

How do groups affect behaviour

A sociological point of view

Why do we follow the beliefs of others?

GROUP = SOCIAL GROUP

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ_qXmxdgGM

Making Connections

- ▶ What groups are you involved with?
- ▶ How do you interact with these groups?
- ▶ Do you care more about certain groups in your life than others? Why?
- ▶ Do they shape your behaviours or attitudes?
How do they accomplish this?

Which characteristics pertain to a social group?

- ▶ Consist of two or more people
- ▶ They rarely interact
- ▶ They have a shared identity or something in common
- ▶ They dramatically differ in their values, behaviours, and goals
- ▶ Have a social structure where there is a leader and followers
- ▶ Allow group consensus to be met, meaning they share certain values, behaviours, and goals
- ▶ They have little in common
- ▶ They interact regularly
- ▶ They influence each other

Types of Groups

- ▶ **Primary Group** – small, interdependent, emotionally close group
 - ▶ Warm, supportive personal relationships
 - ▶ People are truly interested in each other's personalities, feelings, successes, and failures
- ▶ **Secondary Group** – larger, more impersonal group whose main focus is that everyone contributes to the group's goal. This means that there is less dependence and interest from group members.
 - ▶ More impersonal and formal
 - ▶ You can be in these groups and other members may not know anything about you
 - ▶ You are valued for your contributions, not your personality

PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY

- ▶ Every Friday night I get together with my friends and play video games.
- ▶ PRIMARY
- ▶ I just found out that I'm the lead in the school play!
- ▶ SECONDARY
- ▶ On the weekends, I volunteer at an animal shelter. A small team of us walk and care for the animals.
- ▶ SECONDARY

PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY

- ▶ Can members of secondary groups become members of your primary groups?
 - ▶ Absolutely, you could play on a sports team with someone who you have a lot in common with, then begin to hang out with each other after school or on the weekends. This relationship could develop into a friendship.
- ▶ PRIMARY GROUPS tend to be more influential
 - ▶ We model ourselves after the members of primary groups to gain security and acceptance. Can have negative consequences.
 - ▶ Secondary groups are not as influential because they tend to be goal-oriented and downplay personal relationships.

How do Groups Affect Behaviour?

- ▶ Have you done something just to be accepted? Even if you didn't want to?
- ▶ We conform to group expectations just to be accepted and fit in – this is normal.
- ▶ Have you ever had a disagreement with your parents about your clothes, your music, or how you spend your leisure time?
- ▶ Often the expectations of one group conflicts with the expectations of another group. What your friends expect can be totally different from what your family expects. It is your decision which expectations you want to meet.

How do Groups Affect Behaviour?

- ▶ THREE FACTORS THAT SHAPE US:
- ▶ Social Roles
- ▶ Group Norms
- ▶ Sanctions
- ▶ These three factors are used to shape behaviour and ensure conformity within groups.

#1 - SOCIAL ROLES

- ▶ WE ALL HAVE ROLES: son, brother, father, daughter, sister, mother, partner, student, worker . . . these roles change over time.
- ▶ Growing up, we learn what is expected of us. Our parents, teachers, and classmates tell us how to act through the process of socialization.
- ▶ Group pressure is usually what causes us to conform. In more formal settings such as school, the rules may be written down in a Code of Conduct.

#2 - GROUP NORMS

- ▶ WE ALL FOLLOW CERTAIN NORMS: arrive on time for class, tip a waiter at a restaurant, wait in line for your turn.
- ▶ These “norms” are guidelines for our behaviour.
- ▶ Norms can be rooted in MORAL VIEWS which should never be broken (eg. – abuse) or they can be FOLKWAYS which are everyday habits such as manners, personal appearance, or how we interact with others.

#3 - SANCTIONS

- ▶ Punishments and rewards are used to ensure people follow the rules or guidelines expected by society or a group – these are known as sanctions.
- ▶ They can be either positive or negative, informal, or formal. Informal sanctions include a smile or a frown, sarcasm, disapproval, compliments, or praise.
- ▶ Being accepted or rejected is often enough to ensure conformity in groups. Formal sanctions are considered rules, regulations, and laws. They range from scholarships to fines and imprisonment.

Factors Affecting Conformity

- ▶ What factors or conditions make it easier for people to conform and which make it more difficult?
- ▶ Four Factors that Affect Conformity:
 - ▶ 1) Group Unanimity
 - ▶ 2) Group Attractiveness
 - ▶ 3) Nature of the Task
 - ▶ 4) Public vs. Private Response

#1 - Group Unanimity

- ▶ If everyone in the group agrees about something, the pressure to conform is so great, that it is hard to disagree. Most often member with an opposing viewpoint will just conform and agree with the rest of the group.

#2 - Group Attractiveness

- ▶ If you really want to be a part of the group, you will be more likely to conform to the group's expectations. You will also be more likely to conform if you want to advance your status in the group.
- ▶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e3aWouUoI8>

#3 - Nature of the Task

- ▶ We are less likely to conform if we feel strongly about something or we are competent about the task at hand. If, however, the task is vague or there are no clear answers we are more likely to conform to the group's response

#4 - Public vs. Private Response

- ▶ We are more likely to conform to the norm when we are expressing our opinions or views in front of a group as opposed to when we are discussing our views in private. Eg. - class discussion vs. diary