

# COVID-19 Conspiracies: Making Sense of a Global Pandemic | Psychology Today

By Shauna Bowes

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In 2020, the world found itself in a precarious position unlike any other in the modern era. The novel coronavirus spread like wildfire across the globe, causing social isolation, economic shutdowns, prolonged illness, and, in many cases, death. No one anticipated struggling through a mammoth global health emergency. It was shocking and horrifying, and there's still no clear end in sight.

Moreover, there has been a stark absence of scientific and political consensus in many countries on how to best navigate the pandemic and enforce evidence-based health-safety behaviors. Americans, for instance, can all remember being told by scientists early in the pandemic to not wear masks. When putting these factors (e.g., emergency situation, threat, misinformation) together, we get a toxic stew that is a breeding ground for a host of problematic beliefs and troubling behaviors.

To the dismay of many people, numerous conspiracy theories, ranging from the plausible, although improbable, to the outright bizarre, found their footing across the globe, gaining traction on social media. Indeed, these conspiracy theories seemed to spread so quickly that global health experts, scientists, and politicians alike grew concerned with a pandemic of a different flavor: an infodemic.

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