

Social psychology of empathy and cooperation

Research into the human psychology of empathy, compassionate altruism and cooperation is supported by the School's Hilary Green Research Fund, generously endowed by Mr Grenville Green.

This research can include:

- determining the nature of emotional or other mental, social or biological processes involved in empathy, compassionate altruism and cooperation
- assessing variations among people in the extent of empathy and actions out of compassion
- obtaining evidence on how empathy and compassionate action can be enhanced in one-to-one relationships or within or between groups.

The Fund encourages such research by making awards to individual applicants as a short-term Research Fellowship/Associateship, a Research Studentship of up to 3 years for work on a PhD, or a Research Prize for a public Lecture, the organisation of a Conference (with support for attendees early in a research career and for invited speakers), preparing an evaluative overview for publication, developing research tools or educational services, or other promotion of the Fund's research area, in any case based in the University of Birmingham.

The PhD projects centre on empathy and cooperation in everyday life, empathy for pain in healthy adults and patients with chronic pain, and on communication within households and by healthcare professionals about the emotion and motivation involved in healthy eating, in the general population, in type 2 diabetes or in developmental disorders.

The psychological processes of empathy, compassion and helpfulness are to be related in some of this research to processes in the brain using imaging by fMRI or by EEG psychophysiology or to parentally imprinted gene expression.

Current Grants

Hilary Green Research Fund

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