Helping Behavior

Discussion Questions

1. What are prosocial behaviors?
2. Why do we help others?
3. Do we help for selfish or selfless reasons?
4. Who helps? Whom do we help?
5. When do we help?

What are prosocial behaviors?

- **Prosocial behaviors:** Actions intended to benefit others

- **Altruistic behaviors:** Actions motivated by the desire to improve another's welfare

- **Egoistic behaviors:** Actions motivated by the desire to increase one's own welfare

Why do we help others?

- Evolutionary factors
  - Kin selection
  - Reciprocal altruism
  - Empathy

- Motivational factors
  - To obtain rewards and minimize costs
  - To feel and appear good

Why do we help others?

- Because it helps us survive

- **Kin selection:** A preferential helping of genetic relatives
  - Greater likelihood that genes held in common survive
  - Strongest in high-risk situations

Why do we help others?

- **Reciprocal altruism:** Helping others with the expectation that you will be helped in return
    - Greater likelihood of survival
    - Not restricted to basic needs

Why do we help others?

- **Empathy:** Understanding and experiencing the emotional experience of another

- Cognitive component
  - **Perspective taking:** Using the power of imagination to try to see the world through another's eyes

- Emotional component
  - **Empathetic concern:** Involves other-oriented feelings, such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness

Why do we help others?

Why do we help others?

- Because it's rewarding

- **Arousal-cost-reward model:** Suggests we react to emergency situations in the most cost-effective way to reduce the arousal of shock and alarm

Why do we help others?

- Because it makes us feel better

- **Empathetic joy:** Pleasure from seeing another person experience relief

- **Negative state relief model:** Suggests we help others to improve our own moods

Why do we help others?

- Because it's the right thing to do
- Motivation guided
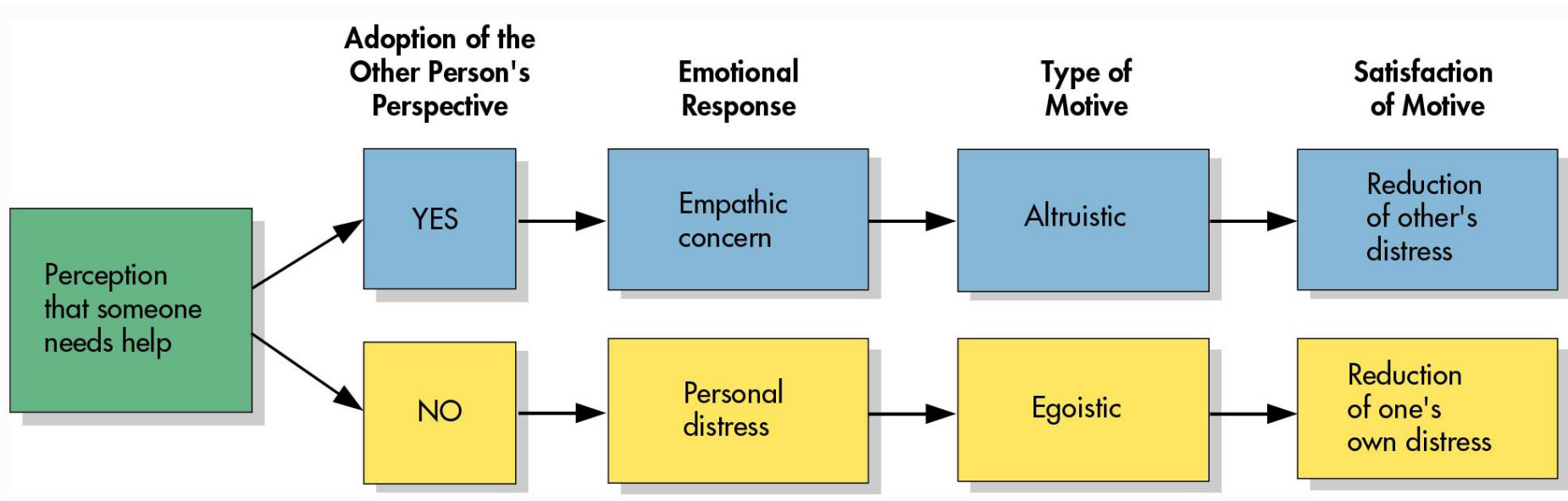 by social norms

Do we help for selfish or selfless reasons?

- *Selfish* reasons more common

- *Selfless* reasons more likely when focused on other's needs
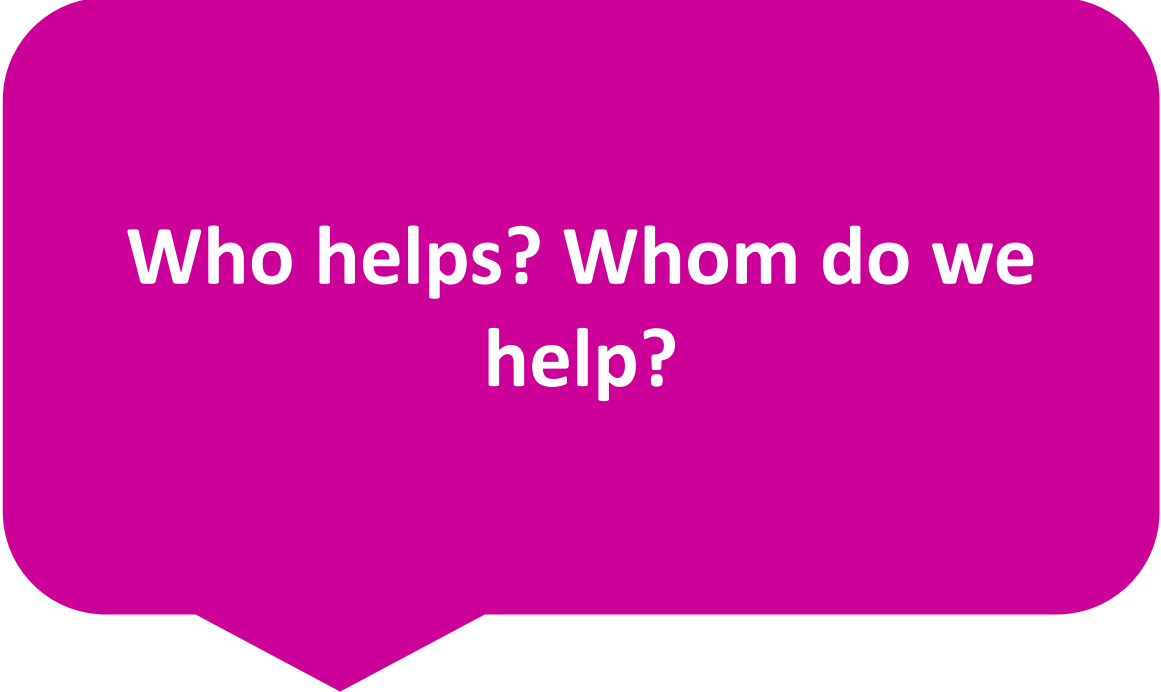
- Sometimes *both* reasons

Do we help for selfish or selfless reasons?

- **Empathy-altruism hypothesis:** Empathetic concern for a person in need produces an altruistic motive

|	Adoption of the Other Person's Perspective	Emotional Response	Type of Motive	Satisfaction of Motive
Perception that someone needs help	YES	Empathic concern	Altruistic	Reduction of other's distress
	NO	Personal distress	Egoistic	Reduction of one's own distress

Who helps?

- People who are helpful in one situation are likely to be helpful in other situations.

- Qualities that predict helping *in certain situations*:
  - Agreeableness
  - Humility
  - Empathy
  - Moral reasoning
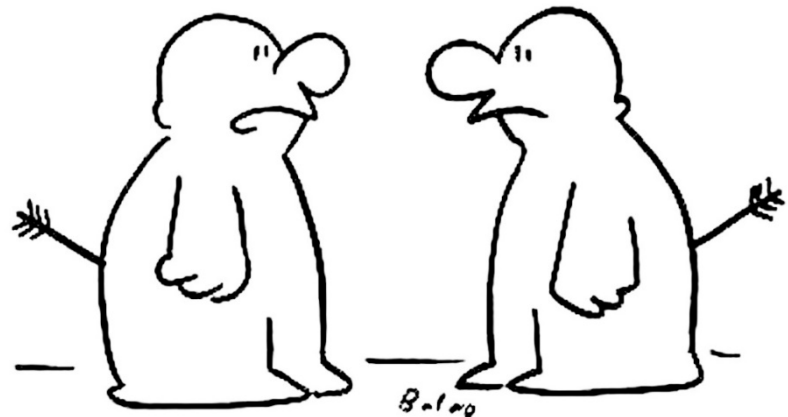
"I know exactly how you feel."

Whom do we help?

- Victims who are:

| Physically and interpersonally attractive | Personally not responsible for needing help | Acquaintances |
| Similar to us | Part of our ingroup | Women |
| | Individualists | |

When do we help?

- When we have time
- When we are in a rural environment
- When our culture values others' well-being
- When we are in a good mood
- When we are in a bad mood
- When we have been exposed to prosocial media
- When we observe prosocial role models
- When we are aware of prosocial norms
- When we are the only bystander
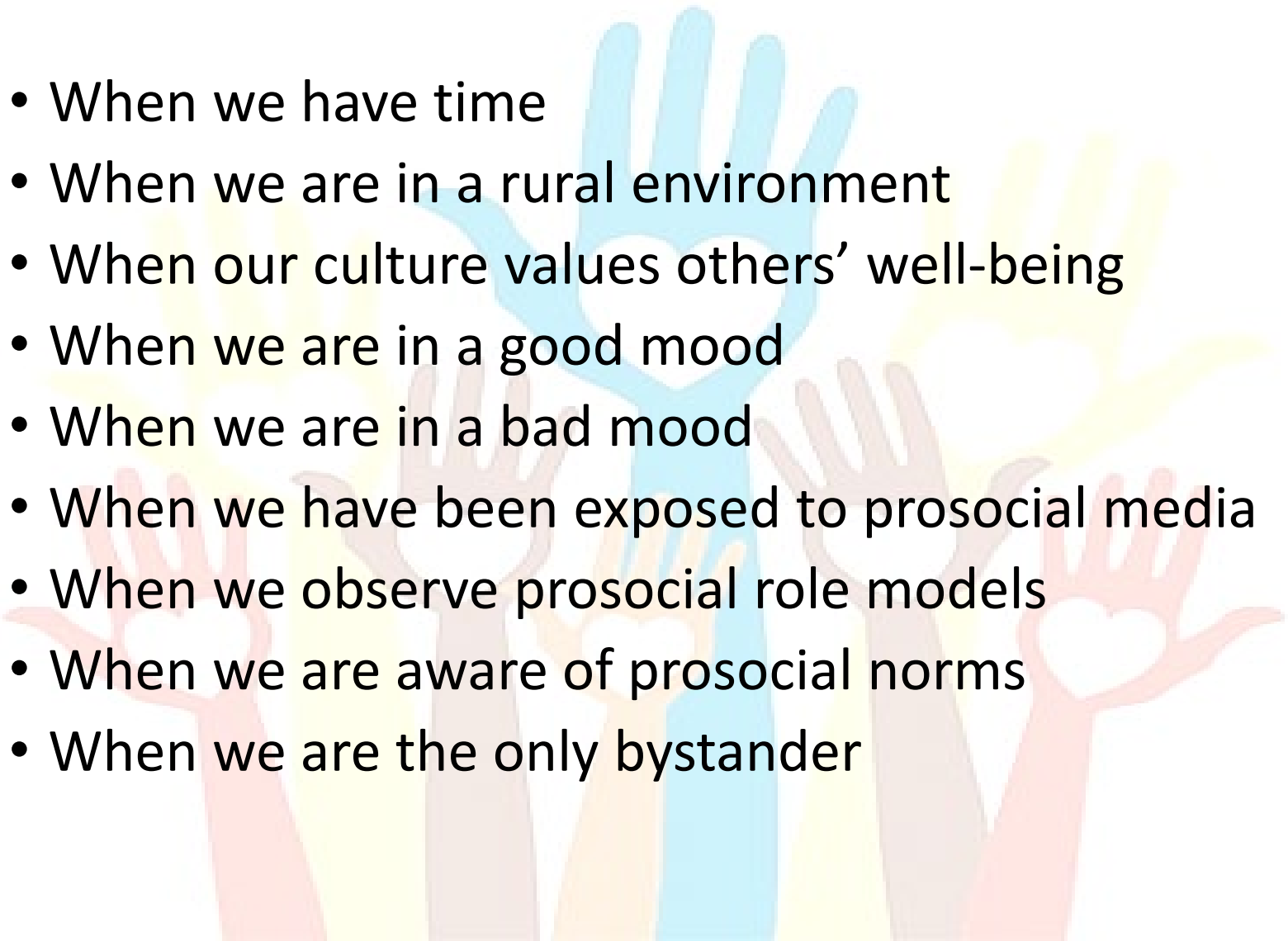
When do we help?

- When we have time
- Less likely to help when in a hurry or preoccupied

Darley and Batson's Good Samaritan Study (1973)

Percentage who helped
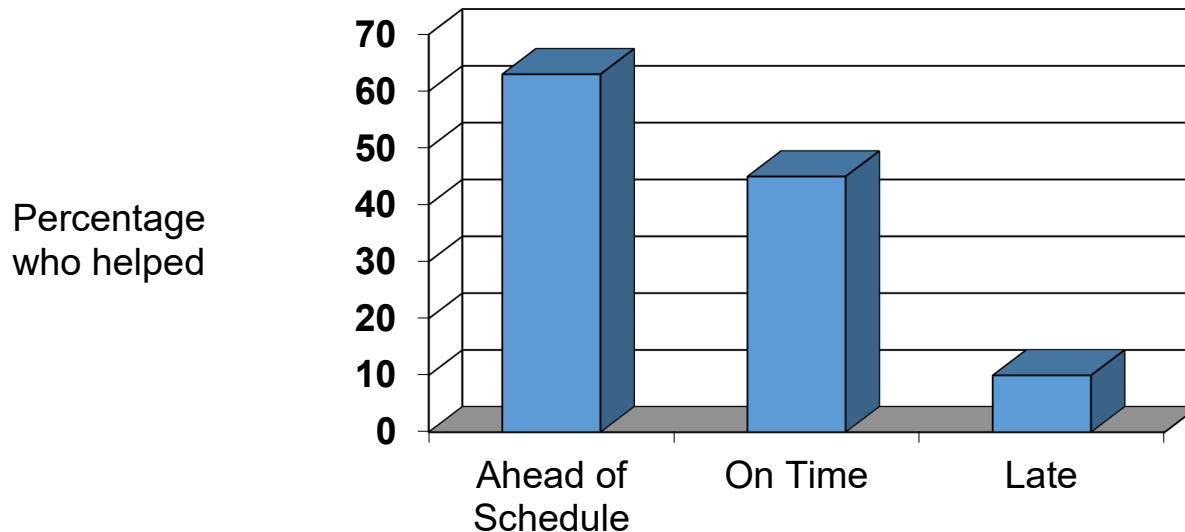
When do we help?

- When we are in a rural environment
- Less likely to help:
  - In urban areas
  - In large cities
  - In dense cities
  - In US cities with lower economic well-being

When do we help?

- When our culture values others' well-being

- Less likely to help:
  - In countries with greater economic well-being
  - In *non-simpatía* cultures

TABLE 10.3

Helping Around the World

Three types of spontaneous helping—helping someone who dropped a pen, who dropped a pile of magazines, or who needed help crossing the street—were examined in field experiments in a major city in each of 23 different countries around the world. The top 6 and bottom 6 cities are listed below, along with their respective ranks on a measure of economic prosperity, relative to the 22 cities for which there were available data. Cities with asterisks are considered to have *simpatia* cultural values, which are characterized by a concern with the social well-being of others.

(Based on Levine et al., 2001.)

Top Six Cities for Helping

City	Helping Rank	Economic Rank
*Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	1	16
*San Jose, Costa Rica	2	15
Lilongwe, Malawi	3	22
Calcutta, India	4	21
Vienna, Austria	5	4
*Madrid, Spain	6	9

Bottom Six Cities for Helping

City	Helping Rank	Economic Rank
Taipei, Taiwan	18	[data unavailable]
Sofia, Bulgaria	19	17
Amsterdam, Netherlands	20	6
Singapore, Singapore	21	2
New York, United States	22	1
Kuala Lampur, Malaysia	23	10

When do we help?

- When we are in a good mood
    - Desire to maintain a good mood
    - Positive thoughts and expectations about helping

- When we are in a bad mood
    - Take responsibility for causing the bad mood
    - Focus on other people
    - Think about prosocial values

When do we help?

- When we have been exposed to prosocial media
- More likely to help:
    - After playing prosocial or relaxing video games
    - After viewing helpful role models on TV

When do we help?

- When we observe prosocial role models
  - Provides a behavioral example
  - Demonstrates link between helping and rewards
  - Increases awareness of social norms

When do we help?

- When we are aware of prosocial norms
- **Social norms:** Rules of conduct reflecting a culture's standards of social approval and disapproval
    - **Norm of reciprocity:** Give back to those who give to you
    - **Norm of equity:** When you over-benefit, give to those who under-benefit
    - **Norm of social responsibility:** Help those who need help

When do we help?

- When we are the only bystander

- **Bystander effect:** Occurs when the presence of others inhibits helping
  - The more bystanders, the less likely they will help
  - Weaker in dangerous situations
  - Training programs effective

Obstacles to Helping

Step 5 — Provide help

Audience inhibition
   I'll look like a fool.

Costs exceed rewards
   What if I do something wrong? He'll sue me!

Step 4 — Decide how to help

Lack of competence
   I'm not trained to handle this, and who would I call?

Step 3 — Take responsibility for providing help

Diffusion of responsibility
   Someone else must have called 911.

Step 2 — Interpret event as an emergency

Ambiguity
   Is she really sick or just drunk?

Relationship between attacker and victim
   They'll have to resolve their own family quarrels.

Pluralistic ignorance
   No one else seems worried.

Step 1 — Notice that something is happening

Distraction
   Stop fooling around, kids, we're here to eat.

Self-concerns
   I'm late for a very important date!

Emergency!

Path to Providing Help

When do we help?

- Overcome the bystander effect by:
  - Ask the perceived victim if they need help
  - Take on the leadership role
    - *We need to help. This is what we're going to do…*
  - Single out at least one person to call 911
    - *You, in the red shirt, call 911.*
  - Ask for competent volunteers
    - *Does anyone know CPR?*
  - Give specific instructions to individual volunteers
    - *You and you, help me move them off the street. You, start CPR. You, turn off the ignition. You, find some water.*

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When do we help?

- "React first" (A. Bushnell-Chamness)
- "When in doubt, help them out" (T. Mourning & K. Zimmer)
- "Be the hero, forget your ego" (D. Hoffman)
- "No need to fear, YOU are here" (M. Ross & E. Gulledge)
- "One is better than none, spring to action" (B. Sachse)
- "Not all snitches are bitches" (A. Kaber)

When do we help?

- "If you see something, say something" (Department of Homeland Security)

- "Don't stand by, speak up" (Stevens Institute of Technology)

- "The measure of a civilization is in the courage, not of its soldiers, but of its bystanders" (Jack McDevitt)

- "What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander" (Elie Wiesel)