Naive Cynicism:

Naive cynicism is a cognitive bias characterized by the tendency to doubt others' intentions and perceive actions as driven by selfish motives or ulterior motives, even in the absence of concrete evidence supporting such skepticism. Individuals exhibiting naive cynicism often display a general distrust of others, assuming that individuals or groups have hidden agendas, leading to a distorted and overly negative interpretation of people's behaviors or actions. This bias can hinder effective communication, collaboration, and relationship-building, as it contributes to an unwarranted suspicion of others' motives.

Ten scenarios illustrating naive cynicism:

1. Generous Offer:

Sarah, despite her genuine intention, offers to help her colleague, Alex, with a project. However, Alex, influenced by naive cynicism, believes Sarah is attempting to gain favor or undermine his capabilities.

1. Colleague's Success:

James, upon hearing about his colleague's recent promotion, immediately assumes there must be hidden motives behind it, such as favoritism or office politics, rather than acknowledging the colleague's hard work and achievements.

1. Altruistic Act:

Emily volunteers at a local charity event, but her friend, Tom, sees it as a way to boost her public image rather than recognizing Emily's genuine desire to contribute to the community.

1. Helpful Advice:

Alex receives constructive feedback from his manager, but due to naive cynicism, he interprets it as a strategy to make him feel inadequate rather than a sincere effort to support his professional development.

1. Team Collaboration:

During a team project, Lucy proposes an alternative approach, but her teammate, Mark, doubts her intentions, assuming she is trying to undermine his role instead of contributing to the project's success.

1. Kind Gesture:

Jessica buys a thoughtful gift for her friend, Mike, to express gratitude. However, Mike, influenced by naive cynicism, suspects hidden motives behind the gesture instead of appreciating the genuine sentiment.

1. Open Communication:

In a team meeting, David shares his honest opinion about a project's challenges. However, his colleagues, due to naive cynicism, question whether he has ulterior motives rather than acknowledging the importance of open communication.

1. Project Collaboration:

Sarah and Jake collaborate on a project, but Jake, driven by naive cynicism, assumes Sarah's contributions are solely for personal gain rather than recognizing her commitment to achieving project goals.

1. Peer Recognition:

Lisa receives praise from her peers for a successful presentation. However, Mark, influenced by naive cynicism, suspects that Lisa is seeking recognition for personal advancement rather than acknowledging her competency.

1. Team Decision-Making:

During a team decision-making process, Tom questions the motives of his teammates' suggestions, assuming they have hidden agendas rather than considering their genuine commitment to finding the best solution.

In each scenario, naive cynicism leads individuals to interpret actions through a lens of distrust and suspicion, potentially impacting collaboration, relationships, and overall team dynamics.

User Story: "The Generous Offer"

Meet Alex, a software developer working on a tight deadline for a project at his company. The workload is overwhelming, and he's feeling the pressure. Enter Sarah, a seasoned colleague who notices Alex's struggle and genuinely wants to help.

User Story:

Sarah, having experienced similar challenges in the past, approaches Alex and offers her assistance. She suggests collaborating on specific tasks, sharing resources, and even providing guidance to ease the workload. Her intention is rooted in empathy and a desire to foster teamwork within the department.

However, due to his naive cynicism, Alex, already stressed by the demanding project, interprets Sarah's generous offer with suspicion. He questions her motives, wondering if she's attempting to showcase her skills to gain favor with their manager or if there's an underlying agenda that might compromise his position on the project.

Despite Sarah's genuine intentions, Alex's naive cynicism leads him to decline her offer, assuming that there must be hidden motives behind her willingness to help. This scenario illustrates how naive cynicism can hinder collaboration and prevent the positive outcomes that could arise from genuine acts of assistance and teamwork.

Competency questions:

What did Sarah propose to Alex?

What was Sarah’s true intention?

How did Alex interpret Sarah’s willingness to help him?

Classes and properties:

1. Classes

* **Agent**: Individual who performs Naïve Cynicism Bias
* **Belief**: A mental attitude or acceptance that something is true or exists, often without direct proof or evidence
* **Predicament**: Difficult, challenging, or perplexing situation in which a person or group finds themselves, often with no easy or obvious solution.
* **Assistance**: The act of providing help, support, or aid to someone or something in need. It involves offering guidance, resources, or services to alleviate difficulties, improve a situation, or achieve a particular goal.
* **Outcome**: Refers to the result, effect, or consequence of a particular action, event, process, or situation
* **Decision**: A conclusion or determination reached after careful consideration of available information, options, and factors

1. Properties

* **hasBias**
* **focusesOn**
* **ignores**
* **hasBelief**
* **hasOutcome**
* **isInfluencedBy**

Key Concepts:

Distrust

Skepticism

Suspicion

Doubt

Misinterpretation

Lack of trust

Cynical beliefs

Intention

Criticism

Communication

Interpersonal dynamics

**Chosen Framester Frames:**

**fs:People:** This frame contains general words for Individuals, i.e. humans. The Person is conceived of as independent of other specific individuals with whom they have relationships and independent of their participation in any particular activity. They may have an Age, Descriptor, Origin, Persistent\_characteristic, or Ethnicity. A man from Phoenix was shot yesterday. She gave birth to a screaming babyyesterday. I study 16-year-old female adolescents. I am dating an African-American man. She comforted the terrified child. I always thought of him as a stupid man.

<http://etna.istc.cnr.it/framester2/data/framestercore/People>

**fs:Event:** An Event takes place at a Place and Time. Big earthquakes only happen along plate boundaries. INI The party will take place on Sunday in the all-you-can-eat buffet.

<http://etna.istc.cnr.it/framester2/data/framestercore/Event>

**fs:Assistance:** A Helper benefits a Benefited\_party by enabling the culmination of a Goal that the Benefited\_party has. A Focal\_entity that is involved in reaching the Goal may stand in for it. Will you help the Government find your brother? Maybe Stephen should assist him with the last manuscript. They helped me psychologically to overcome the physical loss I had suffered. You have helped him tremendously by showing him how to stand up for himself and by being his friend. By bringing assistance to his troops wherever they were in trouble he aided them greatly.

<http://etna.istc.cnr.it/framester2/data/framestercore/Assistance>

**fs:PerceptionExperience:** This frame contains perception words whose Perceivers have perceptual experiences that they do not necessarily intend to. For this reason we call the Perceiver role Perceiver\_passive. Comparing the Perception\_experience frame to the Perception\_active frame, we note that for some modalities there are different lexical items in each frame. For instance, whereas Perception\_experience has see, Perception\_active has look at. For other sense modalities, we find the same lexical items in both frames. To illustrate, consider the verb smell where I smell something rotten exemplifies its Perception\_experience use and Smell this to see if it's fresh exemplifies its Perception\_active sense. This frame also includes words which are not specific to any sense modality, including detect, perceive, perception, sense.

<http://etna.istc.cnr.it/framester2/data/framestercore/PerceptionExperience>

**Chosen Content ODPs and resources**

**Experience and Observation**  
to represent the epistemological "missing link" between a cognitive activity, e.g. the interaction with a cultural object, and any evidence of the effects this activity has on the individuals that are engaged with it; what can collectively be considered as an experience.

**isEngagedIn** (owl:ObjectProperty) Because an activity may engage other participants than the one performing it, engagements are in general considered individual rather than collective, therefore each participants has their own engagement and only some of them will be conscious and/or documented.

**AffectedBy**  
To represent properties/qualities that may affect the status of a feature of interest.

**Biography:**

Effron, D., & Miller, D. T. (2015). The psychology of naive cynicism. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 59, 314-322.