



What defines a conspiracy?

Most conspiracy theories share a **common structure**. Four key elements are typically present:

- **1 A group of actors –**
individuals or institutions
believed to be working together
- **2 A secret agreement –**
coordination that is hidden
from the public
- **3 A hidden goal –**
an objective not openly
acknowledged
- **4 A goal perceived as harmful or unlawful –**
something seen as threatening,
immoral, or illegitimate

Understanding this basic structure helps us see how conspiracy theories take shape—and why they are often emotionally compelling, difficult to challenge, and resistant to counter-evidence.