The Physiology of Social Interactions



The goal of this study is to understand the underlying physiology of social interactions. We’ve created an interactive game that you will play for approximately twenty minutes, so we can take a peek at the factors that drive social choice!

Throughout this game, you will decide whether to allocate a sum of money to random partners. The partners will either be a computer opponent, or they will be real people whose choices we saved from our past sessions to re-use. (*Psst … the researcher is going to ask you if we can use your responses, too, for future studies*).

How it works – Make an Offer!

In this game, you will be given $100 dollars every trial, and you will decide whether you want to allocate some of that money with your partner. You can give a little ($1), a lot ($100) or anything in-between.



But there’s a catch – in some trials, you have full discretion as to how much you share, and your partner will have no say in the matter. However, in other trials, your partner will be granted the ability to invest some of their money to punish you for your choices. If they choose to punish you, every dollar they invest will multiply by five; for example, if they invest $1 to punish you, then this number will compound to a $5 penalty that you will lose.

The trials that you can share as you please are called **non-punishment** trials, and the ones that your partner can punish you in are called **punishment** trials.

You’ll use the keyboard to indicate how much you will give to your partner. You can share your money in 10-dollar increments; 0 indicates that you give no money, 9 indicates you will give 90 dollars. Press ‘A’ to give the full 100-dollar amount to your partner.



Intermixed throughout the game are trials where you’ll simply play against a computer algorithm. To differentiate computer trials versus people trials, you’ll see an icon of a computer or a person.

As you saw in the practice version, you will need to make your decision somewhat quickly, so be careful not to spend too long deciding what to do for each trial!



Your performance determines how much extra money you will receive! The researchers will randomly select a single trial that you played in the game, and that dollar amount will serve as your bonus which will be given to you in the form of an Amazon e-gift certificate.