

The Bystander Effect

Psychology

Why more witnesses means less help, and the five steps that must all be passed.

Latané and Darley's decision model — failure at any step means no help.

1

Notice the event

Distraction and hurry prevent this.

2

Interpret it as an emergency

Others' calm suggests it is not — pluralistic ignorance.

3

Assume responsibility

More witnesses means less personal responsibility.

4

Know what to do

Lack of competence stops action.

5

Decide to act

Fear of embarrassment or danger.

TO GET HELP AS A VICTIM

Point at one specific person

Describe them: 'you in the blue coat'

Give a specific instruction: 'call an ambulance'

Naming one person removes the diffusion. It is the single most effective countermeasure.