



Working For The Common Good

Individuals and Groups Address
Challenges Facing the World

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The Questions

- How and why do people become actively involved in doing good for others and for society?
- How can research in the social sciences address the problems of society?



Problems Facing Society

- Conflict, violence, prejudice, discrimination, poverty, hunger, environment, climate change
- Human solutions to human problems
- Citizen participation and civic engagement



The Problem of Inaction

- A lack of participation in tackling society's problems
- Some facts and figures
- Actions fall short of beliefs
- Solving the problem of inaction



The Case of Volunteerism

- A world wide phenomenon
- One way that people can help solve society's problems
- An important source of helping, with benefits to individuals and to society
- A special kind of helping



Features of Volunteerism

- Performed freely and without obligation
- Involves deliberation and planning
- Extends over time
- May involve personal costs



A Curious Phenomenon

- No press of circumstance
- No bonds of obligation
- It is effortful
- It has opportunity costs
- So, why does volunteerism occur?



Why Does Volunteerism Occur?

- What moves people to volunteer, and what sustains their involvement?
- A matter of values?
- The motivational agendas of volunteers – doing good for self and others
- Functionalist theorizing and research on volunteerism

A Diversity of Motivations

VALUES

I can do something for a cause that is important to me

COMMUNITY

Volunteering allows me to help members of my community

CAREER

Volunteering will help me succeed in my chosen profession

UNDERSTANDING

Volunteering lets me learn through direct, hands-on experience

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Volunteering lets me challenge myself and test my skills

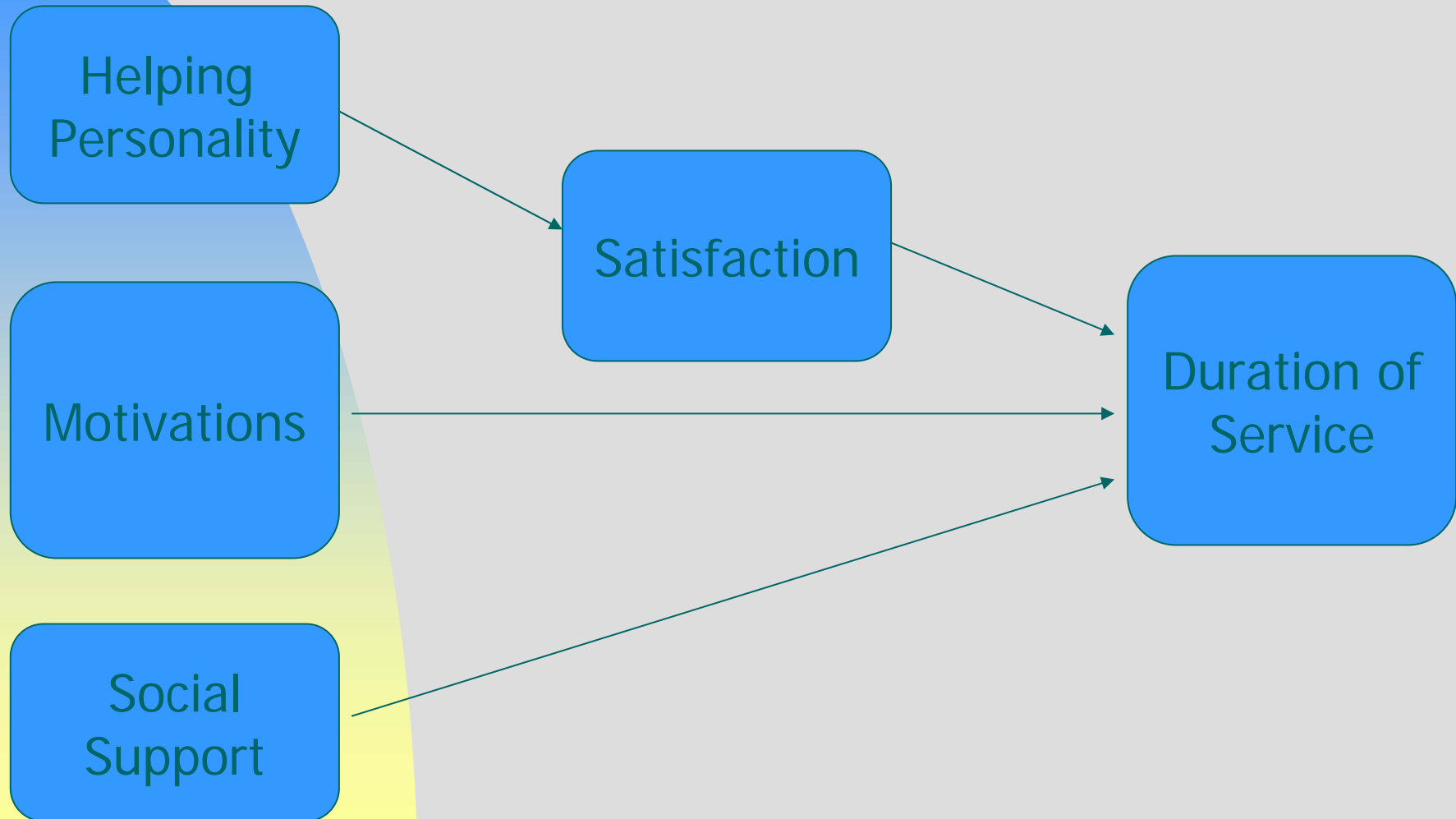
ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT

Volunteering makes me feel important

SOCIAL

People I'm close to want me to volunteer

Predicting Duration of Service





Agendas for Voluntary Action

- The impact of motivation on action
- The particular power of self-oriented motivations
- Harnessing the power of motivation to promote action
- Different strategies for initiation and maintenance of action



Individuals and Society

- The irony of “selfish altruism”
- The “win-win” situation of doing good for self and society
- The solution to the problem of inaction
- Building a well-functioning society



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