

Prosocial Behaviour



Pro-Social Behaviour

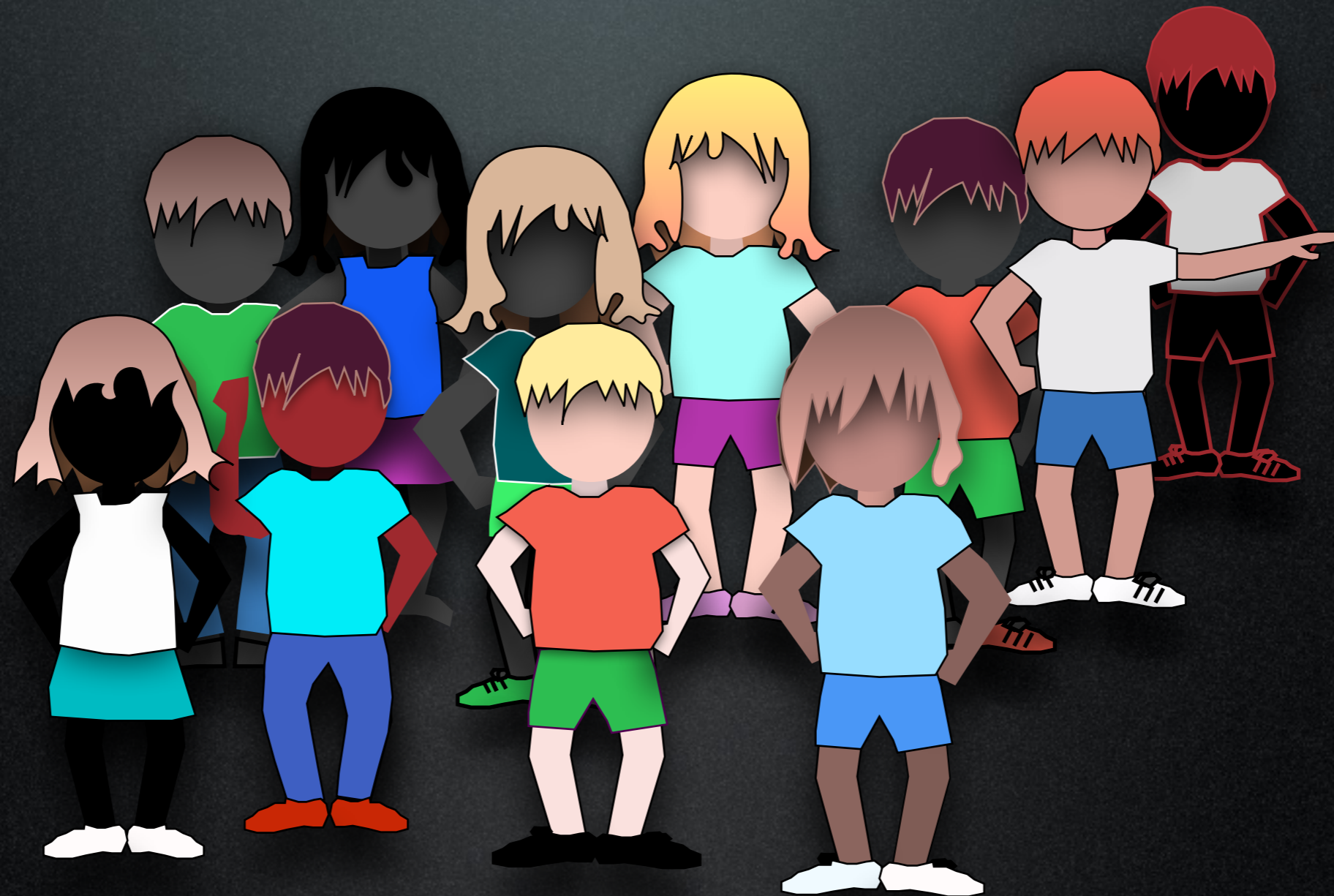
Any behaviour that benefits others or has positive social consequences

To be considered truly **prosocial**, it must be:

- voluntary (not forced)
- intentional (not accidental)
- helpful to another person or group in our society (the primary aim is helping)



First, a true/false quiz



Quick Quiz

1. The probability of people helping others increases as the number of people available to help increases. True or false?
2. People are more likely to help others if those others are similar to them. True or false?
3. People are more likely to help others if they can sense or experience the emotional plight of others. True or false?

Quick Quiz

4. One's competence to give help is not a factor in people's deciding to help or not. True or false?

5. Studies of prosocial behaviour, since they involve positive behaviour, pose no or few ethical issues. True or false?

6. Feeling embarrassed may be one factor that influences people not to help. True or false?

Quick Quiz

7. If you stepped into a lift and dropped several coins, the other people in the lift would be more likely to help as the number of others decreased. True or false?

8. Humans are the only animals that are actually capable of acting from motives of empathy. True or false?

Quick Quiz

1. The probability of people helping others increases as the number of people available to help increases.

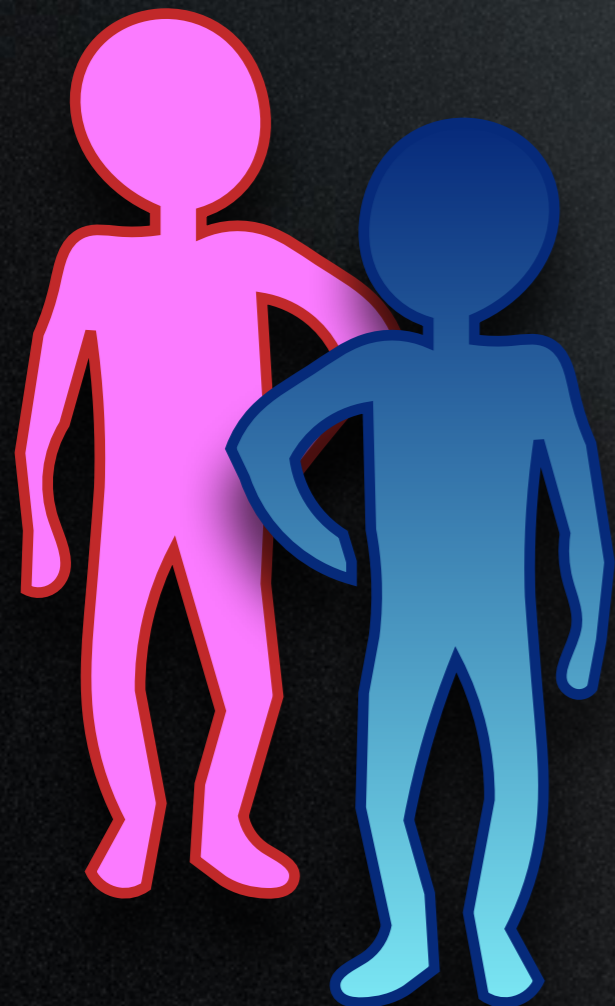
True or

false?

- Weird and counter-intuitive though it may seem, people help less the more other people are around.
- This is known as the “bystander effect” and is an insidiously dangerous aspect of social behaviour.



One or two
people have
been found to
be more
helpful, on
average,...



than individuals in
larger groups.



Bystander Effect

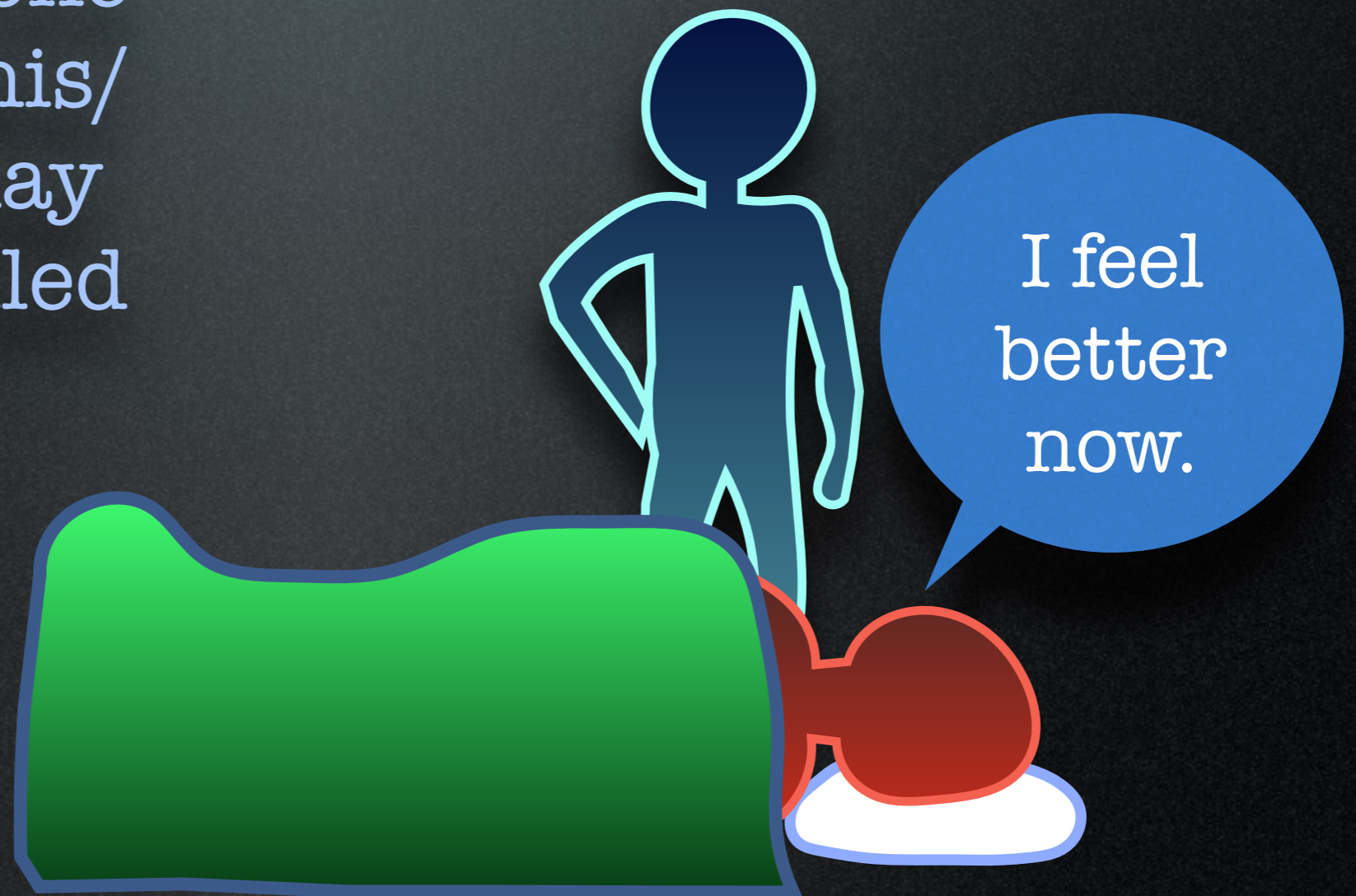


In the presence of others, an individual may feel inhibited about taking action...



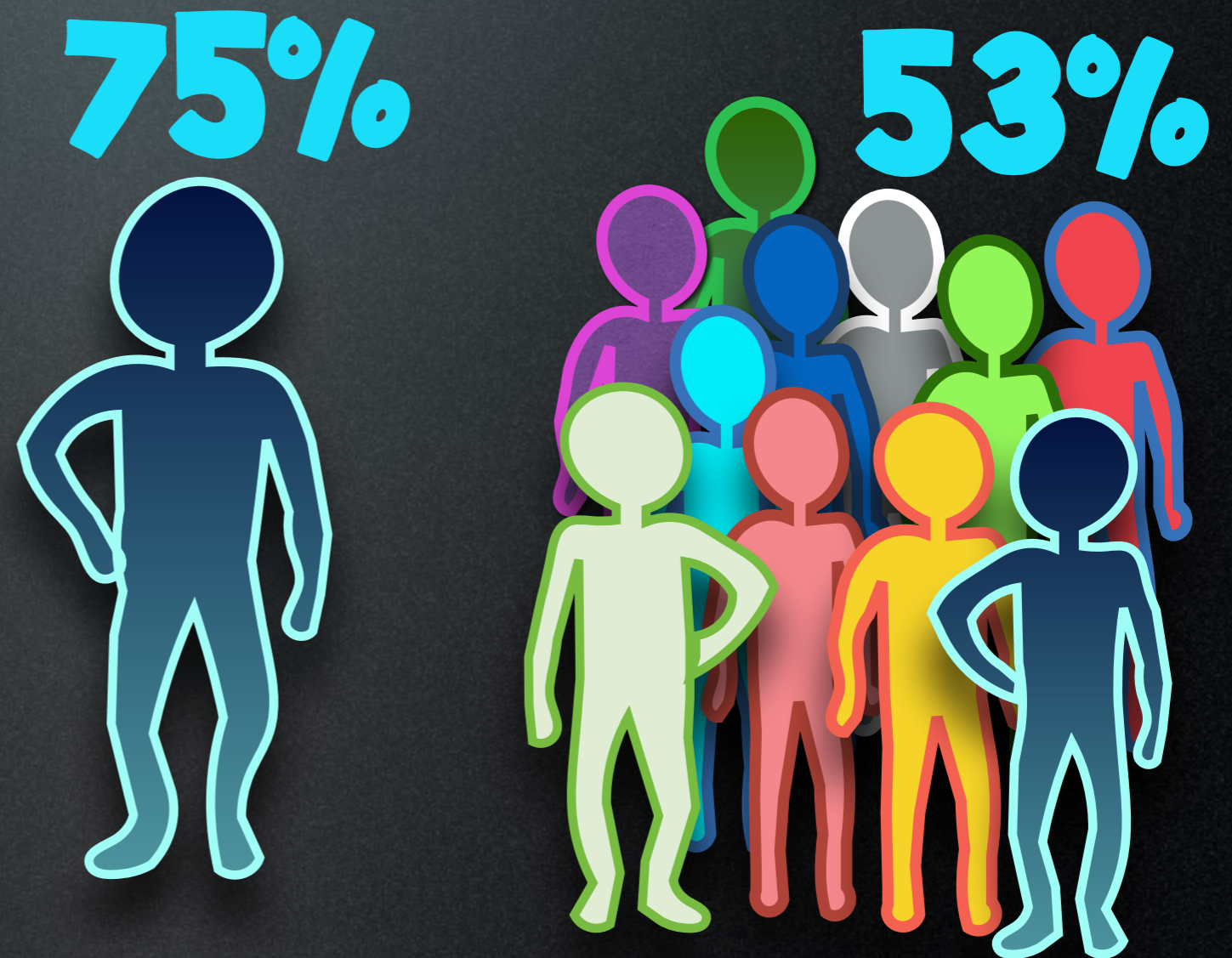
Bystander Effect

...whereas one person on his/her own may feel compelled to act.



ByStander Effect

According to over 50 studies, 75% of people offer assistance when alone, but fewer than 53% do so when in a group.



Source: Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian (2008)

Bystander Effect

Someone else will do it...



One explanation is that old problem, **diffusion of responsibility**.

According to this theory, in the presence of others, individuals feel less personal responsibility and are less likely to take action in a situation where help is required.

Quick Quiz

2. People are more likely to help others if those others are similar to them. True or false?

True

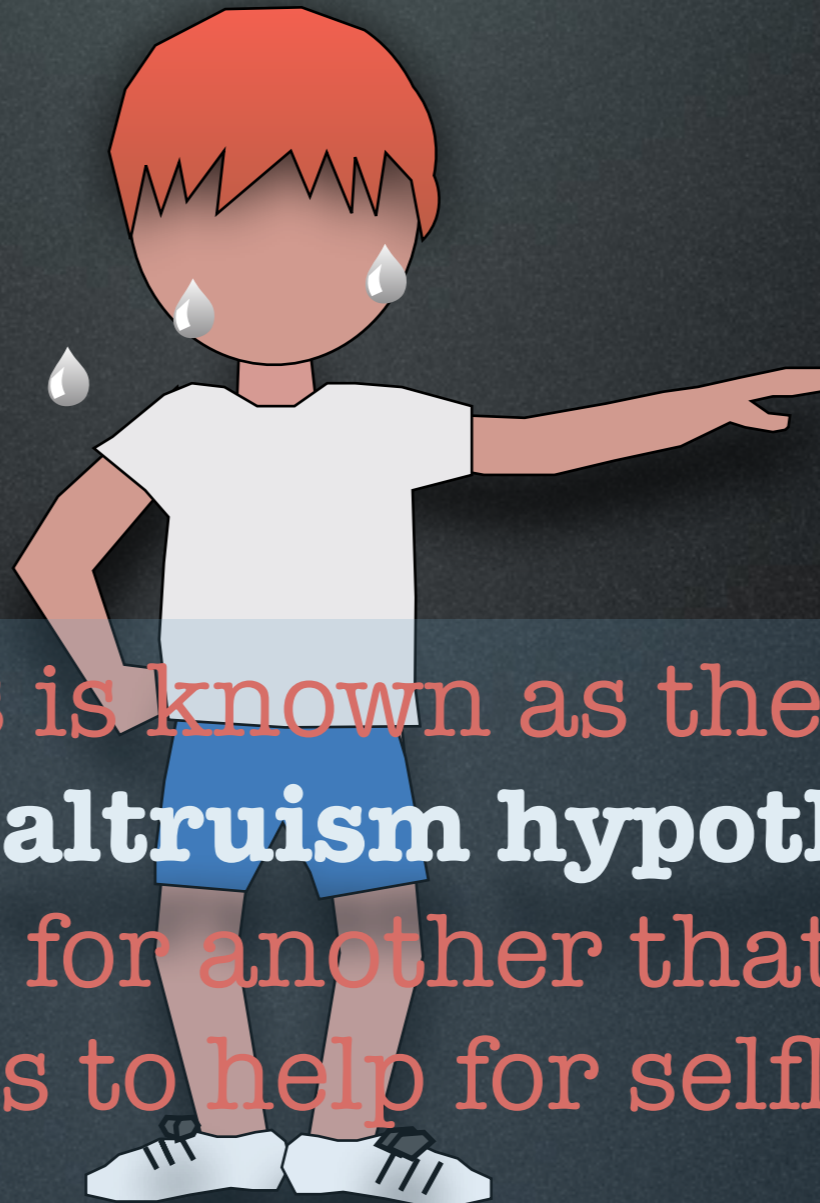
Example: At an Australian Rules football game, more people from the side of the person collecting money were prepared to donate to a charity.



Quick Quiz

3. People are more likely to help others if they can sense or experience the emotional plight of others. True or false?

True

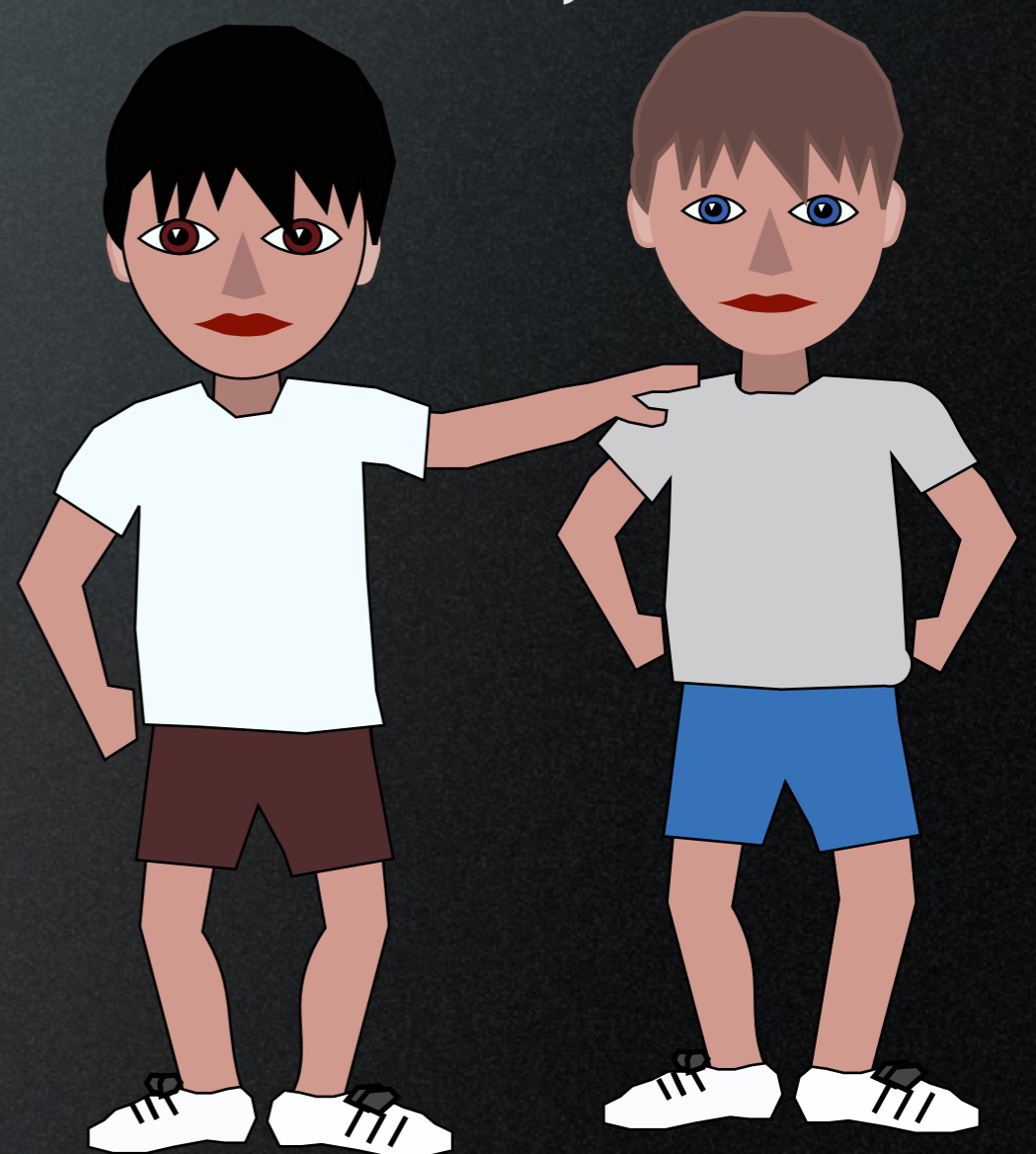


This is known as the **empathy-altruism hypothesis**.

The more concern for another that one feels, the more likely one is to help for selfless reasons.

empathy, n. -

the ability to imagine oneself in another's place and understand the other's feelings, desires, ideas and actions.

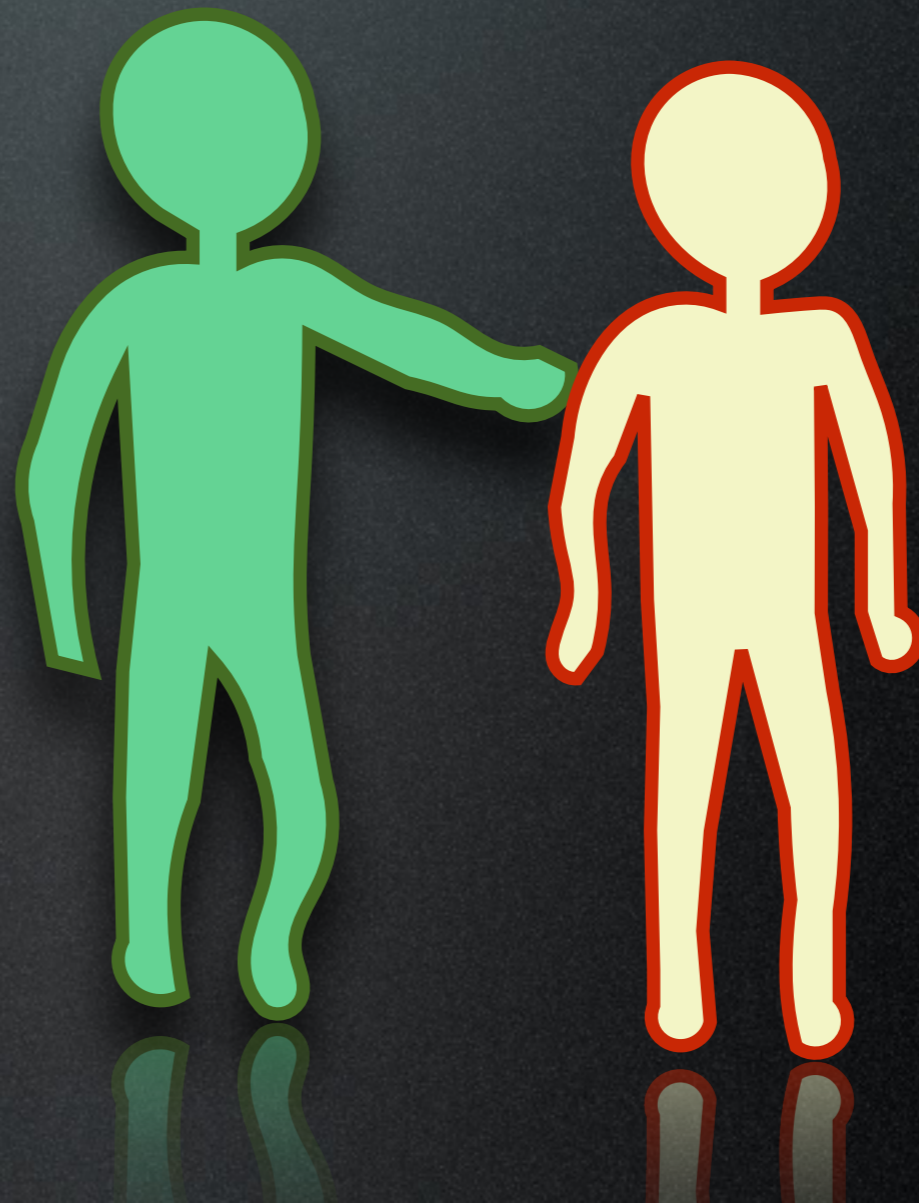


altruism, n. - disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others, as shown by selfless acts of kindness, charity, etc.



- By the way, “disinterested” doesn’t mean “uninterested”.

- It means that you act without any desire for gain. In fact, some altruistic acts might lead to loss on your part or even place you in danger.



Quick Quiz

4. One's competence to give help is not a factor in people's deciding to help or not. True or false?

False. Competence is a factor. For instance, a doctor or nurse is more likely to give aid in a medical emergency on the street than an ordinary person.

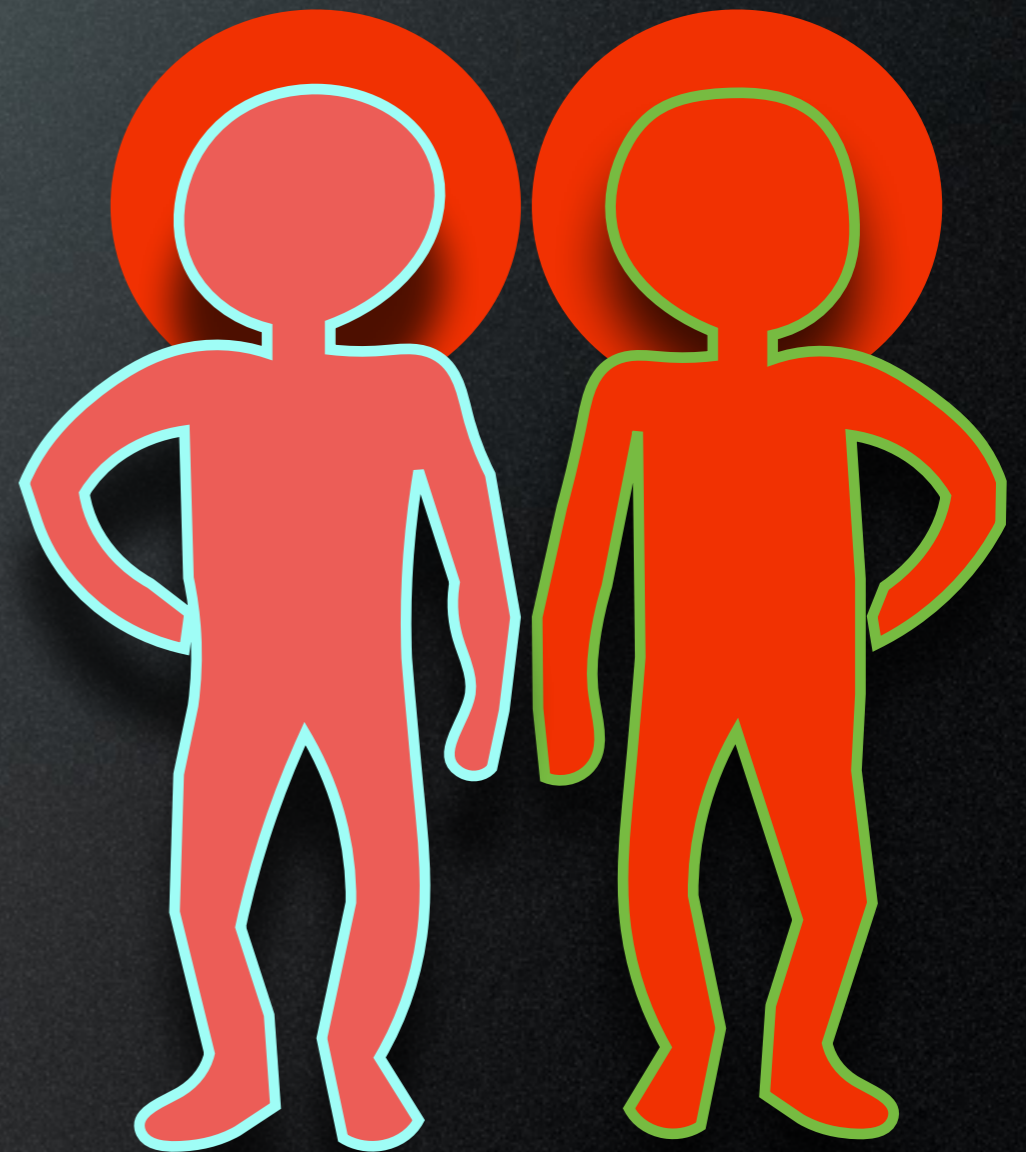


Quick Quiz

5. Studies of prosocial behaviour, since they involve positive behaviour, pose no or few ethical issues. True or false?

False

As with other experimental studies in the social psychology field, studies to see whether people will help in certain situations may involve a level of deception and leave people feeling used or tricked.



Quick Quiz

6. Feeling **embarrassed** may be one factor that influences people not to help. True or false?



True

The term for this is “audience inhibition”.

Quick Quiz



7. If you stepped into a lift and dropped several coins, the other people in the lift would be more likely to help as the number of others decreased. True or false?

True

Quick Quiz

8. Humans are the only animals that are actually capable of acting from motives of empathy. True or false?

False



Even the humble rat has shown signs of empathetic behaviour.

At last, some
recognition...
Humble rat, indeed!



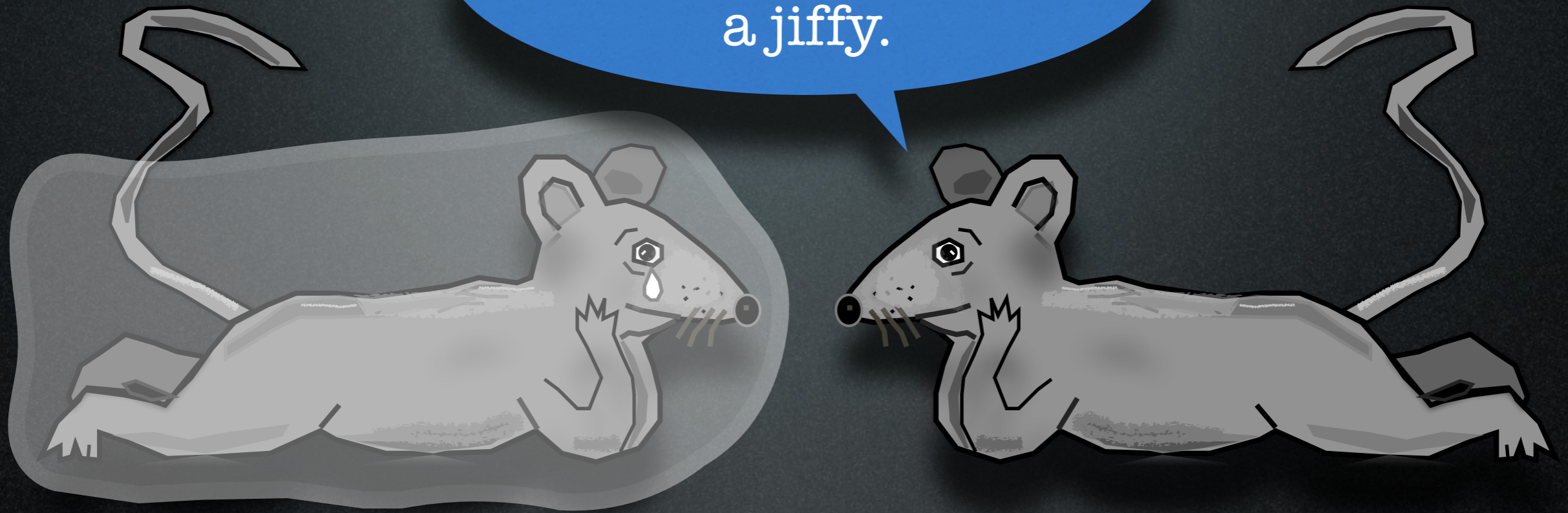
In a study at the University of Chicago
in 2011, a rat was imprisoned in a tiny
cage, while his free friend was able to
learn how to open the cage.

The free rat was not interested in opening an empty cage, only the cage containing his fellow rat.

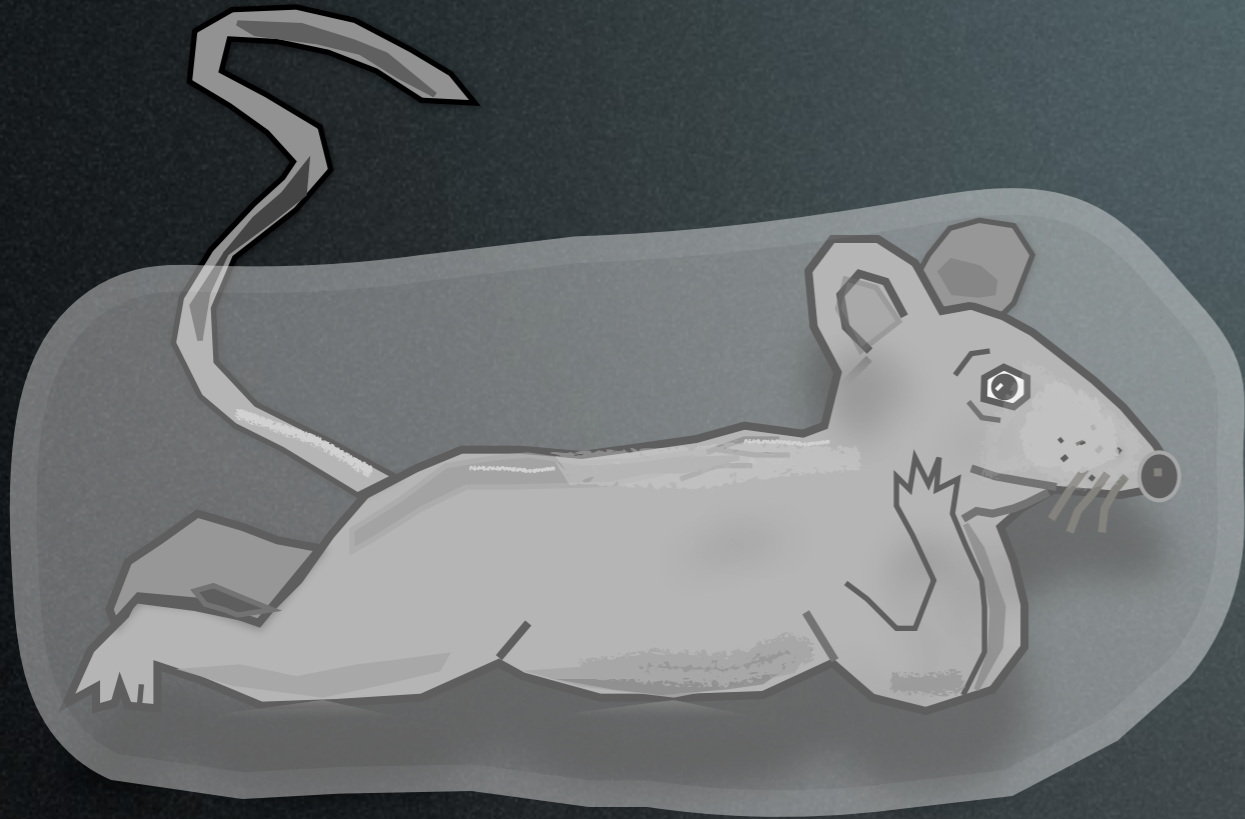
I sometimes think
I have too much
empathy...



Don't panic, I'll
have you out of there in
a jiffy.



Even when the free rat was given the
potential distractor of a cage with
chocolate in it as well...

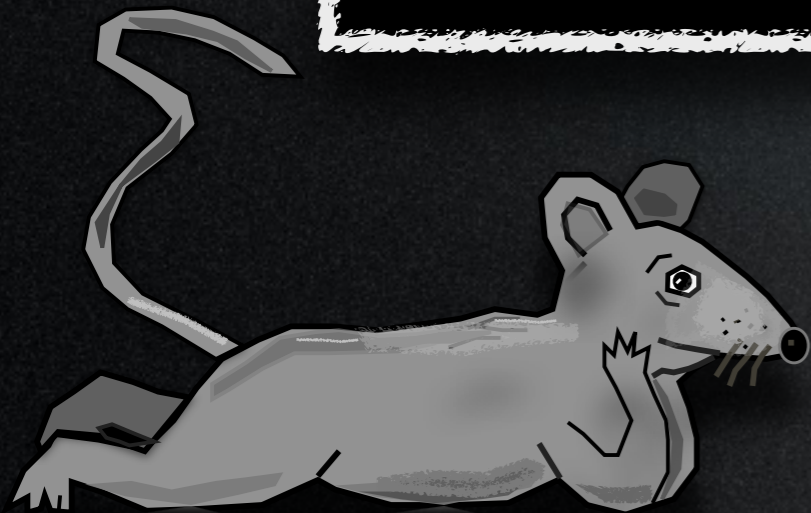
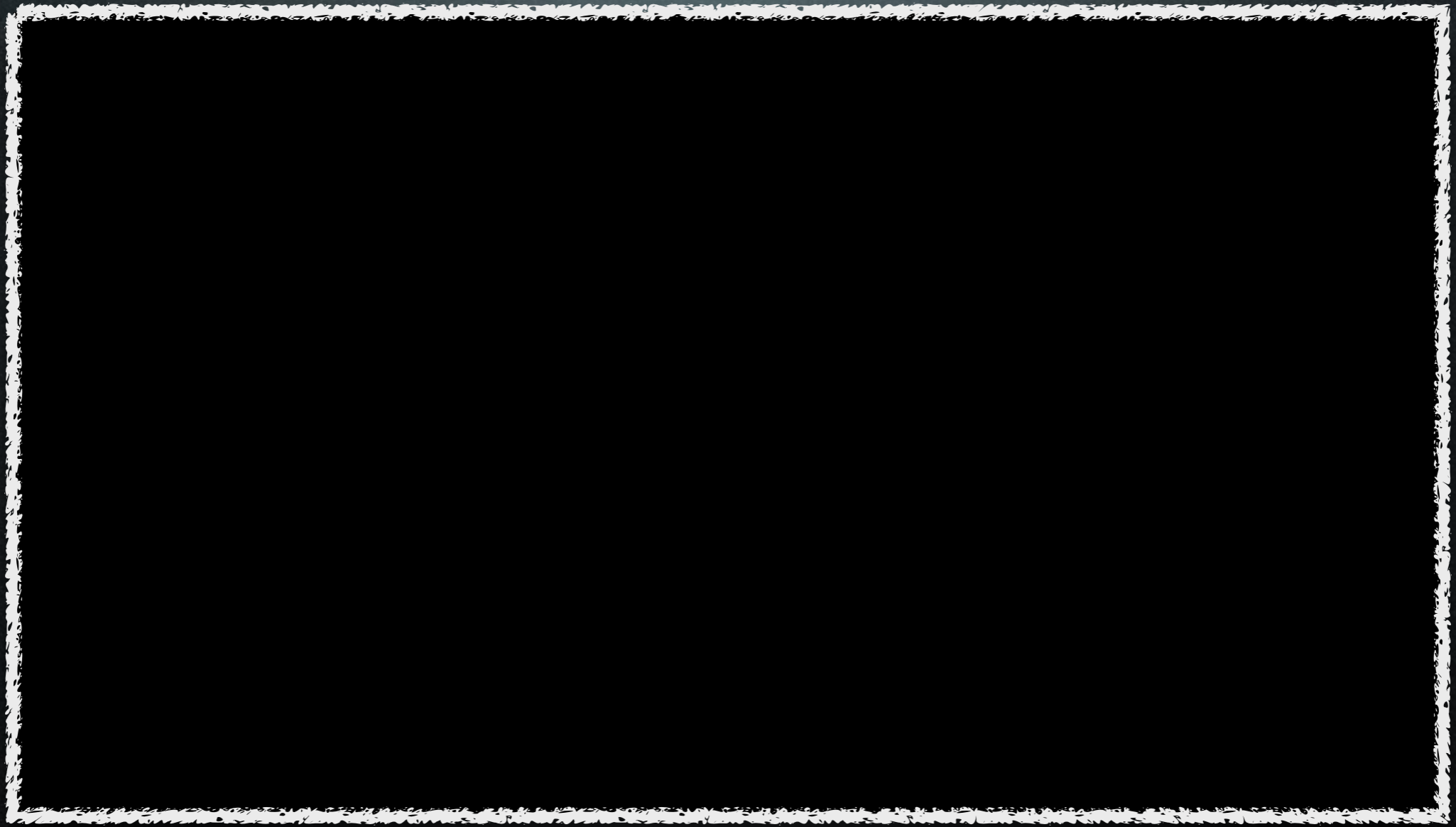


...he typically
opened both
cages and shared
the chocolate
with the other
rat.

Hmm, nothing like
some chocolate to
nibble after a long
hard experiment...



Published in research journal "Science" in 2011



Biological roots of empathically
motivated helping behaviour
(study done at the University of Chicago
by Bartal, Decety and Mason, 2011)

Watch this video on Youtube at this link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jkOwYKBJEI&feature=watch_response



The Smoke-Filled Room

Latane and Darley - 1968

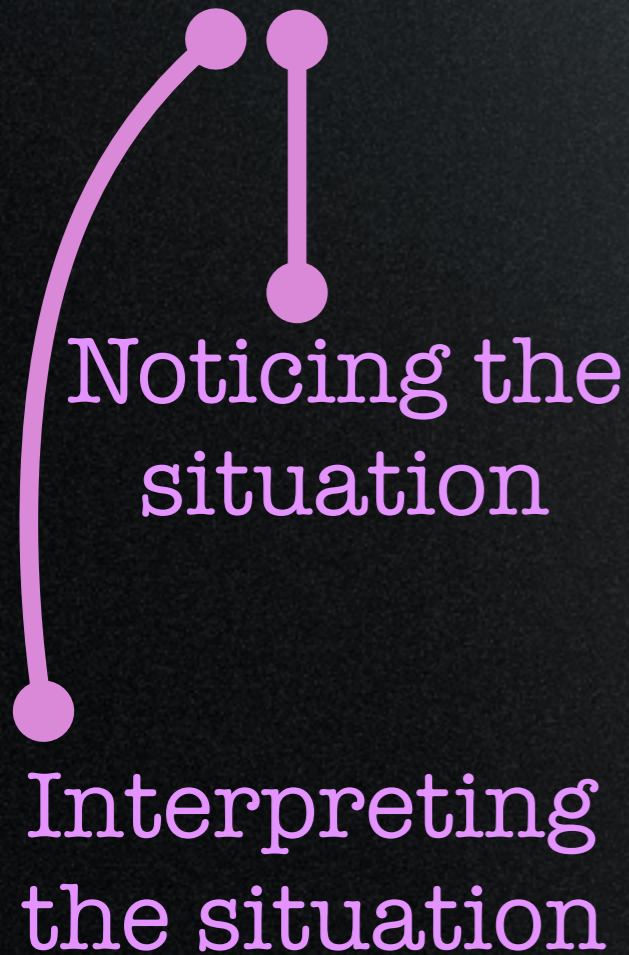
A silent, but strangely fascinating film...

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE5YwN4NW5o>

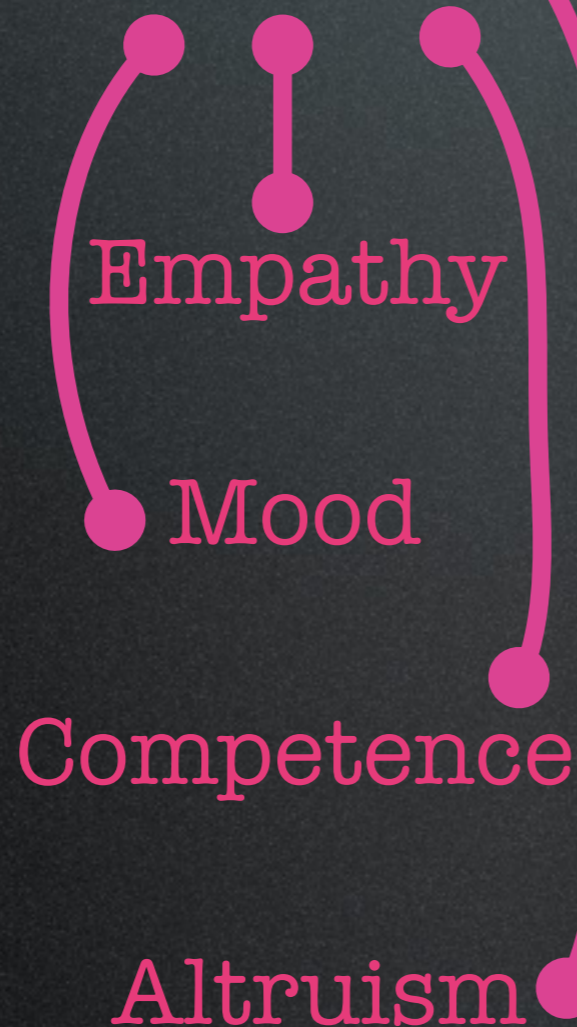
Factors influencing helping and reluctance to help

Factors influencing willingness to help

Situational factors



Personal factors



Factors influencing reluctance to help

Diffusion of responsibility

Audience inhibition

Cost-benefit analysis



Going Further: Text

- 1 Can you define prosocial behaviour and give an example? (p. 523, slide 2 above)
- 2 Can you outline the meaning of the bystander effect and give an explanation? (p.526, see slides 9-12)
- 3 Can you explain the concept of social norms, in particular the reciprocity norm and the social responsibility norm? (pp. 528-9)
- 4 Can you explain the meaning of personal factors such as competence, empathy and altruism? (pp.529-34)