Twitter Thread by Suzanne Zeedyk

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THREAD on conspiracy theories & attachment.
I keep seeing frustrated social media posts asking why people believe conspiracy theories. Answer: It gives a sense of control - includng belonging, predictability & safety. It's emotional regulation. Here's research to unpack that.

2. "Participants with an 'ambivalent attachment style' were more likely to believe in conspiracy theories....The findings add further evidence that attachment not only influences how a person interacts with others, but also influences world views." 2018
https://t.co/JA0tpgJnM8

3. "People have a strong need to feel positive abt the groups they belong, such as their nationality, political party & religious group. A conviction that others conspire against one's group is more likely to emerge when the group feels undervalued." 2019 https://t.co/TsHQpRbYVk

4. "Conspiracy theories are consequential as they have a real impact on people's health, relationships, and safety. They are emotional given that negative emotions and not rational deliberations cause conspiracy beliefs." https://t.co/xKE63sQByq

5. "Ostracized participants were more likely to endorse conspiracy beliefs related to political issues. Moreover, heightened vulnerability mediated the link between ostracism and conspiracy beliefs." https://t.co/pnYeI5UQOu

6. "We anticipated that an avoidant style, because of its emphasis on self-reliance, its motivation to suppress psychological distress, and a view of the world based on a distinction between good and bad, would be associated w/ conspiracy ideation." https://t.co/G2J20jXBAW

7. I'm not saying the answers are all sorted. Explaining belief in conspiracy theories is an issue still under debate & discovery. Here's a study that found no association w/ control (although I think their conceptual frame was too limited). https://t.co/f1y6X5kLvR

8. My key aim in this thread is simply to try to stem the tendency of frustrated people to say 'who are these crazy conspiracy supporters?' They aren't crazy. They are trying to make sense of & operate in the world. Conspiracy is a functional choice, even if it is often harmful.

9. CURIOSITY abt why 'other people' do things that make no sense to us is part of being trauma-informed. It is part of creatng solutions to problems, both big &small. Curiosity gives us a starting point we might otherwise miss. And we hv some big problems to solve in ths world.

10. And if @KamalaHarris or @JoeBiden asked me what I thought would help in the USA right now? I'd recommend lots of listening. "Offering ostracized participants an opportunity to reaffirm values important to them cd reduce political conspiracy beliefs." https://t.co/pnYeI5UQOu

11/end. When t world feels confusng, scary, discountng, unpredictable? Of course yr emotional regulation, attachmnt system kicks in. Recognisng this helps devise solutions. We need equality &value &purpose in human lives. If we are determind, COVID can be t spark to nurture that.