

WHAT IS GROUPTHINK?

COGNITIVE THREAT
TO TEAM DECISION-MAKING



GROUPTHINK IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON IN WHICH THE DESIRE FOR HARMONY OR CONFORMITY IN A GROUP OVERRIDES CRITICAL THINKING AND LEADS TO POOR DECISIONS.

THE CORE IDEA

In a tight-knit group, the priority shifts from evaluating reality to maintaining unity.

Dissent is suppressed, risks are ignored, and alternative viewpoints are lost.

ORIGIN OF THE TERM



COINED BY
IRVING JANIS
1972

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST WHO STUDIED WHY WELL-INTENTIONED GROUPS SOMETIMES MAKE IRRATIONALLY FLAWED DECISIONS.



HOW GROUPTHINK TAKES ROOT



CLOSE-KNIT GROUPS
Strong bonds increase loyalty but discourage criticism.



ISOLATION
Limited exposure to outside ideas reinforces shared assumptions.



STRONG LEADERSHIP
Directive or dominant leaders can unintentionally (or intentionally) suppress dissent.



HIGH STAKES & PRESSURE
Stress and time pressure drive groups to seek quick consensus, not accuracy.



DESIRE FOR HARMONY
Avoiding conflict feels safer than challenging the group.

WARNING SIGNS



ILLUSION OF INVULNERABILITY
The group believes it cannot fail.



COLLECTIVE RATIONALIZATION
Weaknesses, risks, and warning signs are dismissed.



BELIEF IN INHERENT MORALITY
The group sees itself as so ethical that its decisions cannot be wrong.



STEREOTYPING OUTSIDERS
Rivals or critics are viewed as inferior, biased, or malicious.



SELF-CENSORSHIP
Members withhold doubts or alternative ideas to avoid disapproval.



ILLUSION OF UNANIMITY
Silence is mistaken for agreement.



DIRECT PRESSURE ON DISSENTERS
Those who question the group are ignored, ridiculed, or punished.



MINDGUARDS
Certain members protect the group from outside information.

WHY IT MATTERS: THE CONSEQUENCES



POOR DECISIONS
Critical risks are missed and alternatives ignored.



DISASTERS & FAILURES
From corporate collapses to military blunders, the cost can be severe.



STAGNATION
Creativity and innovation die in environments where evidence is unwelcome.



LOSS OF TRUST
When failures surface, credibility and morale collapse.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST GROUPTHINK



ENCOURAGE DISSENT
Actively invite criticism and alternative viewpoints.



BRING IN OUTSIDERS
New perspectives expose hidden assumptions.



APPOINT A DEVIL'S ADVOCATE
Challenge the plan and stress-test the rationale.



SEEK DISCONFIRMING EVIDENCE
Proactively look for facts that could prove the group wrong.



FOSTER PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
Create an environment where people can speak up without fear.



SLOW DOWN
Take time to think. Pressure fuels premature consensus.

[ROCTD]

GROUPTHINK ISN'T ABOUT LOW INTELLIGENCE—IT'S ABOUT **social pressure**. AWARENESS IS THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE.



HF-07-GT