



What makes conspiracy theories so powerful—and so disruptive?

Conspiracy theories aren't just fringe ideas or political noise. They follow a pattern:

1 They oppose mainstream explanations of events

They assign blame to individuals or groups—not systems



3 They describe malevolent or hidden intentions

They're epistemically risky—not necessarily false, but more prone to error



4 They are shared social constructs, not just private beliefs



In public health, education, and social discourse, this matters. Why?

Because these theories can:



Undermine trust



Polarize relationships



Hinder collective action



Create deep fractures in families, communities, and institutions

Addressing conspiracy beliefs requires more than fact-checking. It means understanding their emotional, social, and cognitive roots—and engaging with empathy and curiosity, not just correction.

Let's stop asking, "Why do they believe that?"

And start asking, "What need is this belief fulfilling and how can we address it more constructively?"