**Cognitive Dissonance**

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological state of discomfort that occurs when someone holds conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes. It can also refer to the mental conflict that results when new information contradicts someone's beliefs or assumptions.

People experience cognitive dissonance when their actions are not in line with their values or beliefs. It can cause feelings of stress, guilt, anxiety, shame, tension, or regret.

**To resolve cognitive dissonance, people may:**

* Change their beliefs
* Change their actions
* Change how they view their actions
* Justify or ignore the conflicting information
* Reject, explain away, or avoid the new information
* Persuade themselves that no conflict exists

**Some examples of cognitive dissonance include:**

* Wanting to eat healthier but relying on fast food because it's more affordable
* Making a New Year's resolution to exercise more but cutting back due to tiredness
* Feeling torn between responsibilities and wanting to improve physically
* Believing in the equality of the sexes but expecting a female partner to do most of the household labor
* Seeing a close friend steal something but hesitating to “rat them out” because of the fear of losing the friendship or negative beliefs about people who “snitch”
* American psychologist Leon Festinger developed the concept of cognitive dissonance in the 1950s