Social influence and prosocial behavior

Chapter 4

Learning Objectives

Describe the factors that influence conformity
Describe the six basic principles of compliance and how they function
Analyze the role of authority in inducing obedience
**Describe** several forms of unintentional social influence
Assess the factors that lead people to help others
Identify factors that influence whether bystanders will offer help in emergency situations
Relate crowdfunding to the factors influencing prosocial behavior

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) conducted a 4-day campaign from April 4 to April 7, 2024, before the Eid festival to raise awareness among various professionals, including those returning home, transport owners and workers, and drivers, about Road Safety Issues.
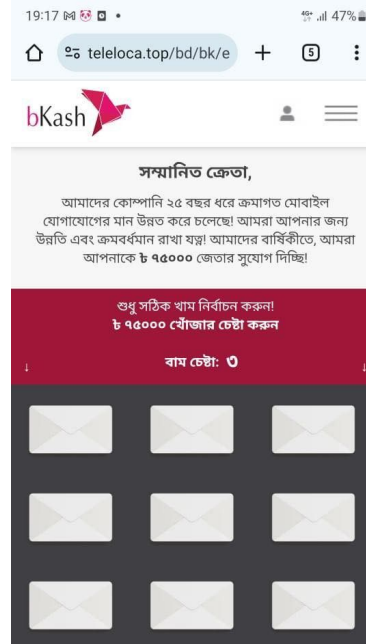
Fraudsters using bKash's name, lucrative offers to scam people, It is offering its customers to win up to Tk75,000 just by clicking a few blank 'e-envelopes' on its anniversary

Introduction

Why do you listen to a campaign by an organization or many people?

Why do you trust a single person, a stranger?

"If you found a wallet with money, would you keep it or return it?"

Social influence—efforts by one or more people
to change the behavior, attitudes, or feelings of one or more others.

Types of social influence:
Conformity
Compliance
Obedience

Conformity

Have you ever laughed at a joke you do not find it funny, just because everyone else is laughing?

Conformity

Why do people follow emergency fire exit instructions?

Conformity

Conformity-(doing what we are expected to do in a given situation), is the act of changing your behaviors to fit in or go along with the people around you.

This social influence might involve agreeing with or acting like the majority of people in a specific group, or it might involve behaving in a particular way in order to be perceived as "normal" by the group. Essentially, conformity involves giving in to group pressure.

Conformity, refers to pressures to behave in ways consistent with rules indicating how we should, or ought to, behave. These rules—whether subtle or obvious— are known as **social norms**, and they can exert powerful effects on our behavior.

Most people follow these rules (explicit or implicit, formal or informal) most of the time.
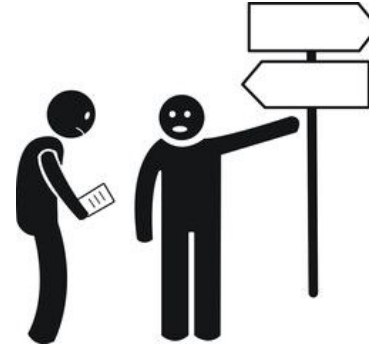
Types of Conformity

Reels sharing

- **Normative conformity** prompts individuals to conform to group norms to fit in, gain acceptance, and feel good.

Ask for directions

- **Informational conformity** leads people to conform, believing the group possesses competent and correct information, especially in ambiguous situations or tasks.

Normative Conformity: Solomon Asch experiment

In the experiment (1950s), participants were shown a target line and asked to select the line (out of three options) that matched its length.

Each group was mostly comprised of confederates of the experimenter who intentionally selected the wrong line. The actual participant was placed last or near the end in the order of responses.

Despite the obvious answer, many participants conformed to the incorrect majority answer.

Even though participants knew the group's choice was incorrect, they conformed to avoid the discomfort of disagreeing with the group or standing out.

When the participants were interviewed after the experiment, most said that they did not believe their conforming answers but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed or thought "peculiar.
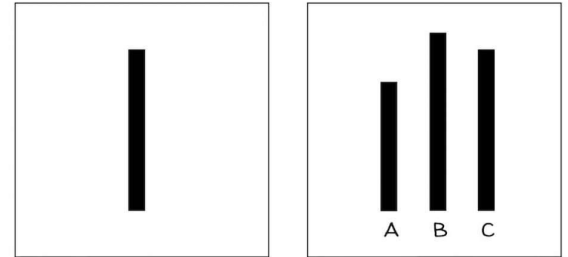
Informational Conformity: Jenness' Bean Jar Experiment

Jenness (1932) conducted a study on conformity where participants were asked to estimate the number of beans in a jar. Initially, each participant made an individual estimate, and then, they estimated it as a group.

His findings indicated that when the task was performed within a social group, participants' estimates converged to a similar value, despite their initial individual estimates varying significantly.

This study effectively demonstrated the influence of the majority, proving that a group can impact individuals' behaviors and beliefs.

This is likely an instance of informational social influence, as participants would be unsure about the actual number of beans in the jar.

Conformity

Why people conform?

- When people don't follow existing social norms, their actions are unpredictable—and sometimes, that can be dangerous. **Conformity makes life more predictable.**
- To "look good" to others—to indicate that they are "good citizens," and are following the rules—whatever these are in a specific time and place.

Why and how norms develop?

- We have a strong desire to be "correct"—to behave in an appropriate manner—and behaving consistent with social norms help us attain that goal. This is a key foundation of social influence.
- There is the desire to be accepted by others and liked by them.

Factors affecting Conformity

Cohesiveness and Conformity: Being Influenced by Those We Like

Ex: Wearing (even if you do not want) a customized tee on a field trip, following fashion trends as your friends do

Cohesiveness—the extent to which we are attracted to a particular social group and want to belong to it. The greater cohesiveness is the more we tend to follow the norms (i.e., rules) of the group.

The more we value being a member of a group and want to be accepted by the other members, the more we want to avoid doing anything that will separate us from them.

Prestigious fraternities and sororities can often extract very high levels of conformity from would-be members who are very eager to join these highly selective groups.

Acting and looking like others is often a good way to win their approval. So, in very basic terms, the more we like other people and want to belong to the same group as they do, and the more we are uncertain of winning their acceptance, the more we tend to conform.

Factors affecting Conformity

Conformity and Group Size: Why More Exerts Greater Social Pressure
Ex: Purchasing goods during sales, you buy goods as you see others (larger crowd) doing it.

Conformity increases with group size, but only up to about three or four members; beyond that point, it appears to level off. However, later research has found that conformity tends to increase with group size up to eight group members and beyond.

In short, the larger the group—the greater the number of people who behave in some specific way—the greater our tendency to conform, and "do as they do."

Factors affecting Conformity

Conformity and Status Within a Group
Ex: Agreeing on an issue in an office meeting after you just joined the office.

In many contexts, group members differ with respect to status, and one important source of such differences is seniority: Senior members feel less pressure to conform. Junior members of the group, in contrast, experience strong pressures to go along; after all, their position is not assured and one way of gaining status is to conform to the group's established norms or rules.

Factors affecting Conformity

Descriptive and Injunctive Social Norms: How Norms Affect Behavior

Descriptive norms are ones that simply describe **what most people do** in a given situation. They influence behavior by informing us about what is generally seen as effective or appropriate in that situation. For instance, a workplace where most employees consistently recycle paper, plastic, and other waste in clearly labeled bins. You follow them.

Injunctive norms specify **how people ought to behave or are expected to do**—either people want to receive others' approval or avoid others' disapproval. Breaking these norms may be disapproved by others. For instance, each driver should occupy only one spot. There is a strong injunctive norm against cheating on exams—such behavior is considered to be ethically wrong.

Norms will influence behavior only to the extent that they are salient (i.e., relevant, significant) to the people involved at the time the behavior occurs. People will obey injunctive norms only when they think about them and see them as applying to themselves and their actions.

Factors affecting Conformity

Descriptive and Injunctive Social Norms: How Norms Affect Behavior
Examples: Let us identify the norms

I will get married by age 18 because all girls in my city marry at that age.	Cheering with a placard at the stadium
Donating blood is a good thing.	Adding a tip to a restaurant bill
Littering is wrong	Dress codes
We should help senior citizens crossing roads	Tax fraud as something that is morally wrong
At the end of a theater play everyone stands up and start clapping, and immediately, others stand up and clap too.	tax fraud is perceived to be wrong, but many people do it.
I go home before it's dark as other girls do in the unsafe city.	Girls should learn basic defense.

Downside of Conformity: Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment

The **Stanford Prison Experiment** (SPE), conducted by psychologist **Philip Zimbardo** in 1971, was a landmark study exploring the psychological effects of perceived power and authority.

Purpose of the Study

- To investigate how individuals conform to social roles, particularly those of prisoners and guards, in a simulated prison environment.
- To examine how power dynamics influence behavior in hierarchical structures.

Setup

- Location: A basement at Stanford University was transformed into a mock prison.
- Participants: 24 male college students were selected after screening for psychological health and stability.
- Random Assignment: Participants were randomly assigned to play the roles of either **prisoners** or **guards**.
- Compensation: Each participant was paid $15 per day.

Downside of Conformity: Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment

Rules and Environment

- Prisoners were "arrested" unexpectedly at their homes, fingerprinted, and brought to the mock prison to enhance realism.
- Guards were given uniforms, sunglasses (to create anonymity), and batons, while prisoners wore smocks with ID numbers.
- Guards were instructed to maintain order but were given no specific training on how to manage prisoners.

Without any explanation, they arrest you and take you downtown to be photographed, fingerprinted, and "booked." Participants did know that they had volunteered to take part in social psychological research, but still, these events were still surprising for many of them.

Downside of Conformity: Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment

As a prisoner, you are expected to obey a long set of rules under threat of severe punishment. You must remain silent during rest periods and after lights are turned out each night. You must address other prisoners only by their I.D. numbers and your guards as "Mr. Correctional Officer." And you must ask their permission to do anything—from reading and writing to going to the bathroom.

How would you react to such conditions? Would you obey? Rebel? Become angry? Depressed? Resentful? And what if you were a guard instead of a prisoner?

Results: The prisoners were rebellious at first, but then became increasingly passive and depressed. And the guards grew increasingly brutal and sadistic. They harassed the prisoners, forced them to make fun of one another, and assigned them to difficult, senseless tasks. The guards were encouraged to dehumanize the prisoners, thereby coming to perceive them as inferior to themselves.

Downside of Conformity: Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment

It is the situations in which people find themselves—not their personal traits—that largely determine their behavior.

People do differ in many ways; but place them in a powerful situation like this one, and such differences tend to disappear.

Zimbardo (2007) suggests that it is this tendency to yield to situational pressures—including conformity to role-based norms— that is responsible for much evil behavior. As he puts it: " . . . we all like to think that the line between good and evil is impermeable—that people who do terrible things are on the other side of the line—and we could never get over there.

According to Zimbardo, this line is permeable, placed in the wrong kind of situation, virtually all of us—even those who have always been good, upstanding citizens—might commit atrocities.

Downside of Conformity

Pressures to conform, and our tendency to surrender to such pressures, can sometimes result in very harmful effects. **Do good people ever do bad things? What makes good people turn bad—at least sometimes?**

Some people seem able to resist even powerful situational or conformity pressures, while most people cannot. **Situations are often stronger than our ability to resist and remain true to our values.** Social norms and the social structure from which inequalities arise do not necessarily produce acceptance of inequalities.

Whether individuals go along with roles (and norms) that impose inequality depends on the extent to which the people involved identify with these roles; if their identification with the existing structure is low, they may resist and seek social change rather than simply resign themselves to their disadvantaged fate.

People decide to challenge an existing social structure rather than accept it, as happened in the 1950s and 1960s in the civil rights movement in the United States, the women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and the "Arab Spring" which started in 2010, and continued till 2012. Large numbers of people challenged the "status quo," and the result was major social change.

Although the power of social norms and social roles to induce conformity is strong, they are not invincible. Sometimes, under the right conditions, individuals challenge existing social orders and the rules they impose, and actively seek social change.

Reasons for non-Conformity

The Actor–Observer Effect Revisited: Its Role in Resisting Pressures to Conform
Ex: Remember the national anthem singing at your school assembly, did you always sing when you were in the assembly line?
We may either be engaged in synchronous behavior ourselves, or simply observe others doing it. As actors, we experience the pressures to conform arising from group membership, but as observers, we do not, and may, instead become sensitive to restrictions that synchronous behavior exerts on our personal freedom.

Observers may experience reactance—the feeling that our personal freedom is being restricted, and that we should resist strong pressure to conform to maintain our individuality.

Actors (students who lead national anthem performs) are more likely to conform when they are focused on the goals they hope to achieve while observers (rest of the students standing in the assembly) may be less aware of these goals, and so focus on the freedom of action given up by the people they watch, who are behaving in the precisely the same manner.

Reasons for non-Conformity

Power As a Shield Against Conformity

Ex: political leaders, generals, heads of corporations.

Power conjures up images of people who are in charge seem to enjoy more freedoms than the rest of us: They make the rules and they can shape situations rather than be molded by them. Restrictions that often influence the thought, expression, and behavior of most people do not seem to apply to the powerful.

Powerful people are less dependent on others for obtaining social resources. They may not pay much attention to threats from others or efforts to constrain their actions in some way.

They may be less likely to take the perspective of other people and so be less influenced by them. Instead, their thoughts and actions are more directly shaped by their own internal states; in other words, there might be a closer correspondence between their traits and preferences and what they think or do than is true for most people.

Reasons for non-Conformity

The Desire to Be Unique and Nonconformity

Ex: Most of your friends wear trendy/colorful dresses, while you wear handmade/B&W color outfits

We all want to believe that we are unique individuals. People have a need for uniqueness and that when it is threatened (when they feel their uniqueness is at risk)—they will actively resist conformity pressures to restore their sense of uniqueness.

When the motive to be somewhat unique was threatened, individuals respond by showing nonconformity, they refused to endorse the views supported by a majority of other people.

Reasons for non-Conformity

The Benefits of Nonconforming

Ex: Teacher who dresses casually (non-conformity to school dress code) has higher personal autonomy.

Nonconforming individuals are seen as high in personal autonomy—they "do their own thing"—while those who conform are seen as lower in autonomy, and these perceptions translate into perceiving the nonconformists as higher in status.

Compliance

Compliance—for getting others to say "yes" to your requests.
According to Cialdini (2008), these basic principles underlie many techniques used by professionals and ourselves for gaining compliance from others.

Six principles:
- Friendship/liking

- Commitment/consistency

- Scarcity

- Reciprocity

- Social validation

- Authority

Compliance

Friendship/liking: In general, we are more willing to comply with requests from friends or from people we like than with requests from strangers or people we don't like.

Will you donate if a stranger asks you?

Compliance

Commitment/consistency: Once we have committed ourselves to a position or action, we are more willing to comply with requests for behaviors that are consistent with this position or action than with requests that are inconsistent with it.

Are you ever approached by people offering you free samples of food? If so, why do they do this?

Ans: once you have accepted this small free gift, you will be more willing (that is compliance) to buy something from the restaurant they represent. Say yes to small, it is consistent that you say yes to something more/big.

Compliance

Scarcity: In general, we value, and try to secure, outcomes or objects that are scarce or decreasing in availability. As a result, we are more likely to comply with requests that focus on scarcity than ones that make no reference to this issue.

Would you like to buy a "limited-offer" product or product that stocks out fast or an "end-of-season" product?

Do you know "playing hard to get"?

Compliance

Reciprocity: We are generally more willing to comply with a request from someone who has previously provided a favor or concession to us than to someone who has not. In other words, we feel obligated to pay people back in some way for what they have done for us.

Would you accompany your friend to the grocery store for their sake, since they once went with you to the bank?

Compliance

Social validation: We are generally more willing to comply with a request for some action if this action is consistent with what we believe people similar to ourselves are doing (or thinking). We want to be correct, and one way to do so is to act and think like others.

Will you take your friend to a busy restaurant or to an empty restaurant if you do not know the food quality of either restaurant?

Compliance

Authority: In general, we are more willing to comply with requests from someone who holds legitimate authority—or simply appears to do so.

Will you take medicines after your doctor explains the benefits and prescribes them?

Can you guess the influence

a child cleaning the table when asked by their parents

a soldier obeying orders from a superior officer during a mission

Obedience

Major type of social influence— **obedience**—in which one person directly orders one or more others to behave in specific ways.

Obedience is less frequent than conformity or compliance because even people who possess authority and could use it often prefer to exert influence in less obvious ways— through requests rather than direct orders.

Obedience to the commands of people who possess authority is far from surprising; they usually have effective means for enforcing their orders. More unexpected is the fact that often, people lacking in such power can also induce high levels of submission from others.


"IF YOU LOVE ME, OBEY ME."

Obedience: Stanley Milgram experiment

One of the most famous studies in psychology on
obedience to authority

Milgram wished to find out whether individuals would obey commands from a relatively powerless stranger requiring them to inflict what seemed to be considerable pain on another person—
a totally innocent stranger.

For example, during World War II, troops in the German army frequently obeyed commands to torture and murder unarmed civilians. The Nazis established horrible but highly efficient death camps designed to eradicate Jews, Gypsies, and other groups they felt were inferior or a threat to their own "racial purity."
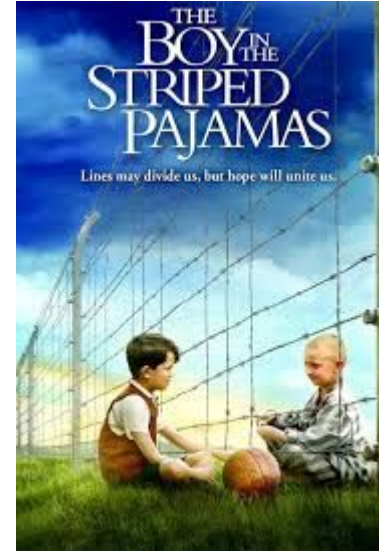
Obedience: Stanley Milgram experiment

Experiment Setup:

- Participants were told they were part of a study on **learning and memory**.
- a simple task involving memory (supplying the second word in pairs of words they had previously memorized after hearing only the first word).
- They were assigned the role of a **"teacher"**, while a confederate (an actor) played the **"learner"**.
- The learner was placed in a separate room and strapped to a chair with electrodes.
- The teacher was instructed to give the learner an electric shock for every incorrect answer, increasing the shock level each time.
- The shock generator had labels from **15 volts (slight shock) to 450 volts (danger: severe shock).**
- The learner (actor) would pretend to be in pain, scream, and eventually stop responding.
- If the teacher hesitated, the experimenter (a man in a lab coat) gave verbal prods like:
  - **"Please continue."**
  - **"The experiment requires that you continue."**
  - **"You have no other choice; you must go on."**
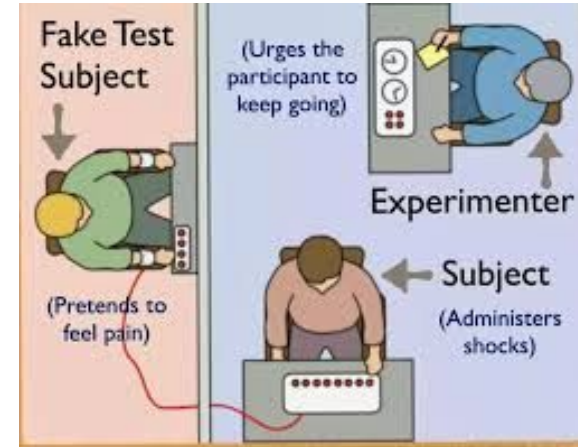
Obedience: Stanley Milgram experiment

Results:

- **65% (two-thirds) of participants administered the highest 450-volt shock.**
- **All participants** went up to at least **300 volts**, despite hearing the learner's cries of pain.
- Many participants were visibly distressed but still obeyed.

Conclusions:

- Ordinary people are likely to **follow orders from an authority figure**, even when it goes against their personal morals.
- Authority can strongly influence behavior, leading people to commit harmful acts if they believe they are simply "following orders."

Obedience: Why does such destructive obedience occur?

Factors that seem to play a role, and together, these combine to make most people unable to resist such situational pressures:

First, people in authority relieve those who obey of the responsibility for their own actions. "**I was only carrying out orders**" is the defense many offer after obeying harsh or cruel commands. In life situations, this transfer of responsibility may be implicit; the person in charge (e.g., the military or police officer) is assumed to have the responsibility for what happens.

Second, people in authority often possess visible badges or signs of their status. They wear special uniforms or insignia, have special titles, and so on. These serve to remind many individuals of the social norm "**Obey the persons in charge**." This is a powerful norm, and when confronted with it, most people find it difficult to disobey.

A **third** reason for obedience in many situations where the targets of such influence might otherwise resist involves the gradual escalation of the authority figure's orders. Initial commands may call for relatively mild actions, such as merely arresting people. Only later do orders come to require behavior that is dangerous or objectionable.

Finally, events in many situations involving destructive obedience move very quickly: Demonstrations turn into riots, arrests into mass beatings or murder, quite suddenly. The fast pace of such events gives participants little time for reflection or systematic thought: People are ordered to obey and—almost automatically—they do so.

Unintentional social influence

Conformity, Compliance and Obedience-all involve intentional efforts by one or more people to change the behavior and thoughts of other people. Groups—and society as a whole—generally want their members to follow the rules (i.e., norms), and put pressure (subtle or direct) on them to do so.

Is all social influence intentional? Do individuals sometimes influence others without overtly intending to do so?

Research findings indicate that such **unintentional social influence is actually quite common.**

- ❏ Emotional Contagion
- ❏ Symbolic Social Influence
- ❏ Modeling: Learning from Observing Others

Unintentional social influence

❏ Emotional Contagion

We are influenced by others' moods or emotions. Effects through which moods spread from one person to another. When we observe emotions in others, we tend to physically match their feelings. If they are happy, we begin to smile; if they are sad, we may frown. These effects occur automatically, and the result is that we come to feel what the other person is feeling. We not only notice others' emotions, but also interpret them. We interpret others' reactions as a source of information about how we should feel. For instance, if they are showing lots of anxiety and excitement while making a decision, we conclude that the decision is very important, and may begin to feel similar reactions.

Unintentional social influence

Have you ever cried watching a movie?

Do you smile when you see others smiling?

Unintentional social influence

❏ Symbolic Social Influence

The mere thought of the reactions of other people may have strong effect on our actions and our attitudes. Social psychologists refer to this as symbolic social influence and in such situations, once again, others influence us without trying to do so. Of course, they might attempt to exert such influence if they were present, but since they are not, it is our mental representations of others—what they want or prefer, our relationships with them, how we think they would evaluate us or our current actions—that influence us.

First, to the extent other people are present in our thoughts, this may trigger relational schemas— mental representations of people with whom we have relationships, and of these relationships themselves. When these relational schemas are triggered, goals relevant to them may be activated, too. **Example: You think of a friend, you want to be helpful. You think of your parents, you want to make them proud.**

Second, the psychological presence of others may trigger goals with which that person is associated—goals they want us to achieve. This can affect our performance on various tasks and our commitment to reaching these goals, among other things. **For example: if we have thoughts about our father, we know that he wants us to do well in school, our commitment to this goal may be increased and we may work harder to attain it.**

Unintentional social influence

❏   Modeling: Learning from Observing Others

Modeling, or observational learning, and it refers to situations in which we learn from observing others and then do what they did. Another term for this process is imitation, which has a negative ring to it—no one wants to be accused of imitating others, but imitation confers all the benefits of modeling and observational learning. Modeling also occurs in many situations in which we are not sure how to behave—there are no clear rules for what is the appropriate way to act. In such situations, we rely on the actions of others as a guide to what we should do. This kind of influence is very strong. Individuals will match their own actions to those of others with respect to everything from expressions of their opinions to even aggression and helping.

Unintentional social influence

Have you followed an electrician around while repairing in your house to learn how to fix such problems later?

Do you want to learn guitar following some musicians?

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Why do people help others?

What motives underlie the tendency to help others?

- *Empathy-altruism: It Feels Good to Help Others*

- *Negative-State Relief: Helping Can Reduce Unpleasant Feelings*

- *Empathic Joy: Feeling Good by Helping Others*

- *Competitive Altruism: Why Nice People Sometimes Finish First*

- *Kin Selection Theory*

- *Defensive Helping: Helping Outgroups to Reduce Their Threat to Our Ingroup*

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Empathy-altruism: It Feels Good to Help Others

Prosocial behavior involves empathy—the capacity to be able to experience others' emotional states, feel sympathetic toward them, and take their perspective.

We help others because we vicariously experience any unpleasant feelings they are experiencing and want to help bring their negative feelings to an end, and one way of doing so is to help them in some way.

This is unselfish because it leads us to offer help for no extrinsic reason, but it is also selfish, in one sense, since the behavior of assisting others helps us, too: It can make us feel better.

Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, and Birch offered the empathy-altruism hypothesis, which suggests that at least some prosocial acts are motivated solely by the desire to help someone in need. Such motivation can be sufficiently strong that the helper is willing to engage in unpleasant, dangerous, and even life-threatening activities.

Emotional empathy, which involves sharing the feelings and emotions of others. **Empathic accuracy** involves perceiving others' thoughts and feelings accurately. **Empathic concern** involves feelings of concern for another's well-being

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Empathy-altruism: It Feels Good to Help Others

The higher adolescents are in empathic accuracy—that is, the better their skill in what has been termed "everyday mind-reading" (accurately understanding what others are thinking and feeling), the better their social adjustment: The more friends, they will have, the more they will be liked by their peers, the better the quality of their friendships, Basically, the researchers reasoned that empathic accuracy would help the students respond appropriately to others; this in turn would lead to better relationships, and better adjustment.

Gleason and colleagues (2009)

Why does bullying happen?

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Negative-State Relief: Helping Can Reduce Unpleasant Feelings

We help because such actions allow us to reduce our own negative emotions. We do a good thing in order to stop feeling bad. The knowledge that others are suffering, or more generally, witnessing those in need can be distressing. To decrease this distress in ourselves, we help others.

You engage in a prosocial act primarily as a way to improve your own negative mood. In this kind of situation, unhappiness leads to prosocial behavior, and empathy is not a necessary component.

Imagine Sarah is walking down the street and sees a homeless person sitting on the sidewalk, looking cold and hungry. She starts feeling sad and uncomfortable about the person's situation. To relieve her own distress, she decides to buy the person a warm meal. After giving the meal, she feels a sense of relief and satisfaction, as her negative emotions have lessened.

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Empathic Joy: Feeling Good by Helping Others

The empathic joy hypothesis suggests that helpers enjoy the positive reactions shown by others whom they help. An important implication of this idea is that it is crucial for the person who helps to know that their actions had a positive impact on the victim.

Suppose I have lots of items in my shopping cart at the grocery store, and the person behind me in line has only two or three, I often say "Please, go ahead of me." Usually they smile and thank me—and as a result I get a small boost in positive feelings.

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Competitive Altruism: Why Nice People Sometimes Finish First

This general idea is carried one step further by another perspective on prosocial behavior—the competitive altruism approach. This view suggests that one important reason that people help others is that doing so boosts their own status and reputation and, in this way, ultimately brings them large benefits, ones that more than offset the costs of engaging in prosocial actions.

For instance, as you probably know, many people who donate large amounts of money to universities are treated like stars when they visit their alma mater, and they may have entire buildings named after them. Research findings confirm that the motive to experience a boost in social status does lie behind many acts of prosocial behavior—especially ones that bring public recognition.

Can you relate to the attitudes of some members of the Economics Department Alumni Association?

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Kin Selection Theory

From an evolutionary perspective, a key goal for all organisms—including us—is getting our genes into the next generation. Support for this general prediction has been obtained in many studies suggesting that in general we are more likely to help others to whom we are closely related than people to whom we are not related.

Also, people were more likely to help young relatives, who have many years of reproductive life ahead of them, than older ones.

We don't just help biological relatives; instead, often, we do help people who are unrelated to us. One answer is provided by reciprocal altruism theory— a view suggesting that we may be willing to help people unrelated to us because helping is usually reciprocated: If we help them, they help us, so we do ultimately benefit, and our chances of survival could then be indirectly increased.

Prosocial behaviour: Motives

Defensive Helping: Helping Outgroups to Reduce Their Threat to Our Ingroup

People often divide the social world into two categories: their own ingroup and outgroups. Furthermore, they often perceive their own group as distinctive from other groups, and superior in several ways.

Sometimes people help others—especially people who do not belong to their own ingroup—as a means of defusing status threats from them. Such actions are known as defensive helping because they are performed not primarily to help the recipients, but rather to "put them down" in subtle ways and so reduce their threat to the in-group's status. In such cases, helping does not stem from empathy or positive reactions to the joy or happiness it induces among recipients, but, rather, from a more selfish motive: protecting the distinctiveness and status of one's own group.

A group of senior employees at a company feels threatened by a group of younger, highly skilled new hires who might challenge their authority. To maintain their higher status, the senior employees decide to "help" the newcomers by giving them small, low-impact tasks that seem beneficial but don't allow them to showcase their full potential.

Response to emergencies: bystanders help

Response to emergencies: bystanders help

Who is a bystander?

Someone who is near the place where an event happens, but not directly involved in it.

Common sense suggests that the greater the number of witnesses to an emergency (or in this case, a crime), the more likely it is that someone will help. **Is this right?**

Response to emergencies: bystanders help

Findings suggest: The greater the number of witnesses to a staged emergency, the less likely they were to help the apparent victim.

What are the decision-making factors/steps for a bystander to help or not:

- **Noticing, or failing to notice, that something unusual is happening:** An emergency is obviously something that occurs unexpectedly, and there is no sure way to anticipate that it will take place or to plan how best to respond.
- **Correctly interpreting an event as an emergency:** Even after we pay attention to an event, we often have only limited and incomplete information as to what exactly is happening. Most of the time, whatever catches our attention does not turn out to be an emergency and so does not require immediate action. Whenever potential helpers are not completely sure about what is going on, they tend to hold back and wait for further information.
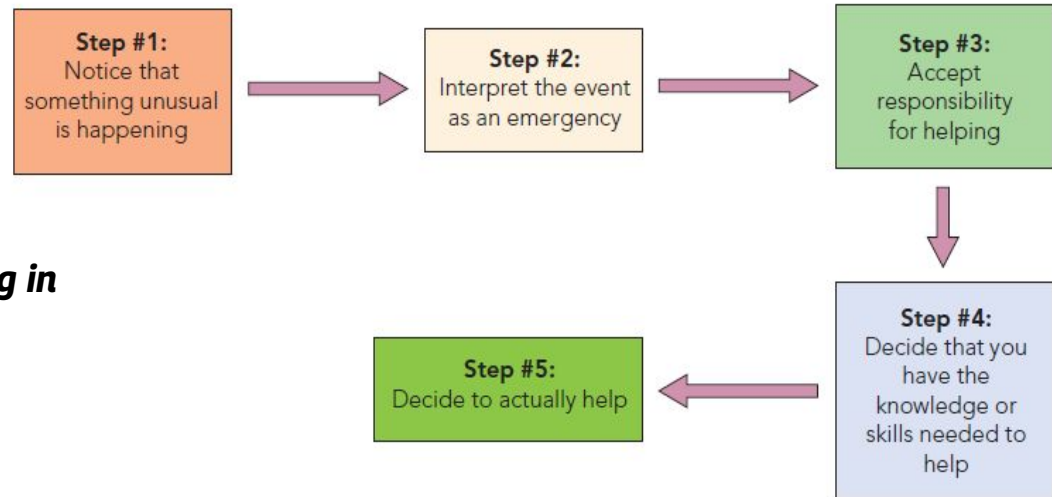
Response to emergencies: bystanders help

Findings suggest: *the presence of multiple witnesses may inhibit helping not only because of the diffusion of responsibility, but also because it is embarrassing to misinterpret a situation and to act inappropriately. Making such a serious mistake in front of several strangers might lead them to think you are overreacting in a stupid way. And when people are uncertain about what's happening they tend to hold back and do nothing.*

What are the decision-making factors/steps for a bystander to help or not:

- **Deciding that it is your responsibility to provide help:** If responsibility is not clear, people assume that anyone in a leadership role must take responsibility—for instance, adults with children, professors with students. When there is only one bystander, they usually takes charge because there is no alternative.

- **Deciding that you have the knowledge and/or skills to act:** Even if a bystander progresses as far as Step 3 and assumes responsibility, a prosocial response cannot occur unless the person knows how to be helpful.

- **Making the final decision to provide help:** Even if a bystander passes the first four steps in the decision process, help does not occur unless he or she makes the ultimate decision to engage in a helpful act. Helping at this final point can be inhibited by fears (often realistic ones) about potential negative consequences. So, here **PROSOCIAL MOTIVES** may work.

Response to emergencies: bystanders help

Five Steps on the Path to Helping in Emergencies

Step #1: Notice that something unusual is happening

Step #2: Interpret the event as an emergency

Step #3: Accept responsibility for helping

Step #4: Decide that you have the knowledge or skills needed to help

Step #5: Decide to actually help

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding—a process in which entrepreneurs use the money contributed to set up and then run their companies. Since contributors will receive virtually nothing in return (perhaps a T-shirt or other small "reward" for their help), this is clearly a form of prosocial behavior—and one that has grown hugely in recent years.

Donation-based crowdfunding is a type of crowdfunding where individuals contribute money to a cause, project, or person without expecting anything in return. It is commonly used for:

- **Charity and Social Causes** (e.g., medical bills, disaster relief, education support)
- **Nonprofits and Community Projects**
- **Personal Fundraising** (e.g., helping someone in need)

Crowdfunding sites carefully screen the projects entrepreneurs submit, and include safeguards to insure that the people who request funds really use them for the purposes they describe.

The overall effects are very positive: Entrepreneurs acquire the funds they need to get started, and as you probably know, the companies they start often provide jobs and contribute to economic growth. So clearly, this is a form of prosocial behavior that benefits not just the entrepreneurs, but their communities too.