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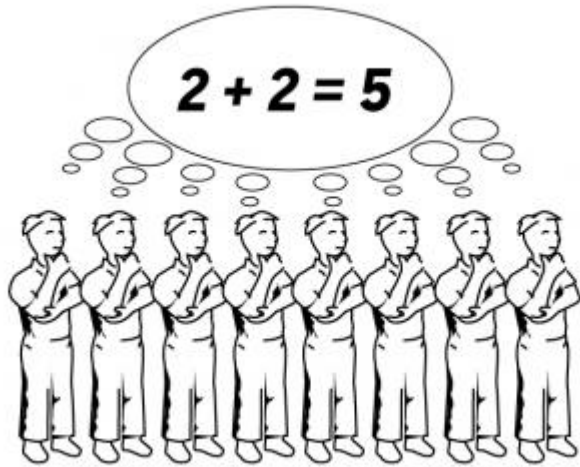
2019 NASW OH Conference

The damaging, hidden Power of Groupthink: Elevate critical thinking toward excellence in advocacy



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Groupthink



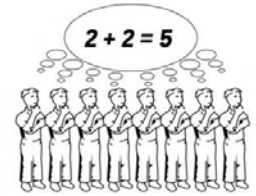
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Groupthink I | In-Group Bias



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw2Y3dUm7Mc> 2:13

What is Groupthink?



Social Psychologist | **Irving L. Janis** | 1972

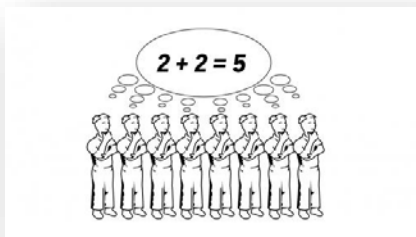
- Psychological phenomenon-
 - consensus within the group supersedes individual members personal beliefs
 - group members will then adopt the opinion of the rest of the group
 - group members opposing the decision or overriding opinion of the group, remain silent (*keep the peace rather than disrupt the group consensus*).

Janis Aha moments

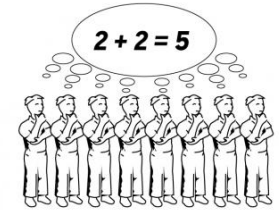
Social Psychologist | Irving L. Janis | 1972

Psychological phenomenon

An examination of the decision making processes of groups- the need for members to reach unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of **action** (Kaba, Wishart, Fraser, Coderre, & McLaughlin, 2016).



Irvin Janis | 1972

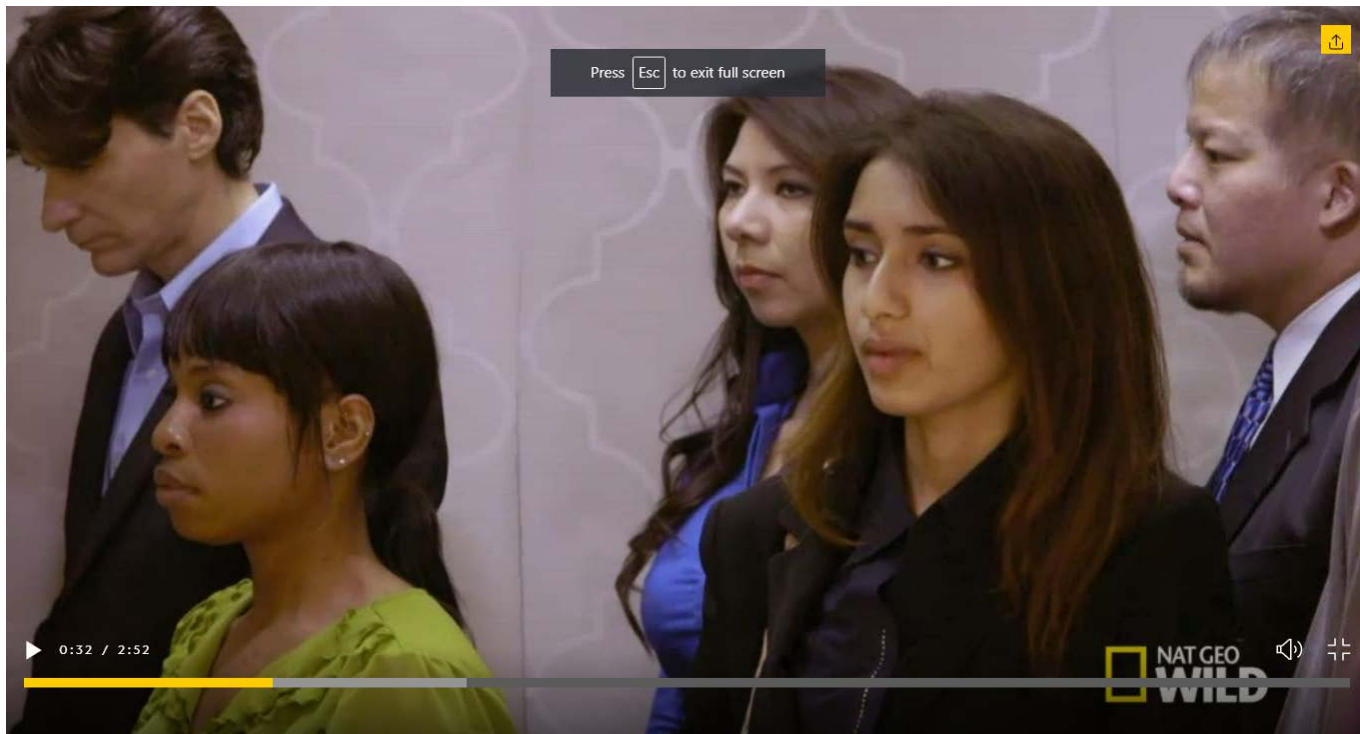


Groupthink- “A mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ strivings for **unanimity** override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (Irving, 1972, p.9).

“Preserve group harmony test to every decision they face” (Irving, 1989, p. 60).

<https://video.nationalgeographic.com/wild/how-human-are-you/00000144-78d9-d3b1-a1ee-79dd586d0000>

National Geographic | How Human are you? | Groupthink | 2:52

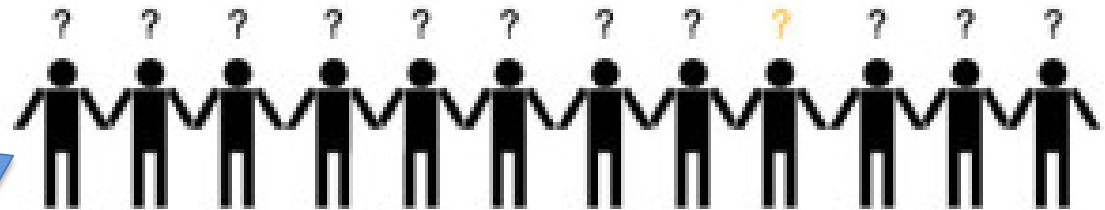


“Concurrence-seeking- group members move toward converging opinions about the adoption of a certain course of action in a given decision situation.”

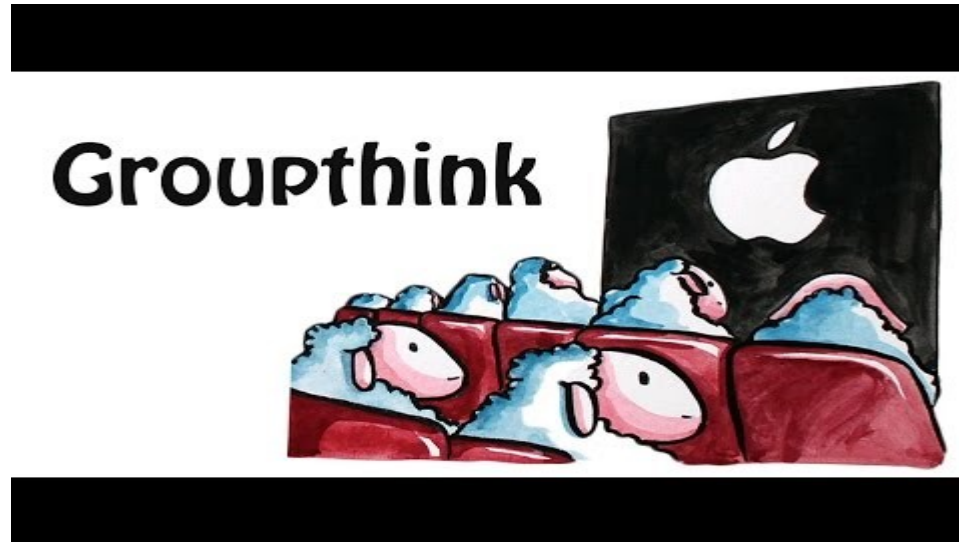
Hart, 1991, p.257

WHEN ALL **THINK** ALIKE,
THEN NO ONE IS THINKING

-WALTER LIPPMAN-



What is Groupthink? Symptoms of Group Think



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWEvJciU0Zc> | 2:54

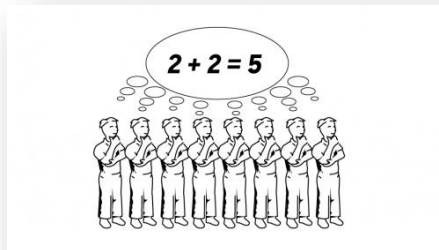
8 Symptoms of Groupthink

Overconfidence |
overestimation in the
group's abilities

- Illusion of invulnerability
- Belief in Inherent Morality of the Group

Tunnel vision members
use to view the
problem

- Collective Rationalization
- Out-group Stereotypes



8 Symptoms of Groupthink cont'd

Strong conformity pressure

- Self-Censorship
- Illusion of Unanimity
- Direct pressure on dissenters
- Self-Appointed Mind guards



8 Symptoms of Groupthink cont'd



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBw0ased8Sw>

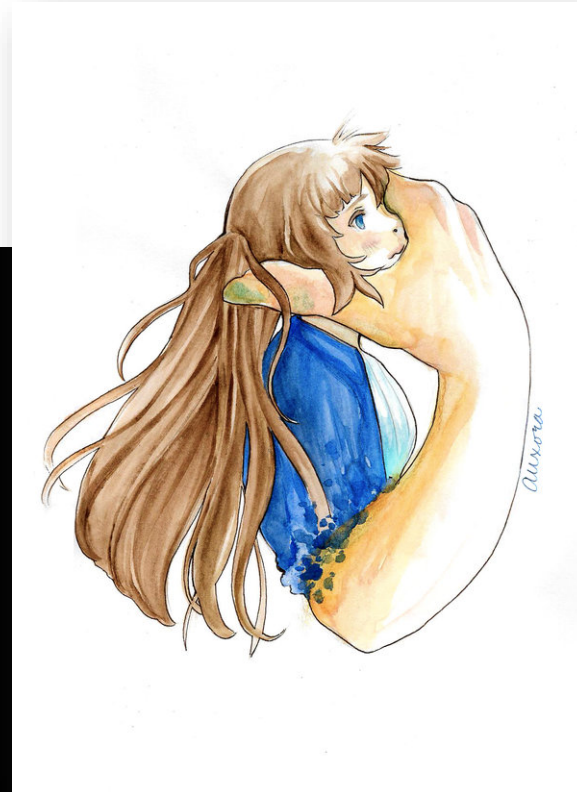
<https://vimeo.com/200029841> 3:02

Impact of Symptoms on whole person

Pause



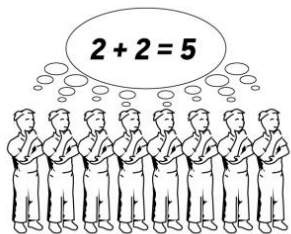
LOST



Groupthink | Group Influence

People change their behavior or attitudes to match those of the group they identify with or seek to belong to. Group members often prematurely seek consensus, influencing decisions and actions.

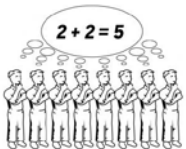
<https://www.overcominghateportal.org/group-think.html>



Groupthink | Group Polarization

- The original attitudes of individuals become exaggerated when shared by others.
- Group members can fuel each other's sense of superiority, dislike for adversaries and outrage at any perceived threat.
- In extreme cases, this exaggerated polarization can lead to group frenzy and mob behavior.

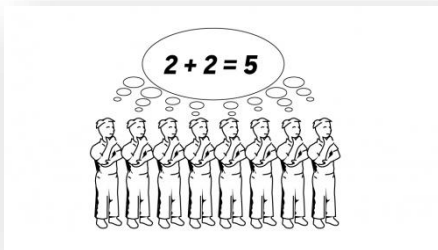
<https://www.overcominghateportal.org/group-think.html>



Groupthink | In-Group Bias

- Identification with a group makes individuals unduly subject to being influenced by the biases, loyalties, and values of the group.

<https://www.overcominghateportal.org/group-think.html>

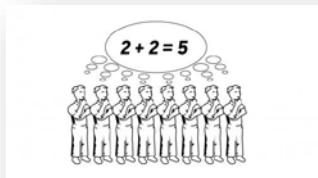


Group Think- Understanding & Overcoming Hate

Group Projection

- Each “side” projects traits onto the groups that it sees as allies or foes. Two polarized sides call each other biased and extreme.
- Each may truly believe that the other is being unreasonable. Semantics can blur the line.

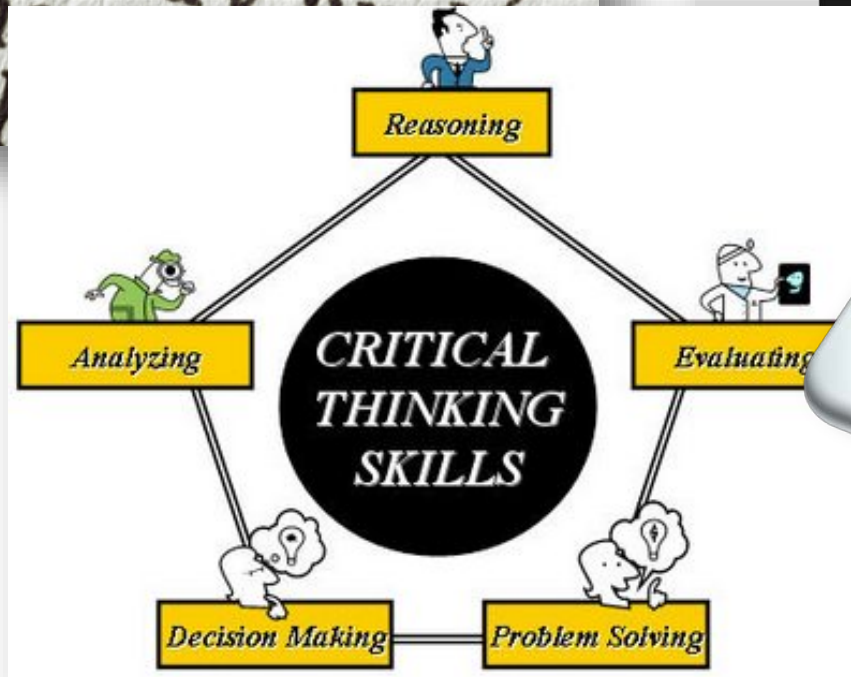
<https://www.overcominghateportal.org/group-think.html>





Implications for Professional Helpers

Hmm...



Critical thinking

Definition | Critical thinking

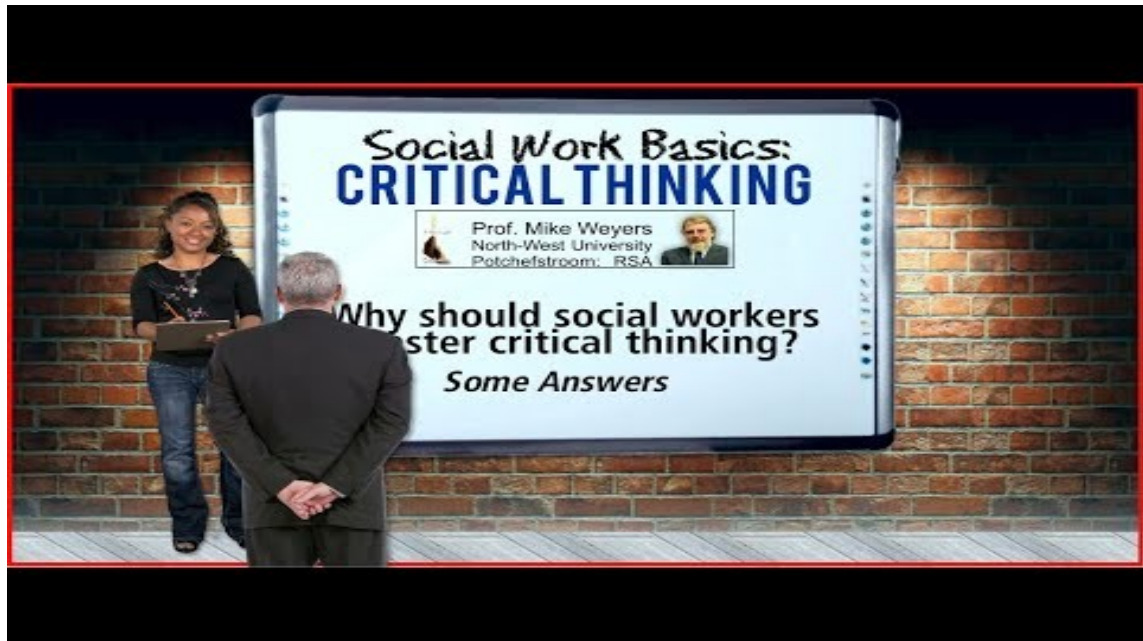
Thinking critically depends upon

- an open mind,
- reasoning,
- logic,
- questioning of assumptions,
- data,
- information, and
- evidence.

In order to engage in critical thinking, a person must value evidence and facts rather than opinions or beliefs.

Why critical thinking ?

9:51



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3pomejCwPY>

Advocacy

Definition | **Advocacy**

The social work profession was founded in social change. Throughout the profession's history, social workers have sought to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources and opportunities that allow them to meet their basic needs. NASW upholds this challenge by advocating for the association to members of Congress and regulatory agencies that so often hold the authority to influence policy.

NASW has developed a policy agenda, which asserts the association's advocacy priorities for the legislative cycle. NASW's policy agenda is consistent with the NASW policies in Social Work Speaks, which is developed by members of the association at Delegate Assembly.

[NASW website: https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy](https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy)

Global Definition of the Social Work Profession

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

International Federation of Social Work

<https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>

NASW Ohio Core Values & Mission Statement

Service | Social Justice | Dignity and Worth of People | Importance of Human Relationships | Integrity | Competence

Mission Statement

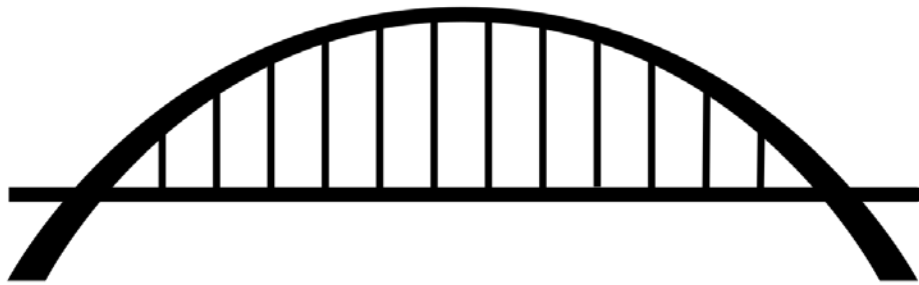
The mission of NASW Ohio Chapter is to strengthen, support, and unify the social work profession, to promote the development of social work standards and practice, and to **advocate for social policies that advance social justice and diversity.**

<http://europeanadvocacy.org/why-engage-in-advocacy/>

1. To solve specific problems through concrete changes in public policies and program
2. To strengthen and empower civil society
3. To promote and consolidate democracy



Bridge | Critical thinking | Decisions | Advocacy |



Bridge | Critical thinking | Decisions | Advocacy |



<https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/ethics> 1:34

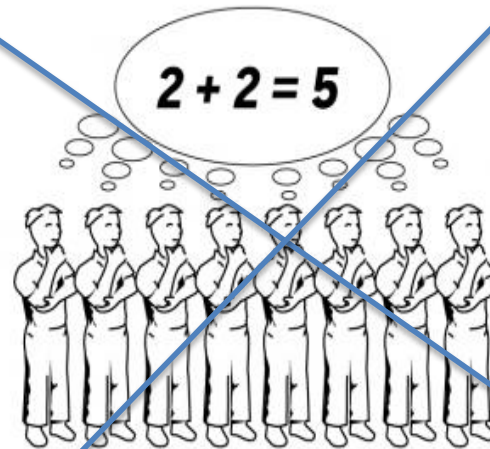
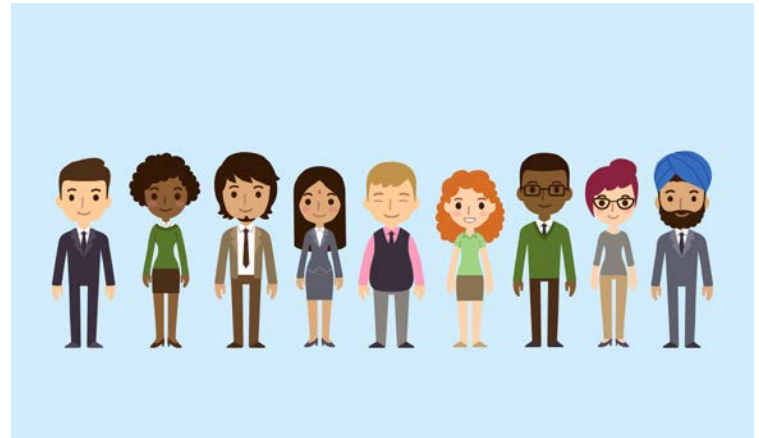


Groupthink Influences...

How can I, the professional helper, elevate critical thinking toward excellence in advocacy when I am unwilling to step away from the group and remember to think, *even* when I like the group?



What can we do?



10th man theory | World War Z



**Critical
Evaluator**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcNK7M2eCI4> | 3:09

5 Ways to Prevent Groupthink

- **Plan for it.** Be proactive and ready to address it when it surfaces or feels like it might surface.
- **Seek feedback.** Reach out to those who will be impacted by decisions and obtain their feedback. Seek out the subtle issues (no matter how small) and address them openly.
- **Encourage debate.** True commitment from everyone on the team is only created through healthy debate (or conflict).
- **Leverage diversity of thought.** Tapping into different thinking styles and personalities ensures a more holistic view of how others think and feel about a topic. It also creates a safe place to discuss issues and concerns.
- **Recognize data bias.** Instead of relying on data as facts, acknowledge that data and statistics might be biased, such as insiders handpicking data to reassure leaders about decisions already made

Ferguson Values, 2018

Prevent Groupthink

Vigilant problem solving

(Kelman, Sanders, & Pandit, 2016)



- Advisors **bring** diverse knowledge & opinions
- Leaders **seeks** dissenting views
- Critically **examines** costs & risks of choices
- **Willing** to revise an initial view in response to deliberation

Groupthink - Definition, Causes and Ways to Prevent It

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWoH2J8sLP8> 5:48



Real World | Case Studies



**Groupthink &
Project
Performance: The
Influence of
Personal Traits &
Interpersonal Ties**

Riccobono,
Bruccoleri, &
Grobler, 2016

**Board
Groupthink**
Coles, Daniel,
Naveen, 2014

**“Tell It Like It is”:
Decision Making,
Groupthink, and
Decisiveness
among U.S.
Federal
Subcabinet
Executives**
Kelman, Sanders,
& Pandit, 2017

**The Enron
board: The
Perils of
Groupthink**
O’Connor,
2003

**Groupthink of
Irving Janis**
Janis, 1991
**(The Challenger
Launch)**



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Refuting | Groupthink



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKH5ITx6>

AAk 3:09

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**We elevate social work
With intentionality.. We
think...I think and I don't stop**



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Questions | Thoughts



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