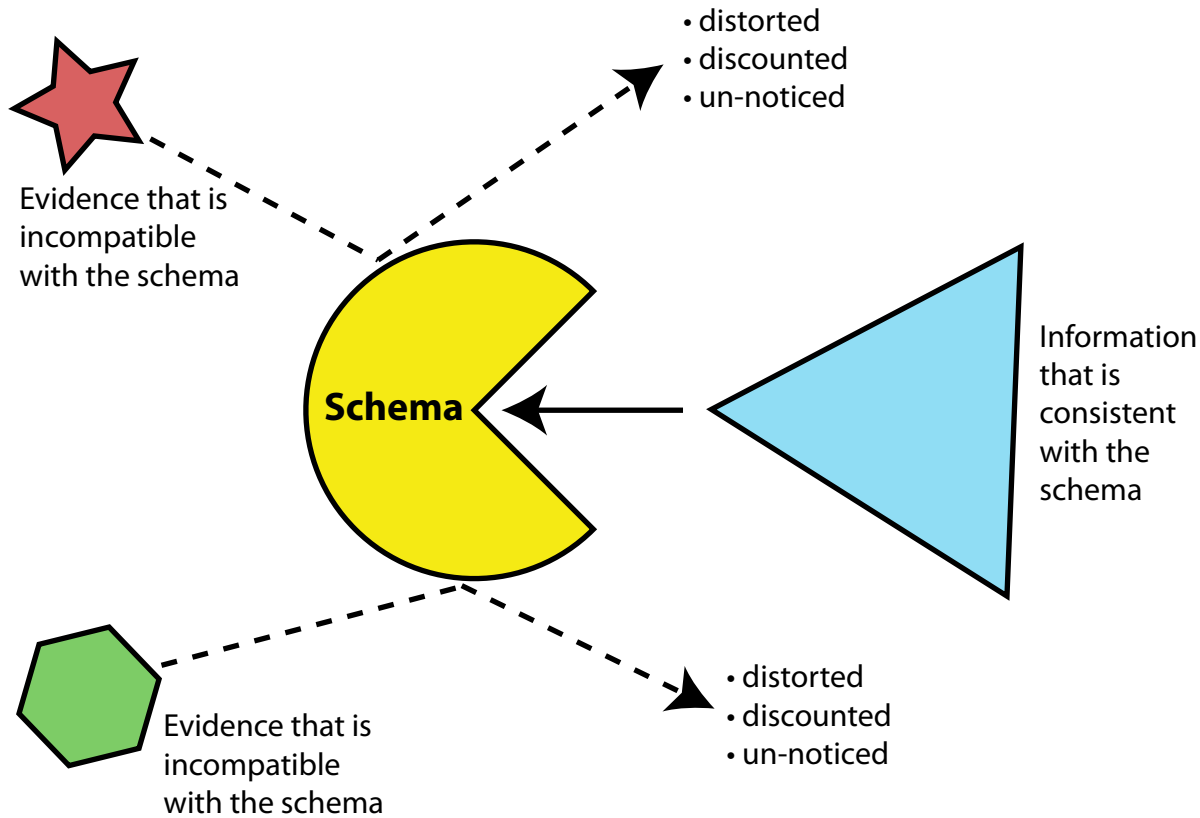


Schema Bias

Our core beliefs (schemas) are stable and resistant to change. They remain stable by influencing the way we see the world - often through *bias* or *prejudice*. Information that does not 'fit' with the schema goes unseen, or is distorted or rejected. Information that does 'fit' is accepted and can make the schema stronger.



This section provides three examples of schema bias, each enclosed in a dashed box. Each example features a yellow Pac-Man-like shape representing a schema, a blue triangle representing supporting information, and a green hexagon representing incompatible evidence. Dashed arrows show how the evidence is processed.

- I am competent:** The schema is supported by "Memory of doing well and being congratulated". Incompatible evidence "Making a mistake" is processed as "That was a one-off and doesn't really reflect upon me". Incompatible evidence "Failing a test" is processed as "I didn't practice, so it wasn't a true test of my ability".
- I am not safe:** The schema is supported by "Walks past intimidating-looking young person". Incompatible evidence "Crime statistics for local town have gone down" is processed as "But burglaries have gone up". Incompatible evidence "Not personally been hurt or threatened for over 10 years" is processed as "Luck" and "It's because I've tried so hard to protect myself".
- I am un-lovable:** The schema is supported by "Had argument with boyfriend". Incompatible evidence "Been in relationship for 5 years" is processed as "If he knew the real me he would leave". Incompatible evidence "Colleagues came to visit me in hospital" is processed as "They just did it to be polite".