

PROSOCIAL CONFORMITY: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Charity Norming

An initial set of 196 charity logos were harvested from websites. Charities were organizations devoted to a wide range of issues, including environmental conservation, politics, culture, equality, education, poverty, etc. Two hundred Mechanical Turk workers then rated a random set of 50 charities. For each charity, they used a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale to respond to three statements: (i) “I am familiar with this charity,” (ii) “I agree with the goals of this charity,” and (iii) “I would be willing to support this charity financially.” Using ratings made by participants between the ages of 18 and 30, we calculated mean *familiarity* (item i) and *worthy of support* (mean of items ii and iii) scores for each charity. We then selected charities that were fairly *familiar* (scores of at least 2.5 of 5) and moderately *worthy of support* (scores between 2.5 and 3.5). For norming data, please contact the corresponding author.

Study 3 Target Notes

High Distress Target

Well, I guess this last month has actually been really hard for me. I was injured in a car accident and broke my leg. It was really painful, and I had to go to the hospital for awhile. The doctors say that my recovery is going well enough, but I'm still in a lot of pain, and I struggle to do things that used to be easy for me. I wish I had someone to help me around the house, because you can only handle so much when your leg is broken, you know? I've also been feeling pretty lonely, just being here on my own. I've been told these feelings are normal when you've been injured, but I really hope they go away soon.

Low Distress Target

Well, I guess this last month has actually been pretty standard for me. I've just been keeping up with the usual pace of my work-life and social-life. I've been on the same project at my day job for awhile now, and it's been going just fine. I've been told that they might hire someone new for the project, but you never know if that's going to happen, you know? Last weekend I actually managed to get some work done around the house, and I'm glad I did that. I've also got plans to hang out with some friends this weekend, so I'm looking forward to that. Overall I think things have been pretty normal, and I'm not expecting much to change around here very soon.

Instructions to Study 3 Note Raters

You will rate the paragraph on the following dimensions. Please answer each on a 9-point scale, where 1 indicates “not at all” and 9 indicates “extremely.”

1. *Empathic and Supportive* ($\alpha = .92$)

- *Understanding*: How understanding does the author seem? To what extent does the author try to communicate that they understand the feelings of the recipient?
- *Connection*: How much does the author try to connect with the recipient? To what extent does the author highlight parallels between their own experiences and those of the recipient?
- *Helpfulness*: How helpful is the paragraph? To what extent does it offer advice or suggestions that will help the recipient feel better?
- *Supportive*: How supportive is the paragraph? How effective do you think it would be in making the recipient feel better?

2. *Recipient-focused* ($\alpha = .88$): How “recipient-focused” is the paragraph? To what extent does it focus on and discuss the experiences of the recipient?

3. *Author-focused* ($\alpha = .92$): How “author-focused” is the paragraph? To what extent does it focus on and discuss the experiences of the author?

4. *On-task* ($\alpha = .79$): How on-task is the paragraph? To what extent did the author follow the task’s instructions to write a paragraph that responds to the recipient’s note and not use the space to write about something unrelated?

Supplemental Table 1

Table S1. Study 3 factor loadings for participants' empathic emotion ratings.

	Factor 1	Factor 2
	<i>Personal Distress</i>	<i>Empathic Concern</i>
Sad	.82*	.01
Heavy-hearted	.81*	-.05
Distressed	.81*	-.33
Troubled	.79*	-.32
Low	.79*	-.23
Low-spirited	.66*	-.38
Uneasy	.65*	-.43
Disturbed	.59	-.34
Compassionate	.50	.77*
Sympathetic	.52	.71*
Touched	.49	.70*
Softhearted	.53	.70*

Note: * = loading > .60

Correlations Between Empathic Concern and Moderated Mediation Dependent Variables

Participants' feelings of empathic concern for the target correlated significantly with raters' ratings of how empathic and supportive their notes were, $r(186) = .52, p < .001$. This relationship emerged within both the low distress target, $r(91) = .37, p = .001$, and the high distress target conditions, $r(93) = .39, p = .001$. Similar correlations emerged for how "on task" notes were rated (all participants: $r(186) = .49, p < .001$; low distress target: $r(91) = .37, p < .001$; high distress target: $r(93) = .34, p = .001$). A significant correlation emerged between empathic concern and how recipient focused notes were rated across all participants, $r(186) = .29, p < .001$, but this relationship did not hold within the low distress target, $r(91) = .16, p = .12$, or high distress target conditions, $r(93) = .11, p = .29$. Finally, a relationship between feelings of empathic concern and ratings of author focus emerged only within the high distress target condition (all participants: $r(186) = .03, p = .69$; low distress target: $r(91) = .03, p = .77$; high distress target: $r(93) = .27, p = .008$).

Study 4 Analyses of Ratings Over Time

To investigate how participants' ratings changed over time, we averaged ratings into 6 bins of 4 trials each (Figure S1). Given that ratings in bin 1 appear to differ across conditions, we first examined participants' ratings on the very first trial, before they observed group ratings, to ensure that these differences did not emerge due to a failure of randomization. A 2 [Group Norm: empathic vs. non-empathic] \times 2 [Target Distress: high vs. low] ANOVA revealed only an effect of Target Distress, $F(1,338) = 125.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .27, 90\% \text{ CI} = [.21, .33]$. Participants reported more empathy for the first high distress target ($M = 76.08, SD = 24.39$) than for the first low distress target ($M = 43.32, SD = 29.40$). No significant effect of Group Norm or interaction emerged on the first trial ($ps > .77$). Follow-up t-tests confirm that initial ratings made by participants in the empathic and non-empathic group norm conditions did not differ within the low distress and high distress target conditions, $ps > .73$. Hence, the differences across conditions observed in Figure I are not due to a failure of randomization, but rather they reflect i) participants' increased empathy for more distressing targets and ii) conformity to group ratings that emerge even after a very small number of trials.

We then subjected bin-wise empathy ratings to a 2 [Group Norm] \times 2 [Target Distress] \times 6 [Time] ANOVA, with time set as a linear contrast. This analysis produced identical statistics for the between-subjects analyses reported in the manuscript (i.e., significant main effects of both Group Norm and Target Distress as well as a significant interaction between these factors). However, this analysis also revealed a significant main effect of Time, $F(1, 338) = 8.54, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .02, 90\% \text{ CI} = [.005, .06]$, a significant interaction between Time and Group Norm, $F(1.338) = 36.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10, 90\% \text{ CI} = [.05, .15]$, and a significant interaction between

time and target distress, $F(1, 338) = 38.94$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI = [.06, .16]. The three-way interaction did not reach significance, $F(1, 338) = 0.65$, $p = .42$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, 90% CI = [0, .02].

We clarified the Time \times Norm interaction by conducting two separate follow-up ANOVAs. These analyses examined the impact of time on empathy ratings for participants in the empathic norm and non-empathic norm conditions separately, after collapsing across target distress. Empathic norms led to a slight increase in empathy ratings over time, $F(1, 175) = 4.54$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, 90% CI = [.001, .07], ($M_{Bin\ 1} = 64.69$, $M_{Bin\ 6} = 66.09$), whereas non-empathic norms led to a substantial decrease in empathy ratings over time, $F(1, 165) = 30.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, 90% CI = [.08, .24], ($M_{Bin\ 1} = 48.76$, $M_{Bin\ 6} = 39.96$). These effects are in the directions one would hypothesize assuming that participants begin at a moderate rating and move their ratings towards group ratings.

We similarly clarified the Time \times Target Distress interaction by conducting two additional ANOVAs that separately investigated the impact of time on empathy ratings for participants who read about high distress targets and participants who read about low distress targets, after collapsing across group norms. Participants who read about high distress targets decreased their ratings over time, $F(1, 171) = 35.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, 90% CI = [.09, .25], ($M_{Bin\ 1} = 68.55$, $M_{Bin\ 6} = 59.36$), whereas participants who read about low distress targets increased their ratings over time, $F(1, 169) = 5.05$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, 90% CI = [.002, .08], ($M_{Bin\ 1} = 45.23$, $M_{Bin\ 6} = 47.38$). These effects are better understood when each condition is considered separately.

We consequently conducted repeated-measures ANOVAs to observe how time affected empathy ratings of participants in each condition. Results from these analyses are presented in Table S2. Attention to the direction and size of the effects reveal that ratings decreased slightly

over time for participants in the empathic norm + high distress target condition, they decreased substantially for participants in the non-empathic norm + high distress target condition, they increased moderately for participants in the empathic norm + low distress target condition, and they showed a non-significant decrease over time for participants in the non-empathic norm + low distress target condition. These analyses reveal patterns very similar to those found in Studies 1 and 2. When participants' initial ratings are outside of the group's range of donations, participants shift their ratings towards the group's ratings over time (i.e., for the non-empathic norm + high distress target condition and the empathic norm + low distress target condition). However, little change in ratings occurs over time when participants' initial ratings are within the range of group donations (i.e., for the empathic norm + high distress target condition and the non-empathic norm + low distress target condition).

Supplemental Figure 1

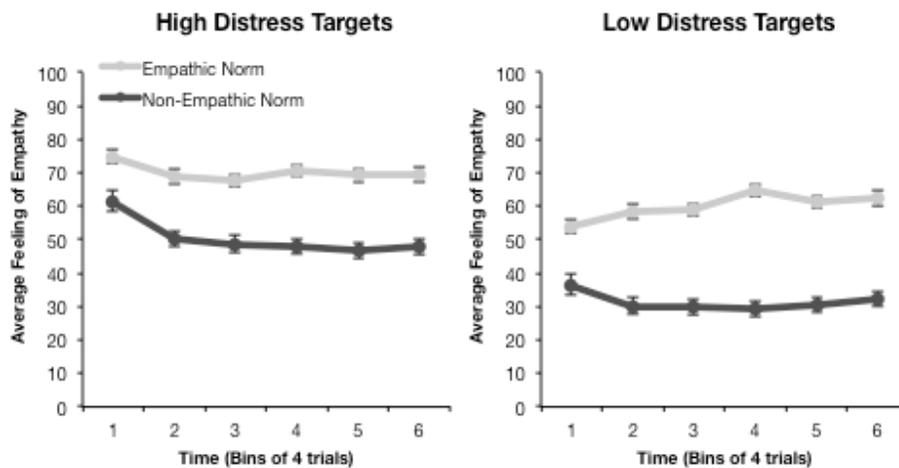


Figure S1. Mean empathy ratings for each bin of 4 trials, separated by condition in Study 4. The left panel represents participants who read about high distress targets, and the right panel represents participants who read about low distress targets. Light grey lines represent participants who observed empathic group ratings, whereas dark grey lines represent participants who observed non-empathic group ratings. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals, adjusted for within-subjects comparisons following Morey (2008).

Supplemental Table 2

Table S2. Results of repeated-measures ANOVAs analyzing the impact of time on empathy ratings within each condition of Study 4.

Group Norm	Target Distress	Direction	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	90% CI
Empathic	High Distress	Decrease	5.19	.03	.05	[.004, .14]
Non-Empathic	High Distress	Decrease	36.58	< .001	.31	[.18, .43]
Empathic	Low Distress	Increase	29.52	< .001	.26	[.13, .38]
Non-Empathic	Low Distress	Decrease	3.09	.08	.04	[0, .12]

Examples of Study 5 Vignettes

1. One day, John was asking for money on the street. Everyone ignored him, and he had no money for dinner that day. John experienced intense stomach pain all night because he had nothing to eat.
2. Last night, Paul was arrested by the police because people believed he was behaving “suspiciously.” Paul claimed that he wasn’t doing anything wrong, but the police still arrested him.
3. Jake has been looking for housing for months now. He has visited several shelters, but they are all full. The shelters told him that he is on a waiting list while more rooms are made available. Jake is incredibly cold at night, and winter has only just begun.
4. Once a week, May attends a local religious service. This weekend she found out that one of the members had passed away. May didn’t know the person well, but the news still made her cry.
5. Ryan’s tooth has been aching for weeks now, but there is no dentist that will take care of him. Last year, there was a dentist that offered free visits in a local clinic, but the dentist stopped offering free services. Ryan doesn’t know what he’ll do about his tooth.
6. Bethany doesn’t have a home, but she has been squatting in a room with a few other homeless people. However, one of these roommates decided she wanted the entire room and kicked her out. Bethany managed to grab some of her stuff and run outside before she was hurt.