



# Attributions

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*Psych 1A – Social Psychology*



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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people,  
the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we gather on.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the  
Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present  
and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs.

Length: 13m

# Introduction

This presentation discusses how we make attributions to help us understand our own behaviour, and that of others.

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Distinguish between internal and external attributions for behaviour
2. Distinguish when and why we make these different attributions

# Internal and External Attributions

## Internal attribution:

The behaviour is due to something about the person.

## External attribution:

The behaviour is due to factors outside of the person's control.



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# When Do We Make External and Internal Attributions?

**Kelley:** Attributions are relevant when we are uncertain about the cause of a behaviour.

Attribution Basis	Explanation
<b>Consensus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would others act in the same way?</li></ul>
<b>Consistency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the person always do this?</li></ul>
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the person behave like this in other situations?</li></ul>

Outcome: Internal	Outcome: External
My other friends would respond	My other friends sometimes haven't responded
Nina never responds	Nina usually responds
Nina is rude to me	Nina is friendly in other situations



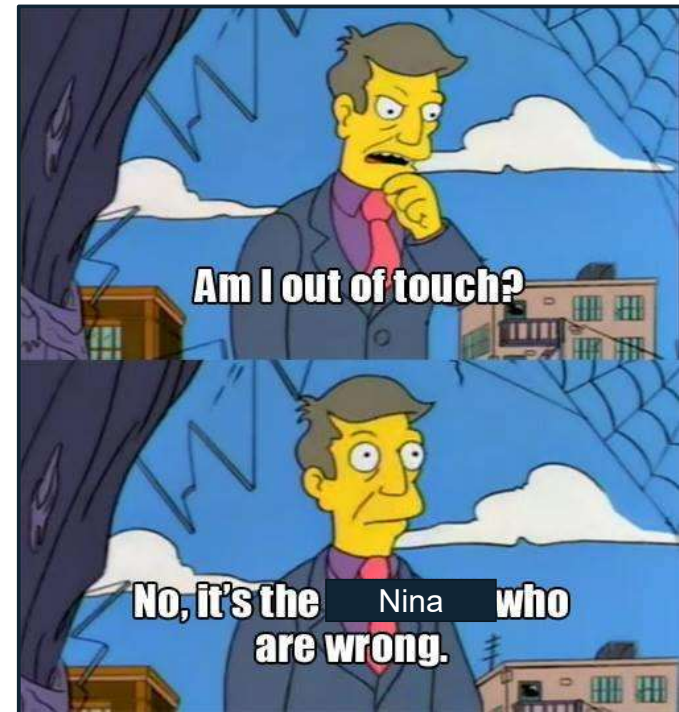
# Sources of Attributional Bias

## Fundamental Attribution Error:

- Tendency to make internal attributions for others' behaviour

## Actor-Observer Effect:

- We are kinder to ourselves than others when making attributions



# Fundamental Attribution Error: Negative Consequences

Victim blaming. Why blame victims?

**Defensive Attributions:** If we don't attribute negative events affecting other people to internal factors, then we must accept that the same negative events could happen to us.

"Nina got mugged because she always wears those expensive handbags – that totally won't happen to me!"



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# Attributions for Personal Outcomes

## Good Personal Outcomes:

- Internal attributions (Self-Serving Bias)

## Poor Personal Outcomes:

- External attributions

But not always... Depressed people tend to over-emphasise personal responsibility for failures.



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# Summary

All people make attributions to try and understand why something has occurred – it is human nature.

- When we do this, we tend to make internal and external attributions.
  - These are often biased.

*Try think about some times that you have made attributions. Have you always been fair? How have these attributions impacted your relationships or life?*

make  
history.

