



The Heroes and Villains Guidebook APPENDIX 4 | the Villains Storylines

This appendix gives you 16 samples of MIL problem statements: each a short vignette about a media issue, introducing a Villain and suggesting counter measures.

In each 'box' you find in a nutshell

- a MIL topic
- its impact on society
- the agenda at play
- the Heroes and Villains involved
- + a short opening of a story around the topic

This can be adapted and enhanced by introducing a character who has been impacted by the issue and who is relatable to the learners .

The local context and local "flavors" of the target group can be introduced here.

The problem statements/stories can be used in various ways:

- To 'set the stage'
- To further the story
- To open discussion, prompt reflection and as an invitation to share personal experiences
- To rework into role plays
- To build local personas
- To explore counter measures and build resilience

Topic 1	Misinformation	Story Introduction
Challenges for Individuals and Society	Spread of false information leading to confusion	<p>In the world of screens and clicks, a mysterious figure called "The Manipulator" has emerged. This bad guy loves spreading lies and confusion using fake stories and attention-grabbing tricks. He uses websites that trick people into believing made-up things, making it hard to know what's true anymore.</p> <p>The problem is that people and society get really confused by all this fake stuff. It's like a puzzle figuring out what's real and what's not, and The Manipulator is very good at making it all seem real.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Bad actors :	Clickbait websites	
Media Villain Involved :	The Manipulator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Critical evaluation of sources and fact-checking information	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Analyze, Reflect	



Topic 2	Misinformation	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Meet "The Manipulator," the crafty villain in a story about misinformation. Trust in good sources used to be solid, but now it's shaky. Sneaky news outlets are playing games, and things are getting confusing. The trick is to compare info from different honest places to find out what's true. Get ready for a story that dives into the mess caused by lies and how "The Manipulator" stirs it up, making everyone question what's real.</p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Erosion of trust in credible sources	
Bad actors :	Manipulative news outlets	
Media Villain Involved :	The Manipulator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Cross-referencing information from multiple reliable sources	<p>Imagine a situation where there's a crucial election coming up in a city called Brightville. The people are eager to make informed decisions, but "The Manipulator" sees this as a chance to sow chaos. They create a fake news article claiming that one of the candidates, Sarah Johnson, has been involved in a major corruption scandal.</p>
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Analyze, Reflect	<p>This fabricated news story spreads like wildfire, shared on social media and even picked up by a few unscrupulous news outlets. As people read the sensational headlines, doubts begin to creep in about Sarah Johnson's integrity. Despite there being no credible evidence, the manipulated story strikes a chord with many, eroding trust in Sarah's campaign. "The Manipulator" continues to fuel the fire by creating fake quotes and documents that seem to support the scandalous claims. People start arguing. Friendships are strained. The community becomes divided. The manipulation has achieved its goal – even though the story is entirely false, the</p>



	<p>damage to Sarah's reputation and the community's unity is done.</p> <p>In this example, "The Manipulator" successfully exploited the erosion of trust in credible sources and the power of manipulative news outlets to create chaos and confusion. It did this whilst evading the process of cross-referencing information from reliable sources.</p>
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Topic 3	Digital privacy	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>In a world where everything's connected online, keeping your personal things private ain't easy.</p> <p>Imagine a sneaky bad guy called "The Thief" who's a real pro at messing with your privacy. They're all about prying into your personal data, using tricks like data brokers who buy and sell info about you. This Villain knows how to take advantage of the settings that protect your privacy, and they're a whiz at using secret codes to talk without anyone knowing.</p> <p>As people are still figuring out how to keep their data safe, The Thief swoops in to get their hands on private info, causing all sorts of trouble.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Invasion of personal privacy	
Bad actors :	Data brokers	
Media Villain Involved : The Thief		
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Understanding privacy settings and using encryption tools for communication	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Act	



Topic 4	Digital privacy	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where being safe online is like a real-life quest. Imagine a Villain named "The Thief" who's like a digital pickpocket, aiming to steal more than just your wallet. They're after your whole identity! These bad apples, also known as cybercriminals, know how to sneak into your digital life.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Increased risk of identity theft	
Bad actors :	Cybercriminals	
Media Villain Involved : The Thief		
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Recognizing phishing attempts and safeguarding personal information	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Analyze	



Topic 5	Media bias	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Ever wonder if what you hear in the news is really the full picture? Step into a world where information can be twisted and opinions are like puzzle pieces that don't quite fit. There's a character in this story known as "The Manipulator," and they're like a master chef of misinformation. They know how to mix things up to make you view things their way. You see, some news people are like super fans of one team, and they only tell you the good stuff about their team, ignoring the other side.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society : :	Distorted information affecting public opinion	
Bad actors : :	Partisan news organizations	
Media Villain Involved : The Manipulator		
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges : :	Diversifying news sources and recognizing bias in reporting	
AACRA Heroes Involved : :	Analyze, Reflect	



Topic 6	Media bias	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where people are split down the middle, like they're all on different teams and forgot how to play together. Imagine a character called "The Manipulator" who's like a puppet master, pulling strings to make folks fight instead of getting along. The Manipulator uses sneaky tricks, spreading info that's not totally true through channels that only show one side of the story.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Polarization and division in society	
Bad actors :	Propaganda outlets	
Media Villain Involved :	The Manipulator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Engaging in constructive discussions and seeking multiple perspectives	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Analyze, Reflect, Act	



Topic 7	Filter bubbles	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Imagine a world where it feels like you're looking at life through a tiny window, only seeing what you're used to and nothing else. Meet "The Manipulator," a character who's like a puppeteer of what you see online. They know how to use computer tricks to keep you in a bubble, only showing you stuff you already like. It's as though they're deciding what you see and what you don't.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Limited exposure to diverse perspectives	
Bad actors :	Social media algorithms	
Media Villain Involved :	The Manipulator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Actively seeking out diverse viewpoints and engaging with different communities	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Analyze, Reflect	



Topic 9	Cyberbullying	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where words can hurt just as much as sticks and stones. Meet a character known as "The Bully," someone who's like a digital troublemaker, using their keyboard to spread hurt and pain. They're experts at picking on people online, making them feel small and sad.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Psychological distress and harm	
Bad actors :	Online trolls	
Media Villain Involved :	The Bully	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Reporting and blocking abusive users on social media platforms	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Act	



Topic 10	Online harassment	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where the online playground can sometimes turn into a scary place. Imagine a character called "The Bully," but this one's not like the schoolyard kind. They're a digital troublemaker who uses their keyboard to send mean stuff and even threats. It's like they're chasing people around the internet, making them feel scared and unsafe.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Threats to personal safety and well-being	
Bad actors :	Cyberstalkers	
Media Villain Involved :	The Bully	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Protecting personal information and reporting online harassment incidents	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Act	



Topic 11	Online harassment	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where some voices are getting drowned out, like they're not being heard at all. Imagine a character called "The Bully," but this one's not just teasing – they're using their words to spread hate and make some folks feel like they don't belong. It's like they're hanging out on platforms where they can be mean and hurtful.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Silencing of marginalized voices	
Bad actors :	Hate speech platforms	
Media Villain Involved :	The Bully	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Promoting inclusivity and standing against hate speech	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Act	



Topic 12	Digital divide	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where some folks have everything at their fingertips, while others are left in the dark. Imagine a character called "The Agitator," someone who knows how to keep things unfair by messing with who gets to know what. They use tricks to make sure some people can't join the online party, missing out on all the good stuff.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Limited access to information and opportunities	
Bad actors :	Internet service providers	
Media Villain Involved :	the Agitator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Promoting digital inclusion and advocating for equal access to information	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Act	



Topic 13	Online scams and fraud	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Picture a world where there are sneaky tricksters around every corner, trying to make a quick buck by fooling people. Meet a character known as "The Thief," but they're not the usual kind you'd find in a story. This one's a digital bandit who's all about stealing your money and even your identity! They use fake websites and tricky messages to lead folks into their traps.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Financial loss and identity theft	
Bad actors :	Phishing websites	
Media Villain Involved :	The Thief	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Enhancing cybersecurity awareness and recognizing common scam techniques	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Analyze, Act	



Topic 14	Algorithms	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Imagine a world where the stuff you see online feels like it's always agreeing with you, like an endless loop of the same ideas. Now, meet a character called "The Manipulator," someone who's like a puppeteer pulling strings behind the scenes. They know how to use computer magic to show you only what you want to see, making you think everyone agrees with you.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Filter bubbles and echo chambers	
Bad actors :	Social media algorithms	
Media Villain Involved :	The Manipulator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Actively diversifying and curating one's online feed to avoid algorithmic bias	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Access, Analyze, Reflect	



Topic 15	Extremism radicalization	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Step into a world where some folks are being pulled into a dangerous spiral of extreme beliefs. Meet a character named "The Agitator," someone who knows how to use tricky words and twisted stories to lure people into radical thinking. They're like puppet masters, trying to make people dance to their dangerous tune.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Recruitment and radicalization of individuals	
Bad actors :	Extremist propaganda outlets	
Media Villain Involved :	The Agitator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Developing critical thinking skills to recognize extremist ideologies and propaganda	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Analyze, Reflect	



Topic 16	Censorship	<p>Story Introduction</p> <p>Imagine a world where speaking your mind could get you in big trouble, where saying what you think is like stepping on a landmine. Now, meet a character known as "The Agitator," someone who's all about keeping people quiet, making sure they only say what the rulers want to hear. They use fear to shush anyone who dares to challenge the status quo.</p> <p><< Insert here the bad experience of someone representative of the Target Audience with the topic >></p>
Challenges for Individuals and Society :	Suppression of free speech and expression	
Bad actors :	Authoritarian regimes	
Media Villain Involved :	The Agitator	
MIL Competencies to Counter Challenges :	Advocating for freedom of expression and supporting uncensored platforms	
AACRA Heroes Involved :	Act	

