

Module 43 Social Thinking

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*social psychology*

## Terms and Concepts to Remember

1. **Social psychology** is the scientific study of how we think about, influence, and relate to one another.
2. **Attribution theory** deals with our causal explanations of behavior. We attribute behavior to the individual's disposition or to the situation.
3. The **fundamental attribution error** is our tendency to underestimate the impact of situations and to overestimate the impact of personal dispositions on the behavior of others.
4. **Attitudes** are feelings, often influenced by our beliefs, that may predispose us to respond in particular ways to objects, people, and events.
5. **Peripheral route persuasion** occurs when people are influenced by more superficial and incidental cues, such as a speaker's appearance.
6. **Central route persuasion** occurs when people respond favorably to arguments as a result of engaging in systematic thinking about an issue.
7. The **foot-in-the-door phenomenon** is the tendency for people who agree to a small request to comply later with a larger request.
8. A **role** is a set of explanations (norms) about how people in a specific social position ought to behave.
9. **Cognitive dissonance theory** refers to the theory that we act to reduce the psychological discomfort we experience when our behavior conflicts with what we think and feel, or more generally, when two of our thoughts are inconsistent. This is frequently accomplished by changing our attitude rather than our behavior.

*Memory aid:* *Dissonance* means "lack of harmony." **Cognitive dissonance** occurs when two thoughts, or cognitions, are at variance with one another.

1. **Conformity** is the tendency to change one's thinking or behavior to coincide with a group standard.
2. **Normative social influence** refers to the pressure on individuals to conform to avoid rejection or gain social approval.

*Memory aid:* *Normative* means "based on a norm, or pattern, regarded as typical for a specific

- group." **Normative social influence** is the pressure groups exert on the individual to behave in ways acceptable to the group standard.
3. **Informational social influence** results when one is willing to accept others' opinions about reality.
  4. **Social facilitation** is stronger performance of simple or well-learned tasks that occurs when other people are present.
  5. **Social loafing** is the tendency for individual effort to be diminished when one is part of a group working toward a common goal.
  6. **Deindividuation** refers to the loss of self-restraint and self-awareness that sometimes occurs in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity.

*Memory aid:* As a prefix, *de-* indicates reversal or undoing. To *deindividuate* is to undo one's individuality.

7. **Group polarization** refers to the enhancement of a group's prevailing tendencies through discussion, which often has the effect of accentuating the group's differences from other groups.

*Memory aid:* To *polarize* is to "cause thinking to concentrate about two poles, or contrasting positions."

8. **Groupthink** refers to the unrealistic thought processes and decision making that occur within groups when the desire for group harmony overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives.

*Example:* The psychological tendencies of self-justification, conformity, and group polarization foster the development of the "team spirit" mentality known as **groupthink**.

1. **Prejudice** is an unjustifiable (and usually negative) attitude toward a group and its members.
2. A **stereotype** is a generalized (sometimes accurate but often overgeneralized) belief about a group of people.
3. **Discrimination** is unjustifiable negative behavior toward a group and its members.
4. The **just-world phenomenon** is a manifestation of the commonly held belief that good is rewarded and evil is punished. The logic is indisputable: "If I am rewarded, I must be good."
5. The **ingroup** refers to the people and groups with whom we share a common identity.
6. The **outgroup** refers to the people and groups that are excluded from our ingroup.

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7. The **ingroup bias** is the tendency to favor our own group.
8. The **scapegoat theory** proposes that prejudice provides an outlet for anger by finding someone to blame.
9. The **other-race effect** is our tendency to recall the faces of our own race more accurately than those of other races.
10. **Aggression** is any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy.
11. The **frustration-aggression principle** states that aggression is triggered when people become angry because their efforts to achieve a goal have been blocked.
12. A **social script** is a culturally specific model of how to behave in various situations.

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1. The **mere exposure effect** refers to the fact that repeated exposure to an unfamiliar stimulus increases our liking of it.
2. **Passionate love** refers to an aroused state of intense positive absorption in another person, especially at the beginning of a relationship.
3. **Companionate love** refers to a deep, enduring, affectionate attachment to those with whom we share our lives.
4. **Equity** refers to the condition in which there is mutual giving and receiving between the partners in a relationship.
5. **Self-disclosure** refers to a person's revealing intimate aspects of oneself to others.
6. **Altruism** is unselfish regard for the welfare of others.

7. The **bystander effect** is the tendency of a person to be less likely to offer help to someone if there are other people present.
8. **Social exchange theory** states that our social behavior revolves around exchanges, in which we try to minimize our costs and maximize our benefits.
9. The **reciprocity norm** is the expectation that people will help, not hurt, those who have helped them.
10. The **social-responsibility norm** is the expectation that people will help those who depend on them.
11. **Conflict** is a perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas between individuals or groups.
12. A **social trap** is a situation in which conflicting parties become caught in mutually destructive behaviors because each persists in pursuing its own self-interest.
13. **Mirror-image perceptions** are the negative, mutual views that conflicting people often hold about one another.
14. **Superordinate goals** are mutual goals that require the cooperation of individuals or groups otherwise in conflict.
15. **GRIT** (Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction) is a strategy of conflict resolution based on the defusing effect that conciliatory gestures can have on parties in conflict.

