

Advancing Health Communication Science and Practice

Lead ICOs: NCI, NIMH, OBSSR

Working Group: FIC, NCATS, NCCIH, NCI, NEI, NHLBI, NIA, NIAID, NIAMS, NICHD, NIDA, NIDCR, NIEHS, NIMH, NIMHD, NINDS, NINR, NLM, OBSSR, ONR



National Institutes of Health

Office of Strategic Coordination–The Common Fund

OSC (Common Fund)



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Concept Clearance: New Common Fund Program

TITLE: Advancing Health Communication Science and Practice

Objective: To investigate, develop, test, and disseminate new approaches for effective and equitable health communication, including measuring communication exposure and impact, addressing misinformation, engaging communities, and building trust.

Initiatives:

1. Research Network
2. Methods & Measurement Research Projects
3. Coordination & Dissemination Center

Funds Available: \$30M per year

Program Duration: 5 years

Council Action: Vote for approval of the concept

Program Co-Chairs and Coordinators

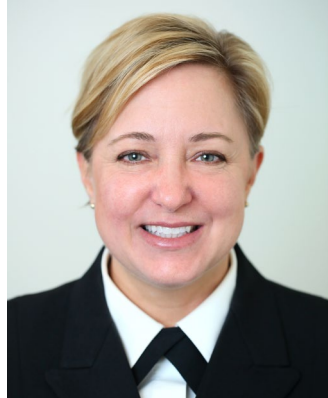


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Program Co-Chairs



Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD
Director, NIMH



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Why Health Communication?



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Online misinformation is linked to early COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy and refusal

[Francesco Pierri](#) , [Brea L. Perry](#), [Matthew R. DeVerna](#), [Kai-Cheng Yang](#), [Alessandro Flammini](#), [Filippo Menczer](#) & [John Bryden](#)

[Scientific Reports](#) 12, Article number: 5966 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

Ignoring behavioral and social sciences undermines the U.S. response to Covid-19

By Judith D. Auerbach and Andrew D. Forsyth March 9, 2022

STAT

[Reprints](#)

“We got the biological science right, but we didn’t get the **social science** right”

Ashish Jha on the pandemic
CNBC, 7/7/22

How cynicism and misinformation add to the emotional costs of gun violence

Mary Blankenship and Carol Graham - Wednesday, June 15, 2022

BROOKINGS

The Washington Post

Facebook ads push misinformation about HIV prevention drugs, LGBT activists say, ‘harming public health’

CONFRONTING HEALTH MISINFORMATION

The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on
Building a Healthy Information Environment

Scientists need to better communicate the links between pandemics and global environmental change

[Matthias C. Rillig](#) , [Anika Lehmann](#), [Michael S. Bank](#), [Kenneth A. Gould](#) & [Hauke R. Heekeren](#)

[Nature Ecology & Evolution](#) 5, 1466–1467 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)

How poor communication exacerbates health inequities – and what to do about it

Stuart M. Butler and Nehath Sheriff - Monday, February 22, 2021

BROOKINGS

We’ve been led to believe that an occasional glass of wine might be better than abstaining from alcohol altogether, but that might not be the case. **B B C**

“...there are things about **human behavior** that I don't think we had invested enough into understanding. **We basically have seen the accurate medical information overtaken...by the inaccurate conspiracies and false information.... We used to think that if knowledge was made available from credible sources, it would win the day. That's not happening now.**”

Francis Collins on *NPR*, 12/7/21

Illustrative Example: Research on Debunking Misinformation

- Does debunking backfire?
- Is correction effective?
- Does it work under real-world conditions?
- What other strategies can mitigate the impact of misinformation?

Review

Searching for the Backfire Effect: Measurement and Design Considerations ☆

Briony Swire-Thompson ^{a, b}, Joseph DeGutis ^{c, d}, David

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Open Access

Can corrections spread misinformation to new audiences? Testing for the elusive familiarity backfire effect



Ullrich K. H. Ecker^{1*}, Stephan Lewandowsky^{1,2} and Matthew Chadwick¹

Editorial > Am J Public Health. 2020 Oct;110(S3)

Correction as a Solution for Health Misinformation on Social Media

Emily K Vraga ¹, Leticia Bode ¹

Research Article

Evaluating the Impact of Attempts to Correct Health Misinformation on Social Media: A Meta-Analysis

Nathan Walter , John J. Brooks, Camille J. Saucier & Sapna Suresh

Pages 1776-1784 | Published online: 06 Aug 2020

Perspective



Health Education & Behavior
1-5
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The COVID-19 Misinfodemic: Moving Beyond Fact-Checking

Wen-Ying Sylvia Chou, PhD¹ , Anna Gaysynsky, MPH² ,
and Robin C. Vanderpool, DrPH¹

JOURNAL OF MEDICAL INTERNET RESEARCH

Mourali & Drake

Original Paper

The Challenge of Debunking Health Misinformation in Dynamic Social Media Conversations: Online Randomized Study of Public Masking During COVID-19

Key Gaps Identified from Planning Activities: January-June 2022



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- **Community-engaged, timely and useful** communication research
- Science of **trust** and **mistrust** within diverse communities
- **Health and science literacy**
- Addressing the **spread of health-related misinformation**
- Innovative **implementation structures and partnerships** to promote **equitable** health communication
- **Workforce** development for researchers and communicators

Planning activities:

- Federal partner listening sessions
- Expert workshop (May 2022)
- An RFI with >50 responses
- Portfolio analysis
- Landscape analysis, including review of previous large-scale communication initiatives

Why a Common Fund Program?



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Cross-disease, synergistic & cross-cutting

- Health communication is a vital yet underfunded area across *all* ICs and health topics
- Traditional linear models of translational research are inadequate

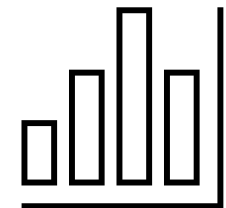
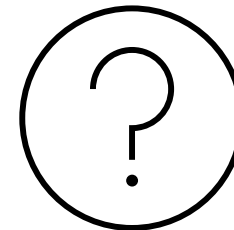
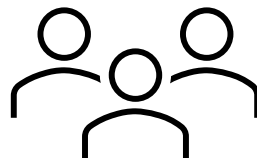
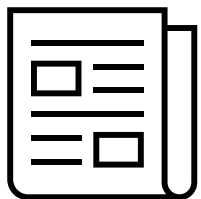
Transformative & catalytic to other areas of behavioral and biomedical science

- Applicability of *iterative team science* and *community-engaged research*
- Practical solutions, training of a diverse workforce, and active community-engaged outreach and dissemination

Unique role of the NIH

- *Coordinated and accelerated research* in health-relevant communication and misinformation

To investigate, develop, test, and disseminate new approaches for effective and equitable health communication, including measuring communication exposure and impact, addressing misinformation, engaging communities, and building trust.



Research Network

Integrated and iterative research across translational continuum to improve health communication practice, foster health literacy, and address misinformation

Coordination & Dissemination Center

Coordination and information sharing across the consortium and dissemination of best practices across audiences

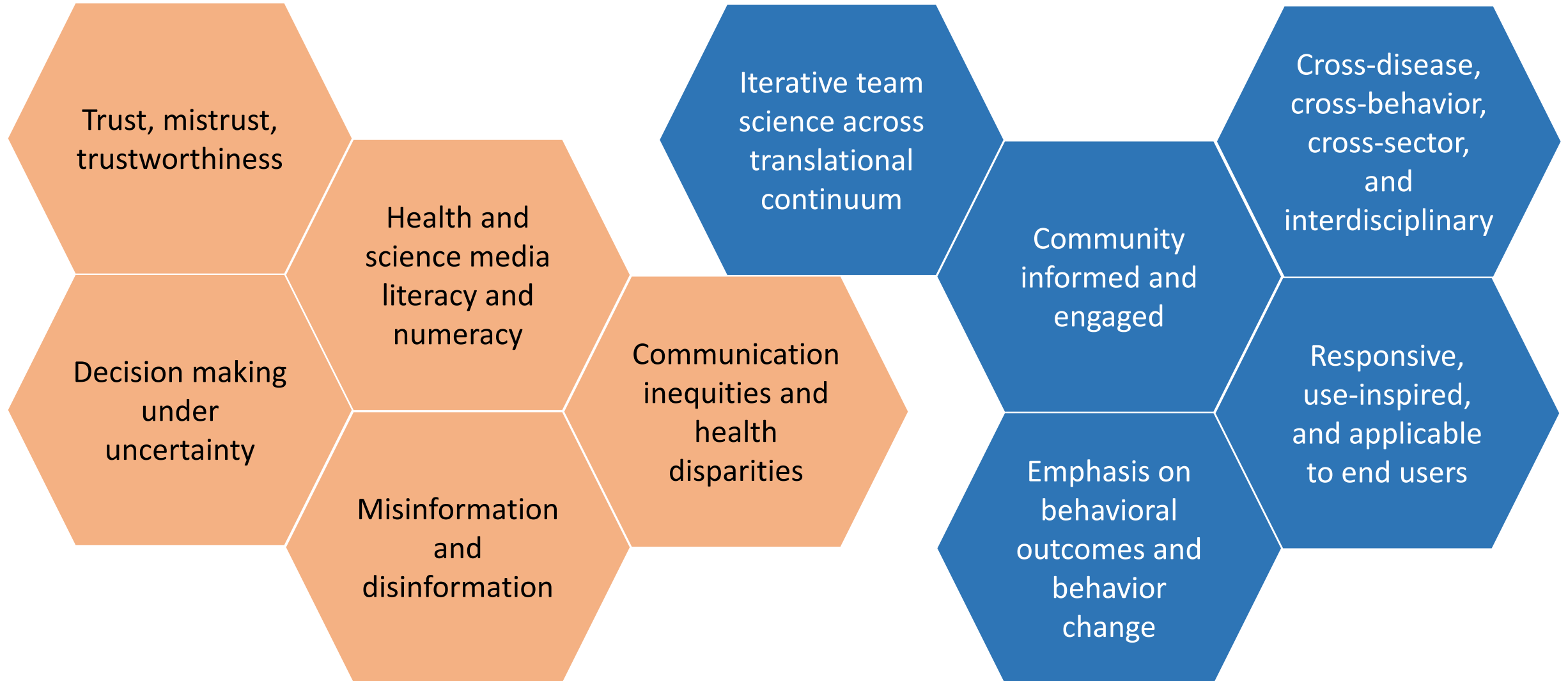
Methods & Measurement Research Projects

Development and testing of innovative measures of communication (e.g., exposure, impact, health/science literacy, mistrust)

Priorities for Research Topics and Approaches



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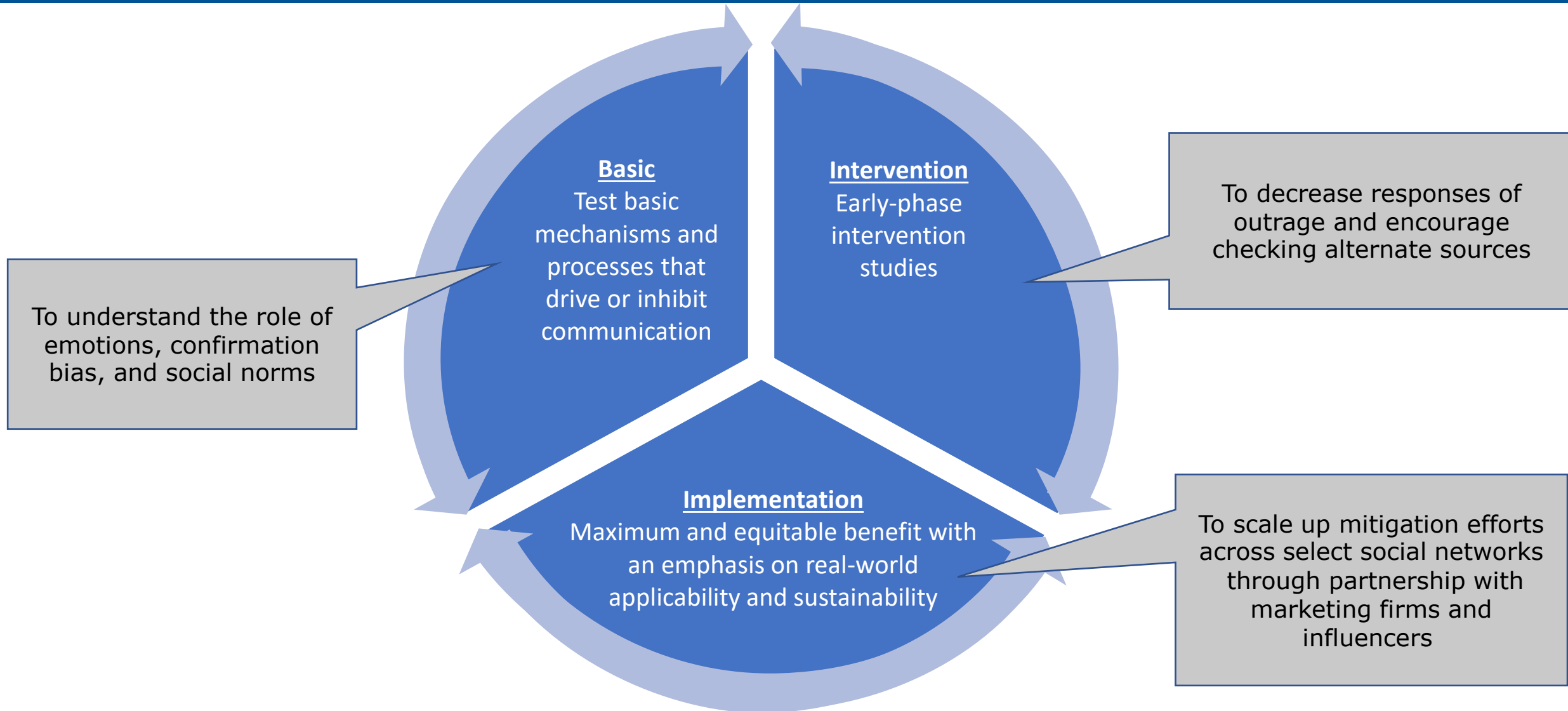


- Ecologically-valid, iterative learning cycle research projects across the translational continuum and disciplines to develop and test new health communication approaches that are sustainable and can be adopted by future health communication researchers and in the broader behavior and social science research (BSSR) fields
- Encourage diversity in health communication research workforce
- *Sub-initiative: Opportunity funds for rapid-response health communication research tackling new and emerging health communication challenges (see appendix for details)*

Deliverables

- Effective health communication approaches (e.g., how to meet the needs of the new communication ecosystem, how to foster health literacy, how to identify and mitigate misinformation) with new understanding of what approaches work for whom, under what circumstances, and why
- A cadre of health communication researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplines

Full-Cycle Translational Framework



- Development and testing of innovative methods and measures of health communication exposure, impact, context, predictors (e.g., health and science literacy)
- Assess quality of information (e.g., credibility, interpretability, and usability across audiences)
- Partnerships with technology/social media platforms, marketing experts, and communicators of health information
- Measures developed by this activity to be shared with and adopted by the full-cycle research activities (when appropriate) for additional testing and validation

Deliverables

- Validated methods and measures for factors relevant to the current health communication ecosystem, including exposure to messages, misinformation, impact of communication exposure, the spread of misinformation, health and science literacy, and other predictors of communication outcomes

- Consortium-wide coordination and convening to foster collaborations, share results, tackle shared challenges, and facilitate cross-study learning
- Collect, compile, and disseminate evidence-based findings, approaches, and other resources from research and measurement initiatives
- Develop educational/training materials for health communication researchers
- Conduct active outreach to and technical assistance for various audiences, including health communication researchers and health communicators (e.g., scientists, health practitioners, journalists, community leaders)
- Offer expert guidance in health equity and community engaged research

Deliverables

- A repository of evidence-based measures, tools, and other resources
- Active dissemination of best practices to health communication researchers and other audiences influenced by health communication research
- Robust assessment of the uptake, use, and impact of all program resources

Budget



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| <i>Budget Phase I: \$154.3M over 5 years</i> | FY24 | FY25 | FY26 | FY27 | FY28 | Total |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Initiative 1: Research Network (~15-20 projects) | \$25M | \$25M | \$22M | \$22M | \$22M | \$116M |
| Sub-initiative funding begins in year 3 (\$200K x 15 sites) | \$0 | \$0 | \$3M | \$3M | \$3M | \$9M |
| Initiative 2: Methods and Measurement Research Projects (6-8 projects) | \$2M | \$2M | \$2M | \$2M | \$2M | \$10M |
| Initiative 3: Coordination and Dissemination Center | \$3M | \$3M | \$3M | \$3M | \$3M | \$15M |
| RMS – staff salary, workshops, travel | \$300K | \$1M | \$1M | \$1M | \$1M | \$4.3M |
| Total | \$30.3M | \$31M | \$31M | \$31M | \$31M | \$154.3M |

Council Action: Vote for approval of the concept for Advancing Health Communication Science and Practice

 commonfund.nih.gov

 [@NIHCommonFund](https://www.facebook.com/NIHCommonFund)

 [@NIH_CommonFund](https://twitter.com/NIH_CommonFund)



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Appendices



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Defining health communication & misinformation



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Health communication: approaches that seek to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health^{1,2}.

Health communication science: inter-disciplinary research and theory development on the processes, effects, and impact of health communication.

Health misinformation*: any health-related claim of fact that is false, inaccurate, or misleading according to the best available evidence at the time^{3,4,5}.

*Disinformation: a coordinated or deliberate effort to spread misinformation in order to gain money, power, or reputation⁵.

1. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/topic/health-communication-and-health-information-technology>

2. Institute of Medicine. 2002. *Speaking of Health: Assessing Health Communication Strategies for Diverse Populations*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/10018>.

3. Chou, W.-Y. S., Gaysynsky, A., & Cappella, J. N. (2020). Where We Go From Here: Health Misinformation on Social Media. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110(S3), S273-S275. doi:10.2105/ajph.2020.305905

4. Office of the Surgeon General (OSG). (2021). *Confronting Health Misinformation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Healthy Information Environment*. US Department of Health and Human Services.

5. Kington, R. S., Arnesen, S., Chou, W.-Y. S., Curry, S. J., Lazer, D., & Villarruel, A. M. (2021). Identifying Credible Sources of Health Information in Social Media: Principles and Attributes. *NAM Perspectives*, 10.31478/202107a. doi:10.31478/202107a

Rapid-Response Opportunity Fund



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Delayed opportunity fund tackling emerging health communication challenges identified by community/practitioners

- Projects would solicit **time-sensitive problems** from the community through an application/matching process that allow the researchers and the community to come together to develop/test a short-term campaign/program (< 1 yr), which will be implemented and rigorously evaluated in real-time
- **What does it add/Why a sub-component?** Leveraging established infrastructure/expertise, this affords the opportunity for more timely and useful solutions to emerging challenges, enabling communities to articulate their challenge/problems and benefit from the wealth of scholarly research that may be relevant and informative to their practices

Table showing distinctions between research projects and rapid response projects:

| | Research Project | Rapid-response set-aside |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Timeline | 5+ years, starting at initiative's Year 1 | 1 year, starting at Initiative's Year 3 |
| Team composition | Basic + Applied + translational BSS scientists; multidisciplinary and multi-sector collaborators | Researchers + a small group of health communication practitioners or community leader |
| Problem definition | Co-determined (a priori) at the time of application preparation | By community leaders at the time of application solicitation |
| *Clarifications | While iterative, Research Projects employ a more common community-engaged cyclical framework | One-level further in the direction of community-engaged research; responds only to a new and emerging community-defined communication challenge. |