

# 0043 Conspiracy Theories Can Be Undermined with These Strategies, New Analysis Shows

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## 1. Conspiracy Theories Can Be Undermined with These Strategies, New Analysis Shows

A new review finds that 主 only some methods **to counteract (v.)**抵制；抵消；抵抗 **conspiracy** 密谋策划；阴谋 **beliefs** 阴谋论信念 系 are effective. Here's what works and what doesn't.

The study is a review of research /on attempts to counteract (v.) conspiratorial thinking, and it finds that /**common strategies** that involve counterarguments 抗辩；反驳 and fact-checking 核实,真相核查 /largely fail to change people's beliefs. The most promising ways to combat conspiratorial thinking /**seem to** involve prevention, either **warning** people [ahead of time] **about** a particular **conspiracy theory** 阴谋论 /or explicitly 清楚明确地，详述地；直截了当地 teaching them /how to spot (v.) **shoddy** 粗制滥造的；劣质的；奸诈的；卑鄙的 **evidence**.

“We're still in **the early days**, unfortunately, **of** having a silver bullet /that will tackle (v.)应付，处理，解决 (难题或局面) misinformation **as a whole** 总的来说,” says Cian O'Mahony, a doctoral 博士的；博士学位的 student in psychology at

University College Cork in Ireland, who led the study.

### Example 1. 标题

#### *counteract*

→ counter-, 同contra-, 相对, 相反。-act, 行为。

#### *conspiracy*

(n.)~ (to do sth)~ (against sb/sth) a secret plan by a group of people to do sth harmful or illegal 密谋策划; 阴谋

→ con-共同 + -spir-呼吸 + -e → 同呼吸, 共命运

- a **conspiracy theory** (= the belief that a secret conspiracy is responsible for a particular event) 阴谋论 (认为某事件背后有阴谋)

#### *shoddy*

/ʃɑ:di/

一项新的审查发现, 对于抵消阴谋论, 只有一些方法是有效的。这里将介绍有效的和无效的方法有哪些。

该研究, 是对"如何抵消阴谋论思维"的研究的回顾, 它发现, 涉及"反驳"和"事实核查"的常见策略, 在很大程度上无法改变人们的信念。打击阴谋论最有希望的方法, 似乎涉及"预防", 即, 要么提前警告人们注意特定的阴谋论, 要么明确教导他们如何发现伪劣证据。

“不幸的是, 我们仍处于早期阶段, 我们还处于解决整个错误信息的灵丹妙药的早期阶段,”领导这项研究的爱尔兰科克大学心理学博士生 Cian O’Mahony 说。

There were a few categories 种类; 范畴 of interventions 干涉. One **consisted of** 由...组成 (或构成) priming 底料, 装填物; 起爆剂, 引火药 studies, which used an unrelated 无关联的; 不相关的 task /to shift someone’s mindset 观念模式; 思维倾向. For instance, participants might be asked to read a passage in a hard-to-read font, which requires more work **to take in** 吸收; 领会 **information** /and

**prompts (v.)**促使；导致；激起 **an analytic 分析的，分析性的 mindset**. Then researchers might present the participants with a conspiracy theory /to see if this task decreases 减少 belief. These studies suggested that /priming 底料，装填物；起爆剂，引火药 **mostly worked (v.)**, but it generally had only small effects. Another strategy of **arguing against** conspiracy theories [**with facts**] /also showed only **very small** to **small** effects. The least effective arguments 争论；理由；论点 involved **appealing (v.)** **上诉；申诉 to** a believer's sense of empathy 同感；共鸣；同情 /or mocking them for their beliefs.

### *Example 2. 标题*

#### *priming studies*

指的是“启动研究”，即使用一项无关任务，来改变某人的心态的研究。

“priming”在这里是指使用某种刺激或任务，来激活个体的心理准备或心态，以便更好地处理或回应接下来的任务或信息。

有几类干预措施。其中一项包括“启动研究”，它使用一个不相关的任务来改变一个人的心态。例如，被试者可能会被要求读一篇字体很难阅读的文章，这需要花费更多的精力来吸收信息，并激起“分析性思维”。然后，研究人员可能会向参与者展示一个阴谋论，看看那个启动任务，是否会降低他们对此阴谋论的信念。这些研究表明，启动任务大多起作用，但通常只有很小的影响。另一种“用事实来反驳阴谋论”的策略，也只显示出“很小”或“小”的效果。**最无效的辩论策略包括：试图上诉于阴谋论信徒的同理心，或嘲笑他们的信仰。**

More promising were inoculation 接种,预防性注射 studies, which warned people [ahead of time] that /they might see a conspiracy theory /and gave them an argument against it. These had medium to large impacts /on decreasing conspiracy belief. Inoculation can backfire (v.)产生事与愿违的不良（或危险）后果,适得其反, however. One study found that /if a conspiracy peddler 毒品贩子 **warned (v.) against** an inoculation approach, that inoculation **would no longer work**. Politicians use this “**inoculate (v.)**（给...）接种，打预防针 **against** inoculation” strategy [in the real world]. For example, Florida governor Ron DeSantis has taken **to accompanying 为...伴奏,陪同；陪伴 his**

**arguments** that /teachers are indoctrinating (v.) students with a “woke” agenda  
待议事项, ( 政治 ) 议题 /with phrases such as “Anyone that tells you it’s not  
happening /is lying to you.”

### Example 3. 标题

*inoculation*

/ɪˈnɔːkjuˈleɪʃn/

*当to 是介词是, 后跟动词要用ing形式(动名词)*

- Florida governor Ron DeSantis has taken to **accompanying** his arguments that...
- admit to doing sth. 承认做了某事
- He look forward to seeing you there on Saturday.

更有希望的方法, 是“接种教育”, 它提前警告人们他们可能会看到阴谋论, 并为他们提供反对的理由。在“减少阴谋论信仰”中, 这些方法有从“中”到“大”的影响力。但是, “接种”策略, 也可能被反向应用。一项研究发现, 如果一个阴谋论贩子, 事先警告潜在信徒, 不要去做接种, 那么该“接种策略”将不再有效。政治家在现实世界中, 已经在使用这种对“接种”打“反接种疫苗”的策略。例如, 佛罗里达州州长罗恩·德桑蒂斯 (Ron DeSantis) 用这种策略来附和他的论点, 他说:“教师正在向学生灌输‘醒过来’的议程, 并用诸如‘任何告诉你这件事没有发生的人, 都是在骗你’之类的短语。你们不要相信那些老师说的话!”

Another challenge is /finding out whether inoculation 接种 or any other strategy **works (v.) in the long run** 一段 ( 幸运或倒霉的 ) 时光; 一系列 ( 成功或失败 ), 跑步的时间 ( 或距离 ), says Karen Douglas. For many studies /that examine this method, scientists **measure (v.) immediate effects** /but don’t **follow up** over days, weeks or months. “For something **/to be effective in dealing with** the bigger problem,” Douglas says, “we need to know that /the interventions will last (v.) over time 随着时间的流逝。”

### Example 4. 标题

*run*

a run of good/bad luck 一连串好运/厄运

英国肯特大学的社会心理学家凯伦·道格拉斯 ( Karen Douglas ) 说。对于许多检验这种方法的研究, 科学家们衡量的是"即时效果", 但不会在几天、几周或几个月内进行跟进。“为了有效地解决更大的问题,”道格拉斯说, “我们需要知道干预措施, 会随着时间的推移而持续。”

The best opportunity /to avoid conspiratorial thinking /may be the most labor-intensive 劳动密集型的. In the new analysis, one of the largest effects /came from a study /that involved a three-month university class /aimed at distinguishing (v.)区分; 辨别; 分清 science from pseudoscience 伪科学. For the study, three instructors 教练; 导师, ( 大学 ) 讲师 taught (v.) students **critical 批判的; 批判性的 thinking skills** /needed to understand common human **mistakes of perception 知觉; 感知 and logic**. The result was a reduction in conspiracy beliefs. “This was a singular study, but it did highlight (v.) teaching these skills explicitly 清楚明确地,直截了当地,” O’Mahony says.

### *Example 5. 标题*

避免"阴谋论思维"的最佳方式, 机会, 可能还是需要花费大力气才能实现。在新的分析中, "能带来最大的影响"的策略之一, 来自一项涉及为期三个月的大学课程的研究, 该课程旨在区分科学与伪科学。在这项研究中, 三位教师, 教授学生"批判性思维技能", 帮助他们理解人类常见的感知和逻辑错误。结果是"阴谋论信念"减少了。“虽然这只是一项单一的研究, 但它确实强调了要"明确教授这些技能"的必要性,”奥马霍尼说。

If it's hard /to change entrenched 根深蒂固的,不容易改的 conspiracy beliefs, the **silver lining** ( 不幸或失望中的 ) 一线希望; 乌云周围的白光 is that /it's also hard to make people **believe in** conspiracies, **contrary to** popular conception 观念, 理解 ( 认为某事怎样或应该怎样 ) . Changing (v.) entrenched beliefs of any kind /is

challenging, Uscinski says, especially if those beliefs **are closely tied to someone's worldview**. Sometimes people pick the beliefs that they want, and they do what they want /because of who they are.

#### Example 6. 标题

如果说, "改变根深蒂固的阴谋论信念"很难, 那么让人们相信阴谋论, 其实也很难, 这与流行的观念相反。乌辛斯基说, 改变任何一种根深蒂固的信念, 都是具有挑战性的. 尤其是当这些信念与某人的"世界观"密切相关时。有时候人们选择他们想要的信仰, 或做他们想做的事, 只是源于他们认为自己应该是谁。(屁股决定脑袋)

For individuals /**interested in** challenging (v.) conspiracy thinking, the authors of the new review /provide some tips:

1. Don't **appeal to** emotion. The research suggests that /emotional strategies **don't work to budge** (使) 轻微移动, 挪动, (使) 改变主意, 改变观点 **belief**.

2. **Don't get sucked into** factual (a.) 根据事实的; 事实的; 真实的 arguments. Debates over the facts of a conspiracy theory /or the consequences 结果; 后果, 重要性 of believing in a particular conspiracy /also **fail to make much difference**, the authors found.

3. **Focus on** prevention. The best strategies /seem to involve **helping people recognize** unreliable information /and untrustworthy 不可靠的; 不能信赖 (或信任) 的 sources /before **they're exposed to** a specific belief.

4. Support (v.) education and analysis. 主 Putting people into an analytic mindset /and explicitly teaching (v.) them how to evaluate (v.) information / 谓 appears **most protective against** conspiracy rabbit holes.

#### Example 7. 标题

*budge*

→ 词源同boil, 沸腾, 膨胀。插入字母d.

对于有兴趣挑战阴谋论思维的个人，<新评论>刊物的作者提供了一些"有用的策略"提示：

- 1.不要诉诸情感。研究表明，"情绪策略"对改变信念不起作用。
- 2.不要陷入"对事实论据的争论"。作者发现，关于阴谋论的事实, 或相信"特定阴谋会带来何种后果"的争论, 作用也没有太大的不同。
- 3.注重"预防性策略", 即实现打疫苗。最好的策略似乎包括: 在人们接触到特定信念之前, 就帮助他们识别不可靠的信息, 和不可信的来源。
- 4.支持"教育和分析"。将人们置于"批判性分析思维模式", 并明确教导他们如何评估信息, 这种方式, 似乎才最能防止阴谋论。

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## 2. <pure> Conspiracy Theories Can Be Undermined with These Strategies, New Analysis Shows

A new review finds that only some methods to counteract conspiracy beliefs are effective. Here's what works and what doesn't.

The study is a review of research on attempts to counteract conspiratorial thinking, and it finds that common strategies that involve counterarguments and fact-checking largely fail to change people's beliefs. The most promising ways to combat conspiratorial thinking seem to involve prevention, either warning people ahead of time about a particular conspiracy theory or explicitly teaching them how to spot shoddy evidence.

"We're still in the early days, unfortunately, of having a silver bullet that will tackle misinformation as a whole," says Cian O'Mahony, a doctoral student in psychology at University College Cork in Ireland, who led the study.

There were a few categories of interventions. One consisted of priming studies, which used an unrelated task to shift someone's mindset. For instance, participants might be asked to read a passage in a hard-to-read font, which requires more work to take in information and prompts an analytic mindset. Then researchers might present the participants with a conspiracy theory to see if this task decreases belief. These studies suggested that priming mostly worked, but it generally had only small effects. Another strategy of arguing against conspiracy theories with facts also showed only very small to small effects. The least effective arguments involved appealing to a believer's sense of empathy or mocking them for their beliefs.

More promising were inoculation studies, which warned people ahead of time that they might see a conspiracy theory and gave them an argument against it. These had medium to large impacts on decreasing conspiracy belief. Inoculation can backfire, however. One study found that if a conspiracy peddler warned against an inoculation approach, that inoculation would no longer work. Politicians use this "inoculate against inoculation" strategy in the real world. For example, Florida governor Ron DeSantis has taken to accompanying his arguments that teachers are indoctrinating students with a "woke" agenda with phrases such as "Anyone that tells you it's not happening is lying to you."

Another challenge is finding out whether inoculation or any other strategy works in the long run, says Karen Douglas. For many studies that examine this method, scientists measure immediate effects but don't follow up over days, weeks or months. "For something to be effective in dealing with the bigger problem," Douglas says, "we need to know that the interventions will last over time."

The best opportunity to avoid conspiratorial thinking may be the most labor-intensive. In the new analysis, one of the largest effects came from a study that involved a three-month university class aimed at distinguishing science from pseudoscience. For the study, three instructors taught students critical thinking



skills needed to understand common human mistakes of perception and logic. The result was a reduction in conspiracy beliefs. “This was a singular study, but it did highlight teaching these skills explicitly,” O’Mahony says.

If it’s hard to change entrenched conspiracy beliefs, the silver lining is that it’s also hard to make people believe in conspiracies, contrary to popular conception. Changing entrenched beliefs of any kind is challenging, Uscinski says, especially if those beliefs are closely tied to someone’s worldview. Sometimes people pick the beliefs that they want, and they do what they want because of who they are.

For individuals interested in challenging conspiracy thinking, the authors of the new review provide some tips:

1. Don’t appeal to emotion. The research suggests that emotional strategies don’t work to budge belief.

2. Don’t get sucked into factual arguments. Debates over the facts of a conspiracy theory or the consequences of believing in a particular conspiracy also fail to make much difference, the authors found.

3. Focus on prevention. The best strategies seem to involve helping people recognize unreliable information and untrustworthy sources before they’re exposed to a specific belief.

4. Support education and analysis. Putting people into an analytic mindset and explicitly teaching them how to evaluate information appears most protective against conspiracy rabbit holes.

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