

## **Advance Course in Social Psychology**

### **Lecture 12: Prosocial Behavior: Part-II**

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with our discussion with prosocial behavior. In the previous lecture, I talked about some different perspectives on helping behavior. Today I will talk about factors influencing prosocial behavior that how a person decides to engage in a prosocial act or offer help to the person in need. It can be a need, it can be an emergency. So, certain factors have been identified by social psychologist that is situational factor which talks about the bystander effect.

As we understand the literal meaning of bystander that a person who is present in any situation or any event that has occurred, but at that same time the person is not engaged or involved in that particular situation, but he witnesses that situation or event. So, social psychologist have talked about the bystander effect while responding to an emergency. How a bystander responds to an emergency based on a typical decision model. So, the fact that the likelihood of a prosocial response to any emergency is affected by the number of bystanders who are present.

The idea is that any accident that has taken place on the road, people will collect will come together all together on that spot of accident, but it is observed that as soon as a number of bystanders increases, then there are less chances or likelihood that the any bystander would come forward to help the person who has made the accident. And at the same time, the time also passes by, but there is no help by any bystander or the witness of the accident. So, this is a bystander effect. So, as the number of bystander increases, the probability that any one bystander will help also decreases because the person thinks that one bystander would think that the other person would help, then second would say the third would help, third would say the fourth it might be fourth will help. And under such circumstances, the person tend to diffuse their responsibility on to the others and there is no knowledge about the event or how the person can be of any help to that person who has made the accident.

So, and the amount of time that passes before help occurs also increases. So, the number of bystanders increases, the chances that the help will come forward also decreases and as the time increases, as the time that passes away, the help would occur that will also not come and vary in time. For example, when someone drops a stack of papers on a crowded sidewalk, most people are likely to continue passing by him or her. That is very obvious. We all are human beings, we tend to exhibit such kind of behavioral dispositions.

So, this example says that there are other serious accidents that takes place on the road and we tend to just pass by. So, this is a bystander effect that in wonder what circumstances any person would extend his help. So, how the factors influence pro-social behavior. So, this example can be extended to even more urgent situations such as a car crash or natural disaster. Even there is a car accident on the road, we will just pass by and there are certain natural reasons that why we pass by because we have no idea that how that and there is no schedule that any immediate situation will occur on the road.

We just pass by. The other is that everybody is very much preoccupied with his or her own work. We cannot even imagine in our dreams, our wildest thoughts that any accident would happen here and we are standing on the road. But all these instances when all been collected together, then again the outcome of that instance is that there are less chances that people would come forward to help the person in any emergent situation. So, the decision model of bystander intervention noted that whether or not an individual gives aid in a situation depends upon the analysis of the situation.

Now, this is also one way to analyze the decision model that we are not aware accidents, the international disasters are not scheduled. It happens naturally and it happens abruptly. We are not prepared for it and we have no knowledge about what kind of accident it is and how we can help. For instance, it is easy to understand that a firefighter knows its role and they know even as a bystander, they will help the burning building. A doctor knows that or even a skilled nurse knows how to give first aid to a person on the road.

But most of the time the bystanders are novice, they have no idea about the situation because they are not overloaded with any kind of information and they tend to analyze the situation in very different perspectives. So, an individual is considered whether or not the situation requires their assistance, if the assistance is the responsibility of the individual and how to help. So, who will decide as a bystander that it is my responsibility or not? It depends on what skill you have, it depends on the information we have. Now, that information can be incomplete or it can be unambiguous at the same time. We are not aware that what exactly has happened.

We are not aware that what kind of information is required. We are not aware that whether we have that skill or to help that person or not. Even in groups also, when members are not skilled enough to take any decision, it is expected from the leader to take some decision to resolve any issue. But as a bystander effect or we are standing on the road and we have witnessed a road accident, we cannot do anything. This is a bystander effect and how a bystander will decide whether I can help or not or whether I have to help or not.

When we are not aware of the situation, we tend to pass on that responsibility on to others. That is, we tend to diffuse our responsibility on to others. So, social psychologists have presented a decision model which involves five steps on the path to help in emergencies. So, the first path is notice that something unusual is happening. Who will notice? As I mentioned just now that emergencies do not happen on a schedule.

They are just happening in its natural course when we are not prepared that any natural disaster or any accident or emergency will occur in any event or even on the road. We are so much preoccupied with our own work. So, as a result, we do not anticipate any problem and as a result, we are doing something else and thinking about quite different matters when suddenly we encounter a stranded motorist and we have no idea what to do. So, under certain circumstances, we tend to ignore or screen out those sights and sounds because they are personally irrelevant. We do not relate with those events.

That is so natural because we were not prepared for any emergency. We were not prepared that anything is scheduled which is untoward towards us or to the other person and we tend to just ignore and pass by. This is the first step that how a bystander can understand his or her own responsibility to engage in helping behavior. The next step is to interpret the event as an emergency. Because we are novice to that emergency, we do not know how to react or respond to that situation but with the gradual process of time as the time passes by, we tend to interpret the whole situation that how much degree of urgency is there in any particular situation.

For that, we need to collect information from the situation and how we tend to interpret or collect that information in the correct manner. So, here there are certain factors that help a bystander to understand or interpret the situation in a very rational manner. At the same time, we are not very much overladed with concrete information of the situation and we tend to again ignore. But at the same time, when any bystander who is focusing or is witnessing any emergency, then there can be certain factors in terms of pluralistic ignorance. Pluristic ignorance refers to the fact that because none of the bystanders respond to an emergency, no one knows for sure that what is happening and each depends on the others to interpret the situation.

And the effect is, I as a bystander thinks that may be the another bystander would be knowing the real situation. The next person must be thinking that the next person must be knowing the real information that how this accident has occurred or how this emergency has occurred. Once the correct information is been collected by the bystander, then he or she can move to the third step that is accept responsibility for helping. Now this is a very crucial stage to understand that how that responsibility can be considered as one's own duty. How the bystander will engage in that type of responsibility? For that, one has to engage in certain behaviour where the person has to identify that is it my responsibility in the emergency or who will do it.

So this is clear. For example, as I mentioned earlier that firefighters know how to function when the building is burning. The police officers know how to handle or deal with the crime or the criminal on the road. We know in the parking lot that maybe any stranger is trying to open the car and we know what we can do is simply dial 100 and the police will come and he will handle that crime, criminal. Or it can be any doctor or any professional nurse who knows how to give first aid to the person who has made accident on the road. Now under such circumstances anybody would take this responsibility and we understand that it is a natural course of action.

You know what skill you have and how you can use it. But at the same time when we have no idea about what we can do, since we do not have any skill, we tend to diffuse our responsibility onto others. That I cannot do anything, let the other person or bystander decide that this is what he can do, let him decide. And we sometimes tend to leave that place immediately. So this involves diffusion of responsibility and it also involves evaluation, apprehension.

So here diffusion of responsibility means the more bystanders present as witnesses to an emergency the less likely each of them is to provide help and the greater the delay before help occurs this is the bystander effect. So when we are diffusing our responsibility onto other, if any bystander wants to engage in that pro-social behavior he or she can take initiative to call a doctor, to call the police and handle the situation. But in rare cases it happens and generally it is a bystander effect where person tries to or the bystander tries to diffuse that responsibility onto the other person. The next and the other aspect that whether to accept the responsibility or not also involves evaluation, apprehension. For example, that even the bystander thinks to help or engage in pro-social behavior or help the other person in need, the person also has these apprehensions in his mind that what people will think about.

Sometimes we are not known that what the person is and maybe the other person will try to take some benefit out of it, he can take some advantage out of our help. For instance Theodore Robert Bundy, he was a serial killer in America and after several trials he accepted that he has engaged in 30 murders killing, killing and suspicious women and he would engage in some acts where he has presented himself, opposed himself to be a needy person and every time any woman would help him and the person that serial killer would just abduct him and kill him or murder him, murdered him. So under such circumstances people have all these apprehensions that maybe the other person is a criminal and he is trying to pose himself to be very educated and sophisticated and what he or she tries to retaliate. Under such circumstances the person tries and decides not to help. So at this step 3, accepting responsibility for helping is not sure whether the person will help, the bystander will take any initiative to help in emergency situation or not.

But in case the decision has been taken by the bystander, he moves on the step 5 that is decide to actually help, decide to actually help. This requires the initiative or the right action to be taken by the bystander and using all the available knowledge and available help in the environment in the situation and then helping that person in need. So this is step 4, decide that you have the knowledge or skills needed to help. So once the step 3 is clear, the person moves on step 4 that is it decide that you have the knowledge or skills needed for help. Now at this point the person identifies his own skills that whether I can help or not, do I have that ability to help that person or not.

As I mentioned that had it been the bystander is a doctor, he would take the action. Had it been it is a police, police officer the person would take the action. Had it been it is any nurse, qualified nurse, he or she would provide all the necessary first aid to that person in need. As soon as the person identifies those skills, the person engages in pro-social behavior by arranging all the resources on the spot to help that person. Now once the skill is being identified or the need of the help has been understood or interpreted by the bystander, the person fully engages in the act of help that is deciding to actually help.

So this is how the model works in any emergency situation where helping is being induced by an individual bystanders understanding. So the first is to notice something which is emergent, engage in collecting information and initially in pro-rheistic ignorance. Then comes accepting the responsibility although it engages diffusion of responsibility and evaluation apprehension. Deciding by identifying one's own skill and engaging in helping behavior and the other is last step is to decide finally to engage in that helping behavior. So this is how the decision model is been implemented in any emergency situation to understand bystander effect.

The other aspect is attraction. Bystanders attraction towards the victim increases the probability of a pro-social response if the individual needs help. It is an individual's understanding if the bystander gets attracted to the person who is in need then definitely it induces it fosters pro-social or helping behavior. Then appearances for example, any for instance any celebrity can also meet accident on the road and that is an attraction for a bystander and he would induce that helping behavior to help that attractive person or any known person. So appearances or a physically attractive victim receives more help than an unattractive one. It is surprising to learn that bystanders are more likely to help a victim who is similar to themselves than one who is dissimilar.

For example, in any foreign country one there are two people coming from the other similar countries and if that person has met accident on the road in a foreign country then definitely the person with the same similar citizenship would also help the same person in need. So this is similarity in different forms also induces pro-social or helping behavior. The other aspect is

situational factor that is attribution. How we connote any meaning to the situation? Any victim of any imagined situation we will not help easily.

Help is not free. People tend to understand attribute certain reasons to the imagined situation and then decide to help. For example, help is not given as freely if a bystander assumes that the victim is to be blamed that means it is not only sympathy it is not only empathy. Sometimes helping behavior does not come because it is an individual's or bystander's attribution that it is victim's blame or victim's mistake that he is he that he has fallen into a state of emergency. We can understand this situation based on this example. In both the examples it is clear maybe in the first picture where the person is bleeding and lying on the road maybe the person was heavily drunk and he could not control his steps on the stairs and he has fallen down.

So anybody any bystander would just pass by while attributing this reason that the person was extremely drunk he is alcoholic and he would he or she would not extend any help to that person. So this is the attribution. In the another another picture it is similar picture and how the other girl in the picture is passing by. So these are the attribution that any bystander would attribute or explain that why the victim should not be help because it is victim's mistake only that he has caught in this kind of emergency. So attribution and attraction plays hand in hand a significant role in helping behavior by the bystander.

The others other is the pro-social model. Now in any emergency situation it is indicated that the presence of fellow bystander who fail to respond inhibits helpfulness. It is equally true however that the presence of a helpful bystander provides a strong social model. One bystander is not helping it will inhibit the help of the another bystander also because if one thinks that if he is not helping then why should I also help. But at the same time if one bystander has extended his help the other bystander will also be encouraged to exhibit that pro-social model. So the bystander who is showing some help initiative to help the person in need then it then that person becomes a pro-social model.

So it becomes a strong pro-social model and the result is an increase in helping behavior among the remaining bystanders. So one person will try to come forward to help the person to stand him on his feet maybe the another bystander will also come and he would collect the other things of the victim which are lying on the road to collect and hand it over to the victim and maybe the third bystander would also come he would stop any car make him sit in the car and go to the hospital for first aid. So bystander in itself can become strong pro-social models in addition to pro-social models also helpful models in the media also contribute to the creation of a social norm that encourages pro-social behavior. For example, any celebrity would advertise do model for some kind of pro-social behaviors in the society and they tend to become strong social models to actually market about pro-social personality. So pro-social models are being created by the bystanders

itself and at the same time media also plays a very important role to create more pro-social models through celebrity celebrities and political celebrities.

So this is how pro-social behavior is being determined. Next comes some individual factors they were the situation factors where bystander effect was the major discussion that how pro-social behavior is being determined. There are some individual factors as well which talks about social responsibility norms and social reciprocity norms. How we motivate or how the individual is motivated to help the person in need or in any emergent situation. So social psychologists have talked about two factors that is social responsibility norm which is a societal rule which says that every person should help the other person in need no matter what.

And with the gradual process of interaction with the society we tend to internalize those rules societal rules and we engage in pro-social behaviors. And the other is social reciprocity norm. It is the expectation that people will respond favorably to each other by returning benefits for benefits and the expectation is common in many interpersonal encounters and relationships. So here as the term implies and we have already discussed social reciprocity norms it is completely giving benefit and receiving benefit and it is been expected in close relationships. So when we are talking about individual factors social responsibility as a societal rule and internalizing and engaging in pro-social behaviors at the same time reciprocating altruism will tend to be tend to foster more helping behavior specially in close relationships.

For instance if we if a child is being rewarded for sharing his or her food with his siblings or class fellows then the person that the child is being rewarded and with the passage of time the person is reinforced to maintain those behaviors and enhance his image his self image in terms of pro-social behaviors. The person becomes an idol and helps to fulfill their own personal needs because they are also getting help in return. So they are benefiting and receiving benefit. So it is the outcome of engaging in social responsibility and social reciprocation. So these are the individual factors that induces helping behavior.

The other behavior is also personal or moral norm. We are helping or donating some money to any organization since we have internalized the concept of concept of social responsibility then there will be a point of time then where we donate and at the same time we do not feel any pressure from of the society and automatically engage in such kind of in such kind of altruistic behaviors. Now under such kind of circumstances that is personal or moral norm the person actually understands the concept of right and wrong no doubt based on social responsibility and the person understanding while understanding what is right and wrong they internalize the aspect and concept of helping and that becomes a personal norm not as a social norm. The internalization is so deep and so strong that even a social norm also becomes a personal norm or a moral norm that I am supposed to help that person by not facing any societal pressure but at the same time they are

actually internalizing this concept and transforming that social norm into a personal and moral norm. So this is how helping behavior is being induced. There are some motivational factors as well which indicates some moral dilemma as well that to help or not to help but ultimately how helping behavior is being induced.

The first is self-interest or sometimes called egoism where the person is exclusively concerned with his or her own interest and welfare rather than with the need and welfare of others. When we are talking about helping others what determines helping behavior and what factors inhibit helping behavior. So these are the factors which motivate a person either to help or not to help. So self-interest or egoism it is an exclusive personal concern with one's own personal needs and welfare rather than with the needs and welfare of others. The person is completely egoistic while engaging egoism while talking about his own interest and not thinking about other person's welfare.

The other is moral integrity it is the motivation to be moral and actually engage in moral behavior that means it is completely and personal responsibility to engage in moral acts of helping that I should help and the person needs help because the person is morally correct and that moral help has to be extended to that person. So this is moral integrity. The other is moral hypocrisy that the person is designed to appear moral but that satisfies individual's own needs and desires which is very much implicit. Hypocrisy is implicit. We try to pose something else while internally we have some other objective.

So we try to be morally correct but may be inside which is very much insidious in nature that we are not morally correct. So these are the factors which motivate or which actually push a person in a state of moral dilemma when not to help or ought to help. If it is about moral integrity then definitely the person is not in moral dilemma may be most of the time the person is encouraged to help but if the person is facing the moral dilemma of egoism or moral hypocrisy then the person is moral dilemma because the person is thinking of himself only but at the same time he is in a dilemma to offer help in a particular situation or not. So these are the motivational factors which push a person in dilemma. So these are the factors which fosters prosocial behavior in terms of situational factors where the bystander effect is being very dominant to understand emergent situation.

Then comes attraction, attribution, prosocial models, individual factors such as social responsibility and social reciprocity, personal or moral wrong or motivational factors that is egoism, moral integrity or moral hypocrisy. So we are through with this discussion. We will start with another discussion in the next class. Thank you so much. Thank you.