



# Groupthink

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1972 - *Victims of Groupthink*

# [ Groupthink ]

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- Groupthink is defined as “a way of deliberating that group members use when their desire for unanimity overrides their motivation to assess all available plans of action.”

# [ Groupthink: Focus ]

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- Consensus thinking instead of good judgment in making decisions in small groups.
- Shift to risk

# Groupthink: Historical examples

- Navy preparedness at Pearl Harbor
- the decision to pursue the North Korean Army on its own territory by President Eisenhower
- Bay of Pigs invasion under JFK
- Escalation in the Vietnam War
- Watergate cover-up.

# [ What relates to Groupthink? ]

- High levels of group homogeneity
- Over conformity
- Too much cohesion
- Groups insulated from external forces
- Lack of impartial leadership
- Lack clear decision-making procedures
- **STRESS**

# Symptoms of groupthink: overestimation

- overestimation of the group
- Illusion of invulnerability refers to a group's belief that it is special enough to overcome obstacles.
- b. Belief in the inherent morality of the group refers to the belief that the group members are thoughtful and good, therefore the decisions they make will be good.

# [ Closed-mindedness ]

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- Out-group stereotypes are held by a group about its adversaries or rivals. Often, groups assume that these "enemies" are not intelligent enough to negatively impact the decisions that are made.
- Collective rationalization refers to the commitment of the group to ignore any warnings

# Pressures toward uniformity

- a. **Self-censorship** refers to the minimization of personal doubts and counterarguments by individual group members. Individuals refrain from expressing opposing views.
- b. **Illusion of unanimity** refers to the group's perception that all members are in agreement. Members usually remain silent when asked if they have additional information or comments, and the silence is perceived as consent.
- c. **Self-appointed mindguards** are group members who protect or shield the group from adverse information. These mindguards believe that they are acting in the best interests of the group.
- d. **Pressures on dissenters** refers to the pressure placed on individuals who express opinions or viewpoints that are contrary to those held by the other group members

# [ How to avoid Groupthink ]

- Establish standards requiring oversight and control
- Challenging the collective rationalizations and perceptions of the group
- Diversity of people and ideas
- Examine advantages & disadvantages
- Think of unintended consequences

# [ Iraq War ]

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- Example of Groupthink:
- <http://www.jmss.org/2008/summer/articles/dpfitzsimmons.pdf>