



Truth Brigade Guide: Welcome to the Indivisible Truth Brigade

Together, We Fight the Lies--and Win!

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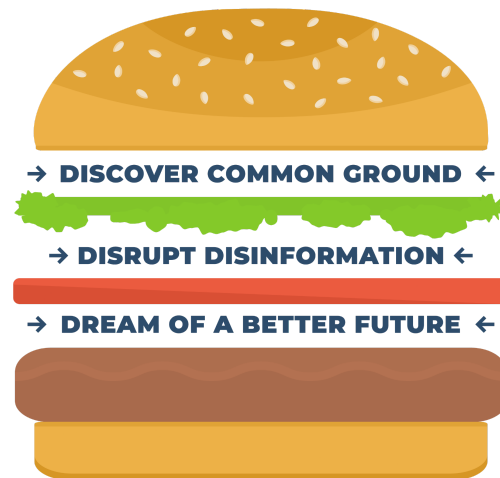
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What is the Indivisible Truth Brigade?

We are an ever-growing community of grassroots truth-tellers who effectively disrupt the flow of disinformation and misinformation online and offline. We do this by strategically writing and sharing powerful, personal, and unified counter-messages to the most damaging and destabilizing lies. We track our impact, learn, make adjustments and do it again--and again--together, to reclaim a civil society built on the shared value of the pursuit of objective truths.

Why We Do It

Neither big tech nor government regulations will put a stop to the tsunami of right-wing disinformation any time soon. Yet every day we see bad actors with huge audiences exacerbate social tensions and foment mistrust to achieve personal, financial, and political gain. This environment leaves many people disheartened and unsure about how to respond, both online and offline.



That's where the Indivisible Truth Brigade comes in. Truth Brigaders learn how and when to respond to even the most toxic disinformation with confidence and for the greatest impact. Activists and organizers like YOU are the key to countering disinformation. People believe sources they trust. When we share and amplify consistent, factual, and strategic messages to those who trust us, we measurably shift the narrative.

How We Do It

We form an ever-growing community of grassroots truth-tellers

We disrupt the flow of disinformation and misinformation through two key strategies:

1. **Stop all interaction with disinformation.**
By not engaging with the lies, online and offline, we diffuse arguments and influence online algorithms
2. **Share messages that encourage critical thinking, rather than argument**
By encouraging critical thinking we drive people to pause before sharing, and we support both short and long term behavioral change

We work and grow together

As a member of the Truth Brigade, you are asked to read and comply with our [Community Code of Conduct listed here](#)

Please invite your friends by sharing [this link to signup!](#)

We identify a specific disinformation campaign to counter

Indivisible Truth Brigade leadership works with a team of external disinformation experts who closely monitor bad actors and identify damaging disinformation as it spreads. Together, generally every two weeks, we strategically craft a model counter-message for Truth Brigade members to share. Sometimes Truth Brigade leadership will launch a rapid-response campaign, and sometimes we run longer-term message campaigns.

We personalize, share and amplify an effective counter-message

Our counter-messages are called **“Truth Brigade message campaigns.”** For every Truth Brigade message campaign, you are provided with explanations, resources, suggestions, examples, and graphics, which you can use to create your own messages to share on social media as well as in longer-form responses like Letters to the Editor or articles, or in offline conversations. New Truth Brigade message campaigns are announced in the Truth Brigade Slack community, on twice-monthly Zoom calls, and in weekly emails.

We track our impact and learn

To better understand how we can effectively fight disinformation, we track our impact by analyzing the reach of our Truth Brigade messages. We share these metrics weekly in Slack and email. We're so proud of where we've come! As of early 2022:



More than **5,000 people** have joined the Truth Brigade!

Truth Brigade members live in **every state** in the US!

We've achieved more than **234 million** measurable social media impressions! (That's mostly Twitter. Our members post just as frequently on Facebook, which isn't measurable)

We've posted—on Twitter alone—almost **60,000** disinformation-disrupting messages

We've trained **thousands of people** in disinformation-disrupting best practices, on and offline

We do it again!

We launch Truth Brigade Message Campaigns **on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month in Zoom calls**. We will provide the call links and message campaign materials to you via Slack and email.

Truth Brigade Disinformation Responses: Best Practices

- **Do not engage with online disinformation.** Social media platforms reward engagement in their algorithms. This means any time a user comments on, clicks on, or shares a post – even to try to debunk that post – they are helping to circulate that content to more users. As a rule, only engage with the content you want to reward and spread.
- **Don't use the language of the disinformers.** If you name it, you spread it (yes, journalists need to learn this too). Disinformers are adept at giving lies the air of legitimacy through falsely employing scientific or credible-sounding terms (for example, the [language perpetuated around the unnecessary review of 2020 ballots](#) and dog whistles that [cloak racism](#)). Make sure your words describe reality and don't repeat sticky, inaccurate labels—even to discredit them.
- **Prime people to be skeptical.** Sometimes it can help to point out (using non-political examples) how easy it can be for anyone to unintentionally believe or spread false information. Take [this example](#), which is safe to repeat: a delightful story about wildlife returning to Venice was shared hundreds of thousands of times on social media, only for National Geographic to [point out](#) the story was false.
- **Focus on discrediting the messenger rather than fact-checking the claim.** Pointing to the origin of the content and explaining why that source is not credible, or would want to spread harmful information or give bad advice (often financial or political motives) may remind people why it is important to question what they see and hear. [An example of this](#) would be calling out Facebook for allowing lies to openly spread about the climate crisis.
- **Redirect to information from official sources.** As much as possible, direct people to accurate, unbiased information. [PolitiFact](#) and [Snopes](#) both regularly debunk viral disinformation and can be helpful resources for fact-checking if someone is genuinely confused about a story.
- **Know when to disengage.** Disinformation and conspiracy theories are not going away any time soon, and a single conversation may not change someone's mind. If it is not possible to engage in a productive discussion, it is usually best to walk away.



- Write (or say) your counter-message **separately, within your own networks**, in the form of an **Indivisible Truth Sandwich to encourage critical thinking** as instructed below.

How To Build An Indivisible Truth Sandwich

Research shows people tend to remember what they hear first, last, and most often. The Indivisible Truth Brigade message system therefore recommends crafting a counter-message in three short parts (sentences or phrases), opening and closing with a repeated version of the same truth. Our system builds beyond this framework, though, to encourage the most possible engagement with the message, and to [prompt critical thought](#). This field of study is continually evolving, and so is the Truth Brigade.

The Indivisible Truth Sandwich example below positively counters The Big Lie about American elections that are used to create mistrust and undermine voting rights.

1. Discover common ground and truthful shared values.

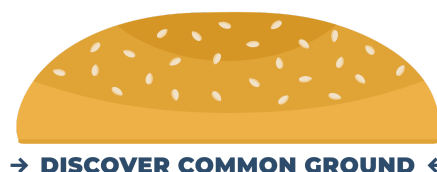
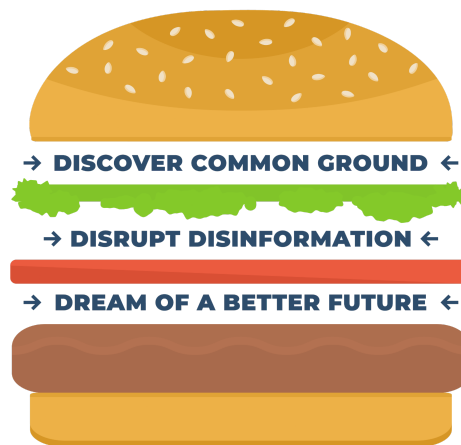
“The freedom to vote is important to me because it gives us power over politicians.”

Why does this work?

We open messages with shared values, because people tend to lower defenses when they sense others share similar views, not when their views are under attack. Authentically identifying places of commonality can be challenging but it will help you become more objective, which ultimately strengthens your argument. We’re all tempted to lead with the facts and tell people why they’re wrong, but this prompts the listener to become more entrenched in their beliefs, and even angry. Primal emotions like anger can shut down higher mental processes, like analytical thinking.

2. Disrupt disinformation by questioning the motives of the messenger to encourage critical thought.

“When I see politicians pushing for laws to make it harder to vote—I have to wonder what they’re afraid of.”





Why does this work?

The middle of your “sandwich” is all about increasing critical thought—which means opening the reader’s mind to the possibility of doing additional research. We know that most people share disinformation and misinformation inadvertently—and are less likely to share when prompted to think! Be careful not to repeat the lie or the language of the lie here. Instead, block that click by providing a reason to **question the disinformers’ motives** or fact-check the veracity of the source.

3. Dream of a better future by reaffirming the truth as an inspiring vision or call to action.

“It’s simple- protect our freedom by protecting our voting rights! #TruthBrigade”

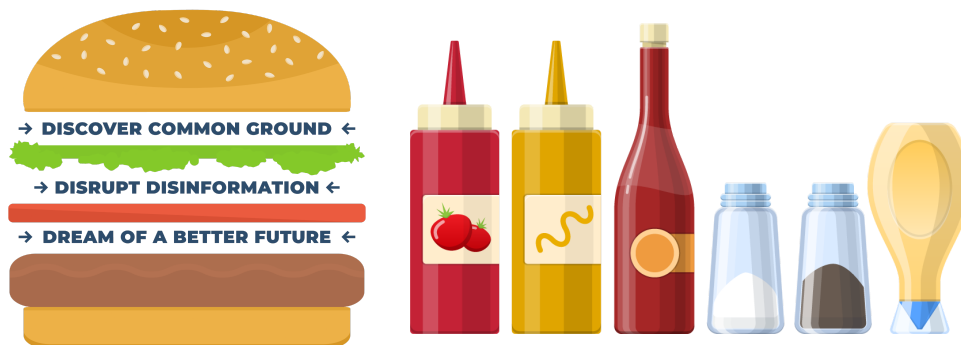
→ DREAM OF A BETTER FUTURE ←



Why does this work?

When you close your message with a **truthful and inspiring** statement about the benefits that arise from this shared truth, you give people an emotional connection to the message, and a reason to share it and take positive action.

These are your condiments and toppings (the extras)



What happens after you open a conversation with a truth sandwich with shared values, disruption of disinformation, and a truthful and inspiring statement? Here are some ways you can build on that successful initial conversation and shift someone into even more effective engagement in the short term:

- **Use local and nonpartisan messengers.** The right invests heavily in politicizing information and sources to undermine trust in officials. In response, you should point people to trusted, nonpartisan influencers who are active on their issues and will help to



reinforce their message. If those messengers are also members of a local community, will also help establish trust.

- **Keep the conversation centered on the impact on people.** As often as possible, connect your message to real people by putting a face to the issue. You can help share stories and content highlighting how local communities are impacted by core issues.
- **Encourage people to take concrete actions to address their concerns.** Many people engage with conspiracies and disinformation because they feel powerless against larger forces of authority. For those who may be looking to feel more ownership of their environment, you can offer tangible actions people can take to have an impact. Encouraging people to join a cause, sign a petition, tweet a lawmaker, or share information with friends can reinforce more effective responses to fear.
- **In offline conversations, address underlying concerns and pivot to a proactive message.** Consider the emotional benefit someone gets from believing false information – coping with fear or powerlessness, feeling more informed than others, etc. Then use the “ABC” method to pivot the discussion: Acknowledge the underlying emotion and find common ground (e.g. “I am also very worried about the direction of our country...”); Bridge with a simple phrase (“The thing is...” or “What I try to remember is...”); then offer relevant Content (your core message) to shift the conversation.
- For more information on how to have personal conversations with people engaging in conspiracy theories, check out [this article](#) from Technology Review or [this NBC article](#). To get guidance specifically related to medical and COVID misinformation, look at [this guidance from HHS](#). This [UNICEF guide](#) to talking to friends and family about COVID misinformation has helpful guidance that also applies to other topics.

Where Can I Meet Other Truth Brigaders?

As the Indivisible Truth Brigade grows, we are adding more spaces for Truth Brigaders to engage with one another! Below you will find different spaces where Truth Brigade members interact:

Slack

Slack is the online community where Truth Brigade members and staff collaborate with one another and share important information like message campaigns and resources. If you’re interested in joining our Slack space, please read our [Truth Brigade Slack Guide](#) for more information.

Monthly calls

Truth Brigade holds 2 monthly calls where we launch our campaigns, discuss what’s happening with disinformation, and talk with fellow Truth Brigade members!

Big Truths Call

On the second Wednesday of every month, we host a call to learn the big truths of disinformation from experts and Truth Brigade staff & partners. Topics we explore include



disrupting big media, government regulation, the psychology of disinformation, disinformation targeted at vulnerable communities, and more. [Sign up for our next Big Truths Call here!](#)

Wednesday Workshop Call

On the fourth Wednesday of every month, we host a workshop call for new member orientation, "ask me anything!" discussions with disinformation-fighting pros, message-writing support, and connecting with fellow Truth Brigaders. [Sign up for our next Message Workshopping Call here!](#)

Need more help?

Join us in the Questions_For_Staff slack channel, or if you aren't on slack yet, feel free to email us at truthbrigade@indivisible.org

What's Next?

Good news, Truth Brigader, you have finished the guide and finished Step One! Now go on to Step Two: [Choose your First Action!](#)

[Act Now!](#)