**Attribution (Causes of Behavior) Terminology**

Directions: After matching the term/definition with the correct example, record the example in the space provided below. OR…even better! Create your own example in the space provided ☺

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| **Dispositional cause** – a person’s behavior is due to internal causes (i.e. personality etc.) | Example: |
| **Situational cause** – the cause of a person’s behavior is due to external factors (environment). | Example: |
| **Fundamental attribution error** – the tendency for people observing someone else’s behavior to emphasize a dispositional cause of that person’s behavior. | Example: |
| **Implicit personality theory** – a collection of beliefs and assumptions that we have about how certain personality traits are linked to other characteristics.  ***A theory that we infer that someone who has a given personality trait will also possess other, related traits (see Halo Effect)*** | Example: |
| **Actor – observer bias –** the tendency for people to explain their own behavior based on situational causes and other people’s behavior based on dispositional causes. This leads to fundamental attribution error. | Example: |
| **Impression formation** – the process by which we form an overall impression of someone’s character and abilities based on available information about their traits and behaviors (i.e. judgments based on our initial perception) ***You can’t judge a book by its cover – BUT we do!!!*** | Example: |
| **Self-serving bias –** the tendency for people to credit their own successful actions to dispositional causes and their failures to situational causes (i.e. if I do something well then it’s because I am a great person, but if I fail at something it is because of someone else). | Example: |
| **The Halo Effect –** a type of cognitive bias where there is a tendency of people to rate attractive or likeable individuals more favorably for their personality traits or characteristics than those who are less attractive or likeable. | Example: |
| **Central-route to persuasion -** occurs when a person is persuaded to act based on the arguments or the content of the message (i.e. logical/research-based evidence). | Example: |
| **Peripheral-route to persuasion -**when a person is persuaded by something other than the argument or content of the message (i.e. sex appeal or emotion). | Example: |
| **Cognitive dissonance –** emotional or psychological discomfort cause by a person doing or saying something that does not match their attitude, beliefs, or morals. The person is then motivated to change their behavior to match their attitude, change their current conflicting cognition to justify their behavior, or form a new cognition to justify their behavior. | Example: |
| **Defensive attribution -** is a mental mechanism used to avoid the worry associated with the belief that one will be a victim or cause of something negative.  A person will place more responsibility on a victim or a harm doer depending on the severity of the incident and how similar the victim and observer are. The more serious a situation is, the more responsibility is placed on the victim or the harm doer as a way of reducing emotional distress and worry of thinking that it could happen to you. In essence, this helps the person feel less worried that the same bad thing will happen to them.   **AKA – blaming the victim ☹** | Example: |