Groups and individuals

Chapter 5

Learning Objectives

Describe the types and features of groups
Identify how the presence of others impacts performance
Evaluate the factors that impact group cooperation and conflict
Recall that the way group fairness is judged impacts behavior
Assess the factors that impact the effectiveness of the group decision-making process
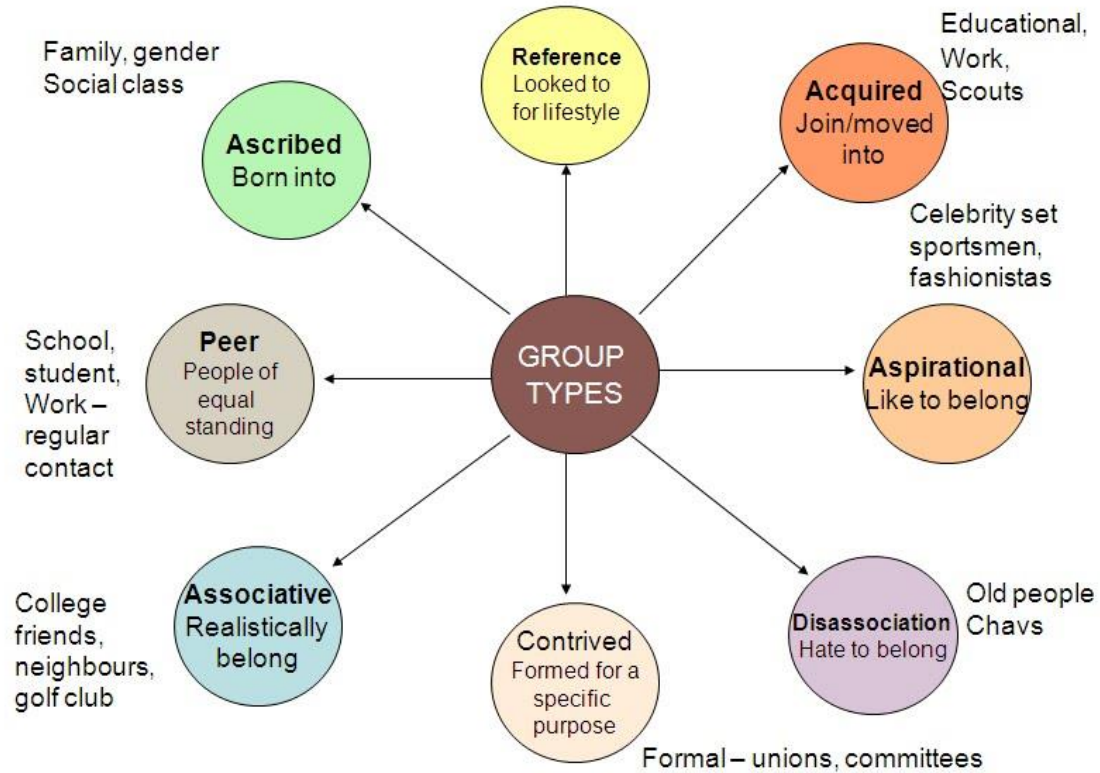**Examine** how social causes lead to physical and psychological ailments

Who are you?

Say 3 words..

Which group defines you most strongly?

Family, gender
Social class

Ascribed
Born into

Reference
Looked to
for lifestyle

Educational,
Work,
Scouts

Acquired
Join/moved
into

School,
student,
Work –
regular
contact

Peer
People of
equal
standing

GROUP TYPES

Celebrity set
sportsmen,
fashionistas

Aspirational
Like to belong

College
friends,
neighbours,
golf club

Associative
Realistically
belong

Contrived
Formed for a
specific
purpose

Disassociation
Hate to belong

Old people
Chavs

Formal – unions, committees

We are all members of many different groups.

Rival players from Barcelona and Real Madrid united under a "One Spain" identity. Result: Won Euro 2008, World Cup 2010, and Euro 2012.


Conflicts and cliques destroyed team spirit. Players even refused to train. Result: Early exit and public embarrassment.

What do you think about **TEAMWORK**?

People are often highly attached to their work group and savor its accomplishments. People who **identify with the organization that employs them, exhibit greater commitment and show positive organizational citizenship behavior** that goes beyond the "call of duty."
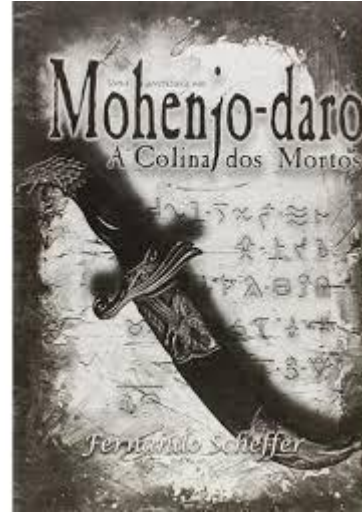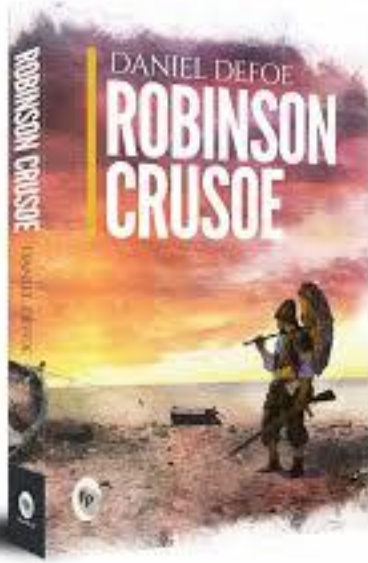
Do **individuals or groups** make riskier (or worse) decisions?

Is being in groups a fundamental part of our evolutionary history?

Introduction: what is a group?

A **group** involves people who perceive themselves to be part of a coherent unit that they see as different from another group.

Common-bond groups, tend to involve face-to-face interaction among members, the individuals in the group are bonded to each other. Examples: players on a sports team, friendship groups, a family, and work teams.

Common identity groups the members are linked via the category as a whole rather than to each other with face-to-face interaction often being entirely absent. Example: our national, linguistic, university, and gender groups are ones where we might not know personally all, or even most, of the other group members.

Introduction: what is a group?

Which one is a group?

Introduction: what is a group?

Can you identify common-bond/ common-identity groups?

Introduction: what is a group?

Can you identify common-bond/ common-identity groups?

Group as an identity

What determines whether, and to what extent, we perceive a group as an entity?

Groups can also differ dramatically in terms of their **entitativity**— the extent to which they are perceived as a coherent whole. Groups high in entitativity tend to have the following characteristics:

- **members interact with one another often, although not necessarily in a face-to-face setting,**
- **the group is important in some way to its members,**
- **members share common goals, and**
- **members perceive themselves as similar to one another in important ways.**

The higher groups are on these dimensions, the more they will be seen by their members and nonmembers alike as forming coherent entities— real groups that can, and often do, exert powerful effects upon their members.

Highly entitative groups are more likely to be stereotyped than are groups low in entitativity.

Group as an identity: Highly Entitative Group

Members **train, live, and work closely together**, often relying on one another for survival.

The group is **highly important** to its members — it defines their identity ("Once a Marine, always a Marine").

They have **shared goals**, like defending their country or completing missions.

They **perceive themselves as similar**, sharing discipline, values, and commitment. They are also **subject to stereotypes** (e.g., being seen as brave, tough, aggressive, or overly rigid.

Group as an identity: Low Entitative Group

They are **physically together**, but don't interact much.

The group is not important to them — they just happen to be there.

They have **no shared goals** beyond catching the bus.

Members **don't see themselves as similar** or connected.

Groups: key components

Status: Hierarchies in Groups

Roles: Differentiation of Functions Within Groups

Norms: The Rules of the Game

Cohesiveness: the Force That Binds

Groups: key components

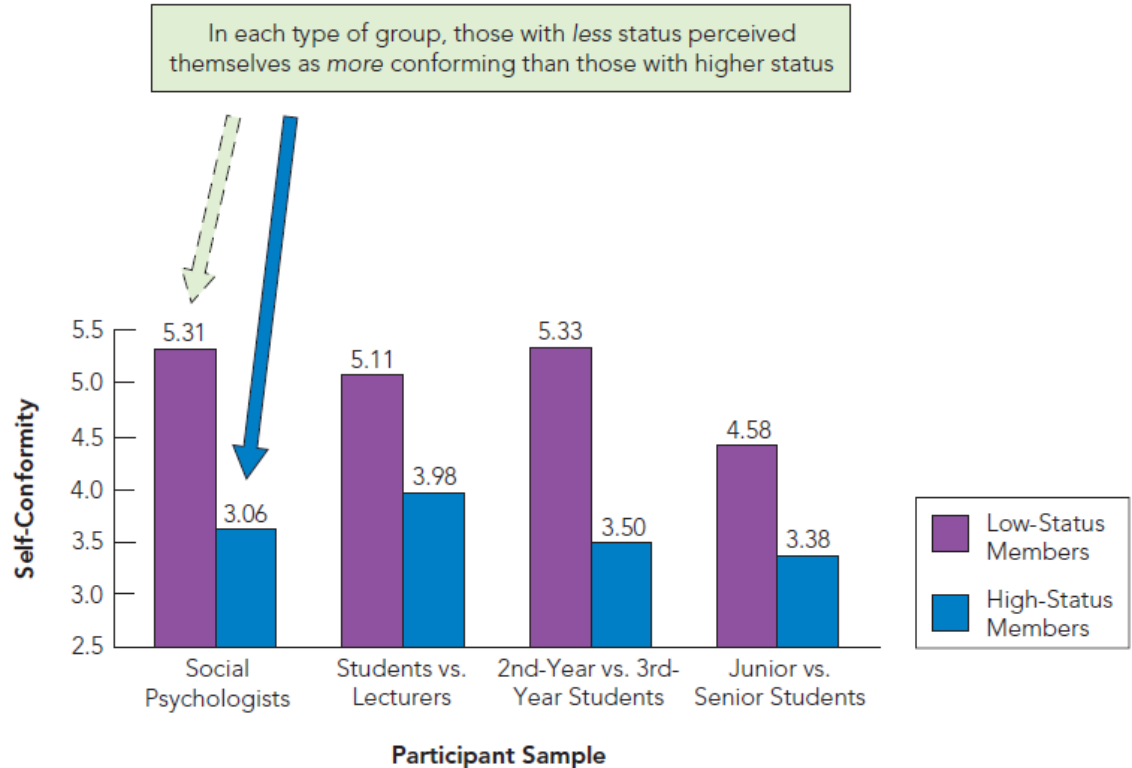**Status: Hierarchies in Groups**

- Many groups have status hierarchies, where members differ in rank or prestige.
- Status can be formal (e.g., President, team captain) or informal (e.g., respected "old-timers").
- People are highly sensitive to their status position because it affects:
    - Respect and influence within the group
    - Access to resources and material benefits (e.g., salary, privileges)

Factors Determining Status

- **Physical attributes:**
    - Taller or more dominant-looking individuals are often perceived as higher-status.
    - Example: Taller candidates or bosses are often "looked up to" both literally and symbolically.
- **Prototypicality:**
    - Members who best represent the group's core values or identity are often granted higher status, e.g., leaders.
- **Longevity / Seniority:**
    - Long-term members or "old-timers" often hold higher status. Seen as more knowledgeable, wise, or experienced in group norms.

Groups: key components

Status: Hierarchies in Groups

In each type of group, those with *less* status perceived themselves as *more* conforming than those with higher status

Groups: key components

Roles: Differentiation of Functions Within Groups

Roles in groups can be **Formally assigned** (e.g., leader, treasurer, secretary) or **Informally developed** (e.g., "good listener," "organizer")
Roles serve different functions: Some members focus on emotional support and Others specialize in task completion
Internalization of Roles and the Self-Concept:

- When people internalize their social roles, these roles become part of their self-concept.
- Successfully enacting a role that matches personal traits leads to:
  - Feelings of authenticity ("This is the real me")
  - Positive mood and greater enjoyment of group tasks
- When there is a mismatch between role and self-perception: People feel less authentic, show lower mood, and enjoy tasks less.
- Strong role identification leads to: Cohesion, confidence, and goal-directed behavior.
- Weak role identification leads to: Stress, confusion, and poor group performance.
- Once people identify with a role, group norms begin to guide both behavior and emotions.

Groups: key components

Norms: The Rules of the Game

- **Norms:** Implicit or explicit rules that guide group members on expected behavior.
- **Feeling rules:** Norms about the emotions appropriate to express in a group or setting.
    - **Example: Certain jobs or professional roles require displaying positive emotions consistently.**

Cultural and Group Variation in Norms

- **Collectivist groups:**
    - Priority: Maintaining harmony among members.
    - Disagreement or conflict is avoided, even at personal cost.
    - Members are expected to conform and cooperate.
    - **Example: Asian Families, Community organizations.**
- **Individualist groups:**
    - Priority: Standing out and expressing individuality.
    - Disagreement is acceptable and often seen as courageous.
    - Individual variability is normal and valued.
    - **Example: Freelancers' community, startup communities.**

Restaurant employees and flight attendants are told they must always smile at customers. Or, they can be more subtle, where learning to be a "good" group member means claiming to be "happier than you were before" you joined the group.

Groups: key components

Cohesiveness: the Force That Binds
All forces that cause members to remain in a group and work together.
Highly cohesive group characteristics: Members like one another and share group goals. Members feel the group best satisfies their needs.

- Strong group identity leads to: High morale, Support and cooperation among members, Better task performance
- Low-cohesive groups: Members don't like each other, lack shared goals, and seek other groups.
- Less likely to perform tasks successfully.

Presence of an outgroup or competitive threat increases cohesion.
Cohesive groups tend to exclude outsiders who do not fit the group norm.

Threats to group identity can intensify cohesion and protective actions.
- **Example: French Canadians fearing cultural assimilation favor Quebec separation to protect their sovereignty.**
- **Example: English Canadians worried about American influence and wanted to limit U.S. media and support protective political measures.**
Perceived threat to the group's future encourages behaviors that strengthen ingroup solidarity.

Groups: benefits and costs of joining

Why do you support even if your team is losing?

Is it difficult to get membership of a group?

Groups: benefits and costs of joining

The Benefits of Joining: What Groups Do for Us

1. We often **gain self-knowledge** from belonging to various groups. Our membership can tell us what kind of person we are—or perhaps, would like to be—so group membership becomes central to our self-concept. Group memberships provide us with a sense of "**existential security**."

1. Being part of a group can also **increase our perceived ability to cope with stress**, in part by making us feel a greater sense of control.

1. Groups can help us **reach our goals of attaining prestige**. When an individual is accepted into a certain type of group—a highly selective school, an exclusive social club, and a varsity sports team— **self-esteem can increase**.

1. People like being in a group best when it **matches their current goal orientation**.

1. Joining a group often helps us to **accomplish goals we could not achieve alone**—for example, social change, people can develop a politicized collective identity, which prepares them to engage in a power struggle on behalf of their group.

Groups: benefits and costs of joining

The Costs of Membership of a Group

1. Group membership often **restricts personal freedom**. Members of various groups are expected to behave in certain ways— and if they don't, the group may impose sanctions or even expel such violators from membership.

1. Groups often **make demands on members' time, energy, and resources**, and members must meet these demands or surrender their membership, e.g., cultural groups, political groups, religious institutions.

1. When **differences in ideology**—the philosophical and political values of a group—among different factions become so disparate that some members cannot see themselves as sharing a social identity with other members of the group.

1. When groups **bring structural changes or transformation (e.g., removing a traditional activity), emotional distress** experienced being in a group reflects the **loss of an important identity/culture/ideology** and is akin to bereavement.

Presence of others affects performance

Social Facilitation: We are strongly affected by the mere presence of others, even if we are not part of a formal group.

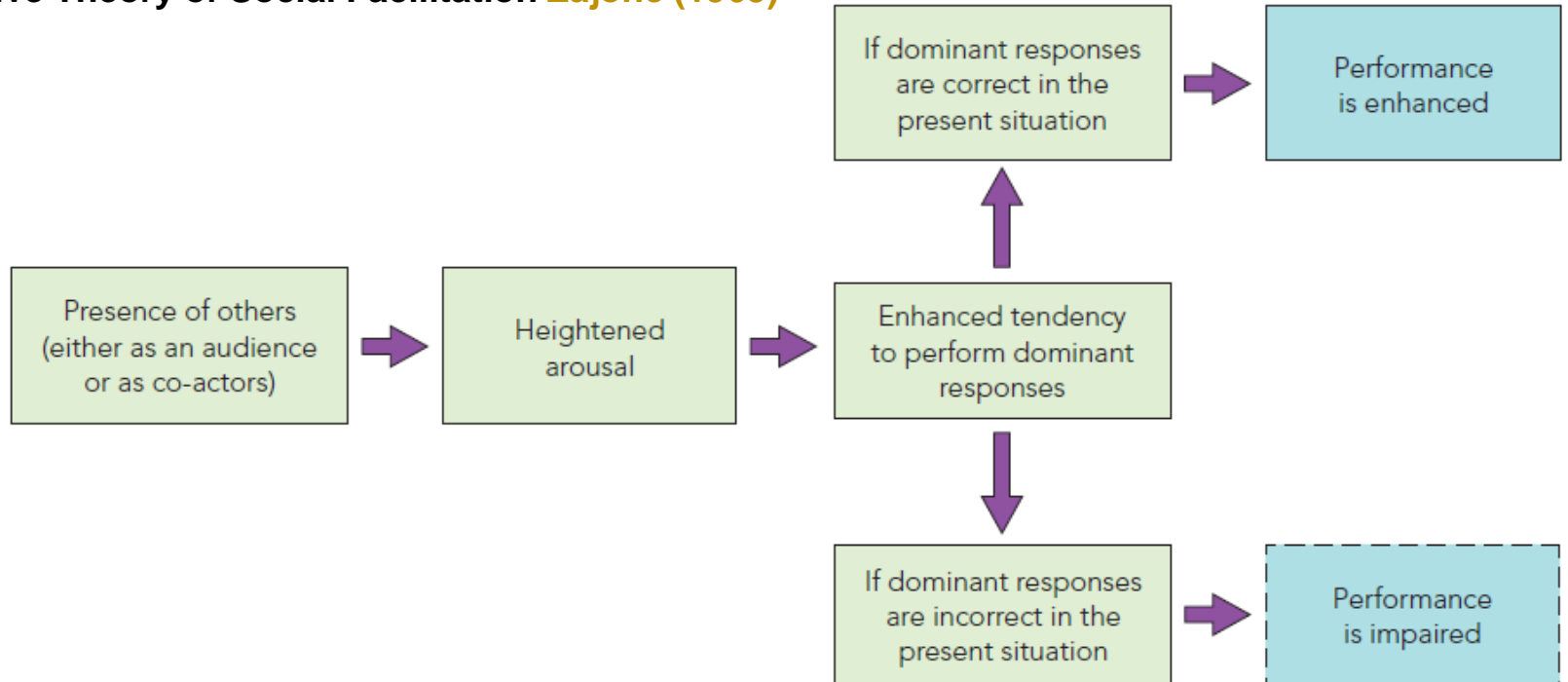*How does the presence of others affect our performance?*
Evidence from several different studies confirms that the presence of others can affect our performance—sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.

Why does having an audience matter?
*the presence of others increases physiological arousal (our bodies become more energized), and, as a result, any dominant response will be facilitated. This means that **we can focus better on something we know or have practiced when we are aroused.***

Presence of others affects performance

The Drive Theory of Social Facilitation Zajonc (1965)

Presence of others affects performance

Evaluation apprehension idea:

Other researchers thought that performance might sometimes be disrupted by the presence of an audience because of apprehension about having their performance evaluated.

Presence of others affects performance

Social Loafing: some people will work hard, while others goof off and do less than they would if working alone. This is social loafing—reductions in effort when individuals work collectively compared to when they work individually.

Each person put out less effort as the size of the group increases.

Do you all perform equally in the chorus?

Why loaf?
- *those who feel "dispensable" to the group are more likely to loaf.*
- *the more fairness that is perceived in the group generally, the less likely students are to loaf.*

How to reduce?
- *making the output or effort of each participant readily identifiable*
- *increasing group members' commitment to successful task performance*
- *increasing the apparent importance or value of a task*
- *given some kind of standard of performance—either in terms of how much others are doing or their own past performance*

Coordination in groups

Cooperation—helping that is mutual, where both sides benefit.

Conflict– individuals or groups perceive that others have taken, or will soon take, actions incompatible with their own interests.

Why would group members not consistently cooperate?
- Social dilemmas are situations in which each person can increase his or her individual gains by acting in a purely selfish manner, but if all (or most) people do the same thing, the outcomes experienced by all are reduced.
- ***Ex. prisoner's dilemma.***

How to resolve conflicts?
- **Bargaining**: opposing sides exchange offers, counteroffers, and concessions, either directly or through representatives. If the process is successful, a solution acceptable to both sides is attained, and the conflict is resolved.
- **Superordinate goals**—goals that both sides seek, and that tie their interests together rather than driving them apart. When opposing sides can be made to see that they share overarching goals, conflict is often sharply reduced and may, in fact, be replaced by overt cooperation.

Perceived Fairness in Groups: Its Nature and Effects

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that you were getting less than you deserved from some group to which you belong? **We perceive fairness in groups by focusing on three distinct aspects or rules.**

Distributive justice, or fairness, This is about the results or rewards people get. According to the equity rule, people who work harder or contribute more should get more in return. We usually decide what's fair by comparing how much people give to the group with how much they get back.

Procedural justice We judge fairness based on things like: i. Whether the same rules are used for everyone, ii. Whether mistakes can be fixed, and iii. Whether decision-makers stay neutral and don't act for their own benefit.

Transactional justice: We see something as fair when the information about decisions and outcomes is explained clearly and respectfully. In other words, we care about whether we're given good reasons for how rewards were shared and whether we're treated politely when told about it.

Decision Making by Groups: How It Occurs and the Pitfalls It Faces

How do groups reach a decision?

How is a decision accomplished?

Can the final decision be predicted from the views initially held by the members of the group?

Decision Making by Groups: How It Occurs

Group polarization: groups often make more extreme decisions than individuals would alone.

- During discussion, a group's initial opinions become stronger.
- As a result, the group's final decision is usually more extreme in the same direction as their starting view.
- Early studies (Kogan & Wallach, 1964) found groups often became riskier — known as the risky shift.
- Later research showed the shift isn't always toward risk:
- If the group starts out **risk-seeking**, discussion makes them **even riskier**.
- If the group starts out **cautious**, discussion makes them **even more cautious**.

Why polarization?
1. **Social comparison** is involved. People want to seem "better" or more in line with the group than others. So, they often take an even stronger version of the group's general opinion to appear more committed or "above average."
2. During group discussions, most arguments support the **group's original opinion.** Hearing these points makes members move even more toward that view. As more people agree, the discussion becomes even more one-sided, and members end up believing their group's opinion is the correct one.

Example:
Political discussion: A group that slightly supports stricter immigration laws may, after discussion, strongly demand a total ban.

Decision Making by Groups: How the Pitfalls It Faces

Group think: When a group becomes **too cohesive**, **groupthink** can occur, originated by Janis (1982).

- Groupthink is when members close ranks and stop questioning the group's decisions.
- The group begins to believe it cannot be wrong.
- Members feel pressure to agree and support the decision fully.
- Opposing opinions or new information are often ignored or rejected.
- Once groupthink sets in, the group becomes stubborn and unwilling to change its decision, even if it turns out to be a bad one.
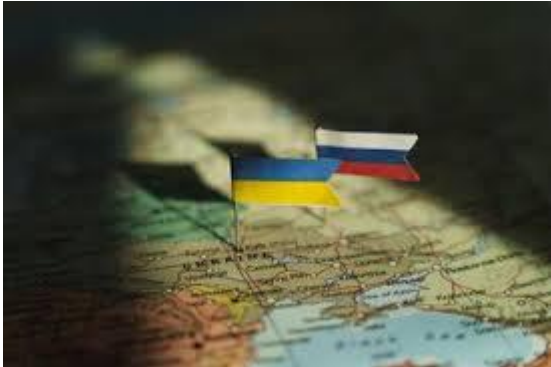
Why groupthink?
1. When group members are very close or cohesive, and the leader's close supporters have extra influence, poor decisions are more likely.
2. Group norms may develop that suggest the group is always right and morally superior, so no further discussion is needed.
3. Groups often don't share all unique information that members have.
4. Decisions usually reflect only the information everyone already knows, not all the available knowledge that some members might have.

Example:
Students in a group agree on an answer for an assignment without checking all the facts, because the majority seems confident, and no one wants to disagree.

Decision Making by Groups: How the Pitfalls It Faces

Why do wars happen?

Decision Making by Groups: How the Pitfalls It Faces

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry found that UK government and civil service decision-making during COVID-19 suffered from a **"culture of groupthink"** - meaning that key ministers and officials did not sufficiently challenge the consensus view, and dissenting opinions were inadequately considered.

In particular, the inquiry noted that officials assumed the **UK was "one of the best placed countries in the world" to handle a pandemic- a view that went largely unchallenged internally.**
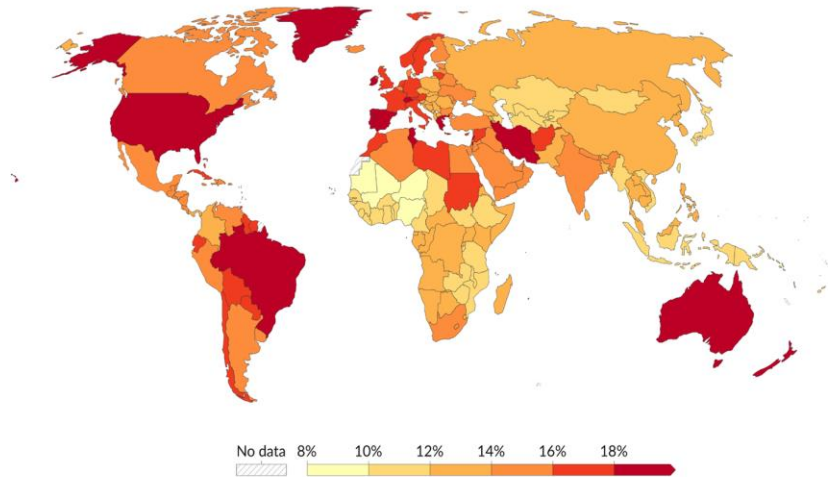
The Times, 2024

Social Sources of Stress and Their Effects on Personal Well-Being

Stress is a common part of modern life—few of us can avoid it altogether.

Share of population with mental health disorders, 2021

This includes depression, anxiety, bipolar, eating disorders, and schizophrenia.

No data 8% 10% 12% 14% 16% 18%

Data source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2024)   OurWorldinData.org/mental-health | CC BY

Note: Due to the widespread underdiagnosis, these estimates use a combination of sources, including medical and national records, epidemiological data, survey data, and meta-regression models.

Share who report lifetime anxiety or depression, 2020

Respondents were asked 'Have you ever been so anxious or depressed that you could not continue your regular daily activities as you normally would for two weeks or longer?'

No data 0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%
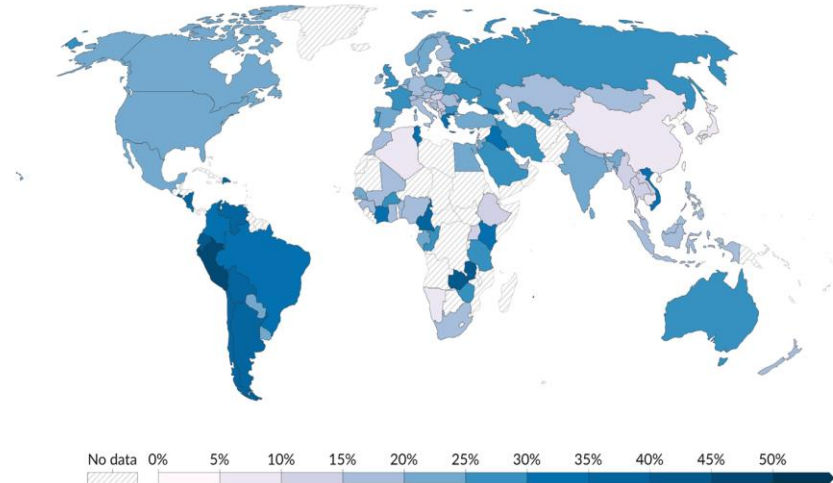
Data source: Wellcome Global Monitor (2021)   OurWorldinData.org/mental-health | CC BY

Social Sources of Stress and Their Effects on Personal Well-Being

**What are the major sources of stress in our lives?**

Major life events: the death of a loved one, a painful divorce, being excluded from important life arenas as a result of discrimination, childhood neglect, exposure to and experience of violence

Minor annoyances of daily life—often termed hassles: having too many things to do at once, misplacing or losing things, troublesome neighbors or roommates, and concerns over money

People who experience high levels of stress are more likely to become seriously ill than those who do not.

Mental health and substance use disorders death rate, 2021
Estimated annual number of deaths from mental health and substance use disorders per 100,000 people. These include alcohol use, drug use, and eating disorders. Figures do not include deaths resultant from suicide, which in some cases are related to these disorders.

No data   0   0.1   0.2   0.5   1   2   5   10   20   50
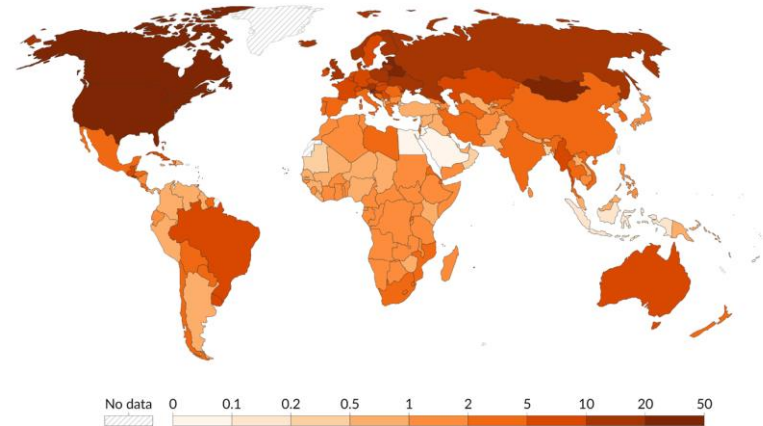
Data source: World Health Organization (2024)

OurWorldinData.org/illicit-drug-use | CC BY

Social Sources of Stress and Their Effects on Personal Well-Being

Stress interferes with efficient operation of our immune system—the mechanism through which our bodies recognize and destroy potentially harmful substances and intruders such as bacteria, viruses, and cancerous cells.

Direct effects, weaken our immune system and also harm other bodily functions.
Indirect effects of stress influence the lifestyles we adopt. Stress can encourage behaviors that can provide immediate pleasure but have long-term heal risks

Evidence: a link between stress and unhealthy behavior was found, especially among low-income American individuals (Krueger & Chang, 2008)
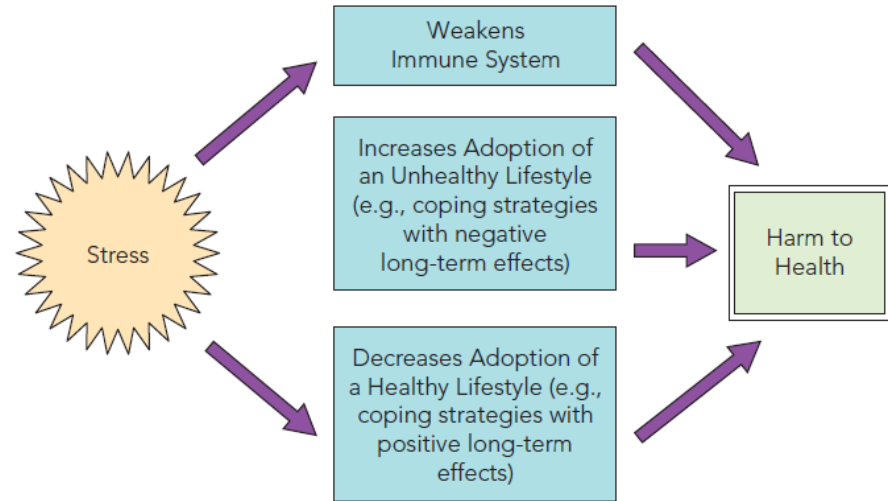
Fostering Happiness in Our Lives

Our subjective well-being involves four basic components:

- **Global life satisfaction—**feeling generally satisfied or happy with our lives
- **Satisfaction with important life domains—**being satisfied with our work, relationships, and family
- **Positive feelings—**experiencing positive emotions and moods often
- **Negative feelings—**experiencing negative emotions less often than positive ones, or preferably, rarely

Fostering Happiness in Our Lives

What makes people happy with their lives?

A higher frequency of positive emotions leads people to think and act in ways that help to broaden and build their emotional, physical, and social resources

Good social relations with other people—friends, family, romantic partners— is an important ingredient for being happy

People who have concrete goals, especially realistic ones, and who feel they are making progress toward those goals, are happier than people who lack goals

Fostering Happiness in Our Lives

Does more money equal more happiness?

Economists have long assumed that the wealth of a nation—termed gross domestic product (GDP)—should be the primary measure of the well-being of a nation.

World Happiness Reports show, GDP (per capita income) does predict differences across countries in the level of happiness and how satisfied people are with their lives.

At low-income levels, a lack of money is likely to make people feel unhappy because without it, they can't meet their basic needs—such as food, clothing, and shelter.

At higher income levels, however, income is not strongly related to how happy people feel. In cases, where people have enough money to meet all their basic needs, plus some of the "luxuries," increasing wealth further does not result in improved happiness or life satisfaction.

Kahneman and Deaton (2010), examined a nationally representative sample of Americans, showed that increased income above $75,000 per year had little connection with the positive feelings people experience on a daily basis.

Optimum level of well-being theory

Is It Possible to Be Too Happy? How much happy should you be?

Oishi, Diener, and Lucas (2007)—optimum level of well-being theory—which concerns the effects of well-being on task performance. This theory proposes that for any specific task, there is an optimum (i.e., best) level of subjective well-being.

For any task, there may be an optimum level of positive affect that is associated with maximum performance. Up to that point, performance on many different tasks improves as well-being increases, but beyond it, performance declines.

For tasks related to achievement (e.g., career success, educational attainment), very high levels of positive emotion may foster complacency or satisfaction with less than perfect outcomes. Motivation and effort are reduced. So, when people are feeling very happy, they may "take it easy," rather than exerting maximal effort on difficult tasks since they are already quite satisfied with their lives. Thus, performance declines at very high levels of positive emotion.

Optimum level of well-being theory

Is It Possible to Be Too Happy? How much happy should you be?

Very high levels of subjective well-being may lead people to believe that they can "get away" with doing things that are dangerous or harmful to their health. They may eat or drink too much, engage in risky actions, and so on. This kind of illusion can, of course, be very harmful and undermine the benefits to personal health conferred by subjective well-being. For these and other reasons, very high levels of subjective well-being can have both harmful and beneficial effects.

to increase your happiness:

- ❏ Begin experiencing positive feelings
- ❏ Build close personal relationships or join groups that you value
- ❏ Invest in experiences over material goods
- ❏ Build personal skills that contribute to being happy
- ❏ **Stop doing counteractive things: do not live in the future, stop worrying excessively and unnecessarily, do not set unreasonable goals for yourself, do not try to be perfect!**

Entrepreneurship as a Means of Seeking Happiness

An entrepreneur is a person who initiates change. An entrepreneur can be someone who starts a new company, creates a new product, or designs a new way of doing something, or people who work for themselves, as opposed to being employees—working for others.

Entrepreneurs tend to be optimists. They believe they will experience positive outcomes in life, even if this belief is not fully justified. Making money is not the key or central motive of an entrepreneur. **Being an entrepreneur is a key to happiness, a feeling of being self-dependent, fulfilling, adventurous, meaningful.**

Self-determination theory (SDT)—is directly relevant to understanding entrepreneurs' motives. This theory focuses on the distinction between two kinds of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to activities that individuals pursue for their own sake—that is, for pure enjoyment. extrinsic motivation refers to situations in which individuals do seek external rewards, money, high status, better job. Intrinsic motives tend to promote higher levels of happiness and wellbeing than extrinsic ones.

Applying self-determination theory to entrepreneurs helps to explain why many of them are not primarily seeking monetary wealth. Rather, they want to enjoy their work and be happy.

Entrepreneurship as a Means of Seeking Happiness

Qualities of an entrepreneur:

Entrepreneurs, as a group, tend to have a high degree of confidence in themselves. They generally believe they can accomplish the tasks they set out to perform. This is known as self-efficacy and is closely related to self-esteem.

Entrepreneurs tend to display is a high level of social skills. Social skills include the ability to "read" other people accurately, the ability to influence people, skill in generating enthusiasm among others, and the capacity to change or adapt behavior from one social situation to another.

Entrepreneurs to develop a strong social network. An entrepreneur needs the expertise of a particular kind of engineer. If she or he has a large social network, someone in it might be able to help by recommending a person who can fill the need.

Entrepreneurs are intrinsically motivated by their work, which tends to promote happiness.