

Rutkowski, G. K., Gruder, C. L., & Roomer, D. (1983). Group cohesiveness, social norms, and bystander intervention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 545-552.

Prior research confirmed the bystander effect with unacquainted participants, but whether bystanders in a cohesive relationship displayed the effect had not been assessed. In one of the two studies Rutkowski, Gruder, and Romer (1983) measured 144 male students' reactions to an emergency. The emergency consisted of a loud crash followed by screams of pain. The experimenters split the students into groups of high-cohesiveness, or low cohesiveness and then placed those participants into groups of two or four. The experimenters established a high-cohesive group by having the participants talk and learn about each other. The low cohesive group did not talk to each other. The experimenters measured how fast the participants in each group reacted to the emergency.

The participants in the low-cohesive condition responded significantly slower in the four-person groups than the two-person groups. The participants in the high-cohesive condition responded significantly faster in the four-person group than the two-person group. The authors commented that high cohesiveness prevented the *diffusion of responsibility* and increased individual responsibility for help as the number of bystanders increased. The authors further mentioned that participants in the high-cohesive groups expected future interaction, increasing the likelihood of helping behavior. Rutkowski et al. (1983) concluded that group cohesiveness affected one's helping behavior in emergency situations.