

Joseph Pierre

Title: “Conspiracy Theory Beliefs: A Sane Response to an Insane World?”

Abstract: Although their considerable prevalence has remained largely unchanged over the past century, it could be argued that conspiracy theory beliefs have become increasingly consequential over the past decade. Some have therefore claimed that society is suffering from “mass delusion” or “mass psychosis.” In this talk, conspiracy theories will be distinguished from delusions and presented within a more normalizing framework whereby epistemic mistrust leads to vulnerability to misinformation in the form of conspiratorial narratives. Conceptualizing conspiracy theories in this way—as well as along a continuum of ideological commitment—has implications for interventions, both at the level of individuals and society at large.

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