If possible, collect all instances of the lie** (aka do the work for them when you can).

Send Facebook POC + fact-checker links to the fact-check article and the links to any claims

Find more information about Facebook's partnership with IFCN Fact Checkers here. US fact-checkers currently include the following outlets:

AFP - Hub   Lead Stories   Reuters Fact Check
The Associated Press   PolitiFact   USA TODAY
Full Fact   Science Feedback   Check Your Fact
                             Factcheck.org   The Dispatch

Meta recently announced a partnership with Telemundo for fact-checking on WhatsApp. Learn more here.

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PLATFORM POLICIES:

Twitter recently updated its approach to the midterm elections. You can read more here.

Civic Integrity:

Their civic integrity policy prohibits content in. four categories including, content "suppressing or intimidating participation, misleading people about when, where, or how to participate in a civic process, misleading people about election outcomes, and false or misleading affiliation (e.g. fake accounts).. Twitter will address violations through removing or labeling offending tweets, prompting users, suspending or locking offending accounts, profile modification, a strike policy, and pre-bunking.

Twitter is also labeling the official accounts of candidates for US Senate, the US House Representatives, and Governor. Ensure your candidate and her opponent's accounts have the correct label.

Twitter does not address mis/disinformation about candidates that do not fall into these four categories meaning "inaccurate statements about an elected or appointed official, candidate, or political party" will not violate Twitter's policies.

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PLATFORM POLICIES:

Abuse/harassment:

Prohibits targeted harassment or incitement to harassment against an individual, including "wishing or hoping that someone experiences physical harm." Twitter will remove offending tweets.

Hateful conduct:

Prohibits threats of violence and harassment against protected classes (race, ethnicity, national origin, caste, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease). Twitter will remove offending tweets.

Misleading and Deceptive Identities:

Prohibits impersonation when it is intended to mislead users (excludes impersonation accounts that are clearly identified as parody). Twitter will suspend violating accounts.

Synthetic and manipulated media:

Prohibits "deceptively sharing synthetic or manipulated media that are likely to cause harm.
" Twitter will label Tweets containing deceptive or manipulated media.

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PLATFORM POLICIES:

YouTube recently updated its approach to the midterm elections. You can read more here.

Harassment & cyberbullying:

Prohibits content that threatens individuals or subjects them to "prolonged and malicious" insults based on their protected class status or physical appearance

Impersonation:

Prohibits impersonation of individuals or channels.

Civic Integrity:

Prohibits manipulated or deceitful content about elections, including false allegations of mass fraud as well as disinformation about where, when, or how to vote. Removes other violative content including content encouraging interference in the democratic process, inciting violence, or advancing certain types of elections misinformation.

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PLATFORM POLICIES:
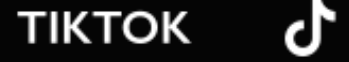
TikTok recently updated its approach to the midterm elections. You can read more here.

Bullying/harassment:
Prohibits abuse, threats or degrading statements targeting individuals. Prohibits unwanted or inappropriate sexual behavior directed at another individual

Hateful behavior:
Prohibits content that content that attacks, threatens, incites violence against, or otherwise dehumanizes an individual or a group on the basis of the following protected attributes.

Impersonation:
Prohibits deceitfully posing as another individual or group.

Harmful misinformation around elections:
Prohibits false information that may undermine trust in civic institutions and electoral processes, for example false claims of mass voter fraud or disinformation about how, when, or where to vote. They will also add labels to content identified as being related to the 2022 midterm elections as well as content from accounts belonging to governments, politicians, and political parties in the US.

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Thank you!