

## Call for Abstracts

### Workshop

## Loss of Trust Between Detachment and Dissociation: Phenomenology, Social Adversity, and Psychopathology

Heidelberg, October 23-24, 2025

Losing trust can take different forms and have a variety of consequences. When others and social institutions cease to be reliable sources of knowledge, constantly disappoint expectations, or even evoke feelings of defeat in oneself, this is likely to result in distrust of them. Indeed, in philosophy, the loss of trust is often associated with distrust. Distrust manifests itself mainly as a specific attitude of heightened vigilance, skepticism, suspiciousness towards others, and corresponding affective accompaniments.

However, loss of trust does not necessarily lead to distrust of others. Concomitant feelings of doubt are not limited or reducible to experiences of alienation from others but also affect one's own mental life by increasing worries, anxiety, preoccupation, impostor feelings, and general stress levels, up to an elevated risk for psychosis or dissociative experiences.

Accordingly, the loss of trust in its many varieties is closely linked to mental distress and is part of many challenging mental health conditions. While distressing changes to one's mental health can be important factors in losing trust in the world, others, or oneself, trust as a social practice also relies on the behavior of others. Psychiatric research on social stressors shows that adverse living conditions play an important role in deteriorating mental health and in affective experiences that facilitate loss of trust – in others, institutions, and oneself.

To advance understanding of the intricate phenomenology of loss of trust, *the first focus* of this workshop is to explore the links between feelings of social detachment, phenomena of (intrusive) self-doubt, and clinically relevant phenomena such as dissociative experiences. To get a fuller picture of how people lose trust in situations of mental distress, it is equally important to examine experiential patterns that are closely related to distrust and paranoid ideations, such as intolerance of uncertainty or hyperactive agency detection.

Given the social nature of trust, *the second focus* of the workshop is on the intersubjective and social processes that contribute to the loss of trust. The emphasis here is on psychosocial, institutional, and infrastructural factors that reinforce feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, or preoccupation and cut people off from processes of collective meaning-making.

Philosophical contributions with an interdisciplinary outlook (e.g., psychology, psychiatry, sociology), from empirically informed philosophy of mind, or taking a phenomenological or 4E cognition perspective on the topics below are particularly welcome.

Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- Psychosis risk, delusional mood, and loss of trust
- Loss of trust and dissociative experiences
- Loss of trust and anxiety, shame, or impostor feelings

- Feelings of social defeat (humiliation, low self-esteem, withdrawal) and losing trust/distrust
- Life adversity, trauma, and loss of trust
- Gaslighting in interpersonal and collective contexts
- Compensatory strategies (maladaptive or adaptive) for losing trust
- Feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, and loss of trust
- Inner speech and mental distress
- Stigma and self-doubt
- Losing trust and intrusive thoughts, memories, or imaginary
- Losing trust and perseverative cognition, worries, or preoccupation
- The influence of the social environment on maintaining worries, self-doubt, or rumination
- The roles of intolerance of uncertainty and hyperactive agency detection in distrust
- The relation between hypervigilance and intrusive experiences
- Resilience to and recovery from losing trust

Please send an **abstract of max 500 words** prepared for **blind review** and a **separate title page** document (including author names, affiliation, and contact email) **by June 15<sup>th</sup>** to [ute-anna.wittenberg@med.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ute-anna.wittenberg@med.uni-heidelberg.de). We will send out notifications of acceptance by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

The workshop is planned as an in-person workshop and remote presentations will not be possible. We especially encourage submissions from early-career researchers and members of underrepresented groups in philosophy.

For further information, please contact [Daniel.Vespermann@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:Daniel.Vespermann@uni-heidelberg.de).

Scientific Organization: Thomas Fuchs, Hannes Gustav Melichar, Philipp Schmidt-Boddy, Daniel Vespermann

The workshop is part of the DFG-project “Dynamics of Oikeiosis. Familiarity and trust as basic elements of an intersubjective anthropology and their significance for psychopathology” (Project number: 513696000; PI Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Fuchs) and the ENACTING Trust lecture series (PI: Dr. Philipp Schmidt & Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Fuchs) supported through a grant from the Research Council Field of Focus 3 as part of the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments.