

SOURCE EVALUATION:

⏸ STEP ONE: PAUSE ⏸

Before evaluating new information, take a minute to pause and check your emotion.
Emotion limits our ability to take in new information logically and objectively.

What type of information is being shared?

Personal experience, cultural information

Teaching Language

Advocacy (e.g. IEP or insurance tips)

Research

Clinical tools, approaches, strategies

What is this person's relationship to the community they are providing information on?

Member of the community

Parent or family member

Professional within scope of practice

Professional outside of scope

Unknown or undisclosed

Always ensure that the information makes sense and matches the source. For example: A parent would be a great source for advocacy tips for young children's IEP process, but may not be a great source for research or therapeutic tools. When information is about culture and language, prioritize information from those in the community. When information is related to clinical practice, prioritize affirming qualified professionals, or professionals who also identify within the community.

Do I notice any language that implies bias like...

Accusatory:
attacks on character of opposite perspective

Sensationalized:
uses extreme or dramatic words

Mind reading:
makes assumptions about thoughts and intention

One sided:
omits any conflicting information

How is this information influenced by bias?

Does this perspective match my own beliefs and bias?

Does this source benefit financially by my response?

Recognizing our own bias and the bias of the source can help us to determine what information we should research further, accept, consider, etc. We are more likely to accept information that matches our current understanding/belief (confirmation bias) Sources that we are using for clinical practice and research should ideally reflect as little bias as possible.

Other considerations:

Is this information consistent with what other members of the community share?

Is this information consistent with what other research has found?

Does this information "make sense"?

All information can be useful in some way- even inaccurate or harmful information can give us important knowledge about what our clients and their families are seeing. We can use all of the details above to decide what we do next with it.