

Group Behaviour

**Unit 5: Individual and
Group Behaviour**

What are groups?

Groups are collections of people who have *shared goals*, a degree of *interdependence*, and some amount of *communication*.

Groups serve one of two purposes:

1. **Task Functions** - activities directed towards getting a job done
2. **Social Functions** - activities directed towards satisfying the emotional needs of group members

How are groups held together?

Norms - unwritten rules that govern the behaviour and attitudes of members.

Ideology - for a group to be cohesive, member must share the same values, attitudes and goals.

Commitment - active participation and personal sacrifice contribute to group commitment..

Interactions within Groups

Social Facilitation vs. Social Inhibition

- An increase or decrease in performance when in front of a crowd.

Psychologist *Robert Zajonc (1965)* found that social facilitation tended to occur when performing simple or well-learned tasks, while social inhibition occurred when participants performed more complex tasks.

Activity #1

Step-up challenge...

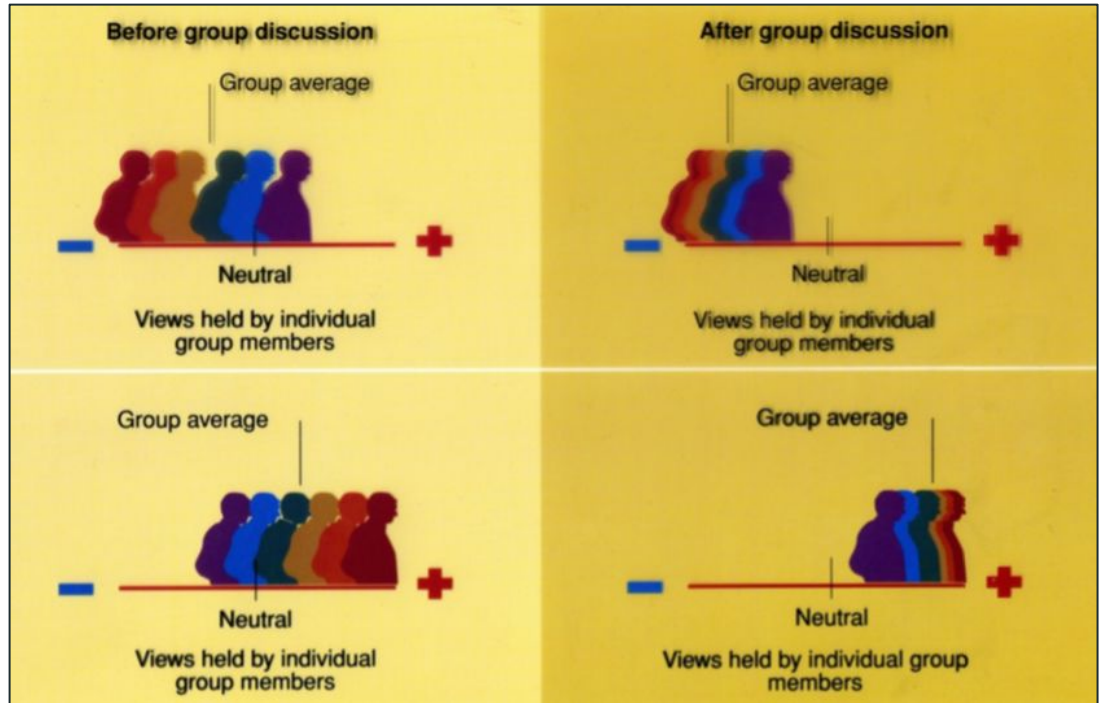
Activity #2

Time to do a little math...

Decision Making within Groups

Group Polarization: Theory stating that group discussion reinforces the majority's point of view and shifts members' opinions to a more extreme position.

ex) discussing the necessity of wearing a seatbelt



Decision Making within Groups

Groupthink: poor group decision making that occurs as a result of a group emphasizing unity over critical thinking.

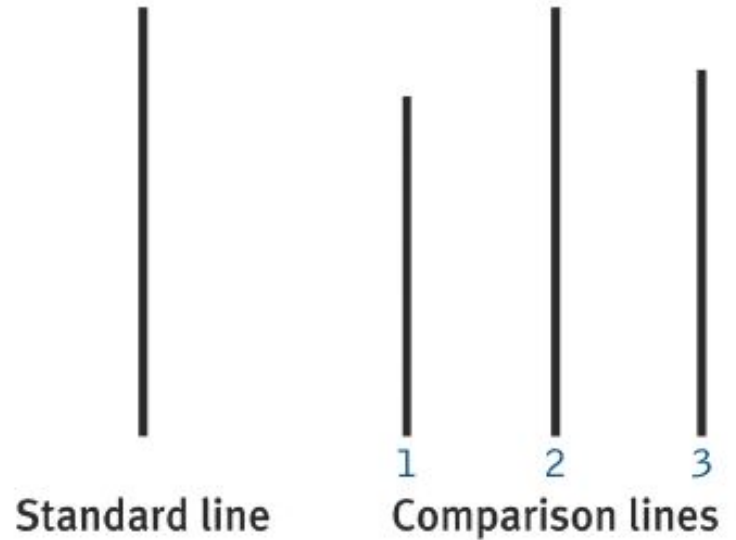
ex) Deciding to launch the space shuttle the *Challenger* in 1986 when weather clearly indicated otherwise. The space shuttle exploded just after launch.

Conformity

Conformity: acting in accord with group norms or customs.

ex) Asch (1952)

Tested the conformity of college students to the pressure of their peers when completing a simple task - like identifying the length of lines.



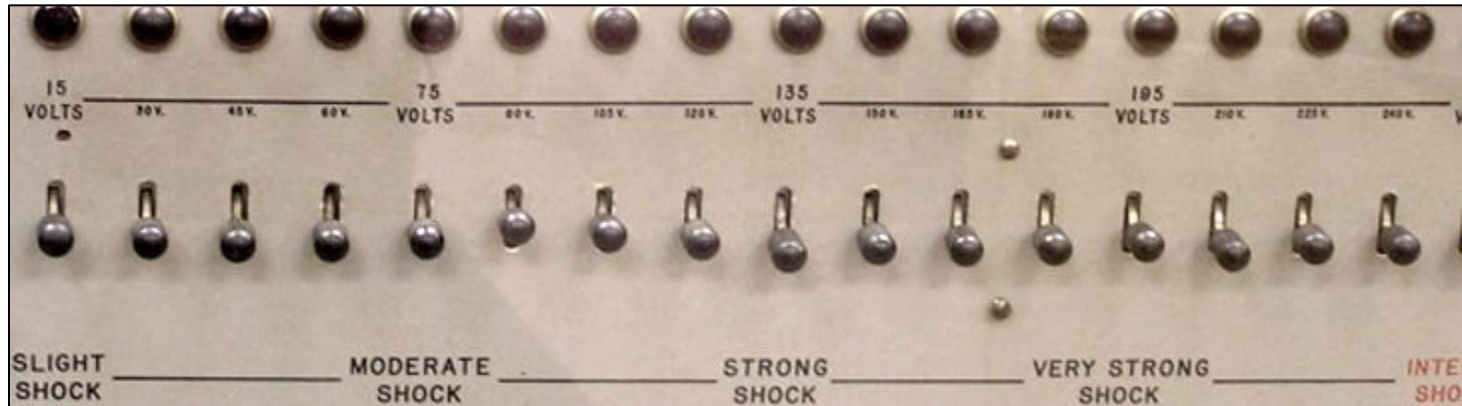
What Makes People Conform?

- Association with a group that emphasizes the role of groups over individuals
- The desire to be liked by other members in the group
- Low self-esteem
- Social shyness
- Lack of familiarity with a task
- Group size (increases as group grows to 5-6 people)
- Cultural influences

Obedience

Obedience: a change in attitude or behaviour brought about by social pressure to comply with people perceived as authorities.

ex) Milgram Experiment, Stanford Prison Experiment



What Makes People Obey?

- Person giving orders is nearby
- Orders come from someone of perceived authority
- Authority figure comes from prestige
- Cannot see others disobeying authority
- Can justify behaviours by assigning responsibility to authority
- People feel the behaviour is expected of them

Altruism - The Psychology of Helping

Altruism: helping another, often with a cost to oneself, for reasons other than the expectation of a reward.

ex) You are walking down a crowded street and suddenly hear a scuffle off to the side. You turn to see a man trying to rip a woman's purse from her arm. Everyone else just keeps walking by the scuffle. What do you do?

Diffusion of Responsibility

The presence of others lessens an individual's feelings of responsibility for his or her actions or failure to act.

ex) Latane and Darley (1968)

Bystander Effect: occurs when a person refrains from taking action because of the presence of others.

Activity #3

Think of as many uses as you can for an automobile tire.

Social Loafing

Social Loafing:

- The tendency to work less hard when sharing the workload with others.
- Occurs when you realize that individual contributions are not as apparent or easily measured in a group setting.

Deindividuation

Deindividuation: occurs when individuals behave irrationally when there is less chance of being personally identified.

ex) Nazi Germany, riots

Group social pressure can have a positive influence as well. How?