

# **Epistemic Trust And Epistemic Injustice, Trying to Understand The Way Psychological Therapies Work For Persistent Mental Health Problems**

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**Background:** Recent meta-analyses suggest that several psychological therapies are increasingly but equally effective for treating a variety of personality disorders (PDs), which suggests the involvement of some common mechanism across both disorders and therapies. Psychological therapies for PDs all have a component that facilitates social learning, suggesting that part of the causation of persistent disorders may be an inability to modify current representations in the face of new knowledge.

**Objectives:** The developmental concepts of mentalizing and the linked concept of epistemic trust may offer a hypothetical framework for explaining persistence and change in these conditions.

**Methods:** The concept of epistemic trust is reviewed developmentally and in the context of the phenomenology of PDs. Some recent statistical models of the hierarchical structure of mental disorder are examined in relation to the hypothesized association with epistemic hypervigilance and shortcomings in mentalizing processes.

**Findings:** Preliminary findings indicate an association between limitations of mentalizing and general psychopathology. Further direct and indirect evidence suggests links between epistemic vigilance and hypervigilance and a range of problems normally considered under the heading of PD.

**Conclusions:** It is argued that persistent mental disorders are best understood not in terms of specific pathologies but in the framework of salutogenesis. Individuals with persistent mental disorder may lack a capacity for wrapping an adaptation for changing social conditions because some optimal social networks weaken by epistemic hypervigilance.