**Research Biases**Beliefs!

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|  | **Confirmation bias & belief bias:**   I believe something. Every time I read evidence, I look for things that will agree with my opinion. I don’t look for, or ignore things that disagree with my opinion.   Example: I believe in equality very strongly. So when I read articles, I always look for reasons we should treat people equally – “Look! It says in this article that discrimination costs us thousands of dollars every year! I’m right!”   I don’t want to read reasons why we *shouldn’t* treat everyone equally, so I don’t look for that information.  See also: Backfire effect! |  |
|  | **Backfire effect:**   If you say something I disagree with, I might get angry. I might not listen to you. I will argue more strongly with you.  See also: Confirmation bias and belief bias See also: Reactance |  |

Groups

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|  | **Group think:**   Everyone else has a different opinion to me, so I won’t say anything. I don’t want to disagree. I don’t want to be the only person in the group who thinks that.   For example: If everyone else thinks “A” is the right answer, I don’t want to suggest “C”. |
|  | **Bystander effect:** I think someone else will help, so I don’t have to.   Example: There is a car accident. Should I help? I look around – no one else is helping. Maybe I shouldn’t help. I’ll wait to see what other people do.   (There are actually times when NO ONE helps, because everyone is waiting for someone else to do it!) |

The pros and cons…

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|  | **Negativity bias & pessimism bias:**  I think things will go wrong. I worry about being hurt. I think things will be bad.   Example:  I’m thinking about joining an exercise class. But what if something bad happens? I might hurt myself or I might make a mistake and feel stupid. Maybe I shouldn’t try…  See also: Optimism bias, Declinism |  |
|  | **Optimism bias** I think things will go well! I don’t worry about problems. Everything will be fine!   Example: I want to buy a house but I don’t have a lot of money. I think everything will be fine, and just do it, without thinking about problems and making plans!   See also: Pessimism bias, negativity bias |  |
|  | **Declinisim:**  The past was better – the “good old days”.  The future is scary and will probably be bad.  Example: In the old days we could trust politicians! Now look at us! In the future we probably can’t trust anyone! |  |

It’s all about me!

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|  | **Self serving bias:**  If things go well, it’s because of me: I worked hard.  If things go badly, it’s NOT because of me: there are other reasons.  Example:  I apply for a job. If I win the job, it’s because I spoke well in the interview.  If I don’t win the job, it’s because the employer was mean, or they didn’t give me a fair chance. |
|  | **Fundamental attribution error:**  I judge other people without knowing all of the information.  But when I think about myself, I do know the information, so I give myself an excuse or think it’s not so bad. (I’m kinder to myself than others, because I know my reasons but not theirs.)  Example:  I hand up my work late. So does another student.  I don’t know why the other student’s work was late, so I think the other student should have done their work on time.  But I don’t think it was my fault my work was late, because I had to take my mother to the doctor so I couldn’t finish. |
|  | **Spotlight effect:**  I think everyone cares about me, and is interested in what I’m doing, but I don’t think about you or what you’re doing.    Example: I’m really worried about how my dance performance will go at school. My friend is also worried about hers, but I tell her not to worry, because no one cares about it that much. |

Do you like it?

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|  | **In-group bias:**   I like you more, because you are like me. I trust you more because you are like me.   Example:  Women might trust women more than men.  Young people listen more to other young people, instead of older people.   It can be on any common thing: Age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, language… anything that is the same! |
|  | **Halo effect:** I like this person, so they are right.  This person is pretty, so I think they are a good person.   Example: I might agree more with my friends because I like them. If it was a stranger, I would ask “Where’s your evidence?” but when my friends say it, I just agree. |
|  | **Framing effect:**  If something looks nicer, we think it is better.   Example, sometimes it seems like a really neat, good looking essay is better quality writing than a messy essay – but that might not be true!  Example: You think a shiny, clean car works better, because it looks nicer. |

Some fun, random ones!

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|  | **Curse of knowledge:**  I understand this, so you will too!   Example: If I know how to paraphrase, I think you also know how to paraphrase. |
|  | **Dunning-Kruger effect:** It’s a real thing- scientists have proven this is true! It is sometimes used as an insult.  People who are bad at things, think they are good. People who don’t know much, think they know a lot. They *overestimate* how good they are.   But people who are good, or have some knowledge, often understand they don’t know everything. They are more likely to *underestimate* how good they are.   Person who is bad at math: “I’m pretty good at Math!”  Person who is good at math: “I’m OK at Math.”   The person who is good at math knows they are ok with fractions, but they don’t know much about algebra, so instead of saying “good”, they say “Ok”.   The person who is bad at math doesn’t know fractions OR algebra, but they don’t think about their answer properly – or they don’t even know algebra is part of math! |
|  | **Sunk cost fallacy:**  Because I have already spent time or money on this, I want to keep trying.   Example: I’m struggling to find information for my research project – but I already spent two weeks on this topic, so I don’t want to change my question!   Example: I gambled money and lost 5 times, but I want to keep on playing: I already lost 5 times, next time I will probably win! I have already lost money so I might as well keep trying! |
|  | **Reactance:**   YOU CAN’T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!   I don’t like you telling me things, so I do the opposite of what you say.   Example: Someone is telling me to slow down, so I walk faster. |
|  | **Just world hypothesis:**  I want the world to be fair, so I think it is.  Example: If someone is not being paid for work, I might be very shocked. “Surely that’s not legal?! They can’t do that! It’s not fair! That’s not really happening, is it?” |
|  | **Placebo effect:**  If I do something, I might think that it’s working, even if it’s not.  Example: In the past, scientists gave out fake medicine. The people with the fake medicine felt better, even though their “medicine” was just sugar!   “Wow, that medicine really helped Doc! I feel great!” |

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|  | **Barnum effect:**  There isn’t much information, so I just decide the answer. Or, there isn’t much information, but I’ll make a guess to get more information.   Example:  My star sign said “Taurus. Something positive will happen this week!”   And today, I found $5 on the ground so it MUST be true! I believe in star signs now!  (We can look for *any* good thing as a sign that this is true – but that doesn’t mean that it actually *is* true, or that it will always work!) |
|  | **Availability heuristic:**  This happened to me, so it’s probably the same.  I read about something strange yesterday– maybe it’s like that!    Example: There’s an article about problems in schools. I remember my days in school – my teacher was really mean. I bet this is like that – the problem is probably that teachers are being mean.   (Instead of looking for information and facts, I use my own memories.) |
|  | **Anchoring:** I read the first article. When I read other things *after,* I think about that first article. The first information becomes the “truth” that you judge everything else by.   Example: The first article I read about Thebarton Senior College was a complaint. It said the school was really bad. (Example only!)   The next article I read says Thebarton is really good, but now I’m thinking of that first article… how can the second article be true (that Thebarton is really good) when the first article said it was really bad?  Example: The starting price is $2000 for this TV. If I see another TV for $1000, I wonder – why is it so cheap? Is there something wrong with it? I thought $2000 was the usual price? |