

Social Psychology

Altruism: Helping Others



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Altruism.ppt

1



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2

What We Will Cover in This Section

- What helping behavior is.
- When people help.
- Characteristics of helpers.
- Characteristics of people who are helped.
- Helping and social norms.



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3

Prosocial Behavior

Actions that benefit others but do not have obvious benefits for the person carrying them out.

- Help.
- No obvious reward.
- May involve risk.

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Darley & Latane

Number in Group

	One	Two	Five
Percent Helping	85	62	31
Lag Time (Seconds)	52	93	166

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Elements of Helping



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Diffusion of Responsibility

Decrease in the individual sense of responsibility for taking action in an emergency because of the presence of other bystanders. The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely each person is to act.

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7

Bystander Effect

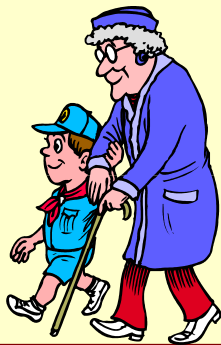
As the number of bystanders increases, the likelihood of helping decreases and more time passes before help occurs.

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8

Five Choice Points in Helping



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9

Choice Point #1

The bystander must perceive that there is an emergency.

- The unaware person does not act.

1/19/2003 10

Choice Point #2

The bystander must interpret the situation as being an emergency.

PLURALISTIC IGNORANCE

Bystanders' misinterpretation of an event caused by reliance on what others do or say even though no one is sure what is happening. All hold back.

1/19/2003 11

Choice Point #3

ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT.

- Have to know what to do.
- Liability?

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Choice Point #4

Deciding how to help.

- Get others?
- Act on own?
- What are the costs?

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Choice Point #5

Actually helping.

- Does not guarantee that you will be effective.

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Who Helps?

ALTRUISM

Unselfish concern for the welfare of others.

EGOISM

Exclusive concern for one's own welfare.

1/19/2003 15

Altruistic Personality

- Empathetic
- Belief in a Just World
- Sense of Social Responsibility
- Internal Locus of Control
- Low Egocentricism

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Social Models

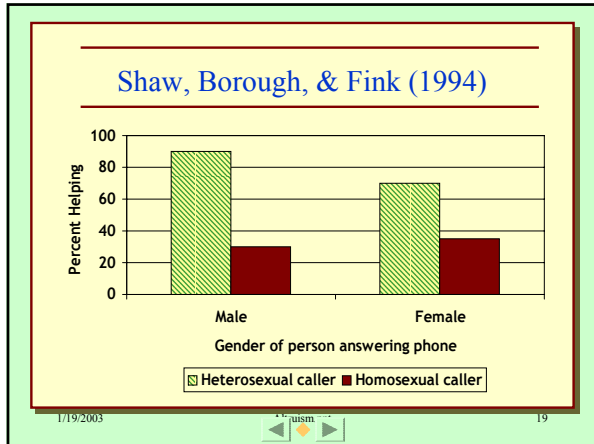
- Seeing others help promotes helping.
- Priming

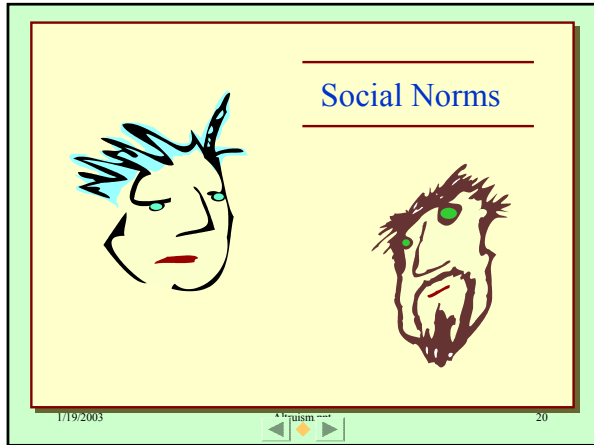
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Victim Characteristics

- **ATTRIBUTION of RESPONSIBILITY**
- **LIKED**

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Social Responsibility

People should respond to the reasonable needs of others and that all people have a societal obligation to help those in need.

1/19/2003 21

Reciprocity

We should help others because they have helped us in the past or may help us in the future.

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Personal Norms

A personal sense of obligation to help a specific person in a specific situation.

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Norm of Noninvolvement

Standard of behavior that leads people to avoid becoming emotionally or physically involved with others.

1/19/2003 24

