People conform to

**group norms**

- privately, because they accept the norm as indicating reality
- publicly, because they value rewards they can obtain by conforming.

Those whose consensus we regard as relevant on a particular issue are called a **reference group**

and agreement with their consensus offers us

- mastery, assurance that our opinions and judgments are correct
- connectedness, feelings of being valued by those whose opinions we respect.

As groups interact and form norms, the result may be

**depolarization**, when the group is initially evenly split.

- superficially by
  - the consensus heuristic
  - adopting extreme positions
- systematically, by
  - processing positions
  - processing arguments
  - processing both together.

**polarization**, when the initial opinion leans one way and information is processed
Conformity may go awry when consensus is reached

- without consideration, relying superficially on the consensus heuristic
- without independence, when people's views are contaminated
- without acceptance, through public conformity

producing the risk of

- groupthink

which can be combated by strengthening

- minority influence

as minorities

- offer an alternative consensus
- appear different, but not too different
- represent diversity
- promote systematic processing

producing better decisions.