

This chart on conspiracy theories has gone viral. A local disinformation researcher breaks down what to know

By [Shannon Larson](#) Globe Staff, Updated November 29, 2021, 9:42 a.m.

The chart is broken down into several sections, beginning with events that actually happened — including the [Tuskegee Experiment](#) and [Big Tobacco lying to the American public](#) about the deadly effects of its products — which Richards noted are “very different from conspiracy theories” as they are based in reality.

As one passes the “speculation line” of the pyramid, they enter into the category where “there are still unanswered aspects” or where questions over said topics remain, and these “can be silly or can be very real,” Richards said. Further up the pyramid, the theories begin to leave reality — but have not yet entered into a zone where they could pose any major hazard to those who believe in them.

But the categories beyond the “reality denial” line contain theories that are not only perilous to those who accept them as the truth, but to the people around them, Richards said. It’s at this point that people begin to deny history, science, and medicine. The top level of the conspiracy chart, when one crosses over the “antisemitic point of no return,” is populated with theories centered around the belief that an evil group of elites “is secretly controlling the world and hiding something from everybody,” and these are “always rooted in antisemitism,” Richards said. Such theories promote both hate and violence toward marginalized groups, she said.

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Source: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/11/29/metro/this-chart-conspiracy-theories-has-gone-viral-freebritney-qanon-local-disinformation-researcher-breaks-down-what-know/>

THE CONSPIRACY CHART 2021

DETACHED FROM REALITY

