Building Immunity: Disrupting Health Mis- and Disinformation through Nursing Education

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Motivation
- Project was born after a discussion about the need to develop communication skills of nursing students
- Originally focused on translating traditional academic information literacy skills into skills employers expect from nursing school graduates
- The project evolved into one that investigated how health care professionals can stop the spread of disinformation

Project Description
- Interdisciplinary team made up of librarians, nurses, public health experts
- Teach nursing students to identify mis/disinfo
- Examine interventions to disrupt the spread of mis-/disinformation
  - Create online OER modules

Context
- In 2021 the American Association of Colleges of Nursing released new competencies for nursing education
- Pitt SON is revising its curriculum accordingly; misinfo not currently addressed
- Our modules will be added to the BSN sophomore Nursing Research course
- We aligned our learning objectives with the competencies to fit in any undergraduate nursing program

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Identify

Understand how disinformation works

Tactics
- Emotional language or images that prompt feelings of fear, anger, validation (I was right all along!)
- Creating fake accounts to quickly spread bad info
- False dichotomies
- Ad hominem attacks

Narratives
- Scapegoating/othering
- Conspiratorial thinking
- Incoherence

Motivations
- Hate
- To gain power
- Instability

Targeted disinformation
- Information ecosystems are influenced by our backgrounds, combined with Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

SIFTing through information

You are faced with an unfamiliar source—what can you do?

- STOP
- INVESTIGATE THE SOURCE
- FIND BETTER COVERAGE
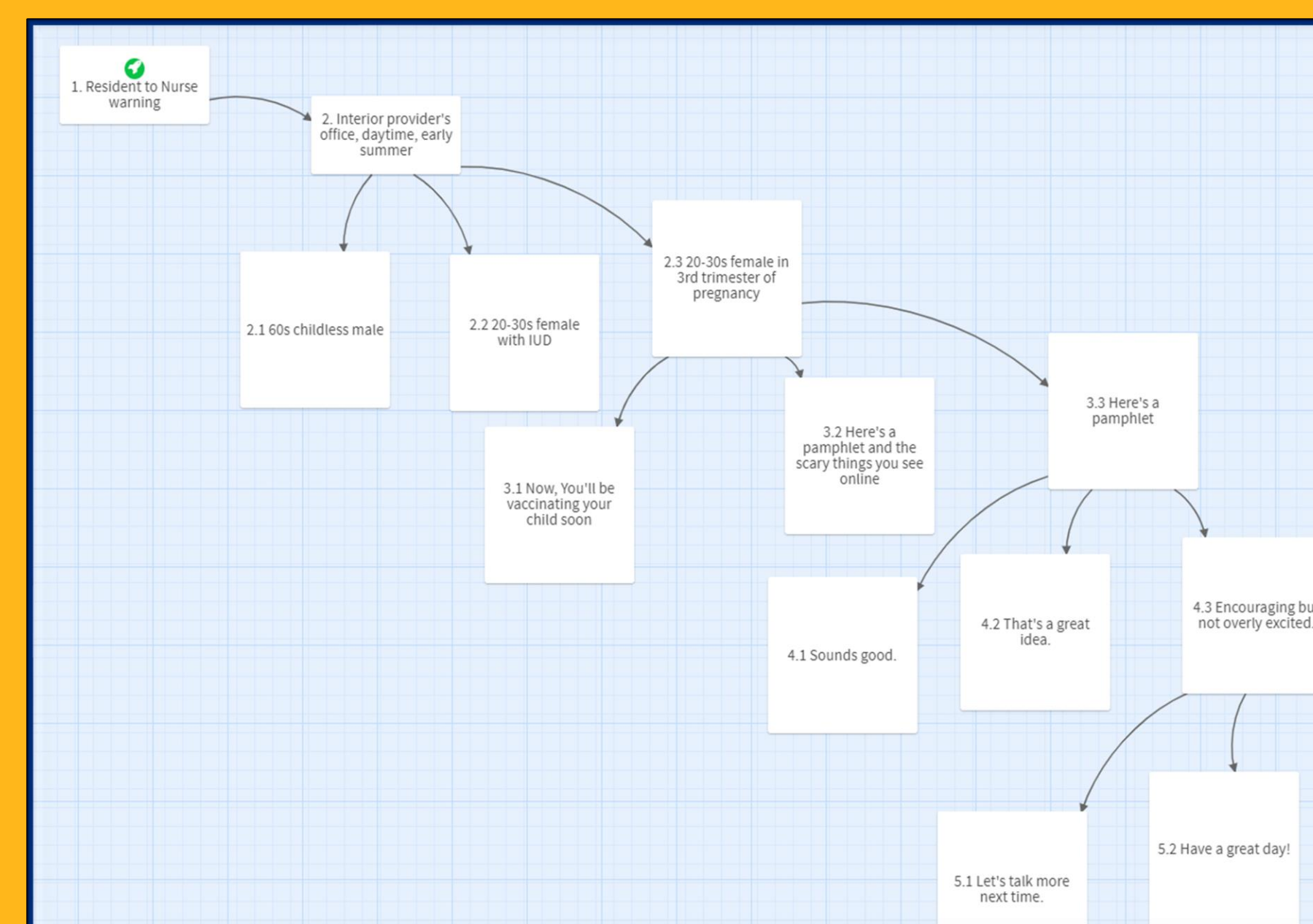- TRACE CLAIMS TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCE

Disrupt

Prebunking (Before Exposure)
- Start with accurate info → Expose shady tactics → End conversation with accurate info
- GOAL: Inoculate people against disinformation by providing them with **accurate information** along with an understanding **of how and why disinformation works** prior to any encounter with disinformation

Motivational Interviewing (After Exposure)
- Patient has already decided about their health based on misinformation OR Patient has been exposed to mis-/disinformation and hasn't rejected it—is in the process of deciding.
- OARS method: Open Questioning, Affirming, Reflecting, and Summarizing
- GOAL: Empower people **to change** (thoughts, behaviors) through **a guiding style of communication** that evokes empathy, respect, and curiosity.

Practice

Choose your own adventure

Branching scenarios
- Professionally acted and produced videos
- Students must choose the most appropriate steps when prebunking and motivational interviewing
- Limited time for complex topic—teaching the spirit over the nuances of each

Project Deliverables
- A set of three (3) modules used in Pitt's SON also released as OERs for anyone to use
  - Introduction: What, when, and how to identify/evaluate mis/disinfo
  - Prebunking
  - Motivational Interviewing
- Created and validated misinformation assessment tool: *Nursing Student Misinformation Attitudes, Confidence, and Knowledge Assessment Tool*
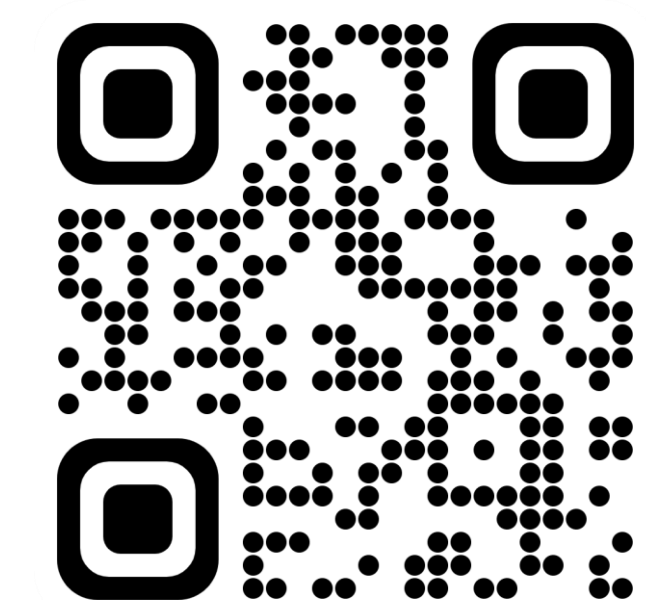
Potential Impact
- Modules as Open Educational Resources (OERs) for use across institutions made easier since learning outcomes are mapped to updated AACN competencies
- Improving the communication skills of nursing students with patients and with colleagues
- Improving the communication skills of practicing nurses through Continuing Education credits

Future Plans
- Have sophomores on two campuses use the Misinformation assessment tool spring 2023
- Hold student and faculty focus groups on the modules, and finalize modules
- Pilot the modules in fall 2023 and spring 2024, using the assessment tool as a post-test
- Provide the modules as CE to a local hospital nursing unit
- Release the modules as OER

Scan the QR code to sign up for updates about modules' release.

Acknowledgements