



Finding out about mental health

BrainWaves



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A claim about cold showers

A friend has recently told you that they are taking cold showers every day and that it's really improved their mental health and made them feel a lot happier. You do a quick search to see if you can find out more.

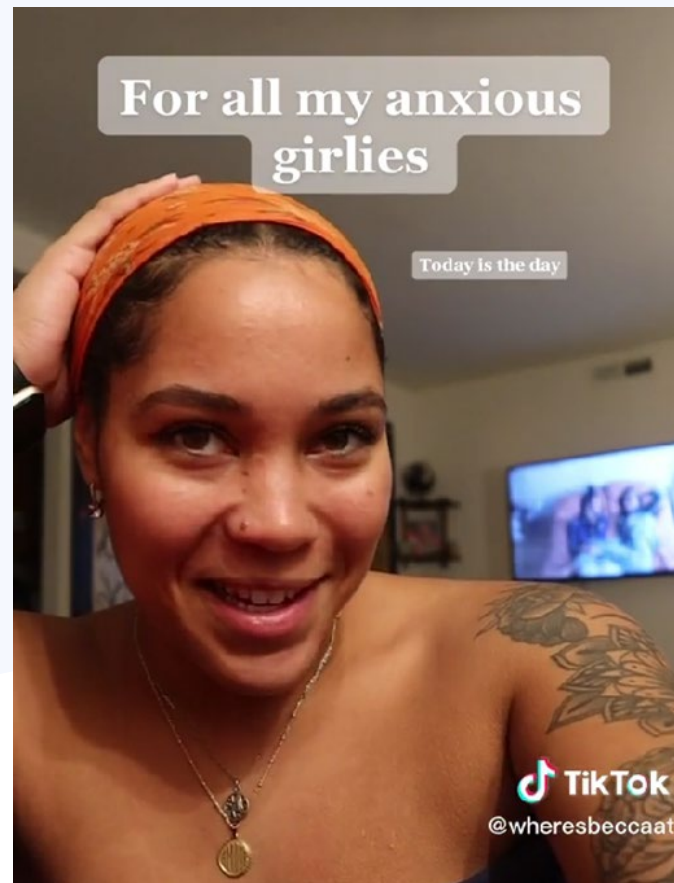
Here's the first Tik Tok you find...

- As you watch the video, write down what the young person is claiming.
- Can you trust her claims? Why?
- How do her claims resonate with your own experiences?

Keep your thoughts written down, we will share together later in the lesson.



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Overview

In this lesson, you will develop an understanding of:

- The advantages and disadvantages of different sources on mental health
- How to evaluate different sources of information and advice

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the credibility of online resources regarding mental health
- Navigate and critique the information shared online about mental health





Guidelines for a safe and respectful space

Be kind

Respect everyone's views and perspectives.
Show appreciation and support.

Contribute

Be brave and ready to answer or have a go.
Everyone has a chance to speak.

Listen

Be respectful and listen to others. When one person is speaking, everyone should listen.

Ask questions

Be curious. Can you expand on someone else's point? What questions would you ask?

No judgement

We don't judge or put anyone down, either verbally or nonverbally.

Remember

You don't have to say anything if you don't want to and you don't have to talk about yourself.

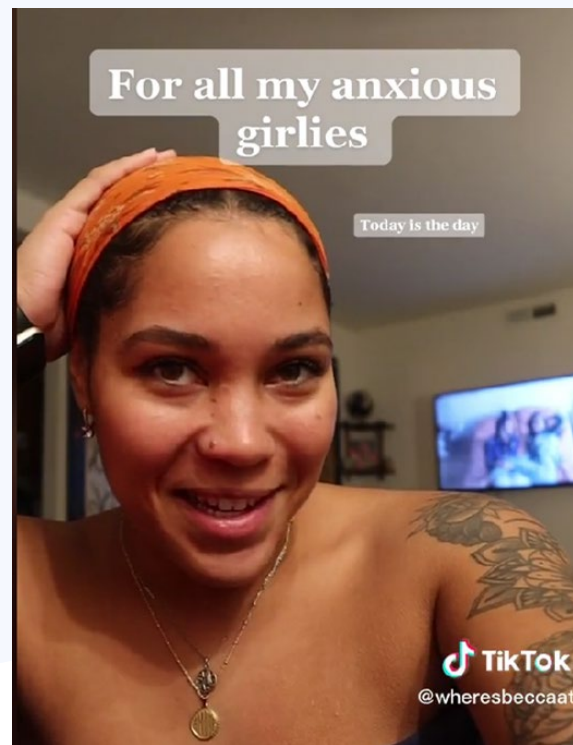




What do you think of the claims she made?

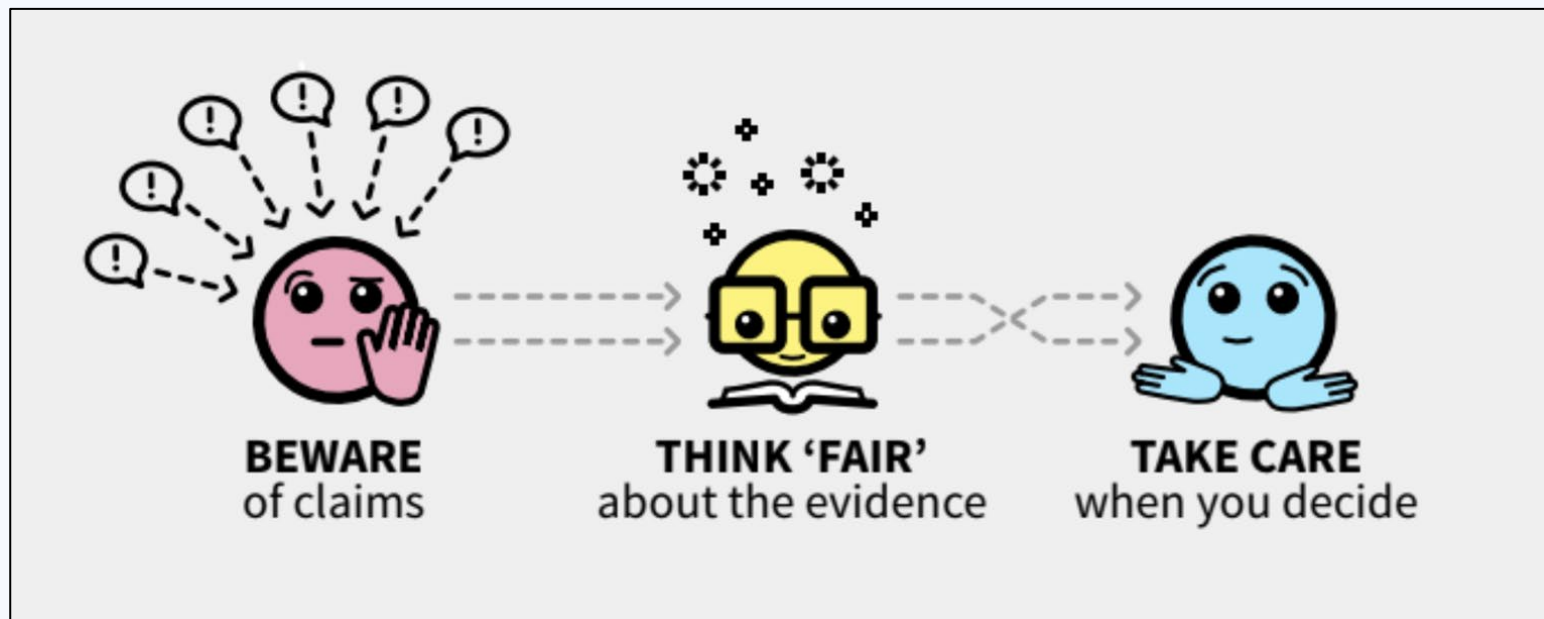
What influences the likelihood of you believing a claim?

Discuss in small groups - then feedback to the class.





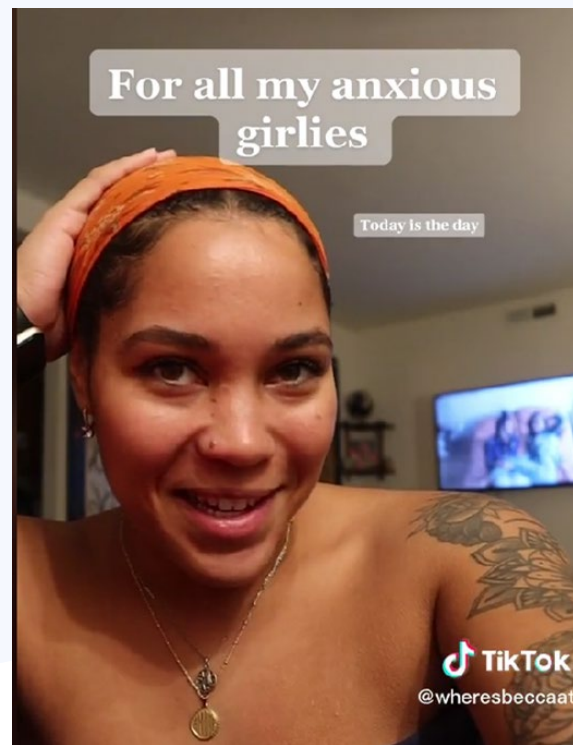
That's a claim!





Beware of...

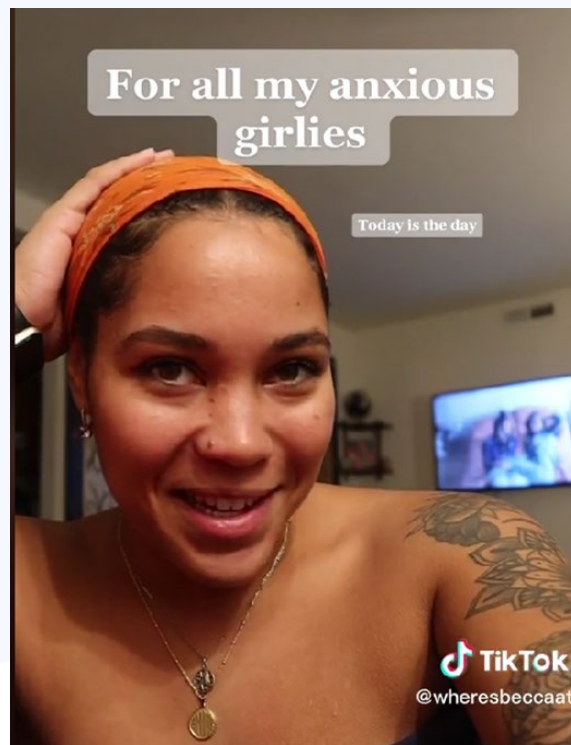
- **Certainty** – Is someone presenting something as certain when it is almost definitely not?
- **Too good to be true / dramatic effects** – If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!
- **Conflicting interests** – Does the author / publisher of the research have any personal interest in presenting the results in a certain way?





Think 'fair'...

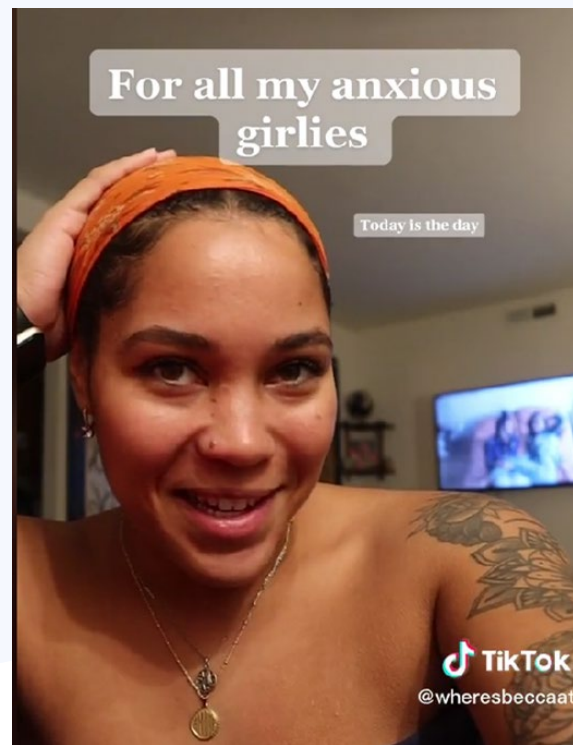
- **Comparisons** – Unless an intervention is compared to a comparison group, it is hard to be able to tell the effect of the intervention itself.
- **Unclear descriptions of effects** – How is the effect of the intervention measured and described? Take particular care of verbal descriptions which are open to different interpretations.
- **Follow up over time** – Is there any follow-up over time? Does the intervention show any evidence of continued, sustained change over time?





Take care...

- **Problems and options** – Before deciding to take advice or try a new strategy, try to make sure you understand as fully as possible the problem you are trying to address and the various options you have available.
- **Advantages and risks** – What are the risks of trying out a particular strategy or intervention?
- **Context and practicality** – How practical is the strategy, from your context?



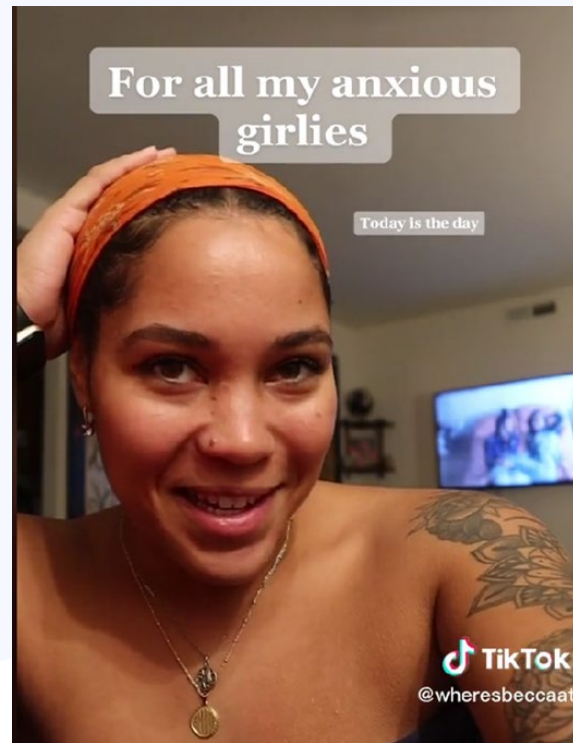


Critiquing one of the claims

“I have never experienced something that took me out of my anxiety so quickly. It was like immediately.”

Try to use the “**Beware, Think Fair, Take Care**” frame to critique this claim.

Has it made you think any differently?



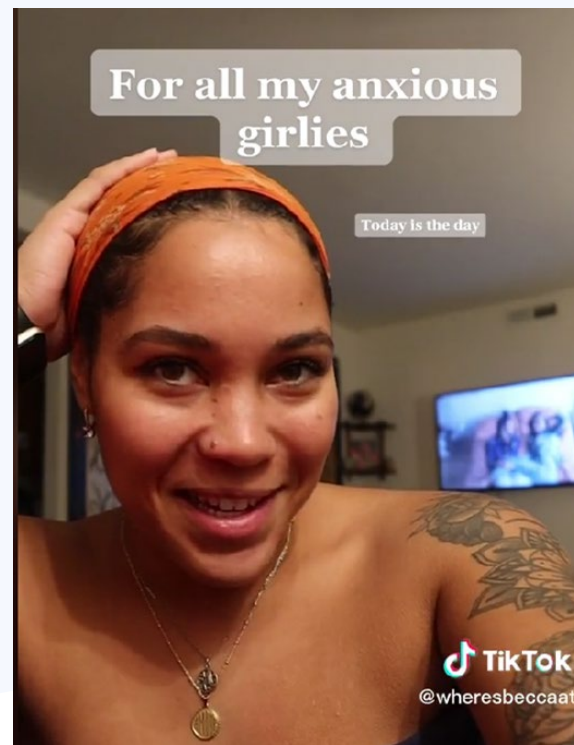


The power of personal stories

Often, people on social media speak from personal experience as these stories can be powerful.

Are they more persuasive?

Personal stories don't mean that the claims are wrong - but remember their personal experience may not be applicable to you.





Where/who is the information coming from?

Who are they?

- Check their credentials. Who and what are they? What perspective are they coming from?
- Do they have any personal incentive to try and persuade you of something?

Red flags

- Not being clear about their credentials and who they are / what they do.
- Giving out medical advice or diagnosing you.
- Trying to sell you something.

Keep in mind

- Information is often simplified. This doesn't necessarily mean the information is false, but it may not show the whole picture.
- Just because something is trending currently, doesn't mean that it's up -to-date or based on current scientific evidence.

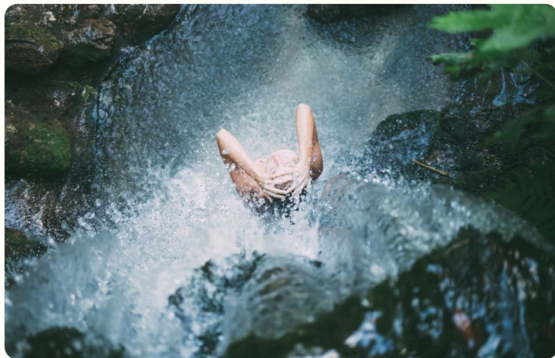




Evaluating sources: A wellness blog

8 science-backed benefits of taking a cold shower

by Inessa Team



Read the blog - think about the answers to these questions yourself, then discuss them in small groups

Who / what are they?

Are they trying to diagnose you?

Are they trying to give you medical advice?

Are they trying to sell you something?

Is the information current?

Do they offer evidence of their claims?

Are they speaking about their own experience?



Putting it into practice

- Find a source that is making a claim about mental health. Read the source and try to think about the strength of the claim and the quality of the research it is based on (if any...!)
- Practice asking these types of questions whenever you read or watch or listen to something about mental health.
- Throughout the BrainWaves lessons, we discuss various claims and sources of evidence. Try in each lesson to ask these kinds of questions, to always think critically about the claims and evidence you are presented with.

