

## Social Psychology – Conformity

### **What is it?**

- When people “go along” with the majority/minority opinion or behaviour.
- Conformity involves social influence;
- Majority influence can be either:
  - Acceptance – private views change;
  - Compliance – private beliefs differ.

### **Sherif and the Autokinetic Effect**

The illusion of a pinprick of light in a dark room appearing to move because of the oscillation of eyes was used:

- Individuals invited into a darkroom. A pinprick of light was shown and because of the autokinetic effect, the participants were asked to estimate the distance the light moved.
- Varied results ensued – there was no consistent pattern.
- Sherif then took three individuals into the room together, and told one of them what the other estimates were, and asked for the estimate again. He found that the second estimate tended to go towards what the other two people thought.
- This showed that in an ambiguous situation, individuals tend to adopt what group members think.