A mode of decision making that emphasizes concurrence-seeking over the thorough appraisal of available information and alternatives.

**Concurrence-Seeking Tendency**

**GROUPTHINK**

(Janis 1982)

### ANTECEDENTS

**[A]**

Decision Makers
Cohesive Group

+ **[B-1]**

Structural Faults

1. Insulation of Group
2. Lack of Tradition of Impartial Leadership
3. Lack of Norms for Methodical Procedures
4. Homogeneity of Group

+ **[B-2]**

Provocative Context

1. High Stress from External Threats
2. Low Self-Esteem
3. Recent Setbacks
4. Excessive Complexity
5. Moral Dilemmas, etc
Symptoms of GT

1. Overestimation of Group
   1.1 Illusion of Invulnerability
   1.2 Belief in Morality of Group

2. Closed-Mindedness
   2.1 Collective Rationalization
   2.2 Stereotypes of Outgroups

3. Uniformity Pressures
   3.1 Self-Censorship
   3.2 Illusion of Unanimity
   3.3 Direct Pressure
   3.4 Mindguards

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ANTECEDENTS

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   5. Moral Dilemmas, etc

OBSERVABLE CONSEQUENCES

[D] Symptoms of Defective DM
   1. Incomplete survey of alternatives
   2. Incomplete survey of objectives
   3. Failure to examine risks of preferred choice
   4. Failure to reappraise
   5. Poor information search
   6. Selective information bias
   7. Failure to contingency plan

[E] Low Probability of Successful Outcome
Space Shuttle Challenger Launch Decision
On January 28, 1986, at 11.38 am EST, the space shuttle Challenger was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The mission ended 73 seconds later when the Challenger disintegrated into a billowing cloud of fire and smoke.

The Presidential Commission investigating the accident concluded that Challenger was destroyed after hot propellant gases flew past the aft joint of the shuttle's right solid rocket booster, burning through two synthetic rubber seal rings called O-rings, and vaporizing the seal. The Commission also concluded that “the decision to launch the Challenger was flawed.”
Preventing Groupthink (1)

The leader of a group should assign the role of **CRITICAL EVALUATOR** to each member, encouraging the group to air objections and doubts.

The leader should be **IMPARTIAL** instead of stating preferences and expectations at the outset.

The organization should set up several **INDEPENDENT** planning and evaluation **GROUPS** to work on the same problem, each under a different leader.

The group should from time to time divide into two or more **SUBGROUPS** to meet separately, under different chairpersons, and then come together to hammer out their differences.

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Preventing Groupthink (2)

Each group member should discuss periodically the group’s deliberations with **TRUSTED ASSOCIATES** in her/his own unit and report back their reactions.

**OUTSIDE EXPERTS** of qualified colleagues who are not core members of the group should be invited to each meeting on a staggered basis and encouraged to challenge the views of core members.

At every meeting, at least one member should be assigned the role of **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE**.

- Create a safe, **Open Climate** for frank, critical discussion
- Adopt new group norm of **Information Vigilance**: being thorough in the seeking and appraisal of information and alternatives
Nominal Group Technique

Generating Ideas: Moderator presents the problem to the group in written form. Asks everyone to work silently and independently, and to write down their ideas in brief statements. **EACH PERSON SILENTLY GENERATES IDEAS AND WRITES THEM DOWN.**

Recording Ideas: In a round-robin session group members concisely record each idea (without debate at this point). Moderator **WRITES AN IDEA FROM A GROUP MEMBER ON A FLIP CHART** that is visible to the entire group, and proceeds to ask for another idea from the next group member ...

Discussing Ideas: Each recorded idea is then discussed to determine clarity and importance. For each idea, moderator asks, “Are there any questions or comments group members would like to make about the item?”

Voting on Ideas: **INDIVIDUALS VOTE PRIVATELY TO PRIORITIZE THE IDEAS.** Votes are tallied to identify the ideas that are rated highest by the group as a whole.

Delbecq & Van de Ven (1968)