

How to Spot Anti-Choice Disinformation

Anti-choice advocates are notorious for spreading disinformation about abortion to stigmatize and restrict access to abortion. In general, audiences should be wary of anti-choice activists using anecdotal, rather than scientific, evidence to support their claims. It's also important to take so-called scientific arguments with a grain of salt. If an argument sounds counterintuitive or wildly exaggerated, it's probably not true.

Top 3 red flags to watch out for:

- Their evidence is strictly anecdotal
- Their claims sound wildly exaggerated
- Pregnant people are conspicuously absent from the conversation

If you think you might be looking at or hearing anti-choice disinformation, here are 8 questions to ask yourself:

<p>1. Who is the speaker? Do they have a bias?</p>	<p>Be wary of studies by notorious anti-choice misinformers, like the so-called "expert" witnesses who testify against abortion in state and federal legislatures.</p> <p><i>Examples of misinformers: Priscilla Coleman, David Reardon, Martha Shuping</i></p>
<p>2. Is the speaker's evidence strictly anecdotal?</p>	<p>Anti-choice activists may use anecdotes to try and refute accepted medical facts. Research has found that 99% of women say they feel relief, not regret, five years after having an abortion, and anti-abortion stigma is primarily responsible for the negative effects that a small minority of women may feel. Still, anti-choice activists will elevate cherry-picked anecdotes with minimal context to argue otherwise.</p> <p>Sample language: "When I began my private OB/Gyn practice, I believed that abortion was a good solution to the problem of young women's unplanned pregnancies and that abortion did not tend to</p>



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	<p>cause psychological difficulties; but, in my practice, I was surprised to find that the opposite was true.”</p>
3. Is the speaker making counterintuitive claims?	<p>If the speaker says something that sounds counterintuitive, like “pro-life is pro-woman,” chances are it’s not true.</p> <p><u>Sample language:</u> “[T]he Medical Society of New York in 1867 ‘condemned abortion at every stage of gestation as “murder.” This movement was applauded by, among others, the leading feminists of the day...”</p>
4. Is the speaker deemphasizing the pregnant person?	<p>Anti-choice activists often pivot away from discussing the consequences their policies will carry for actual pregnant people. If they’re not talking about pregnant people, chances are they’re trying to obscure the harm their one-size-fits-all policies will do in real medical situations or hide the reality that enforcing those policies may lead to criminalization.</p>
5. What sources is the speaker citing?	<p>Sometimes anti-choice activists cite decades- or even centuries-old scientific evidence to support their arguments. If the “scientific” source they’re citing is from before 1980, they’re probably papering over better scientific evidence.</p>
6. What organization is the speaker associated with?	<p>If the author is the president of Live Action, Susan B. Anthony List, or Students for Life, or American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, that should be a dead giveaway that they have an ulterior motive. But sometimes anti-choice organizations fly under the radar because they <i>sound</i> reputable. For example, the American College of Pediatricians sounds like an authority, but they’re actually a Southern Poverty Law Center-designated hate group.</p>
7. Do the speaker’s remarks go against consensus in the medical community?	<p>If the author claims that abortion causes mental illness, breast cancer, infertility, physical injury, or death, they are directly contradicting scientific evidence.</p>
8. Has the speaker been debunked before?	<p>It’s always worth a Google search of a particular author or study to see the discourse around it. If you see articles from trustworthy sources discrediting the research or the researcher, you should be wary of it.</p>