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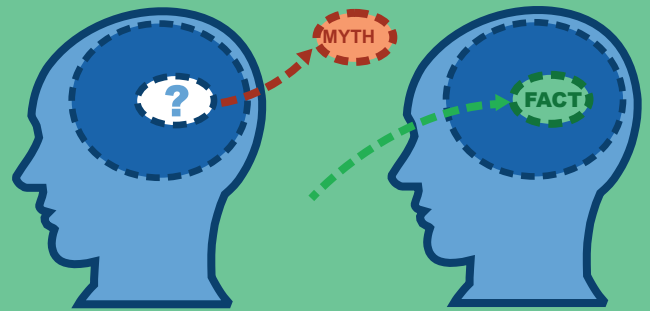
DEBUNKING one-pager

An effective refutation should contain the following elements:

1 Factual Alternative

The most important element of a debunking is a compelling, memorable fact that replaces the myth. Debunking (if done right) is a positive form of communication where the emphasis is on key facts and compelling frames, not the myth. In other words, *fight sticky myths with even stickier facts*.

One requirement of the factual alternative is that it fulfills any causal explanations provided by the myth.



2 Explicit Warning before the myth

Warning a person before they encounter a myth reduces the influence of the misinformation. The warning puts the person cognitively on guard. This indicates that including a warning in a debunking before the myth can help reduce the myth's influence. This can be visual cues or wording such as *"A popular myth is..."* or *"These facts can be distorted. For example..."*

3 Myth

Mentioning the myth runs the risk of making people more familiar with the myth. Nevertheless, you do have to mention the myth. You can't inoculate someone against a myth without first exposing them to a weak version of the myth (think flu shot).

You reduce the risk of increased familiarity by warning them before mentioning the myth and by putting the emphasis on the factual alternative.

4 Explanation of how myth distorts facts

When presented with the factual alternative and the myth, a person holds two contradictory ideas. You resolve this contradiction by explaining how the myth distorts the facts or how the myth came about in the first place. For example, this might involve explaining the logical fallacy within the myth (e.g., cherry picking, red herring, etc). Or you might need to explain how the myth originated in the first place.