

# Recognizing Red Flags: Using the FLICC Model to Identify Signs of Scientific Denial

Scientific denial is the rejection or dismissal of established scientific evidence in favor of less proven ideologies, personal theories, or other forms of misinformation.<sup>1</sup> This can lead to the intentional or unintentional distortion of facts and spread of misinformation. Learning how to identify signs of scientific denial can help you critically evaluate statements and avoid being misled. The **FLICC Model**<sup>2-4</sup> is an easy framework outlining 5 common red flags that might indicate scientific denial, which you can use to help protect you and your clients from potential misinformation.

## Red flags that suggest scientific denial & potential misinformation:<sup>2-4</sup>

### **Fake Experts**



**Individuals portrayed as experts who have no relevant expertise.**

**Example:** "This influencer said carbs are bad, and they have millions of followers – they must know what they're talking about."

### **Logical Fallacies**



**Flawed reasoning & misused logic to support a conclusion.**

**Example:** "If one person lost weight with this specific diet, everyone can."

### **Impossible Expectations**



**Demanding unrealistic standards of proof before accepting evidence.**

**Example:** "Unless a study proves with 100% certainty that a specific food supports digestive health in all people, it is not credible."

### **Cherry Picking**



**Selecting only data that supports your opinion, ignoring any other data that may conflict with your opinion.**

**Example:** "This one study says added sugar isn't bad for me, so I'm not worried about how much I eat."

### **Conspiracy Theories**



**Suggesting a secret, coordinated effort to deceive the public.**

**Example:** "Doctors don't want you to get better, they just want to keep you on medications."

#### References

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