**Collective Behaviour and Cults**

**CULTS:** A charismatic leader can convince followers to perform acts they would never have attempted on their own.

* A group, usually with religious or spiritual beliefs, that is organized around a charismatic leader
* In exchange for loyalty, cult members are promised salvation
* Discourage independent thinking
* Very polarized – “us vs. the outside world”

**Common Characteristics of a Cult**

1. Members swear total allegiance to an all-powerful leader.  
  
2. Rational thought is discouraged or forbidden.   
  
3. The cult's recruitment techniques are often deceptive.   
  
4. The cult weakens the follower psychologically by making him or her depend upon the group to solve his or her problems.   
  
5. The cults manipulate guilt to their advantage.   
  
6. The cult leader makes all the career and life decision of the members.   
  
7. Cults exist only for their own material survival and make false promises to work to improve society.   
  
8. Cult members often work fulltime for the group for little or no pay.   
  
9. Cult members are isolated from the outside world and any reality testing it could provide.   
  
10. Cults can be anti-woman, anti-child, and anti-family.   
  
11. Cults are apocalyptic and believe themselves to be the remnant who will survive the soon-approaching end of the world.   
  
12. Many cults follow an "ends justify the means" philosophy.   
  
13. Cults, particularly in regard to their finances, are shrouded in secrecy.   
  
14. There is frequently an aura of or potential for violence around cults.