

# Why mixed messaging can erode trust in institutions | The Conversation

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently revised its guidance to acknowledge that COVID-19 can be spread through tiny airborne particles, known as aerosols. It had earlier removed a similar guidance from its website, saying it was “posted in error.”

Similarly, there have been conflicting messages from the Trump administration regarding the use of masks. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany has repeatedly said that masks are a recommendation, not a requirement. But others in the administration, such as White House counselor Kellyanne Conway and Vice President Mike Pence, have urged people to wear masks.

Such messaging can lead people to wonder what to believe and whom to trust. As a philosopher studying the nature of trust and its function in institutions, I explore the analogy between trust in people and trust in institutions.

Just as conflicting messages can lead us to distrust people, they can also erode the public’s trust in institutions.

[...]

Source: [Why mixed messaging can erode trust in institutions](#)