

**University of Al-Qadisiyah**

**College of Arts**

**Psychology Dept.**

# **SOCIALIZATION**

تشئة اجتماعية

**For 2<sup>ND</sup> Year Classes**

# 1.What is socialization?

**Socialization** is the process by which children and adults learn from others. We begin learning from others during the early days of life; and most people continue their social learning all through life.

**Socialization** is the Process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, language, social skills, and value to conform to the norms and roles required for integration into a group or community.

**Socialization** is the process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors to group members.

It is a combination of both self-imposed (because the individual wants to conform) and externally-imposed rules, and the expectations of the others.

It is also the lifelong process whereby individuals come to acquire a sense of their culture and develop their human potential

The way we are, behave and think is the final product of socialization. Through socialization we also learn what is appropriate and improper for both genders.

## **There are two types of socialization**

**Natural socialization** occurs when infants and youngsters explore, play and discover the social world around them. Natural socialization is easily seen when looking at the young of almost any mammalian species (and some birds).

**Planned socialization** occurs when other people take actions designed to teach or train others -- from infancy on. Planned socialization is mostly a human phenomenon; and all through history, people have been making plans for teaching or training others.

Both natural and planned socialization can have good and bad features: It is wise to learn the best features of both natural and planned socialization and weave them into our lives.

- Sometimes the learning is fun, as when we learn a new sport, art or musical technique from a friend we like. **Positive socialization** is the type of social learning that is based on pleasurable and exciting experiences. We tend to like the people who fill our social learning processes with positive motivation, loving care, and rewarding opportunities.

- At other times, social learning is painful, as when we learn not to drive too fast by receiving a large fine for speeding. **Negative socialization** occurs when others use punishment, harsh criticisms or anger to try to "teach us a lesson;" and often we come to dislike both negative socialization and the people who impose it on us.

Socialization can be summarized as:

- The key to Our Humanity and personality.
- A lifelong process of social experience by which individuals develop their human potential and learn culture.
- The foundation for the **personality**, a person's fairly consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting.
- The process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors to group members.

### Agents of Socialization

- The primary agents of socialization are the family, the peer group, the school, and the mass media.
- As the principal socializer of young children, the family is the most important agent of socialization in most societies.
- As children grow older, forces outside the family—such as friends, school, and mass media—increasingly influence them.
- Resocialization, or the process of learning new values and norms, can be voluntary or involuntary.

### Primary Agents

Sociologists use the term *agents of socialization* to describe the specific individuals, groups, and institutions that enable socialization to take place.

#### *The Family*

- Most important agent in most societies
- Usually first agent
- Can be intentional or unintentional
- Reflects the social groups family belongs to

#### *The Peer Group*

- Composed of individuals of roughly equal age and similar social characteristics
- Particularly important during pre-teen and early teen years
- Socialization focuses on values of the **peer group**

## 2. Human Development

**Development** refers to changes over time in a person's body, thought, and behavior due to biological and environmental influence. **Developmental psychologists** focus on common features of human development. They usually divide the lifespan into developmental periods or stages that most people share.

### Developmental Periods in the Human Lifespan

**Table 1-1** Developmental Periods in the Human Lifespan

Some developmental periods are defined primarily by biological events (e.g. the prenatal period), while others are defined more by societal expectations (e.g., adolescence).

<b>Prenatal period:</b>	Conception to birth
<b>Infancy:</b>	Birth to 18–24 months of age
<b>Toddlerhood:</b>	12–15 months to 2–3 years of age
<b>Early childhood:</b>	2–3 years to 5–6 years of age
<b>Middle childhood:</b>	6 years to approximately 12 years of age
<b>Adolescence:</b>	Approximately 12 years to 18–21 years of age
<b>Young adulthood:</b>	18–21 years to 40 years of age
<b>Middle adulthood:</b>	40 years to 60–65 years of age
<b>Older adulthood:</b>	60–65 years of age to death

### The Nature of Human Development

- Individual biology and the environment interact.
- Society and culture are powerful influences.
- Children are viewed more favorably today than in the past.
- Collectivist cultures stress interdependence and cooperation.
- Individualistic cultures emphasize competition and individual achievement.

### The Domains of Human Development

- Physical:** changes in physical shape, size, sensory capabilities, motor skills
- Cognitive:** Acquisition of skills in perceiving, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, language
- Personality:** Acquiring stable and enduring personality traits

d. **Socio-cultural** : The processes of *socialization* and *enculturation*

## **The Scientific Approach to Studying Human Development**

The scientific method uses specific techniques and ethical guidelines to study human behavior. Methods include:

- *Descriptive*: case studies, observations, surveys, interviews, and psychological tests
- *Longitudinal Studies*: study people over time
- *Correlational research*: looks at relationships between variables
- *Experiments*: test hypothesis by means of rigid controls

## **Psychological vs. Sociological Views**

### **Psychology**

Emphasizes studying the personal identity (personality and self) in an attempt to understand attitudes and behavior.

### **Sociology**

Emphasizes studying the development of a social identity, the part of self that is built up over time through participation in social life.

## **Psychology: Socialization as Crisis**

### **Sigmund Freud**

Socialization is marked by the continual battle between innate urges and the demands of society to act civilized

## **Erik Erikson: Eight Stages of Development**

### **1. Infancy: Birth - 18 mos.**

Ego Development Outcome: Trust vs. Mistrust. Basic strength: Drive and Hope Success in this stage teaches basic trust and confidence in life, in the future, and in other people.

### **2. Early Childhood: 18 mos. - 3 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Autonomy vs. Shame. Basic Strengths: Self-control, Courage, and Will. During this stage, children learn to master skills on their own. They learn to walk, talk and feed themselves.

### **3. Play Age: 3 - 5 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Initiative vs. Guilt Basic Strength: Purpose. During this stage children experience a desire to copy the adults and take initiative in creating play situations.

#### **4. School Age: 6 - 12 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Industry vs. Inferiority Basic Strengths: Method and Competence Children in this stage are capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, which gives them a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage ...

#### **5. Adolescence: 12 - 18 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Identity vs. Role Confusion Basic Strengths: Devotion and Fidelity Up to this point, according to Erikson, development depends mostly on what is done to us. From this point on, development depends more on what we do. The task of this stage is to discover who we are as individuals separate from our family and as members of a wider society. Failure in this stage results in role confusion.

#### **6. Young adulthood: 18 – 35 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation Basic Strengths: Affiliation and Love. At this stage we try to find mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage and friends. We also usually begin to start a family. If we are successful at these tasks, we experience deep intimacy. If unsuccessful, isolation and distance from others results.

#### **6. Young adulthood: 18 – 35 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation Basic Strengths: Affiliation and Love. At this stage we try to find mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage and friends. We also usually begin to start a family.

#### **7. Middle Adulthood: 35 - 55 or 65 yrs.**

Ego Development Outcome: Generativity vs. Self absorption or Stagnation Basic Strengths: Production and Care The significant task of middle age is to transmit culture through the family and to establish a stable environment.

#### **8. Late Adulthood: 55 or 65 – Death.**

Ego Development Outcome: Integrity vs. Despair Basic Strengths: Wisdom Older adults often look back on their lives with happiness and feel fulfilled that life is meaningful and they have contributed to life.

## Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

- Trust versus mistrust – birth to 1 year
- Autonomy versus shame and doubt – 12 to 36 months
- Initiative versus guilt – 3 to 6 years
- Industry versus inferiority – 6 to 12 years
- Ego identity versus ego diffusion – 12 to 18 years
- Intimacy versus isolation – 18 to 40 years
- Generativity versus self-absorption – 40 to 65 years
- Integrity versus despair – 65 years and older

# **Jean Piaget: Theory of Cognitive Development**

## **A. Sensorimotor Stage 0 - 2 yrs.**

1. Children explore the world through their senses and motor activities
2. Children “know” the world only by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing

## **B. Preoperational Stage 2 - 7 yrs.**

1. Children learn to use symbols to represent things (language)
2. Children can begin pretending and thinking about things that they cannot see

## **C. Concrete Operational Stage 7 - 11 yrs.**

1. Children focus on how and why
2. Logical reasoning develops but is linked primarily to concrete objects that children can see.
3. Children can add, subtract, and use the principle of conservation

## **D. Formal Operational Stage 12+ yrs.**

1. Individuals think abstractly and critically
2. Concepts can be manipulated and problem-solving thought out in advance
3. Historical time can be fully understood
4. Individuals gain the capacity to understand and use metaphors
5. Not all adults become fully operational

## **Jean Piaget Cognitive Development**

### **Cognition**

- How people think and understand

### **Stages of development**

- Sensorimotor stage: Sensory contact understanding
- Preoperational stage: Use of language and other symbols
- Concrete operational stage: Perception of causal connections in surroundings
- Formal operational stage: Abstract, critical thinking

# **Lawrence Kohlberg: Theory of Moral Development**

## **Pre-conventional Level of Morality**

- a. Begins around age 7
- b. Moral reasoning develops based on meeting personal motives to obtain rewards or avoid punishment
- c. Right = what feels good to me

## **Conventional Level of Morality**

- a. About 10 years into adolescence (appears by the teens)
- b. Moral dilemmas are resolved by established social convention, the law, or other sources of authority.
- c. Individuals seek social approval for moral behavior.
- d. Right = what pleases parents and conforms to social norms

## **Post-conventional Level of Morality**

- a. Adulthood
- b. Individuals move beyond society's norms and consider abstract ethical principles—equality, justice, reciprocal rights and responsibilities may transcend authority.
- c. Conscience may override law.
- d. Some adults never reach the post-conventional level of morality.

# **Lawrence Kohlberg Moral Development**

- **Moral reasoning**
  - **The ways in which individuals judge situations as right or wrong**
- **Preconventional**
  - **Young children experience the world as pain or pleasure**
- **Conventional**
  - **Teens lose selfishness as they learn to define right and wrong in terms of what pleases parents and conforms to cultural norms.**
- **Postconventional**
  - **Final stage, considers abstract ethical principles**

# 3.Socialization and Personality

**Socialization** : The lifelong social experience by which individuals develop their human potential and learn patterns of their culture

**Personality**: A person's fairly consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting

– *Could a person's personality develop without social interaction?*

## Personality Development

An individual's personality is the complex of mental characteristics that makes them unique from other people. It includes all of the patterns of thought and emotions that cause us to do and say things in particular ways. At a basic level, personality is expressed through our temperament or emotional tone. However, personality also colors our values, beliefs, and expectations. There are many potential factors that are involved in shaping a personality. These factors are usually seen as coming from **heredity** and the **environment**. Research by psychologists over the last several decades has increasingly pointed to hereditary factors being more important, especially for basic personality traits such as emotional tone. However, the acquisition of values, beliefs, and expectations seem to be due more to socialization and unique experiences, especially during childhood.

## Nature Versus Nurture

A **personality** is the sum total of behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and values that are characteristic of an individual.

### ***Nature***

- **Heredity** is the transmission of genetic characteristics from parents to children
- **Instinct** is an unchanging biologically inherited behavior
- **Sociobiology** searches for the biological basis of all social behavior

### ***Nurture***

- Social environment can imprint characteristics on a child
- Pavlov's experiments showed that behavior could be taught
- Most social scientists believe personality arises from a mixture of both nature and nurture

## Sigmund Freud: Elements of Personality

- Basic human needs: Eros and thanatos as opposing forces.
- Developing personality.
- **Id:** biological/basic drives
- **Superego:** the norms and values we learn/the demands of society
- **Ego:** the mediator/seeks resolution between the demands of the id and superego
- Managed conflict : **Id** and superego are in constant states of conflict, with the ego balancing the two.

## Factors in Personality Development

### *Heredity*

- Characteristics present at birth include hair type, eye color, and certain **aptitudes**.
- Biological needs include hunger and thirst.
- Culture decides how you will use or satisfy hereditary characteristics. ▼

### *Birth Order*

- Personalities are influenced by brothers and sisters.
- Early-born siblings have different traits than later-born siblings. ▼

### *Parental Characteristics*

- Age, level of education, religious orientation, economic status, cultural heritage, and occupation of parents can shape personalities of children. ▼

### *The Cultural Environment*

- Each culture has set “model personalities.”
- Individuals experience a culture in different ways.

## Three Common Types of Modal Personality

In the early 1950's, David Riesman proposed that there are three common types of modal personality that occur around the world. He called them tradition oriented, inner-directed, and other directed personalities.

1. The **tradition-oriented personality** is one that places a strong emphasis on doing things the same way that they have always been done. Individuals with this sort of personality are less likely to try new things and to seek new experiences.

2. Those who have **inner-directed personalities** are guilt oriented. That is to say, their behavior is strongly controlled by their conscience. As a result, there is little need for police to make sure that they obey the law. These individuals monitor themselves. If they break the law, they are likely to turn themselves in for punishment.
3. In contrast, people with **other-directed personalities** have more ambiguous feelings about right and wrong. When they deviate from a societal norm, they usually don't feel guilty. However, if they are caught in the act or exposed publicly, they are likely to feel shame.

## The Development of Self

**Socialization** is the interactive process through which people learn the basic skills, values, beliefs, and behavior patterns of a society. There are many theories of how individuals gain a **self**, or distinct identity that separates you from other members of society.

### *Locke: The Tabula Rasa*

- A “clean slate” onto which anything can be written
- Believed adults could shape newborns’ personality
- Absorb the aspects of the culture they are in contact with

### *Cooley: The Looking-Glass Self*

- Process by which we develop an idea of **self** based on how we think we appear to others
- Three-step process
- Begins in infancy but continues throughout life

## Are there Personality Types?

We often share personality traits with others, especially members of our own family and community. This is probably due largely to being socialized in much the same way. It is normal for us to acquire personality traits as a result of enculturation. Most people adopt the traditions, rules, manners, and biases of their culture. Given this fact, it is not surprising that some researchers have claimed that there are common national personality types, especially in the more culturally homogenous societies. During the 1940's, a number of leading anthropologists and psychologists argued that

there are distinct Japanese and German personalities that led these two nations to view other countries as trying to destroy them.

- The concept of national personality types primarily had its origins in anthropology with the research of Ruth Benedict beginning in the 1920's. She believed that personality was almost entirely learned. She said that normal people acquire a distinct *ethos*, or culturally specific personality pattern, during the process of being enculturated as children.

## 4. Gender Socialization

Gender socialization is the process by which males and females are **informed about the norms and behaviors associated with their sex**

### TERMS

- Gender socialization

The process of educating and instructing males and females as to the norms, behaviors, values, and beliefs of group membership as men or women.

- gender

The socio-cultural phenomenon of the division of people into various categories such as male and female, with each having associated roles, expectations, stereotypes, etc.

### Cognitive Developmental Theory

Despite significant differences in child rearing practices around the world, there are some similarities. Boys and girls are socialized differently to some extent in all societies. They receive different messages from their parents and other adults as to what is appropriate for them to do in life. They are encouraged to prepare for their future in jobs fitting their gender. Boys are more often allowed freedom to experiment and to participate in physically risky activities. Girls are encouraged to learn how to do domestic tasks and to participate in child rearing by baby-sitting.

Sociologists and other social scientists generally attribute many of the behavioral differences between genders to socialization. Socialization is the process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors to group members. The most intense period of socialization is during childhood, when adults who are members of a particular cultural group instruct young children on how to behave in order to comply with social norms. Gender is included in this process; individuals are taught how to socially behave in accordance with their biological sex. **Gender socialization** is thus the process of educating and instructing males and females as to the norms, behaviors, values, and beliefs of group membership.

## **Gender**

One of the first questions people ask of expectant parents is the sex of the child. This is the beginning of a social categorization process that continues throughout life. Preparations for the birth often take the infant's sex into consideration (e.g., painting the room blue if the child is a boy, pink for a girl). It is important to keep in mind that gender differences are a combination of social and biological forces; sometimes one or the other has a larger influence, but both play a role in dictating behavior.

Gender stereotypes can be a result of gender socialization. Girls and boys are expected to act in certain ways, and these ways are socialized from birth by many parents (and society). For example,

- Girls are expected to be clean and quiet, while boys are messy and loud.
- As children get older, gender stereotypes become more apparent in styles of dress and choice of leisure activities.
- Boys and girls who do not conform to gender stereotypes are usually ostracized by same-age peers for being different.

## **Gender Segregation**

One of the most consistent findings in gender socialization research is that children, beginning by age three, choose to play with same-sex peers. The self-selected segregation is not influenced by adults, occurs in different cultures, lasts until adolescence, and is accompanied by rigid definitions of gender appropriate behavior and roles. Research provides one possible explanation for gender-segregated play; boys and girls play very differently.

- Specifically, girls tend to form close, intimate friendships with one or two other girls. They are more likely to take turns speaking, and express agreement.

- Boys, on the other hand, play in larger groups, engage in rougher activities that take up more space, and use interruptions, threats, and boasts.
- Both boys and girls successfully influence others in their interactions. While girls successfully influence other girls, they find it more difficult to influence boys.
- It is important to acknowledge that peers, like parents, significantly influence cross-gender behavior. Just as parents have more negative attitudes toward cross-gender behavior for boys, peers also seem to 'punish' boys for engaging in girl behaviors and activities more than they punish girls for behaving like boys.
- Girls seem to face less pressure than boys to conform to gender stereotypes, are more likely than boys to cross gender boundaries, and girls receive less negative attention than boys when they do participate in activities or games with the other gender.

### **Parental Socialization**

According to those who study gender from an individualist perspective, parents are the primary source of gender socialization. The different parenting styles used with boys and girls:

- **Parents** encourage sex-typed everyday activities. Children are differentially reinforced (with smiles, praise etc.) for the kinds of activities traditionally associated with their sex. Girls were positively reinforced for activities such as, dressing up, assisting with domestic tasks whilst boys were reinforced for more gross motor activities.
- **Parents** dress their children differently. This is a visible reminder that parents feel gender is important. Why are infant girls dressed differently from infant boys? Facially and behaviorally it is often very difficult to tell the different genders apart, but you can usually tell at least in some way from the clothes the child is wearing (Jackson, 1992).

- **Parents** establish sex-typed physical environments for their children. From the earliest physical handling boys and girls are treated differently. The bedrooms of boys and girls even as young as 1 year old are markedly different in decor and contents

- Even getting home from school is gender differentiated. Girls are more often picked up from school or instructed to come straight home than boys.

### **Peer Group Socialization:**

Some researchers study gender as a product of social interactions. Rather than viewing socialization as a hierarchical, top-down process - as when parents influence children – they study socialization as a dialogical process of mutual influence between peers. Indeed, because of the gender-segregated nature of children's play, same-sex peers are often the primary source of information for children about what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior for boys and girls.

### **Media Socialization**

In addition to parents and peers, the media – television, computer games, and literature – also communicate ideas about what is gender appropriate behavior for boys and girls. Research has shown that children's books, for example, are beginning to portray girls and boys in non-stereotypical ways; however, many of the books that predate this change are still available in libraries and book stores everywhere.

### **What is Early Gender Socialization and how early does it start?**

There is general agreement on what is meant by gender socialization: that the process starts at birth and involves learning cultural roles according to one's sex. From the start, boys and girls are treated differently by people in their own environment (for example, parents, siblings and caregivers), and thus learn the difference between boys and girls, women and men.

It is also clear from the comments received that gender socialization is culturally bound. As boys are favored over girls in most cultures, this is reflected in their self-image: boys are often more assertive and demanding, while girls are frequently more submissive and modest.

**A summary of recommendations** made by several contributors (based primarily on the list from Gary Barker) is as follows.

- Starting with what parents, children and local leaders say about gender roles and expectations, identify specific points of entry and opportunity for promoting change.
- Map gender roles in specific settings, understanding where change is already happening and how this change can be tapped or accelerated.
- Assess the environment for young children at home, examining how a literate home environment may benefit a child's learning at school and how material deprivation may hinder it.
- Foster greater engagement of men in the care of children.
- Focus on parenting and child-rearing patterns in the family (including the extended family) and community.
- Focus on group learning opportunities (including daycare centres, pre-schools and the early years of primary school)
- Focus on adult parents of both sexes, as well as on community religious leaders. Encourage parents to participate in adult education classes that integrate religion and a formal western curriculum so that they can see the need for and benefits of literacy for their daughters and wives.

This list of recommendations for positive gender socialization is a good starting point. But it is also a reminder that there is a vast knowledge gap.

This Discussion draws attention to an important socialization process that starts at birth, continues throughout the life cycle and contributes immensely to the gender disparities and inequalities faced by girls and

women in school and in later life. However, it also highlights the need for further analysis and research to elaborate on gender socialization that is embedded in our cultural child-rearing patterns.

**Gender roles-tasks and activities that a culture assigns to the sexes**

## 5. Psychology of aggression

### **Aggression**

*Human aggression* is any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm. In addition, the perpetrator must believe that the behavior will harm the target, and that the target is motivated to avoid the behavior (Bushman & Anderson 2001, Baron & Richardson 1994, Berkowitz 1993, Geen 2001).

Accidental harm is not aggressive because it is not intended. Harm that is an incidental by-product of helpful actions is also not aggressive, because the harm-doer believes that the target is not motivated to avoid the action (e.g., pain experienced during a dental procedure).

**Aggression** : Behavior that results in personal injury or destruction of property” (Bandura, 1973)

**Aggression:** Behavior directed towards the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.  
(Baron, 1977)

**Aggression** : Behaviour directed towards another individual carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm” (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003)

### **Violence**

*Violence* is aggression that has extreme harm as its goal (e.g., death). All violence is aggression, but many instances of aggression are not violent.

For example, one child pushing another off a tricycle is an act of aggression but is not an act of violence.

### **Why aggression?**

- Aggression is universal: Cultural rules restrain aggression
- Aggression aids social animals: Culture offers nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts and problems

### **Types of aggression**

- **Hostile** : Hot, impulsive Intentional use of harmful behavior ► the goal is to cause injury to the victim.
- **Instrumental** : Cold, premeditated, Intentional use of harmful behavior ► so that one can achieve some other goal.
- **Passive** : Harming others by withholding a behavior (e.g., purposely failing to convey an important message).
- **Active**: Harming others by performing a behavior (e.g., spreading vicious rumors).

### **DOMAIN SPECIFIC THEORIES OF AGGRESSION**

Five main theories of aggression guide most current research. The theories themselves overlap considerably, which is what instigated early attempts to integrate them into a broader framework (Anderson et al. 1995, 1996a).

#### **1. Cognitive Neoassociation Theory**

Berkowitz (1989, 1990, 1993) has proposed that aversive events such as frustrations, provocations, loud noises, uncomfortable temperatures, and unpleasant odors produce negative effect. Negative affect produced by unpleasant experiences automatically stimulates various thoughts, memories, expressive motor reactions, and physiological responses associated with both fight and flight tendencies.

#### **2. Social Learning Theory**

According to social learning theories (Bandura 1983, 2001; Mischel 1973, 1999; Mischel & Shoda 1995), people acquire aggressive responses the same way they acquire other complex forms of social behavior—either by direct experience or by observing others. Social learning theory explains the acquisition of aggressive behaviors, via observational learning processes, and provides a useful set of concepts for understanding and describing the beliefs and expectations that guide social behavior.

### **3. Script Theory**

Huesmann (1986, 1998) proposed that when children observe violence in the mass media, they learn aggressive scripts. Scripts define situations and guide behavior: The person first selects a script to represent the situation and then assumes a role in the script. Once a script has been learned, it may be retrieved at some later time and used as a guide for behavior. This approach can be seen as a more specific and detailed account of social learning processes.

### **Excitation Transfer Theory**

Excitation transfer theory (Zillmann 1983) notes that physiological arousal dissipates slowly. If two arousing events are separated by a short amount of time, arousal from the first event may be misattributed to the second event. If the second event is related to anger, then the additional arousal should make the person even angrier. The notion of excitation transfer also suggests that anger may be extended over long periods of time if a person has consciously attributed his or her heightened arousal to anger. Thus, even after the arousal has dissipated the person remains ready to aggress for as long as the self-generated label of anger persists.

### **Social Interaction Theory**

Social interaction theory (Tedeschi & Felson 1994) interprets aggressive behavior (or coercive actions) as social influence behavior, i.e., an actor uses coercive actions to produce some change in the target's behavior.

Coercive actions can be used by an actor to obtain something of value (e.g., information, money, goods, services, safety), to exact retributive justice for perceived wrongs, or to bring about desired social and self identities (e.g., toughness, competence). According to this theory, the actor is a decision-maker whose choices are directed by the expected rewards, costs, and probabilities of obtaining different outcomes. Social interaction theory provides an explanation of aggressive acts motivated by higher level (or ultimate) goals.

### **Person Factors**

Person factors include all the characteristics a person brings to the situation, such as personality traits, attitudes, and genetic predispositions.

1. TRAITS
2. BELIEFS
3. ATTITUDES
4. VALUES
5. LONG-TERM GOALS
6. SCRIPTS

### **Situational Factors**

Situational factors include any important features of the situation, such as presence of a provocation or an aggressive cue. Like the person factors, situational factors influence aggression by influencing cognition, affect, and arousal.

1. AGGRESSIVE CUES
2. PROVOCATION
3. FRUSTRATION
4. PAIN AND DISCOMFORT
5. DRUGS
6. INCENTIVES

## 6. Psychology of Social Relationships

### Everyone is Connected

People do not live in isolation, locked away in remote and desolate corners of existence without the presence of other people. Instead of isolation human life is woven together by threads of social interactions and connections which join all people together. Understanding the complexities of social environments, how relationships are formed and affect people, how people view themselves and their peers and how the myriad elements of society converge to influence individual human behavior is the goal of social psychology.

### **cognitive interdependence: the partner becomes part of the self**

In a close relationship, differences between the self and the other are erased; through self-disclosure and extensive interaction, one (1) gets to know the other person's inner life, (2) gets to know every aspect of the other person's life, (3) gets to know the reasons behind the other person's behaviors and preferences (shares the other person's perspective), and (4) influences the other person's behavior. This way, mental representations of self and other are linked into a single unit, and partners become cognitively interdependent.

### *insider versus outsider perspectives on relationships*

Outsiders (friends) could predict better than insiders (partners themselves) whether the partner's relationship will last. This is due to disclosures about the relationship from insiders to outsiders.

Through processes of interdependence, the partner becomes linked to a person's self-concept.

## behavioral interdependence: transformations in exchange

### *changes in the distribution of rewards*

The nature of exchange of rewards is different in close relationships; rewards are exchanged out of affection and care. Because the partner becomes part of the self, his or her needs and desires are not ignored.

As well as the reasons for rewards, the type of reward is also different in close relationships; whereas material rewards are exchanged in casual relationships, love and emotional support are exchanged in close relationships.

### *attributions in close relationships: it's the thought that counts*

Feelings and intentions that are conveyed by an act are more important than the act itself in close relationships.

Because the partner is part of the self, attributions of the partner's behaviors are also biased in a self-serving way; positive behaviors are inflated in significance and attributed to inner qualities, whereas negative behaviors are minimized and attributed to situational causes.

## affective interdependence: intimacy and commitment

Feelings of closeness change the sense of intimacy and the level of commitment to the relationship.

### *psychological intimacy*

**Intimacy** is defined as a positive emotional bond that includes understanding and support.

Intimacy is enhanced by interactions that involve self-disclosure (step 1), which is responded to with acceptance, acknowledgment, and understanding (step 2). This response, in turn, makes the self-discloser feel understood, valued, and esteemed (step 3).

Intimate feelings are deeply linked with positive emotions of warmth, connectedness, and caring, and are so important to human needs that this is the most central reward of close relationships.

Bowlby (1969; see SP pp. 410–411) even suggested this link has an evolutionary basis; an innate system binds people emotionally to specific

others by leading them to feel good when having contact with those specific others, and to feel anxious or distressed when apart.

### *commitment*

Commitment reflects the intention and desire to maintain a relationship for the long term, as well as a strong emotional bond to the partner.

When partners are committed, they feel comfortable relying on each other for intimacy, advice, and support, and this influences their actions and feelings.

Three factors are involved that create and maintain commitment. The first is satisfaction with the relationship. This is an evaluation of the rewards of a relationship compared with the rewards one believes would be available in alternative relationships (a comparison level for alternatives). The second factor is seeing the rewards of your relationship as unique, as not available in alternative relationships. The final factor is psychological and/or financial barriers, such as feelings of embarrassment, loss of investments of time, energy and self-disclosures, and financial, emotional, and legal difficulties.

For all of these reasons, relationships with stronger commitment last longer.

### types of people, types of relationships

### *attachment styles*

People have an innate tendency to form emotional attachments to others. Our experience with other people influences the ways in which we approach close relationships. Our beliefs about the self, other people, and the nature of relationships are summarized by our attachment style.

Four different attachment styles can be distinguished, with two underlying dimensions; view of others and view of self. People with *secure* attachment styles feel positive about the self and others, and are most likely to feel trust and happiness in close relationships. Those with a *dismissing* attachment style have positive views of the self, but negative views of others; they are low in expressiveness and intimacy in their relationships. *Preoccupied* individuals feel negative about themselves, but positive about others. They are high in emotional expressiveness and show the most reliance on other people. Finally, *fearfully* attached people think negatively about themselves and about others.

These different attachment styles influence the way partners give and receive support. Securely attached people seek more support when they are upset

and give more support when someone else is upset, whereas people with dismissing and fearful attachment styles seek and give less support. This demonstrates how attachment styles influence the ways people attain intimacy and experience love.

Related website: [More information about attachment styles](#)

### *differing theories about relationships*

People differ in their views about what it takes for a relationship to succeed. Research has focused on two types of beliefs (i.e., implicit theories of relationships): growth and destiny beliefs.

People who believe in *growth*, believe that occasional conflicts can be overcome with any partner. These people tend to have a relationship for a longer period of time. People believing in *destiny*, believe that a particular partner is either inherently compatible or not. Initial satisfaction influences whether the relationship will last for a long period of time or end very quickly.

### *gender differences in relationships*

Men and women place different emphasis on the rewards that relationships offer. Women prefer intimacy and sharing feelings, while men prefer enjoyable activities with their partner.

Sources of satisfaction also differ among men and women; men are satisfied when spending time with each other, while women are happiest when arguments and conflicts are successfully avoided.

### *relationships in cultural perspective*

Research in Western, independent cultures places an emphasis on voluntary "Western" relationships. However, many cultural differences can be found, for instance in the nature of the bond between mother and child. Gupta and Singh (1982; see SP p. 417) found that love grows in arranged marriages, while it decreases in voluntary marriages.

Demo: [Cultural differences in relationships](#)

## effects of relationships

Because a partner becomes part of the self, relationships influence our feelings, behaviors, and physical and mental well-being.

### *when things go wrong: intimacy, social support, and health*

Social support increases physical health and psychological well-being because it offers opportunities for self-disclosure, companionship, and enjoyable interactions. These are the same factors that are present in a satisfactory, close relationship, so satisfactory close relationships improve people's well-being.

Research also demonstrated that people with cancer who participated in support groups had more effective immune systems and lived longer than people with cancer who were not in a support group, but received the same medical treatment.

The effects of social support are stronger when given to women, and when provided by family and friends.

### *gender and social support*

There are gender differences in the type of support that is provided; women are more likely to provide emotional support, whereas men offer problem-solving advice. This difference is responsible for miscommunication between men and women; women often feel that their feelings are belittled when a man offers problem-solving support, while men feel they are being denied the uniqueness of feelings when women provide emotional support.

When people are under stress or ill, emotional support is more helpful. Accordingly, people feel healthier after interacting with women than after interacting with men.

### *when things go right: capitalizing on positive events*

Sharing a positive event is an important benefit of close relationships, because it gives an opportunity for re-living and re-experiencing the positive event. When sharing positive events with others, people experience more positive emotions and increased satisfaction in life.

### **so what does this mean?**

In a [close relationship](#), people have a connection involving strong and frequent cognitive, behavioral, and affective [interdependence](#). Many things change when transforming to a close relationship; the nature of exchange rewards and the type of rewards change, differences between the self and the other are erased, and feelings of closeness change the sense of intimacy and the level of commitment to the relationship. People can have different orientations in relation to the self and others in an intimate relationship: *secure*, *dismissing*, *preoccupied*, or *fearful*. The way partners give and receive support is also influenced by these [attachment styles](#). [Social support](#) increases physical health and psychological well-being. Sharing *positive* events results in experiencing more positive emotions and increased life satisfaction.

**next topic**

## **What is Social Psychology?**

Myers (2010) defines social psychology as “the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another” (p. 4). This definition outlines three distinct parts. The first of these parts is the concept of social thinking which includes how people think about themselves and other people, their personal beliefs, judgments and attitudes (Myers 2010). The second part is the concept of social influence. The culture in which a person lives, the religious groups, political or professional organizations he belongs to, his family, friends and professional peers are what creates the social influence within that person's life (Myers 2010). The last of these parts is social relations which is how people relate to one another and includes concepts such as attraction, intimacy, social prejudice, and aggression (Myers 2010).

## **The Biological Side of Social Psychology**

Social relations also includes behaviors which are biologically based (Myers 2010). Nature has predisposed people evolutionarily to behave in those ways with enabled their ancestors to survive and reproduce (Myers 2010). Many behaviors, such as giving support to a stranger have a evolutionary biological bases which supports the survival of the species as a whole (Myers 2010).