

APPLYING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social Influence

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Helping Behaviour

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The Story of Wilson Ross

Wilson Ross was driving his van when he was struck from behind. He lost control, causing his van to flip over. As the van caught fire, he was suspended upside down by his seat belt. As he dangled helplessly, Jackson Stallcup stopped his truck and risked his own life in an effort to save Ross. Stallcup freed Ross just seconds before the van exploded (Taylor et al., 2006)



The Story of Kitty Genovese

At 3am on a night in 1964, Kitty Genovese was murdered in the respectable Kew Gardens area of New York City. The murderer took half an hour to accomplish the act, leaving the scene and returning to finish off his victim, who, crawling toward her apartment door, repeatedly screamed that she was being murdered and pleaded for help. Two weeks after the event, The New York Times carried the horrifying news that 38 neighbours of Kitty Genovese had witnessed the event from their windows, and none had responded even to the point of calling the police (Taylor et al., 2006).

(But see new evidence about this story in The Psychologist, 2017)



Why/When Do People Help?

- **Altruism**
 - helping behaviour that benefits others but requires self-sacrifice
 - no expectation of receiving a reward
- **Prosocial Behaviour**
 - helping behaviour that benefits others, regardless of motives
 - a broader category
- **Altruism ≠ Prosocial Behaviour**
 - many prosocial acts aren't altruistic
 - impress others??

Why Did / Didn't People Help Ross and Genovese?

- Level of involvement?
- Were Genovese neighbours cruel?
- Are truck drivers especially helpful?

“We thought it was a lover’s quarrel!” said one tenant. “Frankly, we were afraid,” said another witness. One woman who didn’t want her name used said, “I didn’t want my husband to get involved.” Others had different explanations for their conduct. “We went to the window to see what was happening, but the light from our bedroom made it difficult to see the street.” There were lots of excuses. **Maybe the most apathetic was the one who told reporters, “I was tired.”**

Perspectives on Helping

- Decision-making perspective – Darley and Latané
 - a number of decisions need to be made before help is offered
- Stages in Deciding to Help
 1. Perceiving a Need
 - (a) Notice the situation
 - (b) Is it an emergency?
 2. Taking Responsibility
 3. Weigh Costs and Benefits
 4. How Should I Help?

Noticing the Situation

- Clark & Word (1972)
 - man falls off a ladder. For some participants, the man cries out



- having a cue (i.e., noticing situation) affected behaviour
 - Without cue, 35% help
 - With cue, 100% help

Is It An Emergency?

- Darley & Latané (1968)
 - students doing study in lab
 - an apparent emergency – smoke



- few people took action → did not perceive event as emergency
- interpreted as leaky air con., chemistry lab, steam pipes, truth gas!

Taking Responsibility

- Moriarity (1975)
 - while at beach, woman near you goes for a swim
 - she asks you to watch her stuff (or not)



- when watching stuff, 95% intervene
- control condition, 20% intervene

Weighing Costs and Benefits

- Shotland & Straw (1976)
 - male Ss witness staged fight
 - condition 1 – F says “Get away from me ... I never saw you before in my life”
 - condition 2 - “Get away from me, I don’t know why I married you”
- RESULTS
 - 3x as much intervention in condition 1
 - perceived greater costs

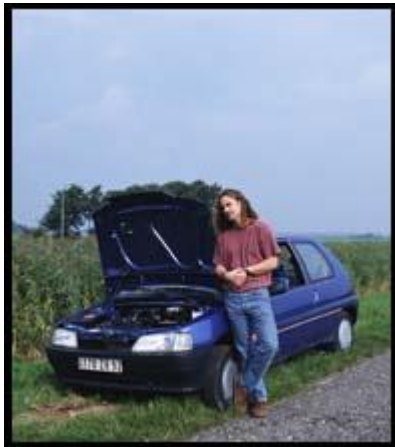
How Can I Help?

- Cramer et al. (1988)
 - more likely to help when you feel competent
 - high competent Ss (nurses) helped more than low competence Ss after hearing person fall from ladder

Perspectives on Helping

- **Learning perspective**
 - we learn to help through reinforcement and modelling
- Reinforcement
 - Mills & Grusec (1989)
 - child Ss asked to share toys
 - rewarded with dispositional (**you're** nice) or general (that was a nice act) praise
 - dispositional praise had long-term effect

- Observational Learning
- Bryan & Test (1967)
 - you're driving and see (or not) a driver helping someone
 - 1 mile later, you pass someone with flat
 - more likely to help if you've observed another's helping behaviour



- **Social Norms Perspective**

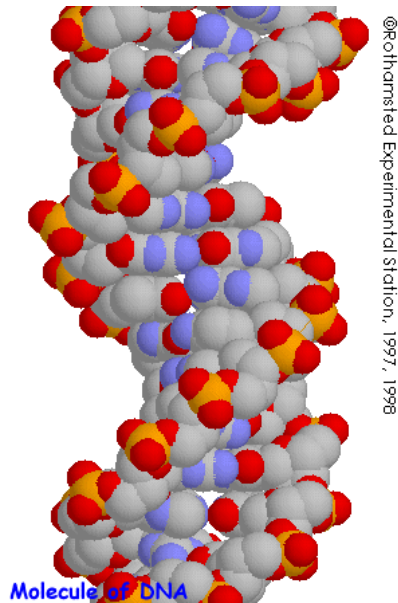
- internalise social norms about helping
 - help because society dictates that we help

- 3 key norms

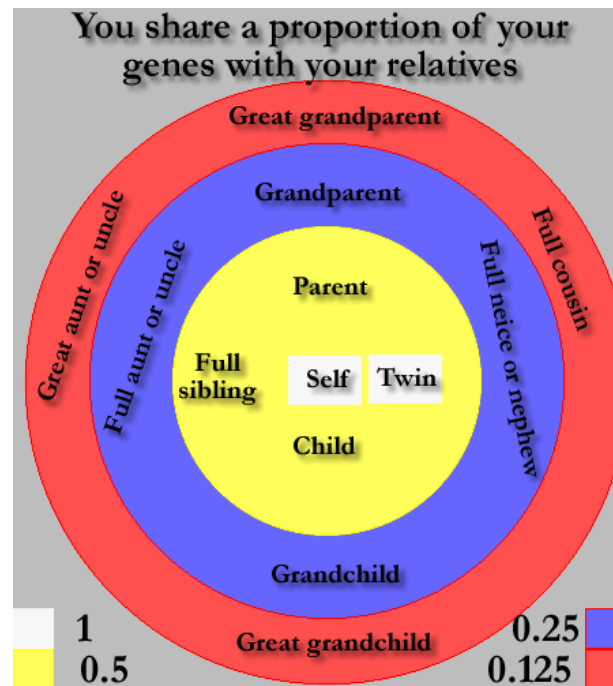
- **social responsibility** - help those dependent upon us
- **reciprocity** - help those who help us
- **social justice** - norms about fairness and equity



- Evolutionary Perspective
 - is helping in the genes?



KIN SELECTION - behaviours that help genetic relatives are favoured by natural selection



- people are more likely to help those genetically closest to themselves
 - most likely to help healthy offspring
- So why do we help strangers?
 - Norm of reciprocity

- **Exchange Perspective**

- we look to maximise benefits and minimise costs

- help is rewarding because

1. we may need help in future (reciprocity)
2. it relieves distress of seeing someone suffer
3. we get positive feedback

Pilavian, Rodin, and Pilavian (1969)

Costs and Rewards Theory		
	FOR HELPING	FOR NOT HELPING
COSTS	Short-term loss of time (e.g., late to appointment)	Loss of self-esteem
	Long-term loss of time (e.g., court appearance)	Social disapproval from witnesses who helped
	Potential injury to self, immediate (e.g., in assault case)	Legal liability (in some states, person who knows first aid must help or risk suit)
	Legal liability if injured person further hurt by self	Not helping promoted, increasing the likelihood oneself will not be helped
	Person who was aided becomes dependent on self	
	Potential injury to self, long-term (e.g., assailant seeks revenge)	
REWARDS	Improved self-esteem	Avoidance of short-term time loss
	Social approval by witnesses	Avoidance of long-term time loss
	Avoidance of legal liability for failure to help	Avoidance of injury to self, immediate
	Helping behavior promoted	Avoidance of injury to self, long-term
	Monetary rewards available in some cities	Avoidance of dependency by victim
	Favorable publicity for self in some cases	Avoidance of liability for further harming victim
	Criminals brought to justice in some cases	

Does Pure Altruism Exist?

- Batson (1991)
 - helping reflects self-serving and selfless goals

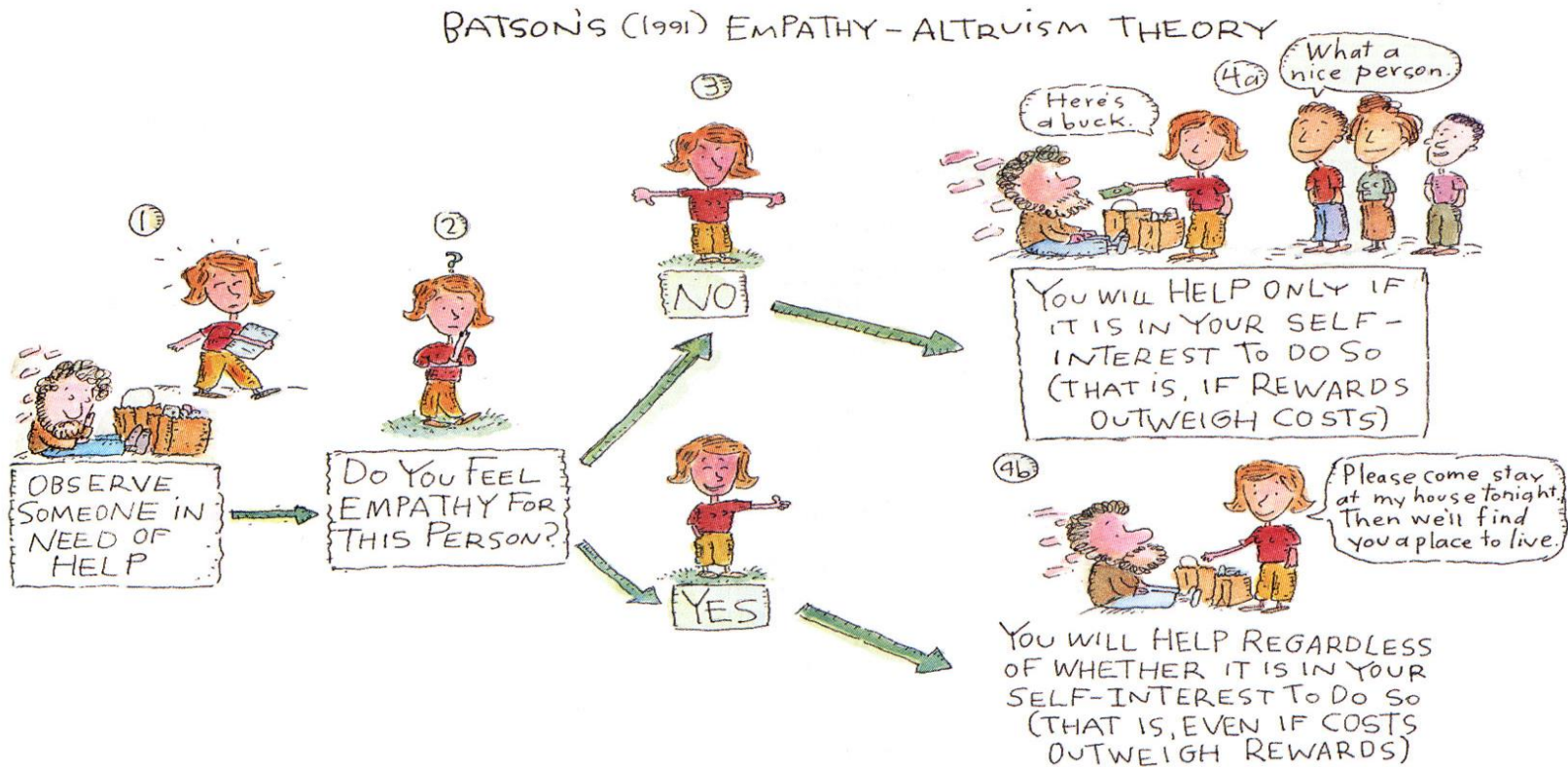
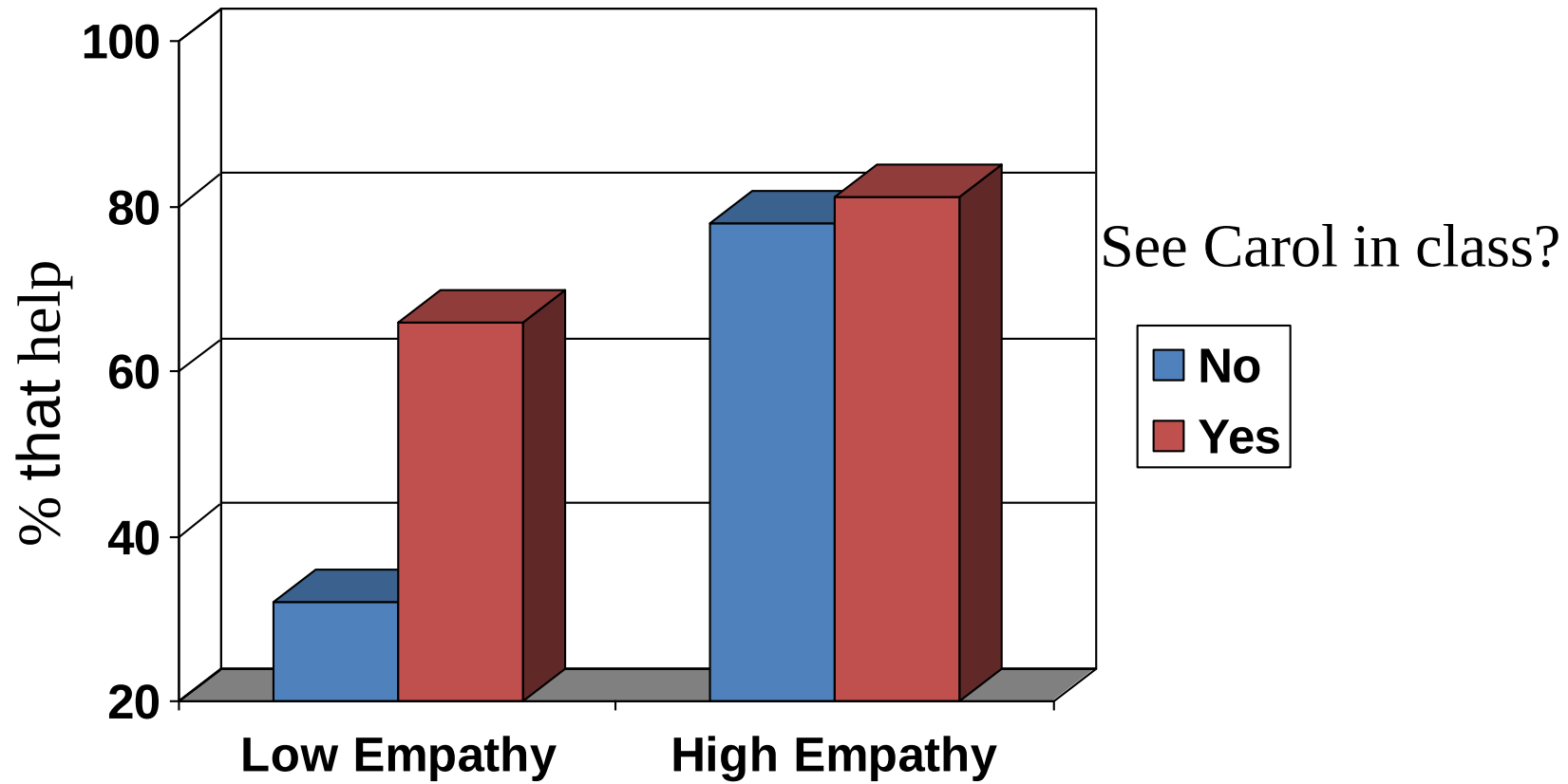


FIGURE 11.1 Batson's (1991) empathy-altruism theory.

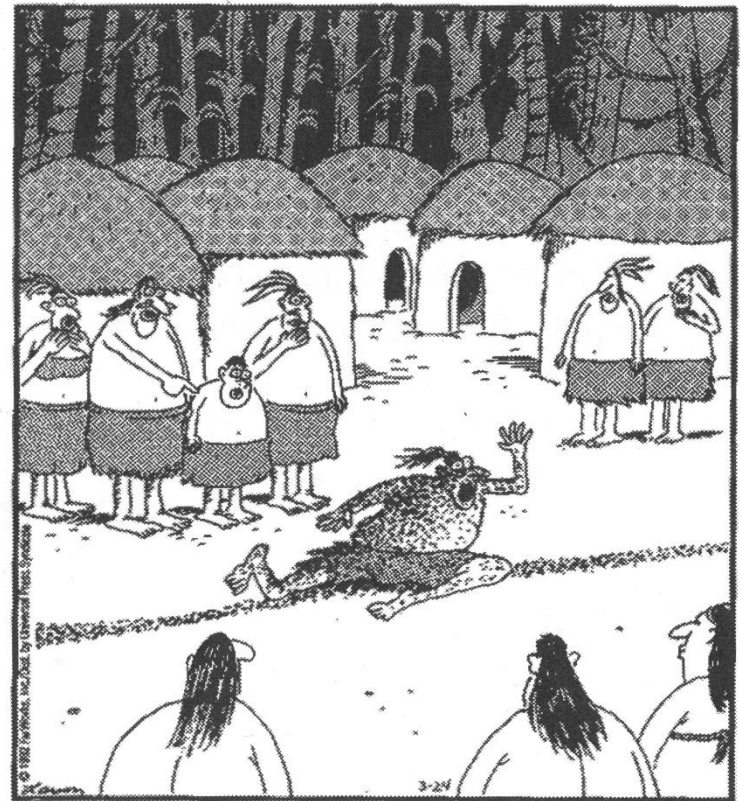
- Batson (2002)
 - Participants hear a story about a student who has had a bad accident and may need to leave the course
 - Asked to take notes for her
 - Empathy manipulated (imagine how she feels)
 - Whether they would see her in class or not

Batson (2002)



Situational Factors: When Do People Help?

- The presence of others
 - Kitty Genovese: 38 people heard her scream for help
 - Latané & Darley: People will help less if others are present, we believe others will take action instead of us
 - Bystander effect



Crossing the village, Mowaka is overpowered by army ants. (Later, bystanders were all quoted as saying they were horrified, but “didn’t want to get involved.”)

Noticing/Deciding - Groups

- Darley & Latané (1968)
 - students complete questionnaire either by themselves or with two strangers



- working alone, 4 seconds to NOTICE smoke
- when in group, 20 seconds

- Latané & Rodin (1969)
 - Participants complete questionnaire
 - Experimenter leaves and is heard falling from chair

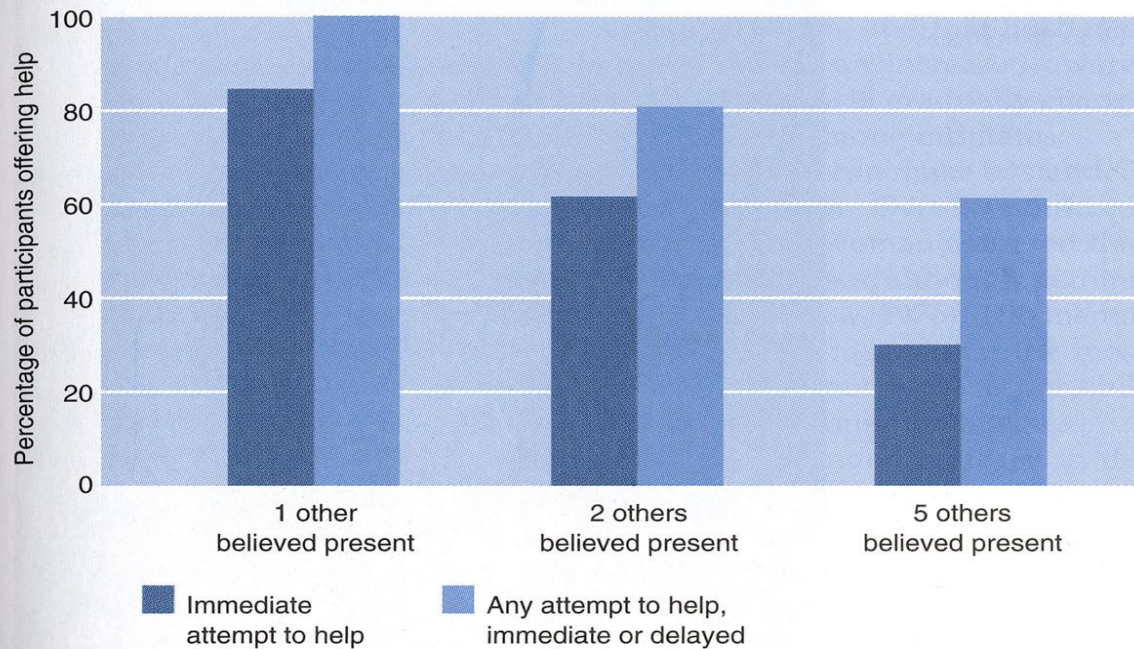


- when alone, 70% of participants helped
 - among pairs of strangers, only 40% of time did either person help

Taking Responsibility - Groups

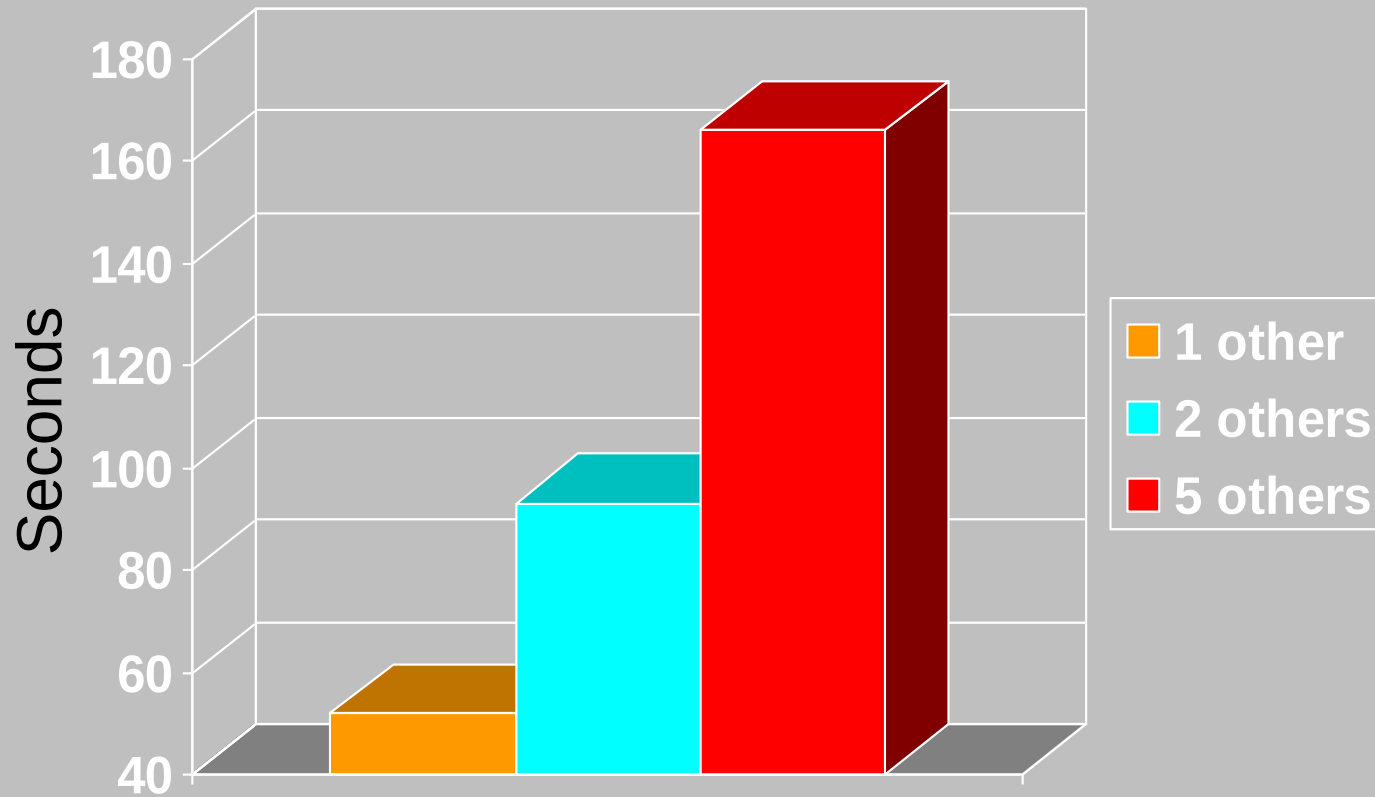
- Darley & Latané (1968)
 - intercom-based study
 - to guarantee anonymity, placed in different rooms, experimenter not listen during discussion, an accomplice lapses into an epileptic seizure

FIGURE 14.1 Diffusion of responsibility: Lost in the crowd



■ In this experiment, participants heard another participant having a "seizure" in what they believed was a group of two, three, or six people. (They actually heard recordings of other voices.) The more people participants believed to be present, the less likely the real participants were to help. (Data from Darley & Latané, 1968.)

Taking Responsibility - Groups



Taking Responsibility - Groups

- Darley & Latané (1968)
 - less likely to help, took more time to help
 - when asked, participants did believe that an emergency had occurred but didn't seek help
 - believed someone else would take action

The Implicit Bystander Effect

- Does simply imagining you're in a group lead to less helping?
 - Garcia et al. (2002)
 - Participants asked to imagine they're having supper with 30 friends, 10 friends (or control)
 - Estimate % of salary they expect to donate to charity upon graduation

Table 1
Mean Charity Contributions by Condition

Condition	Charity level	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Group of 30	3.6	1.3
Group of 10	3.9	1.5
One person and neutral controls	4.2	1.6

Note. Response options ranged from 1 = 1% or less to charity to 8 = over 25%.

The Environment

- Cunningham (1979) - more likely to help (and leave bigger tips) on a nice day



The Environment

- Milgram (1970) urban-overload hypothesis
 - people in cities more likely to keep to themselves to avoid being overloaded by information
 - not due to their upbringing

Time Pressure

- Darley & Batson (1973)
 - seminary students give speech about Good Samaritan OR summer job
 - either a few minutes late (or on time)
 - as they reach building, they see someone slumped in the doorway
- RESULTS
 - on time, 45% helped
 - few mins. late, only 10% helped
 - speech content had no effect!

Time Pressure

- Macrae and Johnston (1998)
 - primed helping (or control)
 - people were more likely to assist after help prime, but not when late

Who's more likely to offer help?

Mood

- Baron (1997) - good moods
 - more likely to provide help to a stranger when in the presence of fresh cookies
- Cialdini et al. (1987) - bad moods
 - negative-state relief model -- helping may repair our bad mood

Who's more likely to offer help?

Gender

- Males more likely to help when
 - victim is a stranger
 - there's an audience
 - there's potential danger
 - victim is female
- Females more likely to help when ...
 - victim is a friend
 - help involves caretaking

Who is more likely to receive help?

- Gender
 - males more likely to help females
 - Attractiveness (Mims, 1975)
 - females equally likely to help male & female victims
- Victim Similarity
 - more likely to help someone like us
- Victim Likeability
 - more likely to help someone we like
- Victim Legitimacy
 - more likely to help someone we believe deserves help
 - people with no control over misfortune