Social Psychology

IN THIS CHAPTER
Summary: If you could spare a few minutes for a close friend who asked for some help, would you? Of course you would. How other people, groups, and cultures shape our perceptions, attitudes, and behavior is the study of social psychology. It looks at how social and situational factors can influence us in both positive and negative ways. Research by social psychologists has raised important ethical questions because of the use of deception and manipulation to get as accurate results as possible. The American Psychological Association’s ethical guidelines have tightened the reins on researchers as a result of some of the more controversial, yet important findings in this field.

This chapter deals with how groups affect the individual, how we perceive others and others perceive us, and attitudes and attitude change.

Key Ideas
✪ Group dynamics
✪ Bystander intervention
✪ Attribution processes
✪ Interpersonal perception
✪ Organizational behavior
✪ Conformity, compliance, and obedience
✪ Attitudes and attitude change
✪ Aggression and antisocial behavior

Group Dynamics
Humans have a basic drive to form social bonds with others. A social group is two or more individuals sharing common goals and interests, interacting, and influencing each other’s behavior.
People occupying an elevator together are not a social group, but members of a girl scout troop would be because they have a pattern of socializing and working together on projects and common goals. **Norms** are implicit or explicit rules that apply to all members of the group and govern acceptable behavior and attitudes. Norms allow for smooth social interactions because they let people know how they are supposed to behave. Violating these norms can be grounds for exclusion from the group, so the desire to belong will cause some members to act very differently from when they are alone.

**Social Roles**

Certain social **roles** or social positions are also characteristic of group membership. In the **Zimbardo prison study**, Stanford students were arbitrarily assigned the roles of either prisoner or guard. As a consequence of their role assignment, individual behavior changed dramatically in a matter of hours. Although they were well aware that the “prison” was a simulated situation, by the sixth day the experiment had to be halted because of the severe stress inflicted by certain “sadistic” guards who took their roles too seriously. The entire experiment was videotaped and experts in the prison system were amazed at how realistic the simulated situation had become in such a short period of time. Those assigned the role of prisoner were cowering in their cells and one-third of those assigned the role of guard inflicted harsh punishment for the slightest infraction of the rules.

Working together in group situations either in the classroom or in the workplace is a common practice. Certain group members, either by assignment or natural inclination, assume leadership roles while others contribute to the group effort in other ways. All too often, a group member assumes the role of “slacker.” This tendency toward **social loafing** is a result of feeling less pressure to put forth effort when engaged in projects where group evaluations are being made. The “slackers” will leave the work to others who are more personally invested in doing a good job always. These same students or “slackers” tend to exert more effort if they believe they will be evaluated individually. Teachers and employers could ease group tensions by keeping this tendency in mind.

Another phenomenon that arises when people are in large groups is **deindividuation**. When we are in a large group, we tend to lose some self-awareness. We may engage in behavior that is unusual or uncharacteristic for us because of this group anonymity. This especially occurs when there is a heightened sense of arousal. Antisocial behavior from normally well-behaved individuals may occur in these situations. Let a pitcher hit a batter with a ball for a second time and watch the benches of both teams empty and a fistfight take place. This normative behavior reduces the conflict any one person feels toward acting in such a brutal way. None of the players give much thought to the repercussions. Similarly, when a blackout occurs, we have become accustomed to expect certain groups to riot and loot. Deindividuation can also lead to prosocial behavior, with an unusual outpouring of generosity among virtual strangers all caught up in an emotionally arousing situation.

**Effects of the Group**

Your performance on certain tasks is also affected by being in a group situation. **Social facilitation** refers to a tendency to perform well-learned tasks better in front of others. The well-rehearsed piano student may perform much better at the recital than he or she has all week during practice. This tendency for improved performance can be explained by the level of arousal and increased motivation that occurs in front of the audience. Studies have also shown that when first learning a new task, performing in front of others leads to the opposite tendency or **social impairment**. Someone just learning to play tennis may begin to hit the ball across the net much more consistently until a crowd gathers to watch, and then the player blows nearly every shot.
When we are in a group of like-minded people, group polarization might occur. The decisions reached by the group are often more extreme than those made by any single individual. Groupthink can be a disastrous consequence of group polarization. Irving Janis first discussed this phenomenon in relation to the ill-fated decision for the U.S. to invade Cuba in the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Cabinet members wanting to preserve the harmony of the newly formed group failed to raise objections or voice dissenting opinions, and actively engaged in self-censorship of any opposing ideas. Because everyone seemed to agree out loud, the group felt there was no way the invasion could be stopped, which led to a disastrous failure. A cure for the groupthink phenomenon might be to bring in outside opinions or have a single member of the group act as the devil’s advocate. By bringing in ideas contrary to the ones being mentioned by the rest of the group, more critical attention is paid to all aspects of the decision and the potential problems.

Minority Influence
The lone dissenter shows that minority influence can also have an effect. This is classically seen in the movie Twelve Angry Men. One member of the jury held unswervingly to his opinion that the defendant was innocent and finally convinced all of the other members to shift their opinion. Anxious to get on with their lives and overwhelmed by the circumstantial evidence provided by the prosecution, the other jurors had quickly concluded that the innocent man must be guilty. Initially, all the other jurors were inclined to agree, so as each supported conviction, members of the group became even more sure it must be right.

Bystander Intervention
The tragic murder of Kitty Genovese outside a New York apartment complex stimulated social psychological research on bystander intervention. Experimenters Bibb Latané and John Darley set up lab conditions in which participants, thinking either that they were alone or that they were with others, heard an emergency cry for help. Those who thought they were alone were much more likely to give assistance than those who thought others were present. The diffusion of responsibility phenomenon seems to reduce the sense of personal responsibility that any one person feels to help another in need and increases in proportion to the size of the group present. According to newspaper articles, a group of over 20 people watched Genovese being stabbed from their apartment windows. Not a single onlooker offered any assistance to her, and the attacker, who had initially run away, returned to murder her when no police arrived.

Spectators do not always take on passive roles of noninvolvement. There are also occasions when people emerge from a group and act in prosocial ways. In the AirFlorida crash into the Potomac river years ago, one “hero” emerged from the crowd of people watching. He jumped into the icy waters to help rescue survivors while an emergency rescue crew worked from a helicopter above. Theorists debate whether there is an inborn trait of altruism that prompts individuals to engage in acts of selfless sacrifice for others or whether these acts are a learned response for the reward of heroism or some other egoistic intent.

Attribution Processes

Social cognition refers to the way people gather, use, and interpret information about the social aspects of the world around them. Theorists believe that everyone tries to figure out why people act the way that they do. Attribution theory accounts for why people behave the way they do. You probably credit either internal characteristics such as personality and intelligence (dispositional attributions) or environmental factors (situational attributions) to explain why you or another person acted in a particular way.
Evaluating Behavior

When evaluating our own behavior, we tend to show a self-serving bias, which means we attribute our achievements and successes to personal stable causes (dispositional attributes) and our failures to situational factors. If our group gets a good grade on a project, we are inclined to overestimate our contributions to the project. Unfortunately, we don’t tend to be as generous when evaluating the behavior of others. The fundamental attribution error is our tendency to underestimate the impact of situational factors and overestimate the impact of dispositional (personal) factors when assessing why other people acted the way they did. We are more likely to believe another student is lazy or stupid when he/she makes a low grade on a test than to look for situational causes, like the recent death of a pet, to explain the grade. When judging others, we tend to make more personal stable attributions while, when judging ourselves, we tend to look at situational constraints, particularly when dealing with our foolish or negative actions. The actor–observer bias is the tendency to attribute our own behavior to situational causes and the behavior of others to personal causes. This can lead us to believe that people get what they deserve—the just-world phenomenon. As an extension of this concept, we tend to blame the victim of a crime such as rape.

Influencing Behavior

Our attitudes about others can also have a dramatic impact upon their behavior. Self-fulfilling prophecy is a tendency to let our preconceived expectations of others influence how we treat them and, thus, bring about the very behavior we expected to come true. In the famous Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobsen “bloomer study,” teachers told to expect certain students to get smart during the year actually treated those kids differently, and as a result, the expectation became the reality. Kids who were expected to do well did, but largely because they were treated differently by their teachers. The ethical dilemma in this experiment, however, concerns those students not expected to “bloom.” Many point to the differences in minority achievement in our school systems as a result of lowered expectations for these students. The lowered expectations of teachers for minority students leads to perhaps unintentional differential treatment, which then results in poorer performance. Poorer grades fulfill the expectations that they were less capable in the first place.

Interpersonal Perception

As we learned in the unit on cognition, we form concepts by organizing people and objects in categories or groups. Categorizing people leads to our perception of in-groups and out-groups. In-groups are groups of which we are members, and out-groups are groups to which we do not belong. We tend to favor our own groups, attributing more favorable qualities to “us” (in-group favoritism), and attributing more negative qualities to “them” (out-group derogation). Social psychologists have studied ethnic and racial tensions, searching for causes and potential solutions. If we can halt the more negative tendencies of conflict, and increase cooperation, we will lessen social problems.

Causes of Conflict

Prejudice is defined as an unjustified negative attitude an individual has for another, based solely on that person’s membership in a different racial or ethnic group. Discrimination occurs when those prejudiced attitudes result in unjustified behavior toward members of that group. Both often arise as a result of stereotypes, or mental schemas society attributes uncritically to these different groups. Most are unaware of how these damaging images can lead to both negative attitudes and treatment of others (like the self-fulfilling prophecy...
explained above). Stereotypes about Jews, Blacks, Italians, the rich, or cheerleaders lie dormant in our thought patterns and can easily lead to attitudes and behavior we would label prejudicial and discriminatory. **Scapegoat theory** offers one possible explanation for these unjustified attitudes and behaviors. A classic example of this is Hitler’s use of the Jews during Nazi Germany. When our self-worth is in doubt or in jeopardy, we become frustrated and tend to find others to blame. Hitler was able to whip up negative attitudes toward Jews (scapegoats) as a result of the frustration Germans felt about the humiliating defeat and reparations after World War I. **Ethnocentrism** is the basic belief that our culture is superior to others. This can easily lead to an in-group/out-group belief system based on limited information about others. **Out-group homogeneity** is a tendency to believe all members of another group are more similar than is true. Hitler increased German pride (ethnocentrism) by suggesting Aryan superiority and blaming all problems on the out-group—scapegoated Jews. Since all Jews were thought to be similar, atrocities during the Holocaust could temporarily be justified.

**Increasing Cooperation**

What solutions can social psychologists offer to turn group conflict into group cooperation and lessen tensions between different groups? **Contact theory** proposes that equal status contact between antagonistic groups should lower tension and increase harmony. Muzafer **Sherif** showed in his classic boys’ camp study that by creating a **superordinate goal** (an emergency situation that required joint cooperation of both groups to solve), conflicting groups could lessen their feelings of hostility and get rid of some of the stereotypes that lack of knowledge of the other group had created. Sherif’s camp consisted of 20 boys divided into two groups of 10. Each group bonded together for a week and engaged in competitive games against the other group. In-group solidarity developed among those in the separated groups and intergroup conflict arose from the competitive games between the groups. Fights between the groups outside of the competitions became increasingly more hostile. By creating the superordinate goal, the boys cooperated together and their prior prejudices disappeared.

Integration of public schools established by the Supreme Court in 1954 was based on this same premise. When Texas decided to end segregation of Mexican American children and integrate previously all-Anglo schools, ethnic tensions immediately arose. Elliott Aronson and Alex Gonzalez devised the **jigsaw classroom** based on contact theory. Elementary school teachers broke their classrooms into a number of diverse **expert groups** that all learned one part of a lesson. Next individuals from each expert group met with others in the **jigsaw group**. In order to learn the entire lesson, students were dependent upon each other. Their equal status was based on the “expert” knowledge of information not held by others. Stereotypes about inferior Mexican children disappeared as the self-concept and performance of these children improved and this experiment in group cooperation proved successful. Industrial-organizational psychologists can play roles in hiring, teambuilding, and providing a work/learning environment that helps people increase their productivity by applying social psychology concepts.

**Friendships**

In friendships, proximity is the primary determinant of who will initially become friends. Long distance romances can continue, but it is more likely that one of the pair will become attracted to someone he/she sees every day. The **mere exposure effect** explains some of this. The more we come into contact with someone, the more likely we are to like that person. Certainly **physical attractiveness** is also a major factor. Most consider the “beautiful” people
to be more socially skilled than less attractive others. Studies show that friends usually are rated very similarly in physical attractiveness. *Similarity* of interests and social background is also likely to determine who becomes friends. Another factor is utilitarian value or complementary needs. If you are less skilled at some activity, getting to know someone who can help you improve in that skill can form the basis of friendship.

**Conformity, Compliance, Obedience**

**Conformity**

Solomon Asch set up a laboratory experiment using deception and confederates to determine what factors were involved in individual decisions to conform with a group decision. Asch instructed subjects to choose which of three lines was the same length as the original line shown. Each subject was on a panel with other “subjects” (Asch confederates) who all initially gave the same wrong answers. Approximately 35% of the real subjects chose to give an obviously wrong but conforming choice. Asch found that the greatest amount of conformity by subjects came when the confederates all gave the same wrong answer. If even one confederate voiced a different judgment, however, the subject was released from the conformity effect. During the debriefing sessions, subjects attributed their conformity to confusion about the nature of the task or doubts about what they were perceiving. Because subjects selected the correct line when allowed to vote secretly, Asch concluded that *normative social influence* resulting from a desire to gain social approval was the cause of the subjects’ behavior rather than *informational social influences*.

**Compliance**

Individuals and groups are skilled in their ability to convince others to go along with their requests. The *foot-in-the-door* phenomenon is a tendency to comply with a large request if we have previously complied with a smaller request. John asks Mary for help with his physics problem set. If Mary agrees to help him she is much more likely to later agree to go out on a date with him. *Reciprocity* is a technique sometimes used by groups soliciting contributions. First a group member gives us a small gift like a flower or pamphlet and we politely listen to their pitch. Later when they ask for a small donation for their worthy cause, we may feel obligated to comply with that request because of the initial gift. The *low-ball technique* occurs when someone offers an initially cut-rate price, but then “ups the ante” with additional costs we assumed were included. We may decide to have expensive laser surgery from one doctor because his initial cost is so much lower than others, only to find out that required follow-up exams are not included. Finally, with the *door-in-the-face* technique, someone makes a very large request we are almost certain to refuse and follows this up with a smaller one later on. Out of guilt, we may comply with the later request.

**Obedience to Authority**

Stanley Milgram was interested in finding out under what circumstances ordinary people could be influenced to inflict harm upon others. Milgram advertised for participants to be involved in a test of how punishment influenced learning. He had a confederate and subject flip a coin to determine who would be the “teacher” and “learner.” The participant always became the “teacher” and was told to give increasingly stronger electrical shocks to learners when they gave an incorrect answer. “Teachers” did not know that “learners” were not actually shocked. Originally Milgram predicted that only 2% of the participants would actually go to the lethal shock level. At the conclusion of the study, 66% of the participants
actually had obeyed and gone to the upper limit. Why did this occur? “Teachers” were initially deceived about the experiment and were subjected to severe emotional distress. The highest obedience came when the experimenter was close to the “teacher” and the “learner” was further away and not visible. If the subject began to ask questions or show signs of quitting, the experimenter urged the subject to continue. Higher obedience came at Yale University than other settings, indicating that the prestige of the college and the legitimacy of the experimenter played a role in obedience. More than perhaps any other psychology experiment, the Milgram experiment led to the development of stringent ethical standards for psychological research. The powerful conclusion of this experiment is that even ordinary people who are not hostile can become agents of destruction when ordered to commit acts by someone they perceive as a legitimate authority figure.

**Attitudes and Attitude Change**

One of the more striking ways that groups can affect us is through the shaping of our attitudes—or learned predispositions to respond in a favorable or unfavorable way to a specific object, person, or event. Some of our attitudes are a product of belonging to a particular culture. Through the **mere exposure effect**, we unconsciously begin to adopt the beliefs of our parents, friends, and significant others. Attitudes are relatively stable, but they are not good predictors of our behavior. Many people claim to be honest citizens, yet cheat on their income taxes or spouses.

**Ways of Changing Attitudes**

Corporations’ and other enterprises’ persuasive techniques attempt to exploit what is known about attitudes to convince people to alter their attitudes in a specific direction. The **elaboration likelihood model** looks at two ways attitudes can be changed. Using a **central route of persuasion**, the speaker uses facts, figures, and other information to enable listeners to carefully process the information and think about their opinions. Opinions changed using the central route of persuasion tend to be more stable than those formed through the **peripheral route**. Frequently used by advertisers, superficial information is used to distract the audience to win favorable approval of their product, and to increase sales. Supermodels or well-known popular athletes are paired with the product and, through classical conditioning, people transfer their liking for the popular figure to the product. Attitudes changed through the peripheral route are less stable.

Other important issues related to changing attitudes include the communicator and the message. Communicators who are perceived as experts in their fields are especially effective. Others who are deeply admired by the audience and those that are seen as fairly attractive will also have a favorable impact. The message must be geared to the specific audience. If the audience has the same opinion as the speaker, facts are chosen that reinforce that position. However, to gain credibility with audiences whose opinions are not the same, a good speaker will begin with sound arguments supporting the audience’s initial point of view, but then conclude with even stronger evidence for the opposing side. Emotional appeals can be valuable as well in persuasion. A moderate level of fear and information about how to avoid the fearful situation seems to be the most effective combination. If appealing for sympathy and contributions to a charitable cause, moderation is also vitally important for success.

**Cognitive Dissonance**

**Cognitive dissonance** is yet another factor that causes individuals to change their attitudes. Dissonance is the tension that results from holding conflicting beliefs, attitudes, opinions,
or values or when our actions do not coincide with these cognitions. Leon Festinger thought that we are motivated to keep our cognitions consistent. He conducted an experiment in which students completed boring tasks and then were asked if they would lie and tell other students that the task was actually interesting. He paid some subjects $20 to lie and others only $1. When he asked these subjects 2 weeks later about the task, the subjects paid $20 still believed that the task was boring; however, the students paid only $1 revised their opinion and believed the task to be more interesting than they had at first believed. A difference between their beliefs about themselves being honest and their agreement to lie to others caused them sufficient dissonance to change their opinion. Apparently $1 was not enough justification for having acted the way they had.

Aggression/Antisocial Behavior

Aggression is defined as an act of delivering an aversive stimulus to an unwilling victim. Psychologists distinguish between two types of aggression—instrumental and hostile. Instrumental aggression has as its purpose the satisfaction of some goal behavior or benefit. A mother will “fight” her way through a crowd at Christmas time to get the last of a “must have” toy for her child. Hostile aggression, on the other hand, results when a person feels pain, anger, or frustration. The aggression is an attempt to strike out against something or someone seen as the cause of this discomfort. Road rage is a modern example of hostile aggression that may result from a fairly trivial action of another motorist. Freud and Lorenz believed aggression to be a natural human instinct. Other theorists, including cultural anthropologists, note a diversity of more passive and aggressive cultures worldwide, suggesting that aggression is a learned normative behavior. Researchers who have examined the influence of watching television violence conclude that it does lead children and teens to act more aggressively.
Directions: For each item, choose the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Mr. Moffatt overheard another teacher describe one of his students as lazy and unmotivated. Though Mr. Moffatt had not previously noted this tendency, he began to see exactly what the other teacher had noted. What might account for this phenomenon?
   (A) norms
   (B) deindividuation
   (C) social loafing
   (D) self-fulfilling prophecy
   (E) representativeness heuristic

2. Some difficult cuts needed to be made in the school board budget and everyone on the board knew that there had to be consensus and cooperation. Even though many members disagreed with certain proposals, each one met with unanimous support or defeat. To preserve cooperation, no one offered conflicting viewpoints. Which of the following concepts is best described by this example?
   (A) group polarization
   (B) fundamental attribution error
   (C) groupthink
   (D) role schema
   (E) reciprocity

3. A young woman was gunned down at a gas station. A busload of onlookers saw the entire event and no one did anything. The bus driver even stepped over the body to pay for his gas. What social psychological phenomenon best accounts for this behavior?
   (A) groupthink
   (B) altruism
   (C) social impairment
   (D) superordinate goals
   (E) diffusion of responsibility

4. You read in the newspaper that survivors in a plane accident in the Andes were discovered to have eaten other survivors during their 32-day ordeal. You will have committed the fundamental attribution error if you
   (A) attribute the behavior to dispositional (personal) factors
   (B) attribute the behavior to situational factors
   (C) think you would have done the same thing if you had been there
   (D) consider the behavior as a signal for the moral degradation of our society
   (E) decide never to fly in a plane again

5. Ethnocentrism is the belief that
   (A) ethnic foods are all good
   (B) human diversity is a positive force
   (C) one’s own culture is superior to others
   (D) other people are all pretty much alike in their opinions
   (E) cultural pluralism is a destructive goal that fosters conflict

6. The effect of one confederate selecting a different line from the others in the Asch conformity test was
   (A) continuing conformity by the participant to avoid looking bad to the others
   (B) the participant asking to vote privately on a separate piece of paper
   (C) a boost to the self-efficacy of the participant
   (D) to release the participant from the conformity effect
   (E) to cause the experimenter to release that confederate in the next trial period, thus ensuring continued conformity by the participant

7. Which of the following factors probably plays the least important role in explaining why children often share the same political and economic values as their parents?
   (A) exposure to mass media
   (B) operant conditioning
   (C) they have never questioned these beliefs and do not really understand them
   (D) modeling
   (E) mere exposure effect
8. Of the following, which would be a good example of a self-serving bias?
(A) Carlos, who feels that everyone should strive to help themselves as well as others
(B) Antoine, who says that he has bombed a test even though he always gets an A
(C) Mai, who works harder for teachers who compliment her on her efforts
(D) Lina, who overestimates the degree to which people agree with her opinions
(E) Betty, who believes that she works harder than others and is underappreciated

9. In a jigsaw classroom,
(A) students are dependent upon each other to learn all parts of a lesson
(B) learning is enhanced by simulations and lectures run by teachers
(C) competition encourages kids to achieve their full potential
(D) outcome research has shown limited success beyond the elementary school level
(E) individualism is encouraged to foster self-esteem

10. Although Graham has not yet met his future college roommate, he learned that the roommate is a football player. He is anxious and unhappy about sharing his room with a football player because he expects that his roommate will be a “party animal” who makes studying in his room difficult. Graham’s attitude can be classified as
(A) stereotype threat
(B) prejudice
(C) discrimination
(D) scapegoating
(E) fully justified

11. When asked what they would do if they could be totally invisible and there would be no recrimination, most people answered that they would commit an antisocial act. Which of the following social phenomena might best be able to explain this response?
(A) reciprocity
(B) group polarization
(C) social loafing
(D) deindividuation
(E) self-fulfilling prophecy

12. Which of the following social psychological experiments has been considered the most unethical and led to sweeping reforms in the APA ethical guidelines?
(A) Bandura’s Bobo study of TV aggression
(B) Asch’s line test for conformity
(C) Milgram’s obedience to authority study
(D) Sherif’s boys’ camp study
(E) Jane Eliot’s brown-eyed/blue-eyed study of prejudice

13. Donald believes himself to be a patriotic citizen, but he also does not believe in attacking countries that are technologically no match for the United States. If the United States was to go to war and Donald were to be drafted, dissonance theory predicts that
(A) he would have no conflict in going off to war
(B) he might have to change one of his attitudes to feel less tension
(C) justification of the military position would have to be internalized by him
(D) morally, he would have to become a conscientious objector
(E) morally, he must fight and defend his country

14. A charity sends you some greeting cards and you feel that you should send them a small contribution. This feeling comes from the persuasion technique called
(A) foot-in-the-door
(B) reciprocity
(C) door-in-the-face technique
(D) low-ball technique
(E) central route

15. Which of the following is not a key determinant of whether or not two people will become friends?
(A) similarity of interests and social backgrounds
(B) proximity
(C) physical attractiveness
(D) utilitarian value
(E) opposing views on key social issues
1. D—Self-fulfilling prophecy studies show there is a tendency to elicit behaviors from others that conform to our individual expectations. After hearing the other teacher’s attribution of the student behavior, Mr. Moffatt’s behavior toward the student probably changed even unintentionally, which affected the student’s behavior. (Note: this is the result of the incident—not its cause.)

2. C—Groupthink is a tendency to self-censor in group decision to preserve the harmony of the group.

3. E—Diffusion of responsibility is the bystander rule that, as the size of the group increases, the assumption of responsibility of any group member decreases.

4. A—When judging the behavior of others, people often make the fundamental attribution error of overemphasizing personal or dispositional factors and underestimating situational factors.

5. C—Ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own group—ethnic, political, religious, etc.—is superior to others.

6. D—Although one-third of the participants conformed some of the time in the Asch conformity trials, when only one of the confederates selected a different line from the others, the participant was released from the conformity effect.

7. A—Children tend to adopt the attitudes of their parents through all of the other methods, but exposure to mass media offers them a diverse set of opinions, which may cause them to carefully reconsider some of their parents’ basic beliefs.

8. E—A self-serving bias causes us to overestimate the contribution we make to successful group projects, thereby preserving our feelings of self-worth and efficacy.

9. A—The jigsaw classroom was an effort to increase cooperation between diverse groups and build esteem and achievement of minority students. The original expert groups learn one part of a lesson. The students then regroup into jigsaw groups and are dependent upon others to learn the complete lesson. Diverse groups working cooperatively together come into contact with each other and lose some of their prejudiced beliefs.

10. B—Prejudice is an unjustified attitude, while discrimination is the unjustified behavior that might result from holding these attitudes.

11. D—In studies on deindividuation, anonymity of group members often excuses them to act in antisocial ways. The wording of this question often leads people to consider personal gain through criminal acts since they “won’t face punishment.”

12. C—Milgram’s “shocking” experiment put individuals under extreme psychological distress and, even though 98% stated they were glad to have participated in the experiment, a similar experiment would not be allowed today because of the ethical problems.

13. B—Cognitive dissonance research states that in order to reduce tension created by opposing actions and values or beliefs, a person will modify either the actions or the beliefs to create cognitive consistency.

14. B—Reciprocity is the compliance technique often used by groups to get others to donate money out of obligation since the group has given them a small gift first.

15. E—Letters A–D are all instrumental factors in determining who will become friends, but opposing views on social issues may cause initial conflict and a lesser tendency for people to be motivated to form a friendship.
Rapid Review

Social psychology—study of how groups influence individuals’ attitudes and behavior.

Group dynamics:

- **Social group**—two or more people sharing common goals and interests interact and influence behavior of the other(s).
- **Norms**—rules either implicit or explicit that govern the behavior of group members.
- **In-groups**—groups to which we belong and tend to favor.
- **Out-group**—groups to which we do not belong, we tend to attribute negative qualities to out-groups.
- **Roles**—ascribed social positions and defined behavior expectations in groups.
- **Social loafing**—the tendency of individuals to put less effort into group projects than when individually accountable.
- **Deindividuation**—loss of self-awareness and self-restraint in situations that promote high arousal and anonymity in groups.
- **Social facilitation**—improved performance of well-learned tasks in front of others.
- **Group polarization**—like-minded people share ideas resulting in a more extreme position for every individual.
- **Groupthink**—individuals self-censor beliefs to preserve harmony in the group.
- **Bystander intervention**—the active involvement of a person in a situation that appears to require his/her aid.
- **Diffusion of responsibility**—an explanation of the failure of bystander intervention stating that when several bystanders are present, no one person assumes responsibility for helping.
- **Altruism**—the selfless concern of one individual for the welfare of another.

Attributions:

- **Social cognition**—the way people gather, use, and interpret information about social world.
- **Attribution theory**—a way to understand how people explain others’ behaviors.
- **Dispositional factors**—individual personality characteristics that affect a person’s behavior.
- **Situational factors**—environmental stimuli that affect a person’s behavior.
- **Fundamental attribution error**—tendency when judging others’ behaviors to overestimate the role of personal factors and underestimate situational factors.
- **Self-serving bias**—to take personal credit for our own achievements and blame our failures on situational factors.
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy**—a tendency to let preconceived expectations influence one’s behavior, thus evoking those very expectations.
- **Actor–observer bias**—tendency to attribute our behaviors to situational factors and others’ behaviors to dispositional factors.

Interpersonal perception:

- **Stereotype**—scheme used to quickly judge others; can be an overgeneralized belief about the characteristics of members of a particular group.
- **Prejudice**—unjustified attitudes we hold about others.
Discrimination—unjustified action against an individual or group.

Scapegoat theory—attributes prejudice to frustration; when own self-worth is in doubt or in jeopardy, we find others to blame.

Ethnocentrism—belief that our culture or social group is superior to others.

Just-world phenomenon—tendency to believe in fairness, that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get.

Out-group homogeneity—belief that members of another group are more similar in their attitudes than they actually are.

Contact theory—if members of two opposing groups are brought together in an emergency situation, group cooperation will reduce prejudicial thinking.

Jigsaw classroom—expert groups of diverse backgrounds learn one part of a lesson and share information in jigsaw groups. Students are dependent upon others; self-esteem and achievement of “poorer” students improve; former stereotypes are diminished. Friendships are based on proximity, similarity, reciprocal liking, and utilitarian value.

Conformity, compliance, and obedience:

Conformity—the adoption of attitudes and behaviors shared by a particular group of people.

Compliance—engaging in a particular behavior at another person’s request.

Foot-in-the-door—agreement to smaller request leads to agreement with larger request later.

Reciprocity—small gift makes others feel obligation to agree to later request.

Attitudes and change:

Attitudes—learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to certain people, objects, or events.

Mere exposure effect—increased liking for a person or another stimulus resulting from repeated presentation (exposure).

Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)—attitudinal change through two routes: central or peripheral.

Central route of persuasion—relatively stable change by carefully scrutinizing facts, statistics, and other information.

Peripheral route of persuasion—pairs superficial positive factors (supermodels and celebrities) with an argument leading to less stable change in attitudes. Communicators should be experts, likable, admired, and good-looking. Messages should be geared to the audience—one-sided if in agreement, two-sided if audience differs.

Informational social influence—accepting others’ opinions about reality, especially in conditions of uncertainty.

Normative social influence—going along with the decisions of a group in order to gain its social approval.
**Aggression**—the intention to do harm to others.

- **Instrumental aggression**—to achieve some goal.
- **Hostile aggression**—to inflict pain upon someone else.

Though Freud and Lorenz believed aggression is innate, the fact that different cultures display differing levels of aggression supports the belief that aggression is learned.

### Table 18.1 Overview of Social Psychological Experiments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimenter(s)</th>
<th>Brief Description of Experiment</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Key Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milgram</td>
<td>Teacher to apply electric shocks when learner does not answer questions correctly</td>
<td>66% of subjects delivered what they thought to be a maximum of 450 volts</td>
<td>Obedience to Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asch</td>
<td>Select the line in a triad that matches the stimulus line</td>
<td>Subjects conformed 1/3 of the time when the confederates voted unanimously</td>
<td>Conformity, Normative Influence, Social Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festinger</td>
<td>Gave two different groups either $1 or $20 to lie about a boring task to future subjects</td>
<td>$1 group changed their perception of the task from boring to interesting</td>
<td>Cognitive Dissonance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latané and Darley</td>
<td>Emergency situation created to test people’s helping behavior</td>
<td>People help when they think they are alone, but the larger the group present, the less likely anyone is to act</td>
<td>Diffusion of Responsibility, Bystander Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherif</td>
<td>Boys’ camp study where an emergency situation required group cooperation</td>
<td>Two previously competitive groups worked together to solve problem</td>
<td>Contact Theory, Superordinate Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aronson and Gonzales</td>
<td>Devised a teaching strategy making Anglo and Hispanic kids interdependent upon each other</td>
<td>Raised self-efficacy of minority children and reduced prejudice on part of Anglo children</td>
<td>Jigsaw Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosenthal and Jacobsen</td>
<td>Teachers were told prior to school year to expect certain kids to “bloom” academically during the year</td>
<td>Teacher expectations did come true—bloomers did prove more successful than non-bloomers</td>
<td>Self-fulfilling Prophecy</td>
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<td>Zimbardo</td>
<td>Simulate a prison setting at Stanford U and assign roles of “prisoners” and “guards” to students</td>
<td>Simulation cut off in 6 days because of sadistic guards and ethical violations</td>
<td>Social Roles</td>
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<td>Triplett</td>
<td>Looked at the effect of an audience when learners had learned task well or were just beginning to learn it</td>
<td>Well-learned tasks were enhanced by audience and newly learned tasks were impaired when audience was present</td>
<td>Social Facilitation, Social Impairment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>