



Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Lesson: 5 - (1/4)

Title: **Formation**

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Lesson 5 Outline

- **Joining Groups**
 - *Personality*
 - *Men, Women, and Groups*
 - *Social Motivation*
 - *Anxiety and Attachment*
 - *Experience and Preference*

- **Affiliation**
 - *Social Comparison*
 - *Downward (and Upward) Social Comparison*
 - *Social Support*
 - *Companionship*

- **Attraction**
 - *Principles of Attraction*
 - *The Economics of Membership*

Groups form through a combination of personal, situational, and interpersonal processes. Formation depends on the members themselves; some people are more likely than others to join together, and when they do a group is born. Groups also come into existence when the press of environmental circumstances pushes people together rather than keeping them apart. They also spring up, sometimes unexpectedly, when people discover that they like one another, and this attraction provides the foundation for the development of interpersonal bonds.





Joining Groups

Personality

Big Five theory

A conceptual model of the primary dimensions that underlie individual differences in personality; the five dimensions are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience; different theorists sometimes use different labels.

Extraversion

The degree to which an individual tends to seek out social contacts. Introverts are oriented primarily toward inner perceptions and judgments of concepts and ideas, whereas extraverts are oriented primarily toward social experiences.

Researchers have studied hundreds of personality traits, but five of the most central ones are described in the aptly named Big Five theory of personality. This theory recognizes that people differ from each other in many ways, but it assumes that the five dimensions summarized —extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness—describe the most essential ways in which people vary (Costa & McCrae, 1988).

The first of these five dimensions, extraversion, is a particularly influential determinant of group behavior (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998).

Joining Groups

Personality

First identified by the psychologist Carl Jung (1924), extraversion is the tendency to move toward people or away from people.



- Those on the introversion end of this personality dimension, **the introverts, tend to be withdrawn, quiet, reclusive, and shy**. Their opposites, **the extraverts, are sociable, outgoing, gregarious, and talkative**. Extraverts are likely to prefer the company of others, particularly in pleasant and enjoyable situations (Lucas & Diener, 2001).
- ***Different cultures imbue introversion and extraversion with unique, culture-specific meaning, but people all over the world spontaneously appraise their own and others' social tendencies*** (Yang & Bond, 1990).
- Extraverts may seek out groups because such interactions are stimulating, **and extraverts appreciate stimulating experiences more than introverts** do (Eysenck, 1990).
- ***Extraverts' affinity for being part of a group may also be based on assertiveness***, for they tend to be influential group members rather than quiet followers. Groups may also seek out extraverts rather than introverts.
- **Some qualities, like intelligence, morality, and friendliness, are difficult to judge during initial encounters, but observers are particularly good at detecting extraversion in others** (Albright, Kenny, & Malloy, 1988).
- ***If a group is looking for people who will be sociable and connect easily with others, it might recruit extraverts more actively than introverts*** (Judge & Cable, 1997).

Joining Groups

Personality

Relationality

The degree to which one's values, attitudes, and outlooks emphasize, and facilitate establishing and maintaining, connections to others.

People vary in their attentiveness to their relations with other people. Unlike those who view themselves as lone individuals interacting with other autonomous individuals, **people who are higher in relationality**— that is, their values, attitudes, and outlooks emphasize and facilitate establishing and maintaining connections to **others**—**are more likely to seek out and more highly prize group memberships.**

- **Such individuals more frequently play team sports such as volleyball or soccer, and they do so because they prefer exercising with other people rather than alone. They seek jobs that will enhance the quality of their relationships with other people, and their satisfaction with their work depends on the quality of their relationships with their coworkers** (Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986).
- In terms of the big five personality traits, **relationality is associated with both extraversion and agreeableness** (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000).

Joining Groups

Gender

Studies of relationality frequently find the sexes differ in their emphasis on connecting interpersonally with other people: women are more relational than men (e.g., Gore & Cross, 2006).

Are men or are women the more social sex?

Studies find that men and women differ in their tendency to join groups, but the differences are far from clear.

- **Women tend to be somewhat more extraverted** than men, particularly on facets of the trait concerned with interpersonal warmth and gregariousness (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001).
- **Women remember more details about their relationships** than do men, and they more accurately recount events that occurred in their social networks (Ross & Holmberg, 1992; Taylor et al., 2000).
- **Women report that their relationships are more important to them**—that they feel pride, for example, when someone close to them succeeds (Gore&Cross, 2006).
- When asked to take photographs that describe how they see themselves, **women are more likely to include pictures of themselves with other people rather than alone** (Dollinger et al., 1996).



Joining Groups

Gender

- **Men belonged to more professional groups, governing boards, political parties, and military organizations than women but women spent more time in their groups than did men** (Booth, 1972).
- **The sexes do not differ in the time they spend** in solitary activities; their involvement in community groups; or their membership in more unusual types of groups, such as cults and satanic covens (Osgood et al., 1996; Parkum & Parkum, 1980; Pittard-Payne, 1980).
- The differences that emerge, although subtle, indicate **that women seek membership in smaller, informal, intimate groups, whereas men seek membership in larger, more formal, task-focused groups**. (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997).

These sex differences are also entangled with role differences and cultural stereotypes. In cultures where men and women tend to enact different roles, the roles may shape opportunities for involvement in groups.



Joining Groups

Social Motivation

Social motivations, unlike the more biologically based motivations such as hunger and thirst, influence people's interpersonal behaviors, and include the need for affiliation, intimacy, and power.

Need for affiliation The dispositional tendency to seek out others. People who seek out contact with other people often have a high need for affiliation. ***People with a high need for affiliation tend to join groups more frequently***, spend more of their time in groups, communicate more with other group members, and accept other group members more readily (McAdams & Constantian, 1983; McClelland, 1985; Smart, 1965). However, ***they are also more anxious in social situations***, perhaps because they are more fearful of rejection by others (Byrne, 1961; McAdams, 1982, 1995).

Need for intimacy The dispositional tendency to seek warm, positive relationships with others. Individuals who have a high need for intimacy, like those who have a high need for affiliation, prefer to join with others. Such individuals, however, ***seek close, warm relations and are more likely to express caring and concern for other people*** (McAdams, 1982, 1995).

Need for power The dispositional tendency to seek control over others. Because group interactions provide many opportunities to influence others, those with a high need for power also ***tend to seek out groups*** (McAdams, 1982; Winter, 1973). ***This relationship between the need for power and participation in groups was stronger for men*** (McAdams, Healy, & Krause, 1984)

Joining Groups

Social Motivation

Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO)

A theory of group formation and development proposed by William Schutz that emphasizes compatibility among three basic social motives: inclusion, control, and affection.

FIRO William Schutz (1958, 1992) integrated the need for **affiliation**, **intimacy**, and **power** in his Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation theory, or FIRO. Schutz identified three basic needs that can be satisfied by groups.

- **Inclusion** - the desire to be part of a group and to be accepted by a group—is similar to the need for affiliation.
- **Control** - corresponds to the need for power.
- **Affection** - or openness, is the desire to experience warm, positive relations with others, which is similar to the need for intimacy.





Joining Groups

Social Motivation

Schutz believed that these needs influence group behavior in two ways: They determine how people treat others and how people want others to treat them.

Inclusion refers to people’s desire to join with others but also their need to be accepted by those others.

Control is the need to dominate others but also the willingness to let others be dominant.

Affection is a desire to like others as well as a desire to be liked by them.

The **FIRO-B scale** measures both the need to express and the need to receive inclusion, control, and affection

T A B L E 4.2 Example Items from the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation–Behavior (FIRO-B) Scale

	Inclusion (I)	Control (C)	Affection (A)
Expressed toward other people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to be with other people. • I join social groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to take charge of things when I am with people. • I try to have other people do things I want done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to be friendly to people. • I try to have close relationships with people.
Wanted from other people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like people to invite me to things. • I like people to include me in their activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I let other people decide what to do. • I let other people take charge of things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like people to act friendly toward me. • I like people to act close toward me.

SOURCE: *FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* by W. C. Schutz. Copyright 1958 by Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Inc.

Joining Groups

Anxiety and Attachment

Just as one's personality and social motives may push people toward groups, other personal qualities may push them away. People who are socially inhibited, or shy, do not join groups as readily as others, and they do not find group activities to be as enjoyable.

- *As early as age 2, some children begin to display fear or inhibition when they encounter a person they do not recognize* (Kagan, Snidman, & Arcus, 1992).
- *Some grade school children consistently seek out other people, whereas others show signs of shyness and withdrawal when they are in groups* (Asendorpf & Meier, 1993).
- *Shy adults report feeling awkward, uncomfortable, and tense when interacting with people they do not know very well* (Cheek & Buss, 1981).
- *Shy people*, rather than entering a new group alone, *often take a friend with them*. This “social surrogate” helps them transition overcoming their initial social anxieties (Bradshaw, 1998).
- *Shy people also react differently, neurologically*, when they see a stranger's face (Beaton et al., 2008).





Joining Groups

Attachment Style

Attachment Style

One's characteristic approach to relationships with other people; the basic styles include secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing, as defined by the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance.

People with certain types of attachment styles are particularly likely to experience anxiety when faced with the prospect of joining a group. Attachment theory (e.g., Bowlby, 1980) explains the way people differ in their relationships, or attachments, to others. From an early age, some children seem very secure and comfortable in their relationship to their caregivers, but others seem to be more uncertain of their caregivers' supportiveness and some even seem to ignore other people altogether.

- ***These childhood differences emerge in adulthood as variations in attachment style***—one's basic cognitive, emotional, and behavioral orientation when in a relationship with others (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).
- ***Those with more anxious attachment styles***, in contrast, contributed less to the group's instrumental work, ***and those with avoidant attachment styles contributed less to both instrumental and relationship activities*** (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003).

Joining Groups Attachment Style

The four basic styles shown in Figure—secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing—reflect two underlying dimensions: anxiety about relationships and avoidance of closeness and dependency on others (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998).

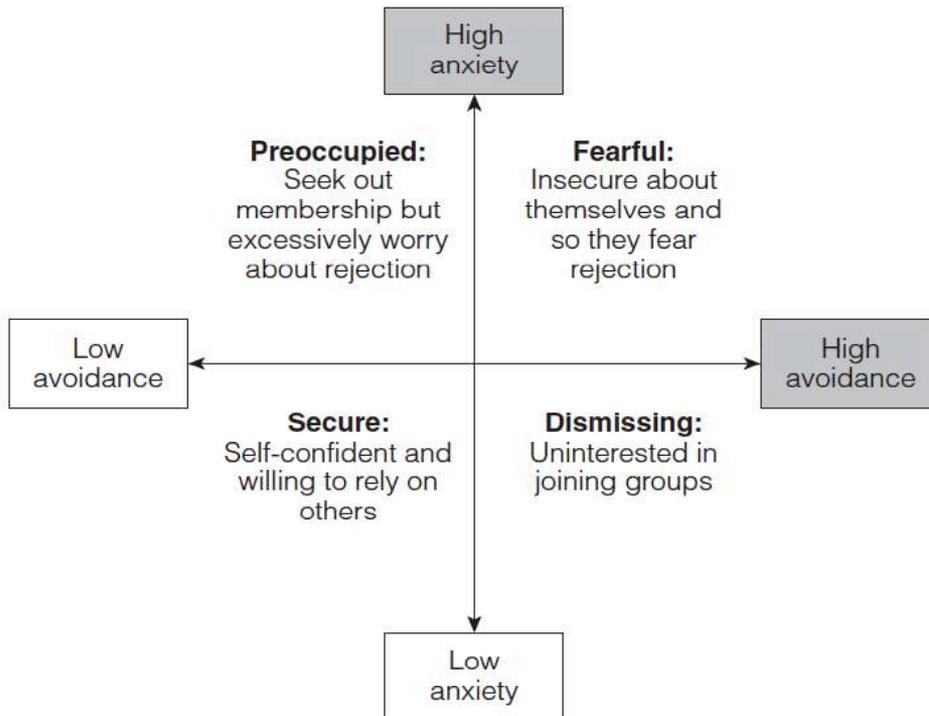


FIGURE 4.1 Group attachment styles. The four basic styles—secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing—are defined by two dimensions: level of anxiety and degree of avoidance. If, for example, an individual is low in avoidance but high in anxiety, he or she would display a preoccupied attachment style.



Lesson: 5 - (2/4)

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Joining Groups

Experience and Preference

Not everyone is thrilled at the prospect of joining groups. In many situations people have the opportunity to join a new group—a new club, a group of people who socialize together, an amateur sports team, for example—but their prior experiences in groups may make them think twice before joining in. Those with little prior experience may be too uncertain to take part, and those with negative experiences in the past may avoid groups as a general rule.

- Only those group veterans with many positive prior experiences are likely to seek them out (Bohrnstedt & Fisher, 1986; Corning & Myers, 2002; Ickes & Turner, 1983).
- **Those students who had positive experiences in their high school groups—they rated their high school groups as both important and enjoyable.** These students tended to be more deliberate in their review of potential groups, and displayed commitment to a specific group throughout the search process (Brinthaup, Moreland, & Levine, 1991; Pavelchak, Moreland, & Levine, 1986).



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Joining Groups

Affiliation: Social Comparison

Why do people join together with others in groups? In part, the motivation comes from within the members themselves, for people's personalities, preferences, and other personal qualities predispose them to affiliate with others. But the tendency to affiliate with others also comes from without—from the situation itself. People often seek the company of others when they need information, social support, or companionship.

Social Comparison

Evaluating the accuracy of personal beliefs and attitudes by comparing oneself to others on the basis of the shared social norms.

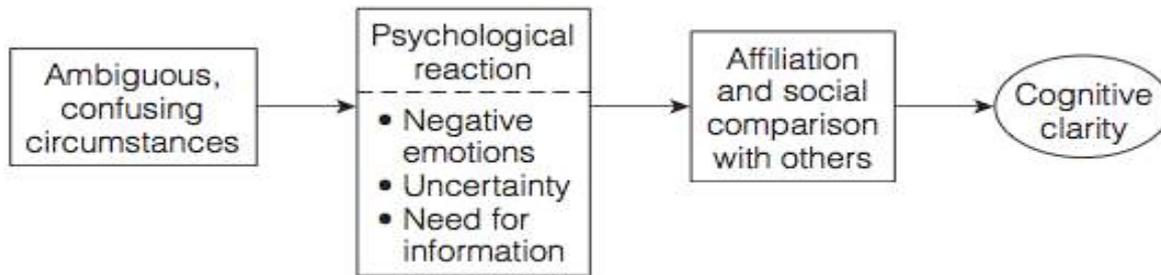


FIGURE 4.2 Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison assumes that people, when facing ambiguous situations, seek out others and compare their reactions and interpretations to their own.

Leon Festinger (1950, 1954) maintained that people often rely on others for information about themselves and the environment. Physical reality is a reliable guide in many cases, but to validate social reality people must compare their interpretations to those of other people



Joining Groups

Affiliation: Social Comparison



Festinger called this process social comparison, and suggested that it begins when people find themselves in ambiguous, confusing situations. Such situations trigger a variety of psychological reactions, most of which are unsettling, and so people affiliate with others to gain the information they need to reduce their confusion.

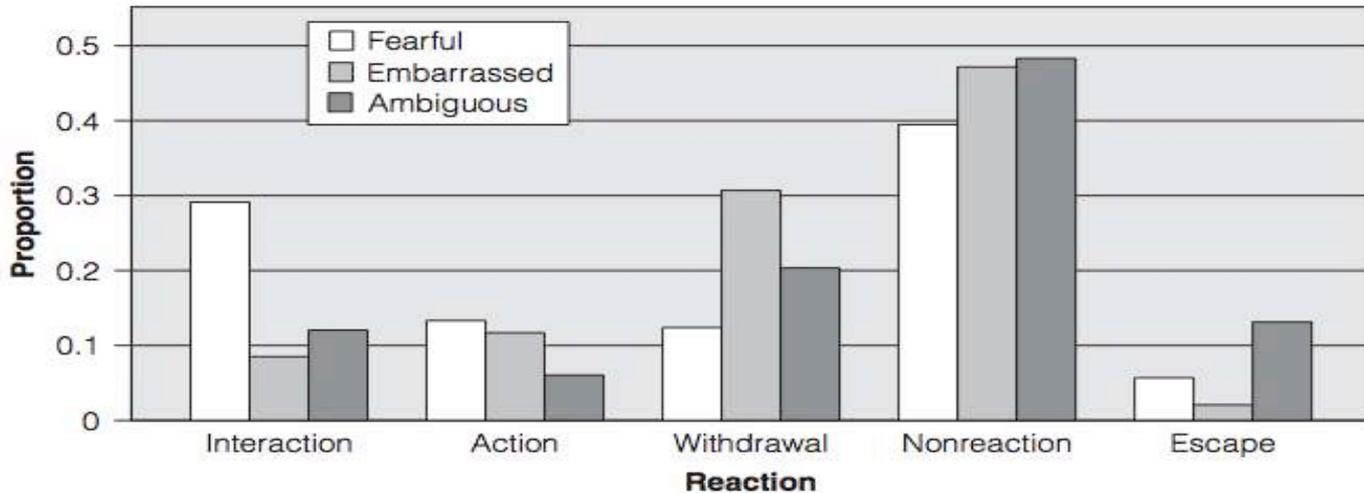


FIGURE 4.3 Five types of behavioral reactions—interaction, action, withdrawal, nonreaction, and escape—to three different kinds of situations: fear-provoking (fearful), embarrassing (embarrassed), and ambiguous. People who faced an ambiguous situation did not talk among themselves as much as people who were fearful. People who were anxious and embarrassed, in contrast, interacted the least and they often withdrew from the group (Morris et al., 1976).

Joining Groups

Affiliation: Downward (and Upward) Social Comparison

Downward Social Somparison

Comparing oneself to others who are performing less effectively relative to oneself.

Upward Social Comparison

Comparing oneself to others who are performing more effectively relative to oneself.

- ***People compare themselves to others when they lack information about the situation they face, but they are not indiscriminate when selecting targets for comparison.*** When they want information, they select people who are similar to them or are likely to be particularly well-informed. ***But when self-esteem is on the line, people engage in downward social comparison by selecting targets who are worse off than they are*** (Wills, 1991).
- Students reviewing their academic progress with other students, spouses discussing their relationships with other husbands and wives, patients talking with other patients about their success in coping with their illness, medical students taking part in a training class, and expectant mothers talking about their pregnancies ***all show the tendency to seek out, for comparison purposes, people who are doing more poorly than they are*** (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007).

Joining Groups

Affiliation: Downward (and Upward) Social Comparison

Downward Social Somparison

Comparing oneself to others who are performing less effectively relative to oneself.

Upward Social Comparison

Comparing oneself to others who are performing more effectively relative to oneself.

- ***In the upward social comparison***, which occurs when a person compares himself or herself to others who are better off than he or she is. When students were asked to keep track of the people they compared themselves to over a two-week period, they reported feeling depressed and discouraged when they associated with more competent people (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992).

BUT!

- Even if people know they have performed better than average, ***if they compare themselves to someone who has far outperformed them they feel discouraged*** (Seta, Seta, & McElroy, 2006).

Joining Groups

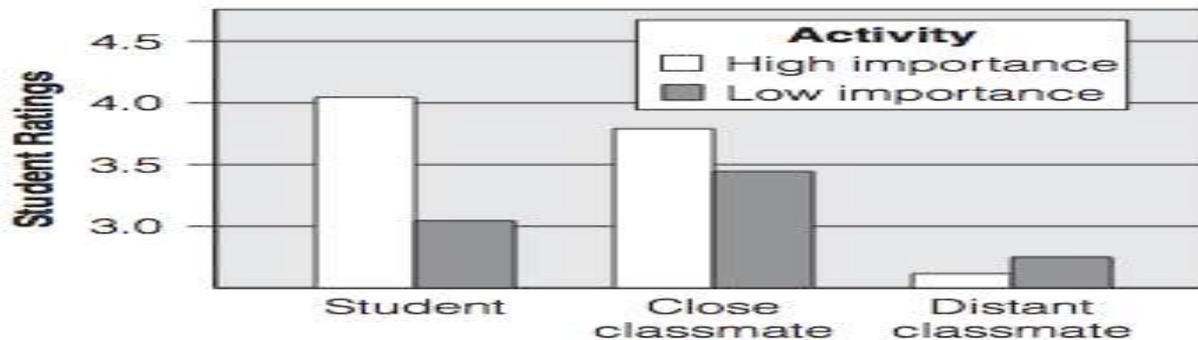
Affiliation: Self evaluation maintenance

Self-Evaluation Maintenance (SEM) Model

A theory proposed by Abraham Tesser which assumes that individuals maintain and enhance self-esteem by associating with high-achieving individuals who excel in areas that are not relevant to their own sense of self-esteem and avoiding association with high-achieving individuals who excel in areas that are important to their sense of self-esteem.

When will people choose upward comparison over downward comparison?

- Abraham Tesser's self-evaluation maintenance (SEM) model suggests that **people often graciously celebrate others' accomplishments—but not when they are bested in a domain that they value greatly**. In such cases, others' success will more likely trigger resentment, envy, and shame rather than pride and admiration (Smith, R. H., 2000).





Joining Groups

Affiliation: Self evaluation maintenance

When will people choose upward comparison over downward comparison?

- Tesser and his colleagues examined this tension between sharing others' successes and highlighting their failures by asking elementary school students to identify the types of activities (sports, art, music, math) that were personally important to them. ***Students thought that the task was important, they judged their performance to be superior to that of their close friend. If the task was not important to them personally, they felt that they had performed relatively worse*** (Tesser, Campbell, & Smith, 1984).
- Tesser and his colleagues discovered that ***happy couples felt that it was more pleasant to be outdone by one's partner in an area that their partner valued but to outperform the partner in an area that he or she did not value. Unhappy couples did not recognize this secret ingredient for marital bliss*** (Beach et al., 1998).



Lesson: 5 - (3/4)

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Joining Groups

Social Support: Stress and Affiliation

Social Support

A sense of belonging, emotional support, advice, guidance, tangible assistance, and spiritual perspective given to others when they experience stress, daily hassles, and more significant life crises.

The group did not just provide us with “cognitive clarity” but with social support in times of turbulence and trouble.

- Humans are group-seeking animals, but ***their gregariousness becomes particularly robust under conditions of stress*** (Rofé, 1984).
- ***In times of trouble***, such as illness, divorce, catastrophe, natural disaster, or personal loss, ***people seek out friends and relatives*** (Dooley & Catalano, 1984).
- ***College students who are experiencing problems***, academically or socially, ***spend between 28% and 35% of their time interacting with people they feel are supportive*** (Harlow & Cantor, 1995).
- ***Individuals experiencing work-related stress***, such as the threat of layoffs, time pressures, or inadequate supervision, ***cope by joining with coworkers*** (Bowling et al., 2004; McGuire, 2007).



Joining Groups

Social Support: Stress and Affiliation

Social Support

A sense of belonging, emotional support, advice, guidance, tangible assistance, and spiritual perspective given to others when they experience stress, daily hassles, and more significant life crises.

The group did not just provide us with “cognitive clarity” but with social support in times of turbulence and trouble.

- **Individuals who have been reminded of their own mortality are more likely to sit closer to other people**, even if these other individuals do not share their opinions on important social issues (Wisman & Koole, 2003).
- **People also react to large-scale traumatic events by joining with others.** When U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, 60% of adult Americans reported seeking solace by talking to others (Sheatsley & Feldman, 1964).
- **In the days following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, 98% of all adult Americans reported talking to others** about the attacks, 60% reported taking part in a group activity, and 77% sought to strengthen their connection to their loved ones (Schuster et al., 2001).
- **Many individuals joined virtual groups via the Internet.** Internet usage declined overall, but discussion areas, forums, and chat room use surged, as did e-mail rates. Nearly three-quarters of all Internet users (72%) used e-mail to contact family and friends or to share news about the attack (Ranie & Kalsnes, 2001).

Joining Groups

Social Support: Stress and Affiliation

Affiliation with others plays a key role in both fight-or-flight and tend-and-befriend responses to stress.

- *When the group members face an imminent threat, they can work together to fight against it—they can rally against attackers, organize a concerted response to a disaster, and so on.*
- *Groups also enhance survival as members escape. If escape routes are not restricted, the dispersion of a group can confuse attackers and increase the chances that all members of the group will escape unharmed.*
- *A group can also organize its escape from danger, with stronger members of the group helping less able members to reach safety.*
- *If, in contrast, the group faces a long-term threat, then the group may cope by increasing nurturing, protective, and supportive behaviors (tending) and by seeking out connections to other people (befriending).*

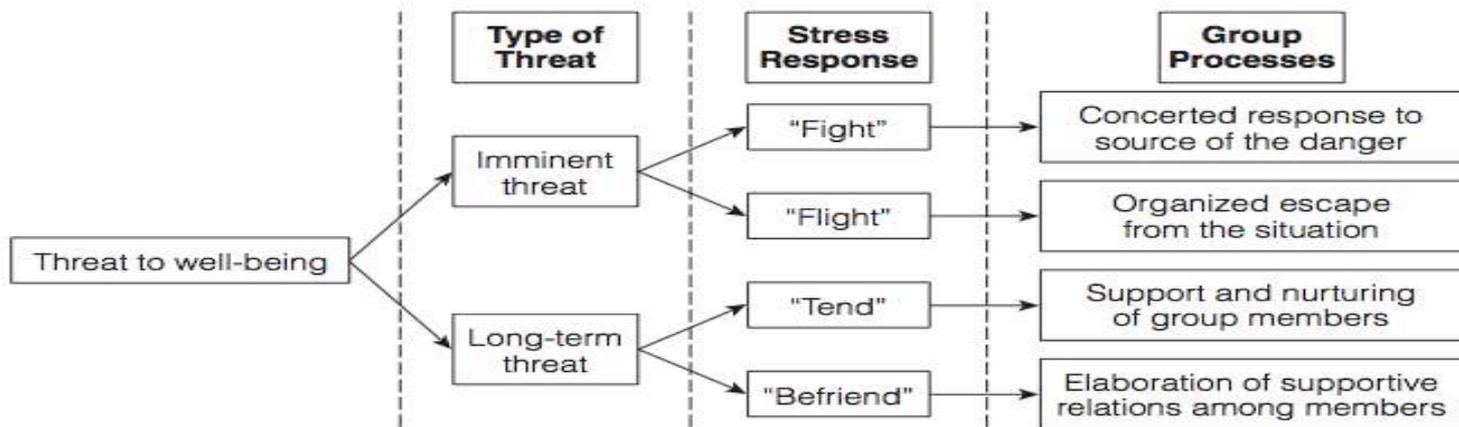


FIGURE 4.5 Group-level responses to stress. The two basic responses to stress—fight-or-flight and tend-and-befriend—are both enhanced when members rely on resources made available by their groups.



Joining Groups

Social Support: Sources of support

Groups provide support for their members in different ways:

Belonging: by letting troubled members know that they are valued members, the group reassures them that they are not alone in facing their problems (Krause & Wulff, 2005).

Emotional support: when they express their caring and concern for one another, often by listening to others' problems without offering criticism or suggestions, encouraging them, and showing general approval (McGuire, 2007).

Informational support: pertains to advice and guidance.

Instrumental support: provides members with tangible resources.

Spiritual support: helps members deal with existential dilemmas and threats to their worldview (see Uchino, 2004).

TABLE 4.3 Some Forms of Social Support Provided by Groups

Type	Definition	Examples
Belonging	Inclusion in a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing acceptance • Reassurance of belonging • Reaffirming membership • Encouraging identification • Group activities
Emotional support	Expressing caring and concern for one another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing respect and approval • Encouragement • Listening • Sharing feelings • Responding nonverbally in positive ways (e.g., hugging, nodding)
Informational support	Providing advice and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing helpful information • Giving directions, advice, suggestions • Demonstrating a way to perform a task • Problem solving
Instrumental support	Providing tangible resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing favors • Lending money or possessions • Assisting with work, duties • Transportation • Providing a place to stay
Spiritual support	Addressing issues of meaning and purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining challenging events • Allaying existential anxiety, fear of death • Sharing faith • Reconfirming one's world view



Joining Groups

Social Support: Sources of support

- Admittedly, some groups fail to deliver on their promise of support. ***They may even add stressors by stirring up conflicts, increasing responsibilities, and exposing members to criticism*** (e.g., Newsom et al., 2008).
- Groups are more frequently supportive than burdensome. ***People who enjoy strong social bonds with other people tend to experience less stress in their lives, are less likely to suffer from depression and other psychological problems, and are physically healthier*** (Stinson et al., 2008).
- ***Social support is particularly valuable when people find themselves in threatening circumstances—a divorce, a job change, a move, or the like. Stressful life circumstances leave people at risk for psychological and physical illness, but groups can serve as protective buffers against these negative consequences*** (Taylor, 2007).

All these studies suggest that a group offers members a safe haven from the storm of stress!!



Joining Groups

Social Support: Sources of support

- Who were **more firmly embedded in a social network** of friends, relatives, and neighbors **were less depressed than people who were not integrated into groups** (Norris & Murrell, 1990).
- **Firefighters who felt they were supported by their peers and their supervisor reported less stress** than those who did not feel as closely connected to their group members (Varvel et al., 2007).
- A survey of New York City residents following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks indicated that those who **were members of groups or affiliative organizations** (e.g., church groups, discussion groups, veterans groups) **were more resilient to the stressful effects of the attacks** (Bonanno et al., 2007).
- **Participants who played the role of prisoners in a simulation of a prison (in England) provided one another with substantial social support, and in consequence they were relatively unaffected by situational stressors** (Haslam & Reicher, 2006).

All these studies suggest that a group offers members a safe haven from the storm of stress!!



Lesson: 5 - (4/4)

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Joining Groups

Companionship; Type of Loneliness

Memberships are not static. At some point in his or her life, an individual may find that he or she belongs to many groups. At other times, however, people may feel that their relationships with others are too few or too superficial. In such situations, people often experience loneliness, and to escape it they turn to groups for companionship.

Loneliness

Feelings of desperation, boredom, selfdeprecation, and depression experienced when individuals feel their personal relationships are too few or too unsatisfying.

Loneliness is not the same as being alone, for in some situations people are not troubled by isolation or a relative paucity of relations with others. Loneliness, instead, is an aversive psychological reaction to a lack of personal or social relations with other people.

***Emotional loneliness** occurs when the problem is a lack of a long-term, meaningful, intimate relationship with another person; this type of loneliness might be triggered by divorce, a breakup with a lover, or repeated romantic failures.*

***Social loneliness**, in contrast, occurs when people feel cut off from their network of friends, acquaintances, and group members.*

Both types of loneliness create feelings of sadness, depression, emptiness, longing, shame, and self-pity.



Joining Groups

Companionship; Type of Loneliness

Groups Alleviate Loneliness

- **Groups can provide the antidote to loneliness by (1) organizing and integrating connections with other individuals, and (2) promoting the development of warm, supportive, intimate relationships between members (Shaver & Buhrmester, 1983).**
- **College students who belonged to a cohesive, satisfying group reported much less loneliness than students who belonged to poorly integrated groups (Anderson & Martin, 1995; Schmidt & Sermat, 1983).**
- **Members of groups with extensive interconnections among all the members were less lonely than members of groups with less dense networks (Kraus et al., 1993; Stokes, 1985).**
- **Children with friends—even friends who were considered odd or unusual by their peers—were less lonely than friendless children (Asher & Paquette, 2003).**
- **People who belonged to groups (e.g., service organizations, religious or church organizations, business or professional organizations, and social clubs) were healthier and happier than individuals who did not (Harlow & Cantor, 1996).**
- **They even lived longer than lonely loners (Stroebe, 1994; Sugisawa, Liang, & Liu, 1994).**



Joining Groups

Companionship; Type of Loneliness

All groups are not equally effective in buffering their members from both forms of loneliness. Transitory, impersonal collectives do little to ease either social or emotional loneliness.

TABLE 4.4 The Effectiveness of Different Types of Groups in Ameliorating Loneliness

		Effectiveness in Reducing Emotional Loneliness	
		Low	High
Effectiveness in Reducing Social Loneliness	Low	Collectives (passengers, queues, audiences)	Intimate Groups (couples, long-term close friendship pairs)
	High	Social Groups (congregations, work groups, regulars at a bar, social clubs, amateur athletic teams)	Primary groups (families, communes, very close-knit friendship cliques)



Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Proximity

Even though attraction is often thought to be a highly capricious and unpredictable social process, Newcomb identified a small number of principles that explain when liking is more likely.

Proximity Principle

The tendency for individuals to form interpersonal relations with those who are close by.

Group members often assume that their groups result from rational planning or common interests. But the proximity principle suggests that in some cases, people join groups that just happen to be close by.

- Newcomb (1960) assigned the participants roommates at random, but by the study's end most roommates had become close friends.
- When teachers assign students seats in classrooms, cliques of pupils in adjacent seats develop (Segal, 1974).
- City dwellers who regularly assemble in the same physical location—commuters at subway stops, patrons at local bars, and frequent picnickers in parks—eventually gel into identifiable groups (see Gieryn, 2000).
- College students living in dorms send far more emails to those who live near them than they do to those who live in more distant rooms (Sacerdote & Marmaros, 2005).
- Leon Festinger and his colleagues tracked the emergence of networks of attraction in a housing residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Not only did the majority of best friends live in the same building, they lived next door; 41% of the next-door neighbors were identified as people “seen socially.”



Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Elaboration

Elaboration Principle

The tendency for groups to expand as members form dyadic associations with someone who is not in the group and thereby draw the nonmember into the group.

Groups, as selforganizing, dynamic systems, tend to increase in complexity over time. A group that begins with only two members tends to grow in size as these individuals become linked to other nearby individuals.

- According to systems theory, ***“the basic dynamic of elaboration is the proliferation of elements and ties,” which “are linked together to form a functional unit called a group”*** (Arrow et al., 2000, pp. 91–92; Parks, 2007).
- This same kind of self-organizing process has been documented in other emerging groups, such as adolescents’ peer group associations, leisure groups, and social movements (Benford, 1992).
- Gangs form when three friends refer to themselves with a shared name and recruit other friends to join the group (Tobin, 2008).
- Friendships are very likely to form between students who were linked to the same individuals (Gibbons & Olk, 2003).
- Groups form when otherwise unrelated individuals are drawn to a single individual, who becomes the hub for gradually developing bonds among the various members (Redl, 1942).

Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Elaboration

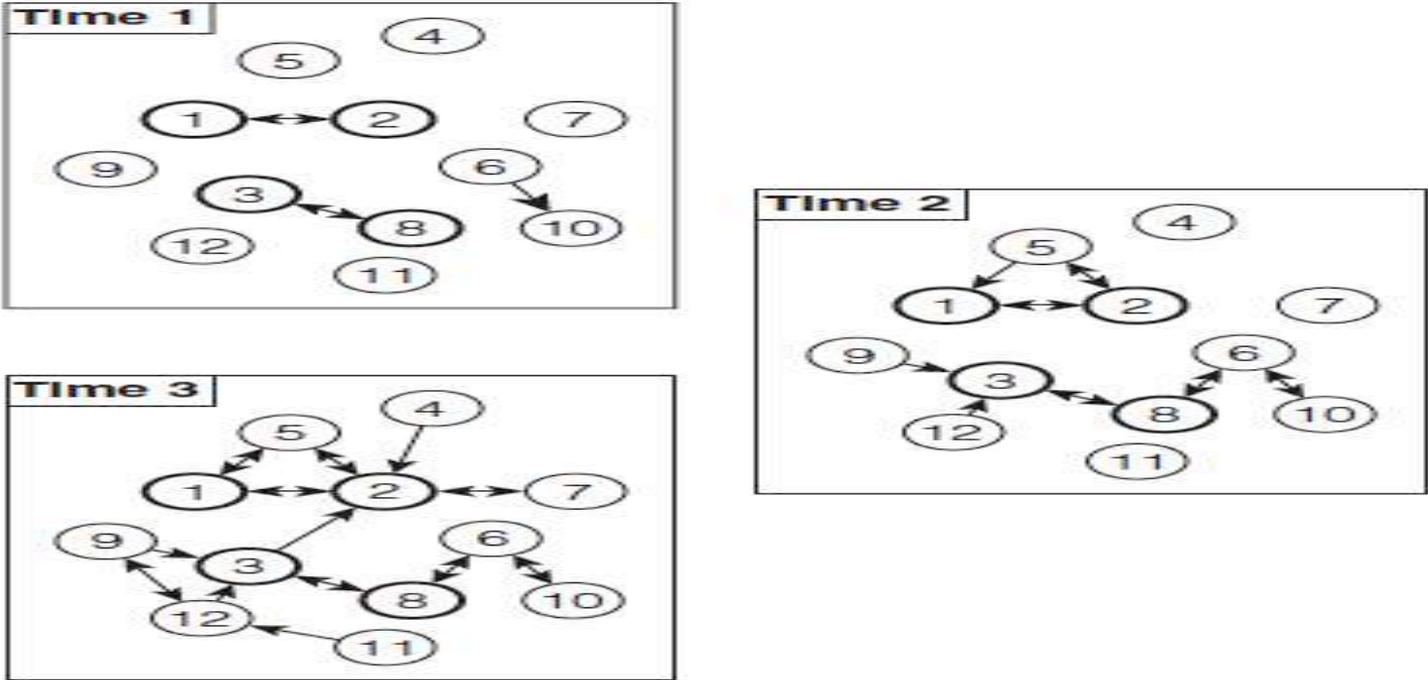


FIGURE 4.6 The elaboration of groups over time. Groups that begin as simple two-person groups become more complex over time as individuals who are initially linked together only in one-to-one, dyadic relationships (e.g., person 1 and 2, person 3 and 8) expand their networks to include additional elements (members).



Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Similarity

Similarity Principle

The tendency to affiliate with or be attracted to similar others; this tendency causes groups and other interpersonal aggregates to be composed of individuals who are similar to one another rather than dissimilar.

Homophily

The tendency for group members to display certain affinities, such as similarities in demographic background, attitudes, values, or so on; the overall degree of similarity of individuals within the same group.

People are attracted to those who are similar to them in some way. Similarity is a social magnet that creates all kinds of relationships. People tend to marry people who are similar to them; they join groups composed of others who are like them; and they live in communities where people are more alike than different.

Although these similarities often reflect agreements in attitudes, values, and beliefs, they are also based on irrelevant demographic characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, sex, and age (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954).



Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Similarity

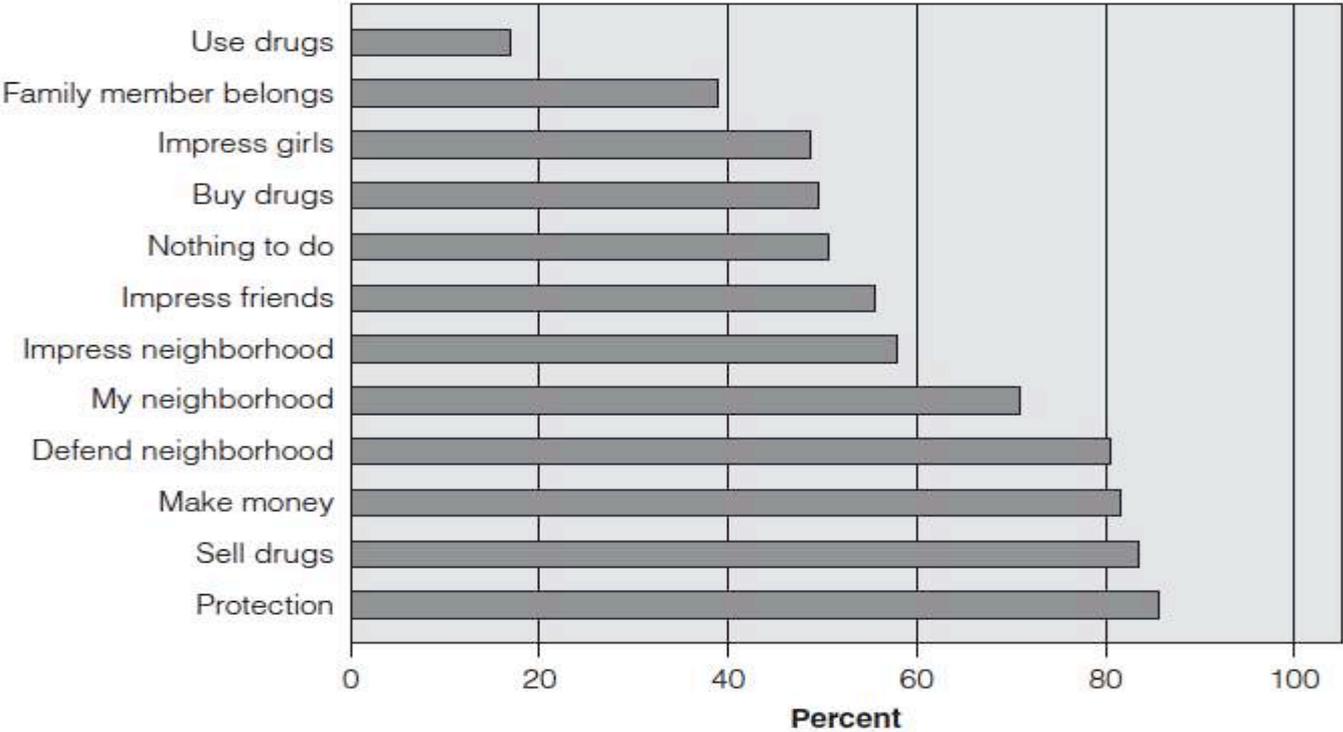


FIGURE 4.7 Gang members' explanations for their decision to become a gang member. Those who join gangs are more likely to mention instrumental concerns, such as protection and the need to make money selling drugs, than a concern for gaining status and impressing other people. Other factors, such as having a family member in the gang or a gang's access to drugs, were also mentioned as reasons for joining.

Joining Groups

Principles of attraction: Complementary

Complementarity Principle

The tendency for group members to like people who are dissimilar to them in ways that complement their personal qualities.

Interchange Compatibility

As described by William Schutz, compatibility between group members based on their similar needs for inclusion, control, and affection

- People generally associate with similar others, and they are repulsed by those who are dissimilar to them (Rosenbaum, 1986).
- In one-on-one relations, people are sometimes attracted to individuals who have very desirable personal qualities, but when evaluating groups people base their preferences on the degree of similarity between the group and themselves (Clement & Krueger, 1998).

If, however, people's qualities complement each other—they are dissimilar but they fit well together—then this unique form of dissimilarity may encourage people to associate with one another.

- Similarly, individuals who are forming a group may realize that the members' skills and abilities must complement each other if the group is to be successful (Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Stevens, 2005).
- These cases are consistent with the complementarity principle, which suggests that people are attracted to those who possess characteristics that complement their own personal characteristics (Winch, 1958).