

## Epistemic Trust in Psychopathology and the Wider Social World

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Recent research on mentalizing emphasizes the role of epistemic trust, that is the capacity to receive and perceive interpersonally transmitted knowledge as relevant to oneself, trustworthy, and generalizable to other situations, as a risk factor for psychopathology and compromised social functioning. The symposia as a whole will provide a brief overview of the theory and explore thinking on how early social interactions and epistemic trust relate, as well as its implications for psychopathology and broader social processes. Presentations will widen the topic by discussing emerging research findings on epistemic trust. Accordingly, first, differences in epistemic stance (i.e., high epistemic trust, mistrust, and credulity) between clinical and nonclinical adult groups will be discussed, and potential mechanisms underlying the relationship between epistemic trust and psychopathology will be explored. In the following presentation, a network analysis model investigating the relationships between epistemic stance and reflective functioning, emotional dysregulation, and psychopathology in a sample of nonclinical adolescents will be presented. The next presentation will consider the associations between epistemic stance and reflective functioning, attachment, and childhood trauma, and then the relationships between personality traits, mentalization, and epistemic trust and responses to pandemic restrictions and attitudes towards vaccination. The role of conspiracy endorsement as a public health challenge for the successful containment of the COVID-19 pandemic will be highlighted in the final section, which will cover the association between adverse childhood experiences and conspiracy endorsement which appears to be mediated by epistemic trust and personality functioning. Both academic and practitioner audiences will be targeted.

## Epistemic Trust and Psychopathology in Adults: A Comparison and Investigation in Clinical and Control Groups

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Recently, the mentalizing model was enhanced by highlighting the importance of the failure of social learning and transmission of cultural knowledge in the development and treatment of psychopathology. Epistemic trust has been considered the mechanism behind the relationship between mentalizing and psychopathology. This study aimed to explore the predictor roles of epistemic stance (i.e., epistemic trust, mistrust, and credulity) and mentalizing in distinguishing adults with common mental health problems (e.g., depression and anxiety problems) and healthy controls, and investigate potential mechanisms underlying the relationship between mentalizing and emotion regulation by taking epistemic trust and interpersonal functioning into consideration in this relationship. In this cross-sectional study, the sample included a clinical group who were considered suitable for the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme in Greater London and a control group (N = 735). Binary logistic regressions revealed both unique and combined effects of mentalizing and epistemic stance effectively differentiated the control and clinical groups. Our results confirmed the positive relationship between inadequate mentalizing and difficulties in emotion regulation was partially and sequentially mediated by disruptions in epistemic trust and interpersonal problems. Based on these preliminary findings, the enhanced mentalizing model incorporating epistemic trust was discussed. Clinical implications in the light of theoretical assumptions suggesting epistemic disruption could be a general vulnerability factor associated with a wide range of clinical representations were provided. The intended audience was academics and practitioners.

