

Combatting Influencer Influence

Influencer nutrition misinformation isn't going away, so the goal isn't to "win arguments"; it's to build trust, foster **critical thinking, and build resilience** in your clients.

Here are some practical, client-friendly tools to help you combat influencer influence on your clients.

Lead with validation, not correction

Clients relate to *identity and emotion* before hearing facts. Validation keeps you on the same team.

Try responding with:

- "Yeah, that advice is *everywhere* right now."
- "I see why that sounds convincing."
- "A lot of people are confused by that—so let's talk more about it."

Reframe yourself as a *filter*

Position your role as helping them **evaluate** information, not as replacing influencers. Empower them instead of putting them on the defensive.

You can do this with statements like:

- "My job isn't to dispute or debate what is presented on social media—it's to help you decide what's useful from what is just noise."
- "Let's run that claim through a quick reality check."

Teach them to spot RED Flags

We naturally trust firsthand stories more than abstract advice—even though one person's experience is not universal.

Give clients a **repeatable checklist** they can use on their own. This hits on *pattern recognition*, which is powerful.

"RED FLAG" test

- Results are promised that are fast or universal
- Eliminates entire food groups
- Demonizes what is typically referred to as healthful foods
- Fear-based language is used (words like "toxic," "poison," "destroying," "dangerous")
- Lacks context (no information given for dose, population, lifestyle)
- Anecdotes – is there any evidence presented along with the claim?
- Guru -is someone selling something as a result?

Compare influencer logic to everyday life

Analogy make a better impact than data alone. Demonstrating the faulty logic in a statement or idea undermines it.

Here are some examples:

- “That’s like saying one bad sunburn means the sun is evil.”
- “Elite athletes eat this way, how about someone with a desk job and two kids?”

Explain *why* influencers can sound more convincing than professionals

Help clients to stop equating confidence with correctness. You must help clients realize it is not that influencers are more credible; they’re just better at speaking to our emotions.

- “Influencers are rewarded for engagement—clicks, shares, and sales. Professionals are rewarded for accuracy and achieved results.”
- “Professionals are trained to be precise, cautious, and balanced. Influencers speak casually, emotionally, and confidently. Our brains read that as authenticity—even when the information is not more accurate.”

Focus on outcomes, not debates

When false information pops up, anchor back to your client’s goals.

Ask questions about the reality of it all:

- “How would this advice actually fit your life?”
- “Does this move you closer to feeling better—or just more stressed?”
- “If this were true, what would we expect to see in real people long-term?”

Show intellectual humility

Clients trust you more when you are honest and admit you don’t know or have not heard what they are referring to. Ironically, this makes you more credible than the influencer who was “100% sure.”

- “I haven’t seen any great data on that yet.”
- “There *might* be a small effect, but it’s too soon to make an educated call.”
- “This information applies to a narrow group—not most people.”

Normalize curiosity without endorsement

Provide positive reinforcement for paying attention to what might affect your client’s health and wellness but be careful not to endorse the ideas generated from randomly searching the internet.

A simple statement might be:

“Your curiosity is good. Acting on every viral idea can be overwhelming and exhausting for anyone.”

Build TRUST over time

The more your clients see: consistency, calm and educated explanations, and real-life results, the less influencer content will shake them.

Eventually, you will hear them say... “I saw this thing online and thought, ‘eh, my nutrition professional would probably laugh at that.’” That’s the win!

Here's an example of how you might approach an influencer-influenced conversation:

Client: "I heard that Blueberries are actually bad for you."

Professional: Validate the Response:

"I've seen that claim going around, too. Claims like this usually come from taking one narrow idea—like blood sugar or oxalates—and applying it to everyone. For most people, blueberries are one of the *least* problematic fruits. The dose matters, the context matters, and your overall diet matters way more than one food."

Professional: (response with blood sugar fears)

"Blueberries have fiber, water, and polyphenols, which slow digestion. In real people eating real meals, blueberries tend to cause *smaller* blood sugar increases than a lot of other foods. And unless you're eating them alone by the pound, they're probably not doing what that advice suggests."

Professional: Addressing misinformation details

"A lot of these claims come from taking a mechanism and skipping straight to conclusions. 'This compound does X in a lab' turns into 'this food is bad for humans.' That jump is where the false conclusion happens. If blueberries were a real problem, we'd expect people who eat a lot of this kind of fruit to have worse health outcomes—but we consistently see the opposite."

Professional: Reality Test

"Let's zoom out. You've been eating blueberries for years. Have they caused weight gain, poor labs, or digestive issues for you in the past? If a food were truly harmful, we'd expect to see consistent real-world effects—not just scary explanations online."

Professional: Values-Based Response

"Any nutrition advice that turns a basic fruit into something to fear usually creates more stress than health. My priority is helping you eat in a way that is nourishing, sustainable, and enjoyable—not constantly worrying about specific claims for what are otherwise healthy foods."

Professional: To close the conversation

"If you like blueberries and they agree with you, you can keep eating them confidently. If you don't enjoy them, we don't need to force them—but there's no pressing health reason to fear eating them."

Open, honest dialog with your clients will likely yield the result you hope for: a clear understanding between influencer hype and solid, evidence-informed, science-backed nutrition advice.



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