Chapter 9

Group Processes:
Influence in Social Groups
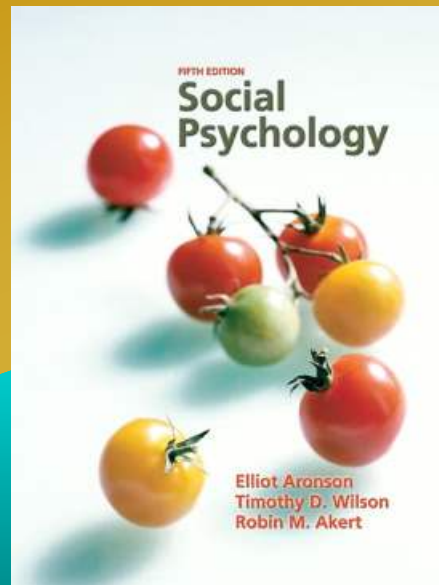
PowerPoint Presentation

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Chapter Outline

I. What Is a Group?

What Is a Group?

A *group* is two or more people who interact with each other and are interdependent, in the sense that their needs and goals cause them to influence each other.

What Is a Group?

- ## Why Do People Join Groups?

  Group membership offers many benefits including offering an important source of information, resolving ambiguity, helping us form an identity, and establishing social norms and rules.

What Is a Group?

- **The Composition of Groups**

  Members of a group tend to be similar in age, gender, beliefs, and opinions. This is because people are attracted to similar others and because groups operate in ways that encourage similarity among members.

What Is a Group?

- **The Composition of Groups**

  Influential aspects of groups include social norms, *social roles,* which are shared expectations about how particular people in the group are supposed to behave, gender roles, and *group cohesiveness* or the qualities of a group that bind members together and promote liking between them.

What Is a Group?

- ## The Composition of Groups
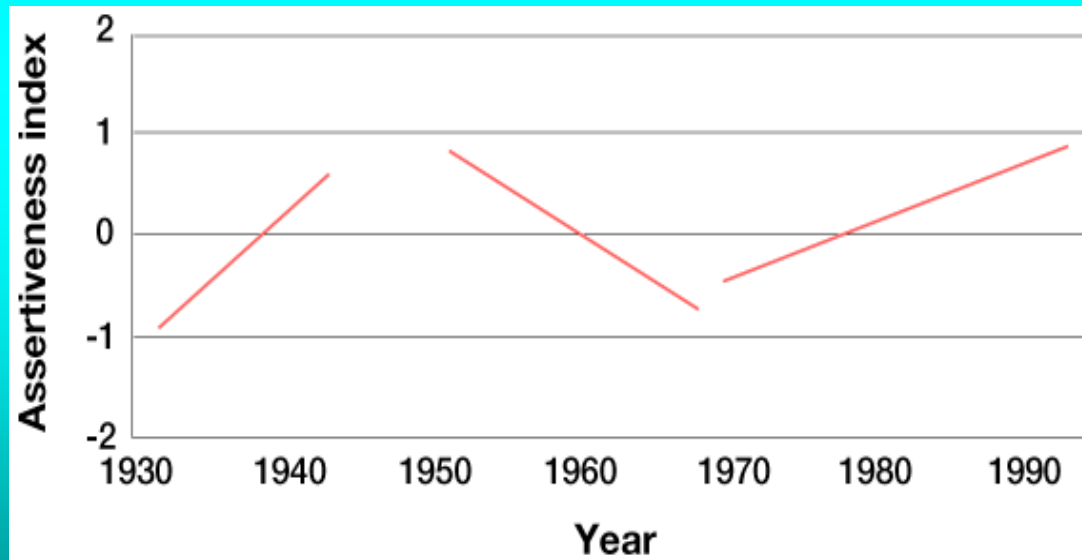
Chapter Outline

II. Groups and Individuals' Behavior

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us**

    Social facilitation **is the tendency for people to do better on simple tasks and worse on complex tasks when they are in the presence of others and their individual performance can be evaluated.**

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us**

   Zajonc and colleagues (1969) did a study with cockroaches that demonstrated that roaches run a simple maze faster when they are in the presence of an audience of other roaches than when they are alone.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- ## Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us

  Whether a task is simple versus difficult affects our performance in the presence of others. In the roach experiment, the roaches ran a complex maze more slowly in the presence of others than they did alone. Many other studies show that simple tasks are performed more quickly in the presence of others but complex tasks are performed more slowly.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us**

  Zajonc hypothesized that the presence of others increases physiological arousal which facilitates dominant, well-learned responses, but inhibits performance on more difficult tasks.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us**

    Three theories try to explain why the presence of others leads to arousal:

    The presence of others makes us more alert.

    The presence of others makes us concerned about what others think of us.

    The presence of others distracts us.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us**

  In social facilitation research, the activities studied are ones where people are performing individually, and these individual efforts are easily observed.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us**

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us**
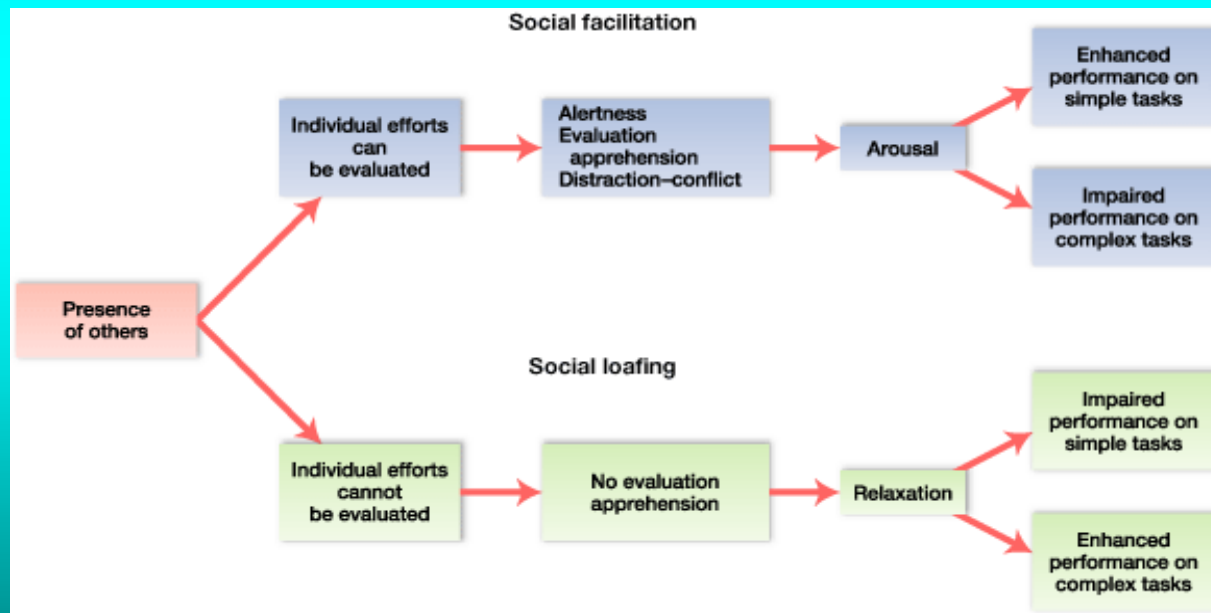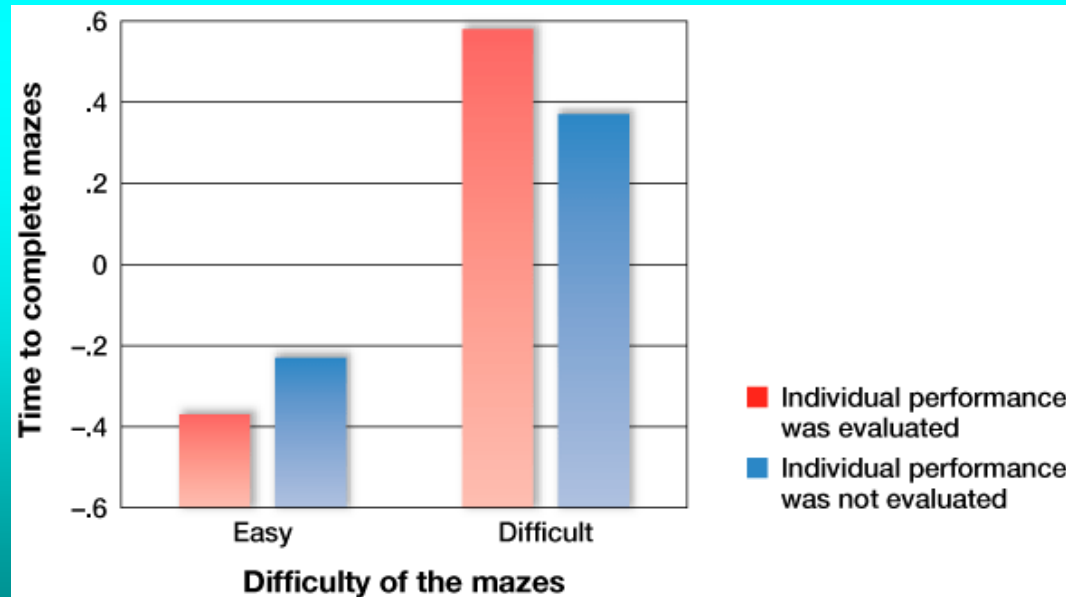
Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us**

In other social situations, being around others means that our individual efforts are less easily observed and merge to be part of the group. In these situations, *social loafing* often occurs. The relaxation that results impairs performance on simple tasks but enhances performance on complex ones.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us**

  Latané and others have found that social loafing disappears if each person's performance can be individually evaluated.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Gender and Cultural Differences in Social Loafing: Who Slacks Off the Most?**

  Karau and Williams (1993) found that the tendency to loaf is stronger in men than in women. Similarly, the tendency to loaf is stronger in Western than in Asian cultures.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

When performing a simple task, a little evaluation apprehension can improve performance. However, if the task is complex, being evaluated can impair people's performance.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd**

  Deindividuation **is the loosening of normal constraints on behavior when people are in a crowd, leading to an increase in impulsive and deviant acts.**

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd**

   Mullen (1986) examined news reports of lynchings in the U.S. from 1899-1946 and found that the larger the mob, the greater the savagery with which they killed their victims.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd**

   There are two factors that are important to deindividuation. One is that deindividuation makes people feel less accountable for their actions. Another factor is that deindividuation increases obedience to group norms.

Groups and Individuals' Behavior

- **Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd**

  An important qualification is that not all impulsive behavior is negative or antisocial. Deindividuation may result in prosocial or antisocial behavior, depending on what the norm of the group is.

Chapter Outline

III. Group Decisions: Are Two (or More) Heads Better than One?

Group Decisions

Most of us assume that two (or more) heads perform better than one. Sometimes, though, two or more heads do not perform better than one, or at least no better than two heads working alone.

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

  Process loss is any aspect of group interaction that inhibits good problem solving.

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

  Process loss may result because group members fail to share unique information. This type of process loss can be prevented if people learn who is responsible for what kinds of information.

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

  Transactive memory, **the combined memory of two people that is more efficient than the memory of either individual, can help groups avoid process loss.**

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**
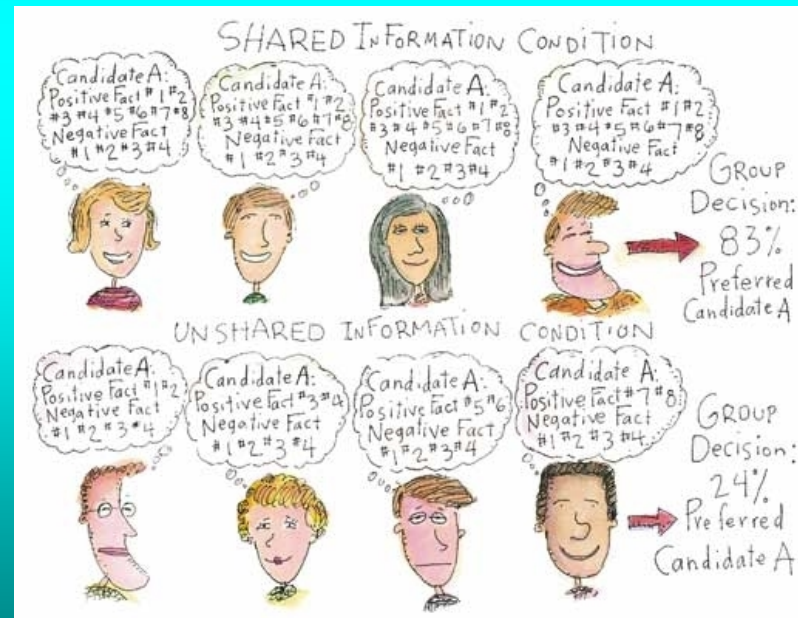
Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

Another example of process loss is *groupthink*, when group cohesiveness is more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner. Groupthink can lead to defective decision making.
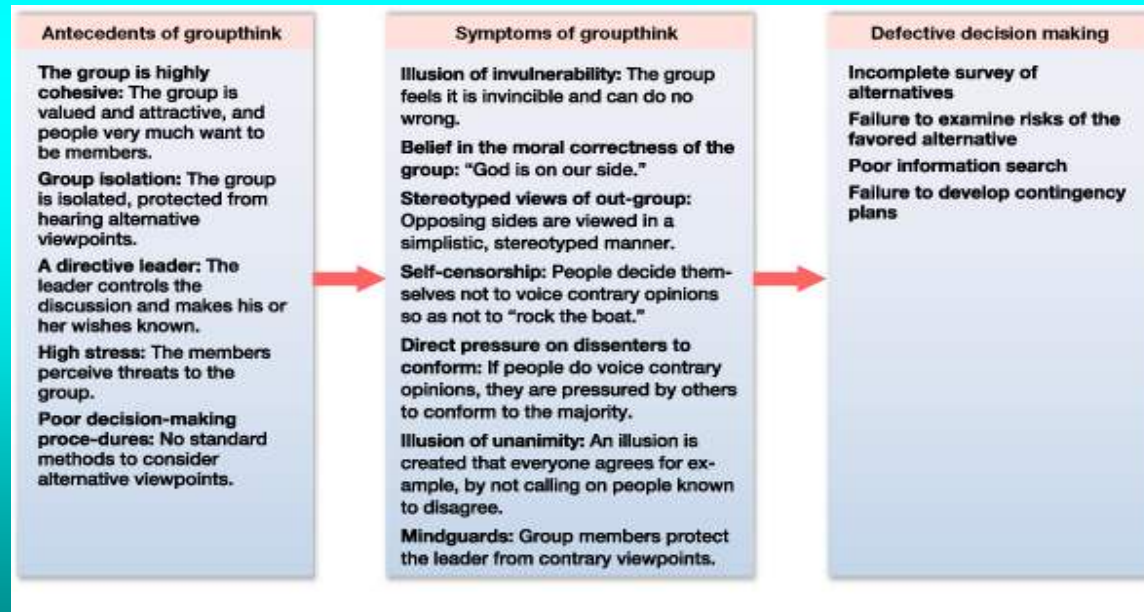
Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

Antecedents of groupthink

The group is highly cohesive: The group is valued and attractive, and people very much want to be members.

Group isolation: The group is isolated, protected from hearing alternative viewpoints.

A directive leader: The leader controls the discussion and makes his or her wishes known.

High stress: The members perceive threats to the group.

Poor decision-making proce-dures: No standard methods to consider alternative viewpoints.

Symptoms of groupthink

Illusion of invulnerability: The group feels it is invincible and can do no wrong.

Belief in the moral correctness of the group: "God is on our side."

Stereotyped views of out-group: Opposing sides are viewed in a simplistic, stereotyped manner.

Self-censorship: People decide them-selves not to voice contrary opinions so as not to "rock the boat."

Direct pressure on dissenters to conform: If people do voice contrary opinions, they are pressured by others to conform to the majority.

Illusion of unanimity: An illusion is created that everyone agrees for ex-ample, by not calling on people known to disagree.

Mindguards: Group members protect the leader from contrary viewpoints.

Defective decision making

Incomplete survey of alternatives

Failure to examine risks of the favored alternative

Poor information search

Failure to develop contingency plans

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

  Antecedents of groupthink include a highly cohesive group, group isolation, and a directive leader. Symptoms of groupthink include the illusion of invulnerability, self-censorship, and the illusion of unanimity.

Group Decisions

- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving**

  To avoid groupthink, a leader should be impartial, outside opinions should be invited, the group should be divided into subgroups, and the members should be encouraged to speak openly and/or privately about their concerns.