

# Prosocial Behavior



# What is Prosocial Behavior?

The background of the slide features a sunset sky with soft, golden light filtering through the clouds. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of hands reaching out towards each other, symbolizing help, support, and prosocial behavior.

**“Voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals” (Eisenberg and Mussen 1989).**

**Any act performed with the goal of benefiting another person. (e.g. helping, comforting, sharing)**

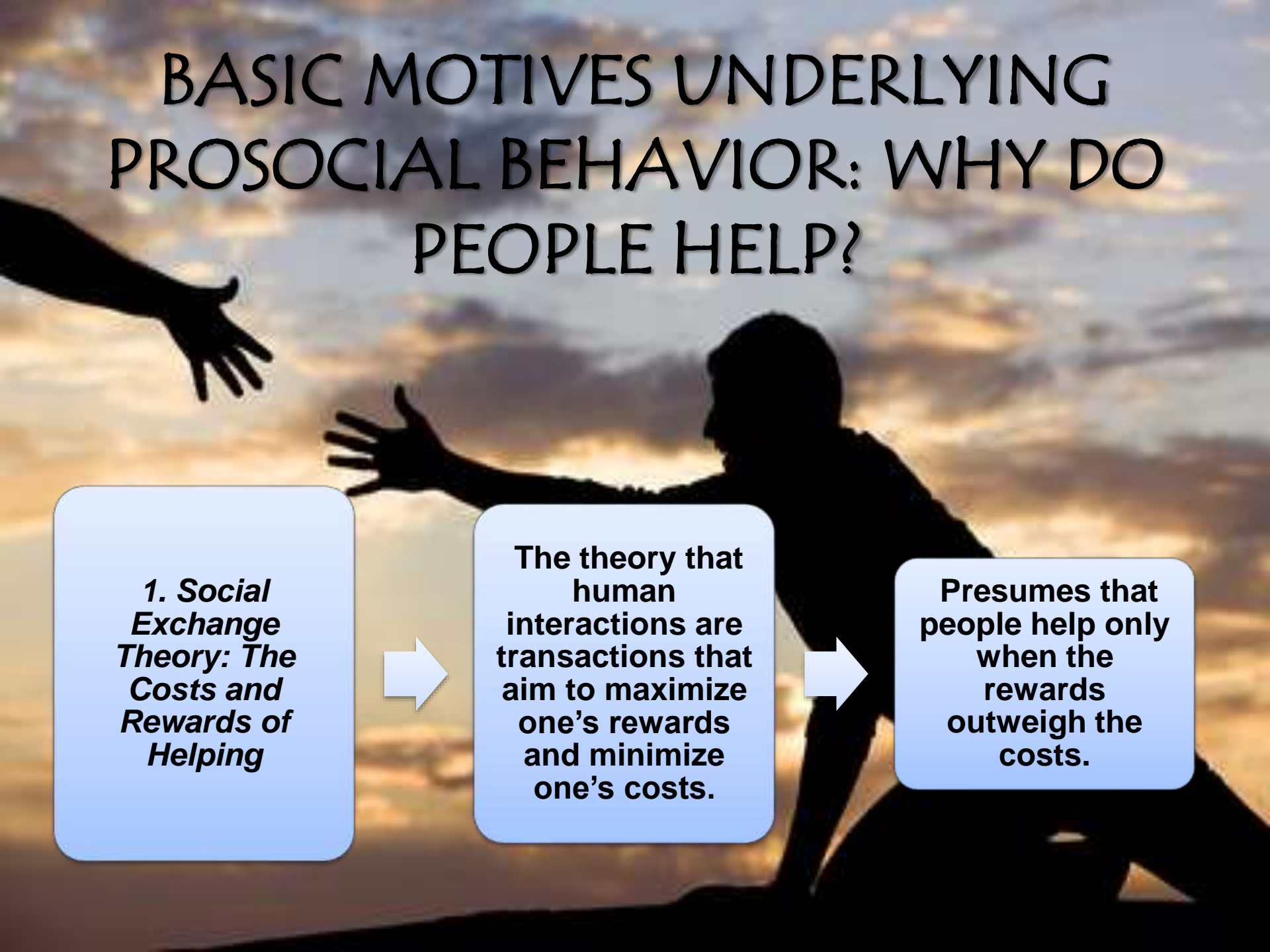
**Characterized by a concern about the rights, feelings and welfare of other people.**

# Prosocial behavior vs. Altruism

The background of the slide features a sunset sky with soft, golden light filtering through scattered clouds. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of hands reaching out. One hand is on the left side, and another is in the center, with a person's silhouette partially visible behind it, suggesting a gesture of help or support.

**Prosocial behavior refers to a pattern of activity, whereas, altruism is the motivation to help others out of pure regard for their needs rather than how the action will benefit oneself.**

# BASIC MOTIVES UNDERLYING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR: WHY DO PEOPLE HELP?



**1. Social Exchange Theory: The Costs and Rewards of Helping**



The theory that human interactions are transactions that aim to maximize one's rewards and minimize one's costs.



Presumes that people help only when the rewards outweigh the costs.



## ***2. Social Norms:***

### ***a. Reciprocity norm***

- According to this principle, people are likely to help strangers if it is understood that the recipient is expected to return the favor at some time in future.

### ***b. Social-Responsibility norm***

- States that we should help when others are in need and dependent on us.

### ***c. Gender and receiving help norm***

- Women not only receive more offers of help in certain situations but also seek more help.

**Evolutionary  
Psychology**

**Any social behavior that enhances reproductive success (the conception, birth, and survival of offspring) will continue to be passed on from one generation to the next.**

- a. Kin selection**
- **The idea that evolution has selected altruism toward one's close relatives to enhance the survival of mutually shared genes.**

# SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR: WHEN WILL PEOPLE HELP?

## ***A. Environment: Rural versus Urban***

- People in rural areas are more helpful.

## ***B. Residential Mobility***

- People who have lived in one place for a long time are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors.

## ***C. The Number of Bystanders: The Bystander Effect***

- Refers to the tendency for people to become less likely to assist a person in distress when there are a number of other people also present.

# Reasons for the "Bystander Effect"



• Three main hypotheses:

– *Pluralistic ignorance*

• We look to others to see how to act

– *Social inhibition*

• We don't want to draw negative attention to ourselves

– *Diffusion of responsibility*

• The burden of helping is shared with others



# How can we increase helping?

The background of the slide features a sunset sky with soft, golden clouds. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of hands reaching out towards each other, symbolizing help and support. One hand is on the left, another is in the center, and a third is on the right, all appearing to be in motion.

**A. Increasing the  
Likelihood that  
Bystanders Will  
Intervene**

**B. Enable guilt and  
concern for self-image**

**C. Socializing altruism**