

Obstacles to Good Judgment and Decision Making

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My Educational Background

- **B.A in Human Ethology**
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- **M.A - General Psychology**
- **M.Ed. - Community College Ed.**
 - **Northern Arizona University**
Flagstaff, Arizona

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Why study
judgment and
decision making?

The Fiduciary's Role

“ . . .the fiduciary alone is ultimately responsible for decisions made on behalf of the ward, protected person, or estate.”

(ACJA 7-202, J-e)

Observations

“... (1) people are unaware of how they make decisions and often why they prefer one alternative to others.”

(Hogarth)

Observations

“(2)They show little concern for the quality of their own decision making processes.”

(Hogarth)

Observations

“(3)The scientific study of decision making has not attracted the attention it merits.”

(Hogarth)

General Recommendation

- “Public school curricula should include material designed to teach people that the world in which they live is probabilistic not deterministic, and to help them learn judgment and decision making strategies for dealing with that world.”

(Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky)

Definitions

- **Judgment**

- The ability to make considered decisions or form sensible opinions.
- Mental act of comparing choices between a given set of values in order to select a course of action.
- The process of forming an opinion or evaluation by discerning and comparing

Definitions

- **Decision Making**
 - Choosing between alternative courses of action using cognitive processes - memory, thinking, evaluation, etc.
 - An outcome of mental processes leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives.

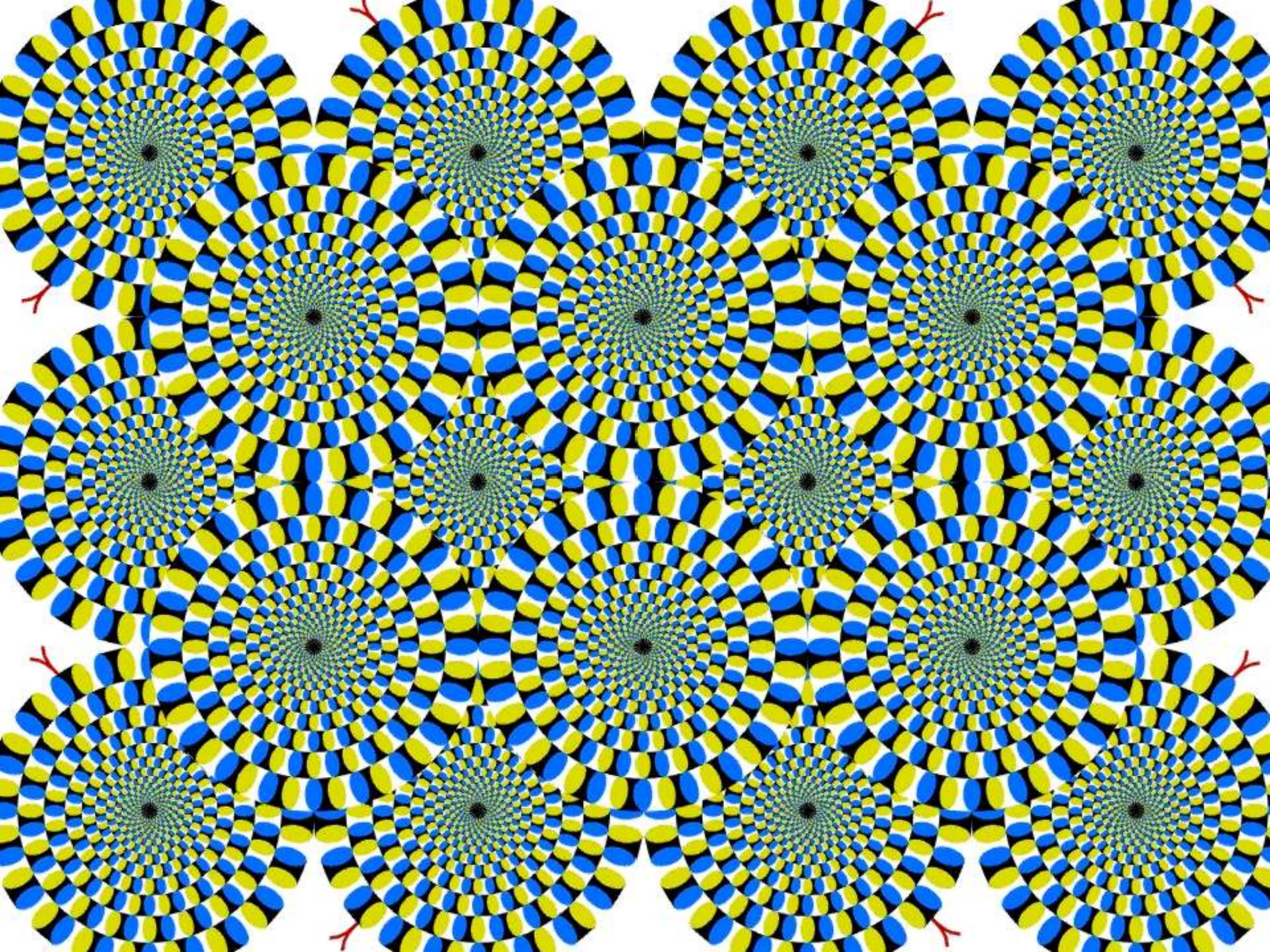
**Obstacles to
Good Judgment
and Decision Making**

Perception

- Selective Perception/Attention
 - Perceptual Set
- Memory Construction

Perception

- “I know what I saw!”



Cognition

- Cognitive biases that may adversely effect judgment and decision making

Overconfidence

- The tendency to overestimate the accuracy of our knowledge and judgments and to be more confident than correct in assessing that accuracy.
- “...often wrong but never in doubt.”

(Ivy Baker Priest)

Anchoring and Adjustment

- The tendency to rely too heavily on an initial value, reference point or single bit of information when making a judgment, and then making inadequate adjustments based on that anchor.

Fundamental Attribution Error

- The tendency, when explaining another person's behavior, to overestimate the role of internal disposition factors and underestimate the role of external situational factors.

Belief Perseverance

- The tendency, once we have formed an opinion or belief about a particular topic or issue to cling to that belief even in the face of disconfirming evidence.

Confirmation Bias

- The tendency to attend to information that confirms our ideas, opinions, or beliefs and to ignore or discredit information that conflicts with them.

Groupthink

- The tendency for some group decision making to be characterized by:
 - Overconfidence
 - Conformity
 - Self-justification
 - Group polarization

(Irving Janis)

False Consensus Effect

- The tendency to overestimate the extent to which others agree with our points of view.
- “We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are (The Talmud).”

(Myers)

Fixation

- The tendency for people, once they have looked at a problem or issue in a certain way, to then have difficulty approaching it from a fresh perspective.

Framing

- The manner in which an issue is presented.

Hindsight Bias

- The tendency, knowing the outcome of a situation or event, that we would have been able to predict it.
- The “I-knew-it-all-along phenomenon”

Illusory Correlation

- The tendency to see a relationship between two variables where none actually exists.

Illusion of Control

- The tendency to believe we have more control over events than we really do and to therefore underestimate future uncertainty.

Intuition

- “Our capacity for direct knowledge, for immediate insight without observation or reason.”
(Myers)
- “Intuitive thinking is perception-like, rapid, effortless”
(Kahneman)
- “Go with your gut”

Heuristics

- Availability Heuristic
 - The tendency to base our judgments on the availability of information in our memories.

Heuristics

- Representativeness Heuristic
 - The tendency to judge the likelihood of things based on how well they represent a particular prototype.

The Just-World Phenomenon

- The tendency to believe that the world is just and that people must therefore get what they deserve.

The Primacy Effect

- The tendency to be influenced more by the beginning information we receive and less by subsequent information.

The Primacy Effect

- Envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious, and intelligent.
- Intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, and envious

Priming Effects

- The tendency for an earlier stimulus to influence our response to a later stimulus
- The Rosenhan Study
 - <http://psychrights.org/articles/rosenham.htm>

The Recency Effect

- The tendency to place more weight on recent information and either ignore or forget more distant information.

Another Definition of Decision Making

- “The process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made.”

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook5.htm>

- This definition stresses the information-gathering function of decision making.

Informed Consent

Technical Assistance Document 8 Informed Consent for Psychotropic Medication Treatment

**Developed by the
Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Behavioral Health Services**

Effective January 15, 2004

<http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/guidance/psyc.pdf>

Purpose

- To improve the practice of obtaining and documenting informed consent from persons/parents/legal guardians for all prescribed psychotropic medications, thereby affecting positive clinical outcomes through an increased understanding, compliance and empowerment by the behavioral health recipient.

Informed Consent

- “A voluntary agreement . . . following presentation of all facts necessary to form the basis of an intelligent consent by the person or guardian prior to the provision of specified behavioral health services.”
- <http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/provider/defs/ic.pdf>

Elements of Informed Consent:

- The diagnosis and target symptoms for the medication being prescribed
- The benefits/intended outcome of treatment
- The risks and side effects of each medication
- Alternatives to the proposed medication treatment

Informed Consent

- The Reality
 - Reason for prescribing the medication
 - ***“Behavior”***
 - Expected Benefits
 - ***“Reduce behavior”***

Another Aspect of the Fiduciary's Role

- “The fiduciary shall maintain an awareness of their limitations, shall carefully consider the views and opinions of those involved in the treatment, care and management of the ward, protected person, or estate and shall also seek independent opinions when necessary.’

(ACJA 7-202, J-d)

Clinical Judgment

- “The low reliability of clinical judgment has been observed in many studies.”
- “Lack of reliability is reflected in inconsistencies for a given clinician over time . . . (and) in inconsistencies in judgments between clinicians.”

(Bell & Mellor, 2009)

Clinical Judgment

- “...clinical approaches to making judgements continue to dominate . . . despite the accrued evidence that indicates the limits of the approach.”

(Bell & Mellor, 2009)

<http://wf2dnvr11.webfeat.org/lo6jN13278/url=http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=2&hid=7&sid=55776ca5-2e7d-47cc-a62e-1f8c33b12512%40sessionmgr11>

General Recommendations

- Educate people about the obstacles to good judgment and decision making.
- Recognize when you or one of your advisors is falling prey to one or more of these obstacles.
- Take measures to counteract their effects. (welcome criticism, entertain opposing views and ideas, think critically, seek out contradictory evidence, etc.)

Thank you

The End