

# Cognitive Biases in team decisions

## 01 Authority Bias

MOST COMMON

The most senior person speaks first and anchors everyone else.

- **DANGER** When the CEO or lead voices their opinion before the discussion.
- **FIX** Senior speaks last. Anonymous voting before discussion.

## 02 Groupthink

MOST COMMON

Nobody challenges the majority view, even when they have doubts.

- **DANGER** When everyone nods after 5 minutes and no one plays devil's advocate.
- **FIX** Anonymous voting first. Explicitly invite disagreement.

## 03 Anchoring

MOST COMMON

The first number mentioned anchors all subsequent estimates.

- **DANGER** When someone names a price, timeline, or revenue figure first.
- **FIX** Generate multiple reference points in parallel before discussing.

## 04 Confirmation Bias

Seeking only evidence that confirms the existing hypothesis.

- **DANGER** When the team stops actively attacking its own position.
- **FIX** Designate a devil's advocate. Hunt for disconfirming data.

## 05 Sunk Cost Fallacy

Continuing because of past investment, not future value.

- **DANGER** When time or money spent is used as a reason to keep going.
- **FIX** Ask: "Would we choose this today, from scratch?"

## 06 Overconfidence

Systematically overestimating your own predictions.

- **DANGER** When forecasts are presented as point values, not ranges.
- **FIX** Use confidence intervals, not point estimates.

## 07 Status Quo Bias

Preferring the familiar, even when it no longer fits.

- **DANGER** When "we've always done it this way" enters the debate.
- **FIX** Evaluate the status quo as if it were a new proposal.

## 08 Availability Heuristic

Judging probability by how easily an example comes to mind.

- **DANGER** When one recent incident dominates the risk discussion.
- **FIX** Check with data, not anecdotes.

## 09 Framing Effect

How an option is presented changes the decision.

- **DANGER** When an option is framed only as a gain or only as a loss.
- **FIX** Re-state the option in both gain AND loss terms.

## 10 Planning Fallacy

Systematically underestimating time and cost.

- **DANGER** When optimistic assumptions about similar work slip into the plan.
- **FIX** Use reference-class forecasts from comparable projects.

## 11 Dunning-Kruger

Low-expertise voices overestimate their own certainty.

- **DANGER** When the most confident voice in the room has the least experience.
- **FIX** Expert review before finalizing. Weight estimates by track record.

### HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

#### 3 steps to better meetings

1. Read before every important meeting.
2. Review again before decisions are locked.
3. Spot a bias? Apply the matching FIX.