

## Public Health Ontario guide to appraising grey literature

Library Services

### Grey Literature

Many valuable materials are not formally published, and so are referred to as grey literature. Alongside traditional peer-reviewed literature, these materials are important sources of information for decision making, and should be appraised according to similar principles.

### Criteria

Consideration of the presence (reporting) and the appropriateness (validity) of the items described below will help to assess the quality of the item. It is also recommended to consult with colleagues when possible.

	Author/publisher	Host/sponsor	Facts and references	Currency
<b>Reporting</b>	Who is the author, are they who they claim to be?	Does the hosting site have a sponsor?	Are references included?	Is a publication or revised date provided?
<b>Validity</b>	<p>Does the author/host have an agenda?</p> <p>Publishing body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they a well-known provincial/national government-affiliated public health agency?</li> <li>• For-profit company?</li> <li>• Political or philosophical agenda? (e.g. Fraser Institute vs. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives)</li> </ul>	<p>Is the information shared for commercial purposes?</p> <p>Does the site sponsor have a political or philosophical agenda?</p>	<p>Are references to research evidence?</p> <p>Is the information based on research/data/analysis or is it opinion piece?</p> <p>Can you verify some cited sources, facts?</p> <p>How current are the references?</p>	Is the information current?

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