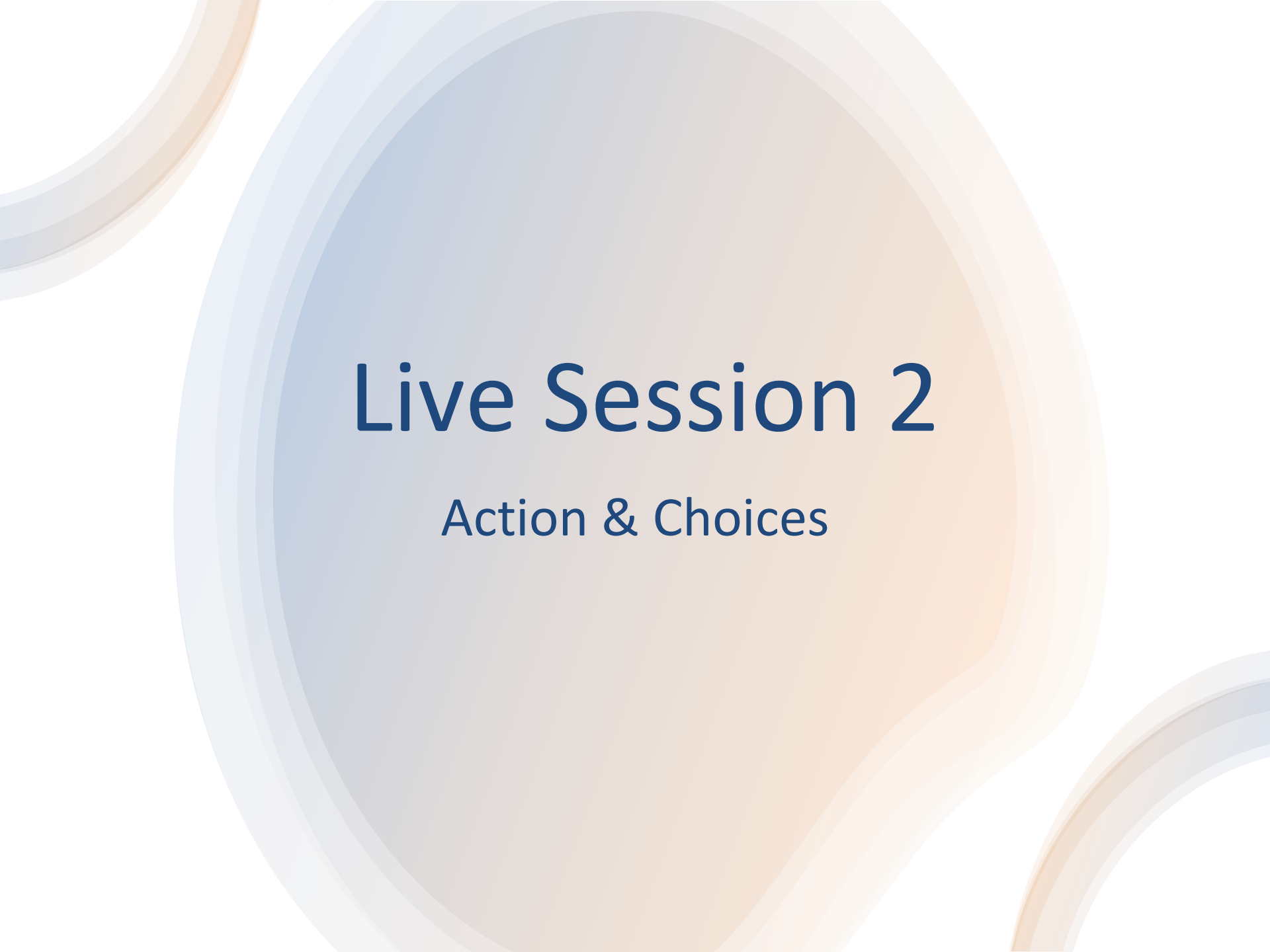




Live Session 2

Action & Choices

Self-Regulation



Self-regulation is the ability to control or override one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to achieve long-term goals or adhere to social norms.

Key Components:

- **Monitoring:** Keeping track of your behavior.
- **Standards:** Having goals or ideals to compare behavior against.
- **Willpower:** The energy or strength to resist impulses.

- **Example:**

A student resists the urge to binge-watch a series the night before an exam, choosing instead to study.

- **Theoretical Link:**

Self-regulation is central to the concept of the self as an agent. It's also tied to the idea of **ego depletion**—the notion that self-control is a limited resource that can be exhausted.



Trade-Offs

A trade-off involves sacrificing one desirable outcome for another. Most decisions require weighing competing values or outcomes.

- **Example:**

Choosing between a high-paying job that requires relocation and a lower-paying job that allows you to stay close to family.

- **Theoretical Link:**

Trade-offs highlight the **cost-benefit analysis** involved in decision-making. Social psychologists emphasize that even moral or emotional decisions often involve rational trade-offs.



Decision Fatigue

Decision fatigue refers to the deteriorating quality of decisions after a long session of decision-making. The more choices we make, the harder it becomes to make good ones.

- **Example:**

Judges are more likely to deny parole later in the day, possibly due to mental fatigue.

- **Theoretical Link:**

This concept supports the idea that **self-control and decision-making draw from the same mental resource pool**, reinforcing the importance of conserving cognitive energy.



Cultural Norms

Cultural norms are shared expectations and rules that guide behavior within a group or society. They influence what is considered acceptable, desirable, or moral.

- **Example:**

In collectivist cultures, decisions often prioritize group harmony over individual preference, such as choosing a career path that benefits the family.

- **Theoretical Link:**

Cultural psychology (e.g., Markus & Kitayama's work) shows how **individualistic vs. collectivist** cultures shape the self and influence decision-making styles.



Social Influence

Social influence is the effect that other people have on an individual's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. It includes conformity, compliance, and obedience.

- **Example:**

A student chooses not to speak up in class because no one else is raising their hand, even though they know the answer.

- **Theoretical Link:**

Classic studies (e.g., Asch's conformity experiments, Milgram's obedience studies) show how powerful social pressure can be in shaping actions—even against personal beliefs.



Free Will

Free will is the capacity to choose among alternatives and act independently of external constraints or internal compulsions.

- **Example:**

Someone chooses to forgive a friend despite peer pressure to cut ties.

- **Theoretical Link:**

Social psychologists debate the extent of free will, especially in light of unconscious influences and situational pressures. Baumeister argues that **free will is real but limited**, and it plays a role in moral responsibility and social functioning.



7. The Self in Decision-Making

Definition:

The self plays a central role in guiding choices through identity, self-concept, and self-awareness. People often make decisions that align with their values, goals, and social roles.

- **Example:**

A person who sees themselves as environmentally conscious might choose to bike instead of drive.

- **Theoretical Link:**

The **self as a decision-maker** is a key theme in social psychology. Theories like **self-determination theory** and **identity theory** explore how internal motivations and social identities shape behavior.

Task – think about the questions for each of the following scenarios...

Core Psychological Analysis

- What psychological processes are at play in this scenario? (e.g., *self-regulation, decision fatigue, conformity, moral reasoning*)
- What trade-offs are involved in the decision? How might these affect the outcome?
- How does the concept of free will or agency apply here? Is the individual truly free to choose?

Cultural & Global Perspectives

- How might this scenario play out differently in another cultural context?
- What cultural values (e.g., individualism vs collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) are influencing the decision?
- Are there any cultural biases or assumptions embedded in the scenario?

Ethical & Social Dimensions

- What are the ethical implications of each possible action?
- Who benefits and who might be harmed by the decision?
- How might group dynamics (e.g., peer pressure, groupthink) influence the outcome?
- Would your decision change if you were in a position of more or less power?



Self- Regulation (Japan)

Scenario:

You're a university student in Tokyo preparing for final exams. Your friends invite you to a karaoke night, but you've planned to study. In Japanese culture, maintaining group harmony is important.

Do you go to avoid disappointing them, or stay home to meet your academic goals?



Trade-Offs (India)

Scenario:

You've been accepted into a prestigious art school abroad, but your family expects you to stay in India and join the family business. Pursuing your dream may strain family ties.

What do you choose?



Decision Fatigue (South Korea)

Scenario:

You're a high school senior in Seoul preparing for university entrance exams. After a full day of classes, tutoring, and decisions about extracurriculars, you're asked to choose your top three university programs. You feel mentally exhausted.

How do you decide?



Cultural Norms (China)

Scenario:

You're offered a leadership role in a student organization. In your culture, humility and deference to elders are valued. Accepting the role might be seen as boastful.

Do you take the position?



Social Influence (Nigeria)

Scenario:

You want to study abroad, but your community and church leaders believe you should stay and contribute locally. Their opinions carry significant weight.

Do you follow your personal ambition or respect their wishes?



Free Will (Saudi Arabia)

Scenario:

You're a young woman who wants to start a business. While legal reforms are expanding opportunities, social expectations still discourage women from working independently.

Do you pursue your goal or wait for more support?



The Self in Decision- Making (South Africa)

Scenario:

You're a student in post-apartheid South Africa. You've been offered a scholarship to study abroad, but you feel a strong sense of duty to stay and help rebuild your community.

How do you reconcile your personal goals with your social identity?



Social Media & Cultural Identity (Brazil)

Scenario:

You're a Brazilian influencer known for vibrant, expressive content. A global brand wants you to promote a minimalist lifestyle that clashes with your cultural identity.

Do you accept the deal for financial gain or stay true to your roots?