

Applying social psychology concepts & theories

You are learning how to...	In the context of...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply psychological concepts and ideas to explain real world behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanations of social influence processes

Use ideas from the topics you have studied to explain what is happening in each of these situations. Don't stop when you think you have identified a relevant concept or theory; what you need to do is retell each scenario using the psychological concept(s) or theory as a basis. Make sure you indicate why the person has behaved as they have.

Mike is a community support officer. Walking down a side-road in his patrol area he sees in the distance three youths climbing over a high wall into a disused factory. He shouts to them to climb back down. Two of them disappear over the other side of the wall. Mike runs toward where they climbed over. The third youth is sitting astride the wall. Mike tells him, 'Get down.' The youth looks at him for a moment and then jumps down on the other side. Mike hears him running off.

Jez is worried about his friend Seth. Seth has been spending increasing amounts of time with a religious group he joined when went to college. Jez thinks the group have some pretty odd ideas and he is worried because Seth appears to have started agreeing with them. Last time they talked Seth mentioned that he was thinking about quitting college and devoting more time to the group. Jez said he thought this was a bad idea but Seth said that all his friends in the group thought otherwise. He also said that he shouldn't really see Jez any more because his new friends thought he might be a bad influence.

Mr Crowley works as a middle manager in a medium sized company. He is in charge of a team of ten people. He is not well liked by his team because they think he treats them very badly. Whenever someone in his team gets something wrong he shouts at them and often humiliates them publicly. Even if they are doing things well he acts in a condescending way. Behind his back his team members call him 'Mr Crawly' because whenever a senior manager is around Mr Crowley acts in an obsequious and ingratiating manner, always agreeing with everything the boss says and barking out more orders than usual to his team members. Whenever he is asked to do something by his boss Mr Crowley does it immediately and without question, and he expects his team to act in the same way for him. He knows that his team don't like him but he says he doesn't care: it's because they've been badly brought up and never disciplined properly, not like he was.

Mark is revising in his psychology class. His teacher has arranged them into groups and is asking them to come up with as many ideas as they can think of to explain an example of social behaviour. Mark usually dislikes this sort of activity as he finds he can't think of anything when he's working with other people. Today, however, he really surprises himself with the number of ideas he is able to contribute – far more than when he was thinking about this topic before class. Mark put a concerted effort into revising psychology over the holidays.

Jeanine is at a parents' evening to hear about the school progress of her daughter, Ellie. All Ellie's teachers comment on how polite and obedient she is. Jeanine can't believe what she's hearing. At home, Ellie rarely does as she's told and often makes a point of doing the exact opposite.