

Reflection 2

Name of Student

Institutional Affiliation

8-2 Reflection 2

You should write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) addressing each question below.

- 1. Reflect on what you learned this week about motivated reasoning and intellectual dishonesty. Did the study results surprise you or not?**

This week's insights into motivated reasoning and intellectual dishonesty highlighted the powerful influence of cognitive biases in shaping our beliefs and responses to evidence. While not entirely surprising, the study results underscored the extent to which individuals can protect their pre-existing views, often employing intellectual dishonesty unconsciously. The realization stresses the importance of cultivating a critical mindset and the need for rigorous scientific methods to mitigate these biases. Understanding that our reasoning can be flawed and driven by motivations other than truth is crucial in academic and personal contexts.

- 2. Motivated reasoning can have negative consequences, as we have seen last week looking at vaccination. Do you think anything can be done to counteract motivated reasoning? Address this question briefly below.**

Countering motivated reasoning requires a multifaceted approach, primarily focused on education and critical thinking. Educating individuals on the nature of biases and the principles of critical thinking from an early age can fortify them against flawed reasoning (Elder, 2022). Additionally, promoting transparency in data and fostering an environment where questioning and open discussion are encouraged can also help. Encouraging individuals to consider alternative viewpoints and engage in reflective thinking about why they hold certain beliefs can reduce the impact of motivated reasoning.

- 3. Think back over the semester – what is something that you learned that might be of use to you later on in life? Is this something that motivated reasoning could be**

impacted by? Is there anything that you can do to make yourself more aware of when you might be likely to engage in motivated reasoning?

Throughout the semester, the importance of evidence-based decision-making has been a recurring theme that will undoubtedly be useful in various aspects of my life, particularly in navigating health and policy decisions. Motivated reasoning can influence the approach, especially when decisions involve deeply held beliefs. To combat this, I plan to practice mindfulness and self-reflection regularly, which can help me recognize when my conclusions align more with my desires than the evidence. Keeping a journal of decisions and their rationale could also be helpful to monitor and evaluate my reasoning process over time.

4. Recall from the first week of the semester that science attempts to address questions of the natural world around us. This means that there are some questions that science cannot address. Reflect below on when it is appropriate for personal belief to guide our decision making.

Personal beliefs play a crucial role in decision-making when questions extend beyond the empirical reach of science and venture into the realms of ethics, morality, and personal values. For example, decisions about end-of-life care, the rightness of a cause, or choices about personal relationships often involve considerations that transcend scientific evidence (Jones, 2020). In such cases, personal beliefs shaped by cultural, ethical, and spiritual perspectives become central. While science can provide data and forecasts, the value-driven aspects of these decisions rely on personal belief systems, underscoring the importance of a balanced approach that respects both empirical evidence and individual values.

References

- Elder, L. (2022). Fairminded Critical Thinking and Depth of Knowledge as Essential to Gifted Education Programs That Advance the Common Good. In R. J. Sternberg, D. Ambrose, & S. Karami (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Transformational Giftedness for Education* (pp. 143–170). Springer International Publishing.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91618-3_8
- Jones, H. M. (2020). *Life-Prolonging Medical Care and Religiosity at the End of Life*. [PhD Thesis, University of Otago]. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/10067>