What is Prosocial Behavior?

- Prosocial Behavior is voluntary behavior that is carried out to benefit another person

- There are 2 basic forms of helping
  1. **Egoistic helping**
     - A form of helping in which the ultimate goal of the helper is to increase his or her own welfare
  2. **Altruistic Helping**
     - A form of helping in which the ultimate goal of the helper is to increase another’s welfare without expecting anything in return
Helping is Consistent with Evolutionary Theory

• One principle of evolutionary theory is that any social behaviors that enhance reproductive success (the conception, birth and survival of offspring) will continue to be passed on from one generation to the next.

Helping is Consistent with Evolutionary Theory

• Kin selection
  – A theory that people will exhibit preferences for helping blood relatives because this will increase the odds that their genes will be transmitted to subsequent generations.

Helping is Consistent with Evolutionary Theory

• Reciprocal Helping
  – An evolutionary principle stating that people expect that anyone helping another will have that favor returned at some future time. Also known as reciprocal altruism.
Social Norms Define the Rules of Helping Others

• 3 social norms that serve as guidelines for prosocial behavior
  – Norm of Reciprocity
  – Norm of Social Responsibility
  – Norm of Social Justice

• Norm of Reciprocity
  – The expectation that helping others will increase the likelihood that they will help us in the future

• Norm of Social Responsibility
  – A social norm stating that we should help when others are in need and are dependent on us
• Norm of Social Justice
  – A social norm stating that we should help only when we believed that others deserve our assistant

Personal Qualities and Prosocial Behavior: Why do some people help more than Others

1. Individual Differences
2. Gender Differences
3. Cultural Differences
4. The Effect of Mood

1. Individual Differences
  – The Altruistic Personality
    • The qualities that cause an individual to help others in a wide variety of situations
Researchers have also identified 2 distinct emotional reactions associated with helping that are related to personality differences which are empathy and personal distress.

- Empathy
  - A feeling of comparison and tenderness upon viewing a victim's plight.

- Personal Distress
  - An unpleasant state of arousal in which people are preoccupied with their own emotions of anxiety, fear or helpless upon viewing a victim's plight.

2. Gender Differences
   - Men generally help more than women
   - Women are more likely than men to provide social and emotional support to others
   - Among children, there are few gender differences in helping
3. Cultural Differences

– Compared to members of individualistic cultures, members of interdependent cultures are more likely to help people they view as members of their in-group and less likely to help people they viewed as members of an out-group.

3. The Effect of Mood

– Mood also affects helping
  – Good moods increase helping for several reasons (e.g. make us see the good side of other people)
  – Bad mood increase helping because of the negative-state relief hypothesis, which maintains that helping someone makes us feel good.
When Do We Help?

- Bystander helping in emergencies
- Bystander effect
  - The finding that people are less likely to offer help when they are in a group than when they are alone

When Do We Help?

- Five steps to helping
  - Step 1: Notice that something is happening
  - Step 2: Interpret meaning of event
  - Step 3: Take responsibility for providing help
  - Step 4: Know how to help
  - Step 5: Provide help

- Pluralistic ignorance
  - Looking to others for cues about how to behave, while they are looking to you: collective misinterpretation
- Diffusion of responsibility
  - The reduction in feeling responsible that occurs when others are present
• **Audience inhibition**
  – Failure to help in front of others for fear of feeling like a fool if one’s offer help is rejected

Whom do we help?

• We are most likely to help similar others
• We also are most likely to help deserving others