The Identity-Oriented Age Diversity Training helps organizations to overcome the challenges of age diversity by "speaking to the heart" of age-diverse coworkers

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For more information, please contact Dr. Anne Burmeister at burmeister@rsm.nl.
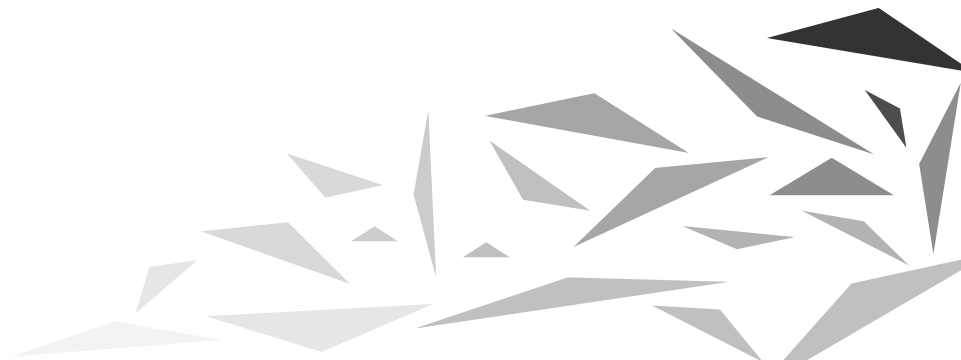
IDENTITY-ORIENTED AGE DIVERSITY TRAINING
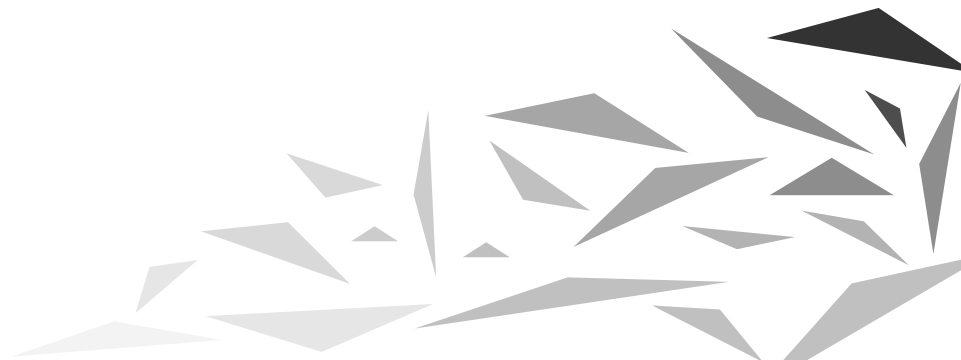
Overcoming the challenges of age diversity

Agenda

1. Agenda and welcome [~15 mins]

2. Introduction to age diversity [~30 mins]

3. Intergroup attribution exercise [~30 mins]

4. Age, social identity and sub-group formation [~30 mins]

5. Coffee break [~30 mins]

6. Reflection on age group descriptions [~30 mins]

7. Identity integration [~30 mins]

8. Action plan [~30 mins]

9. Reflection and goodbye [~15 mins]

Introduction

Who are you?
(Name and job title)

What are your expectations for today?

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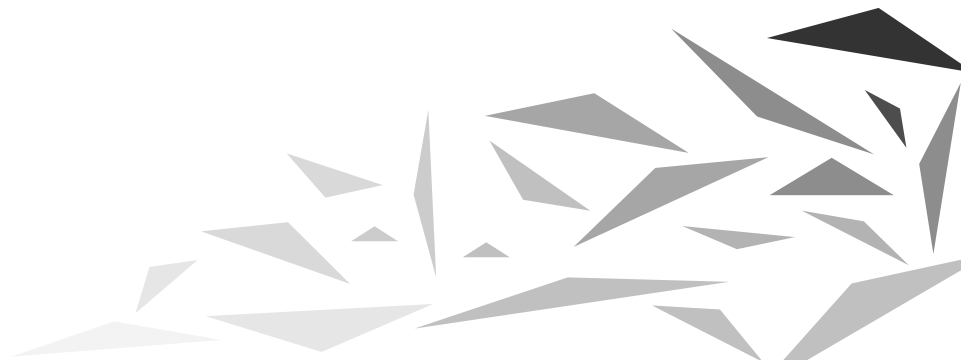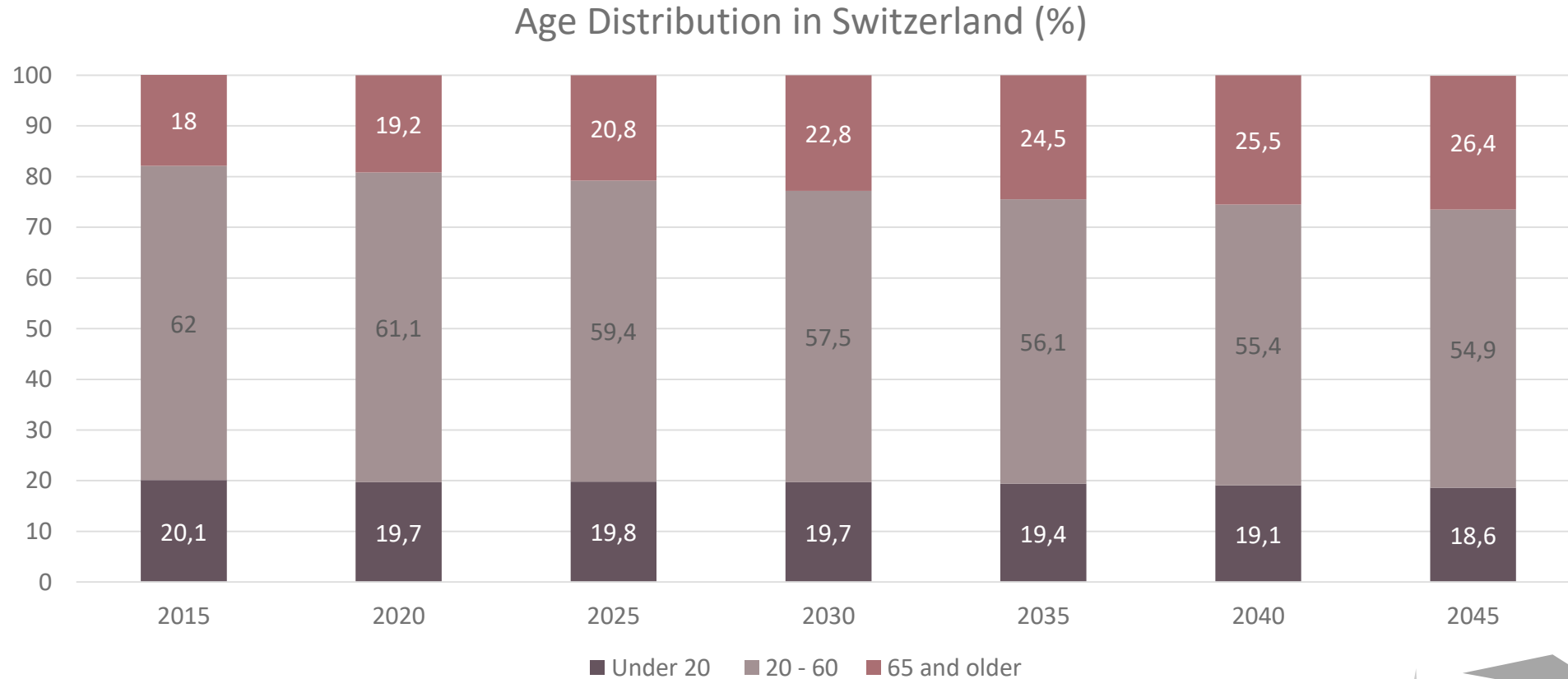8. Action plan [~30 mins]

9. Reflection and goodbye [~15 mins]

Demographic change affects the age structure in Switzerland

Age Distribution in Switzerland (%)

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
65 and older	18	19,2	20,8	22,8	24,5	25,5	26,4
20 - 60	62	61,1	59,4	57,5	56,1	55,4	54,9
Under 20	20,1	19,7	19,8	19,7	19,4	19,1	18,6

■ Under 20   ■ 20 - 60   ■ 65 and older

Quelle: https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/712531/umfrage/prognose-zur-altersstruktur-in-der-schweiz/

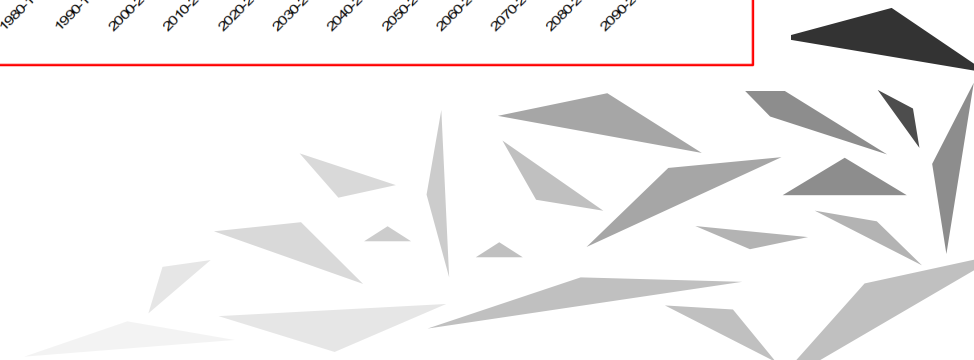# … As birth rates are decreasing & life expectancy is increasing
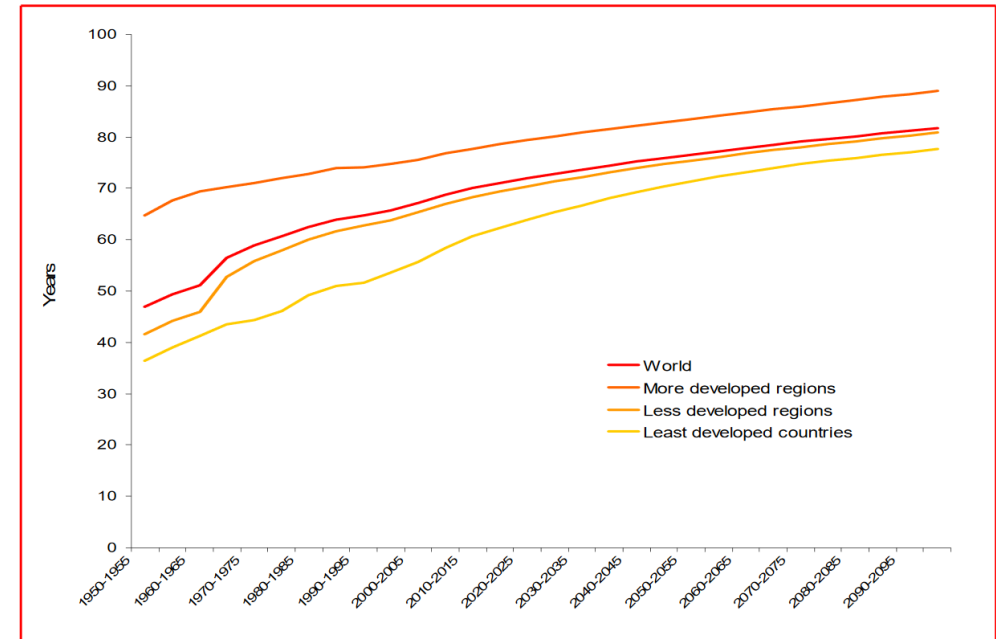
Birth rate

Figure 1.1
Total fertility rate: world and development regions, 1950-2050
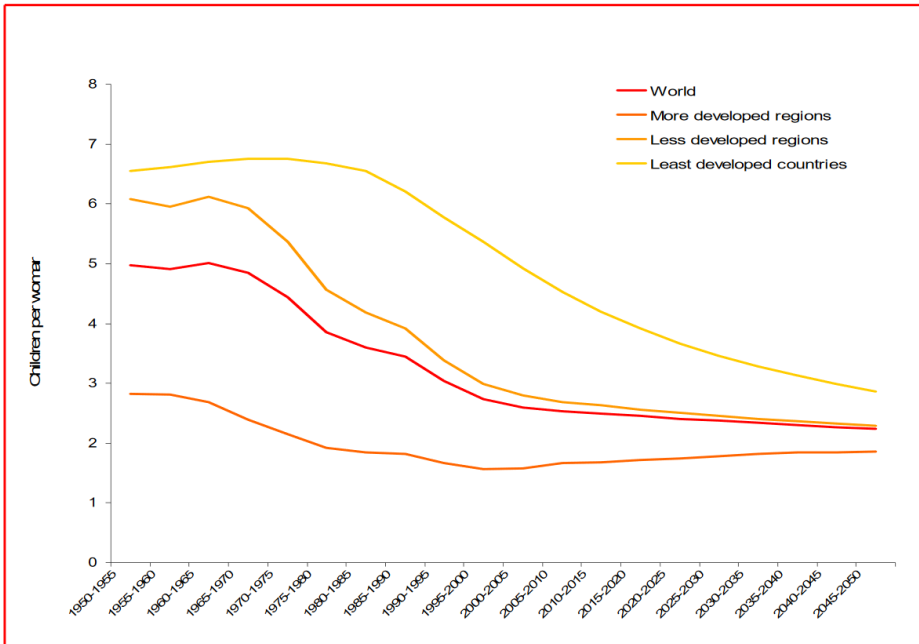
Life expectancy

Figure 1.3
**Life expectancy at birth: world and development regions, 1950-2050**

More older workers and higher age diversity in companies 1/2

Age diversity refers to age differences in companies and is particularly relevant nowadays because:

| For the first time, up to **four different generations** / age groups work together | Employees of different ages have **different needs and different knowledge** | New, more independent forms of work require a **high degree of cooperation** from all employees |
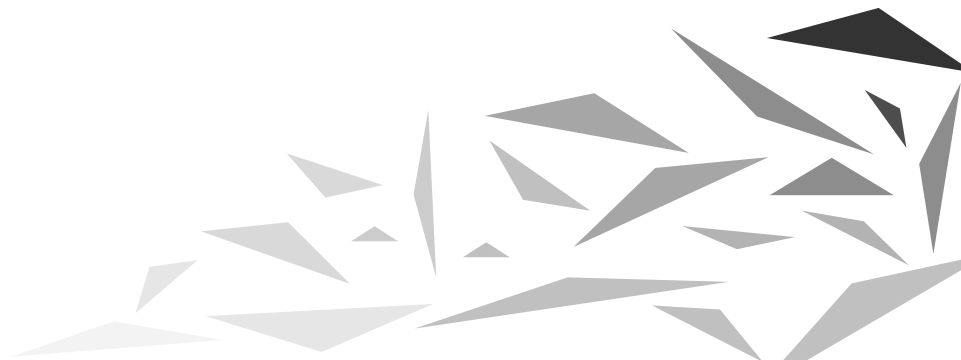
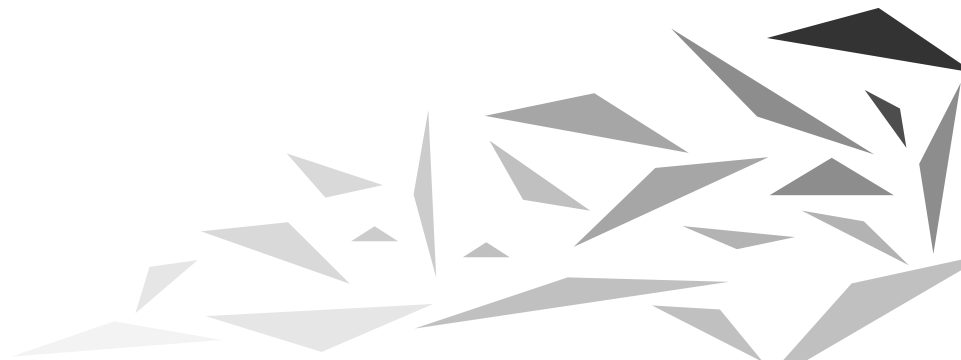# More older workers and higher age diversity in companies 2/2

Higher age diversity leads to new challenges for companies

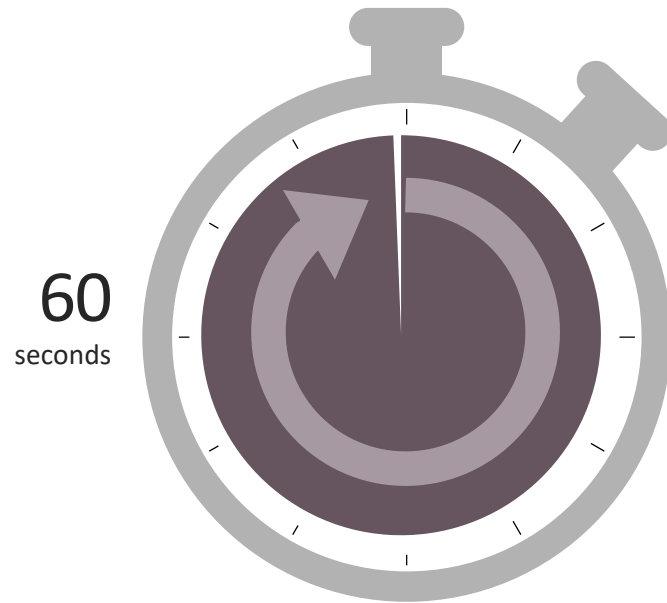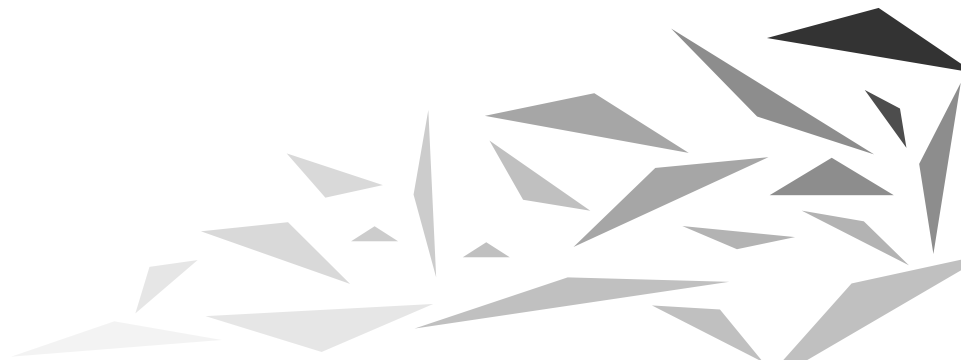| Management of different values and needs | Knowledge management | Management of prolonged and changed career paths | Health management |

Speed dating: Benefits and challenges of age diversity

What benefits and challenges are associated with age diversity in companies?
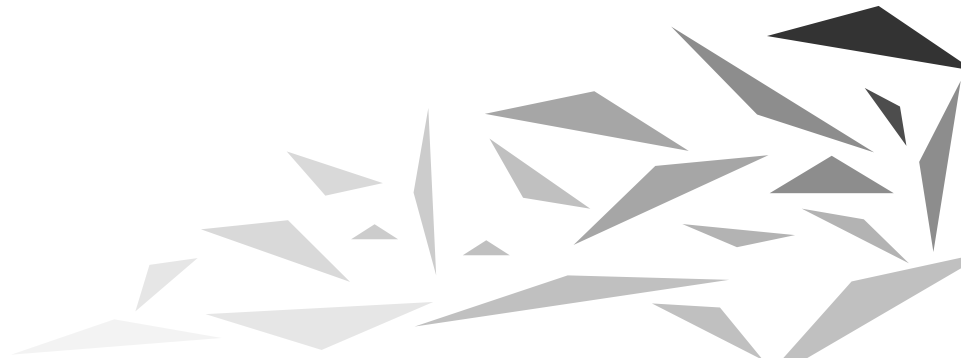
60
seconds

Integration: Benefits and challenges of age diversity

Please note down two benefits and two challenges and pin them on the pin boards.
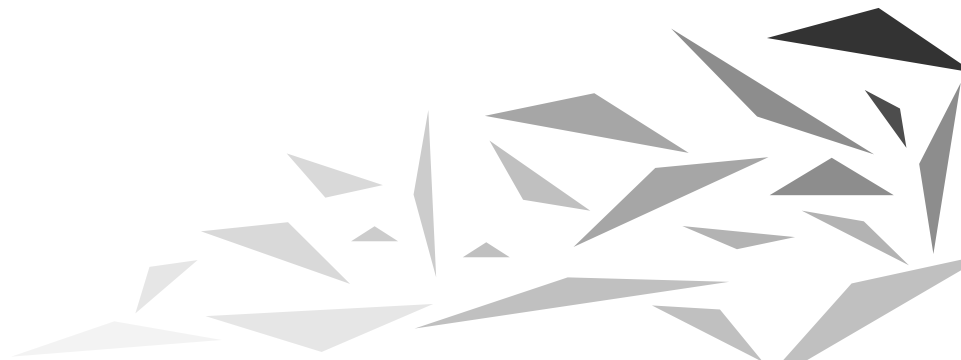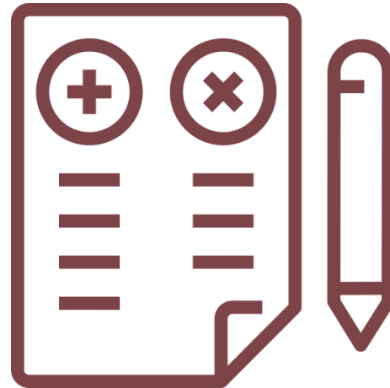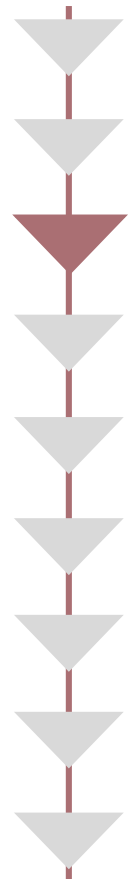
Integration: Benefits and challenges of age diversity

Which topics can be clustered together? What does that mean?

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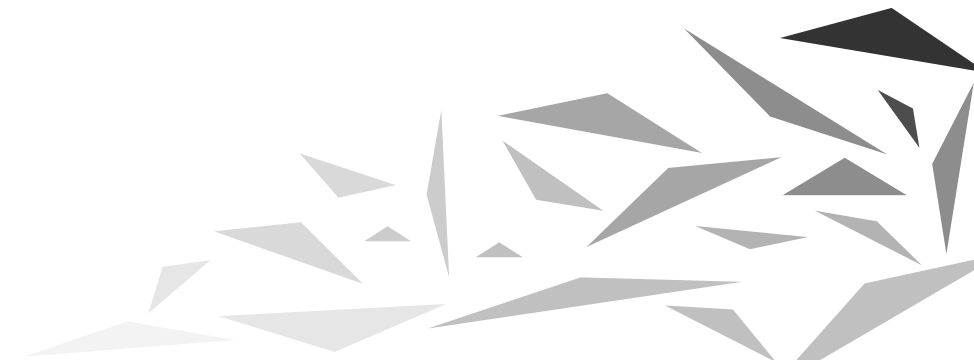
Instructions: Reflection intergroup attributions

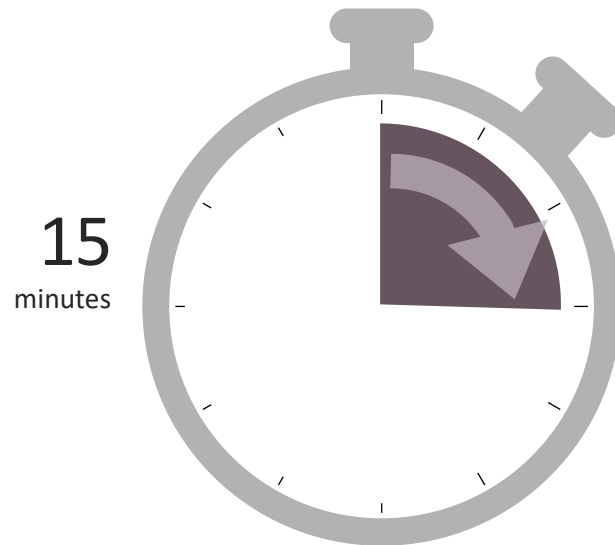We experience situations every day in which we explain the behavior of others without having complete information. That's what the following exercise is about.

- Imagine the situation described as vividly as possible.

- Write down what you think is the most likely explanation for the other's behavior (5 mins).

- Discuss in your group which behavioral explanation is most likely (10 mins).

15
minutes

This exercise is based on the intergroup attribution exercise by Pendry, Driscoll, & Field (2007): Pendry, L. F., Driscoll, D. M., & Field, S. C. T. (2007). Diversity training: Putting theory into practice. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80(1),* 27–50.

DIVERSITY TRAINING

How do you explain the behavior?

Imagine that *a new team member who does not belong to your age group (i.e. is significantly younger / older)* joined your team last month. Within the next few weeks, you will experience how this person behaves in different situations as described below. What motives do you attribute the respective behavior to? Write down your thoughts in key words.

Situation: Your colleague ...	Behavioral attribution / comment:
1. … Asks you critical questions in a meeting with you and your boss.	
2. … For private reasons, does not deliver the promised work on time.	
3. … Is late for a joint meeting.	
4. … Ignores you when you arrive at the office in a good mood in the morning.	
5. … Forgets to copy you in on an important email to the team.	

This exercise is based on Pendry, L. F., Driscoll, D. M., & Field, S. C. T. (2007). Diversity training: Putting theory into practice. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80(1),* 27–50.

How do you explain the behavior?

Imagine that a *new team member belonging to your age group (i.e. about the same age as you)* joined your team last month. Within the next few weeks, you will experience how this person behaves in different situations as described below. What motives do you attribute the respective behavior to? Write down your thoughts in key words.

| Situation: Your colleague ...	Behavioral attribution / comment:
1. ... Asks you critical questions in a meeting with you and your boss.	
2. ... For private reasons, does not deliver the promised work on time.	
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This exercise is based on Pendry, L. F., Driscoll, D. M., & Field, S. C. T. (2007). Diversity training: Putting theory into practice. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80(1),* 27–50.

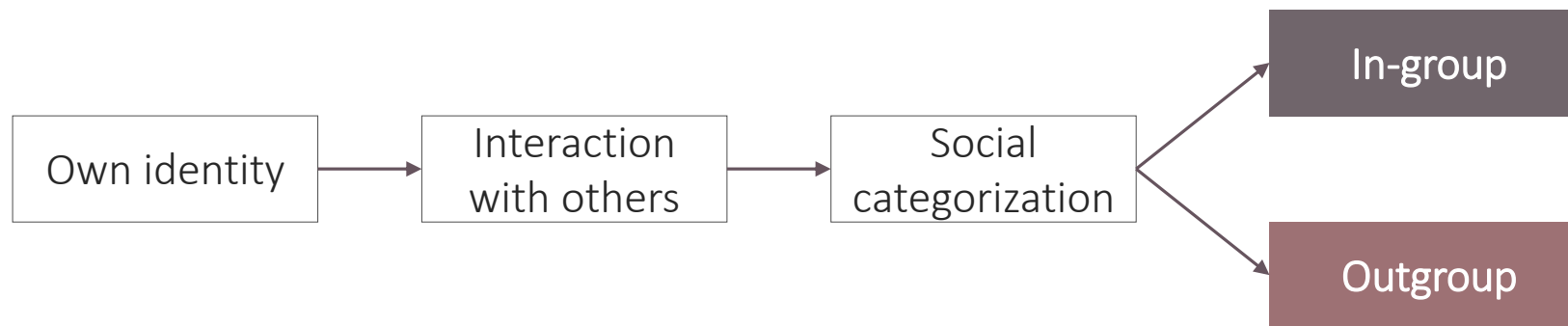# What insights do you draw from the behavioral attributions?
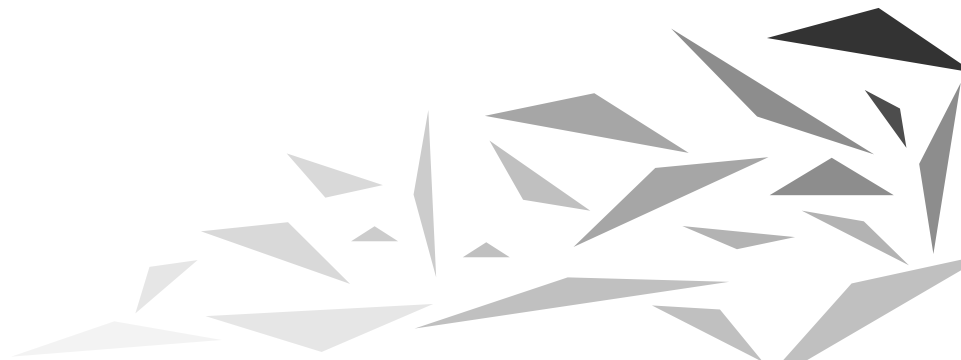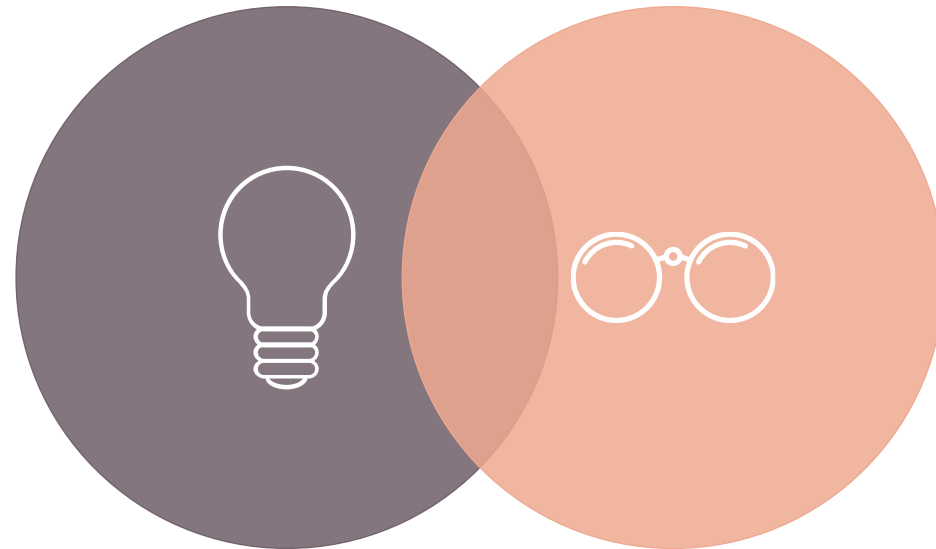
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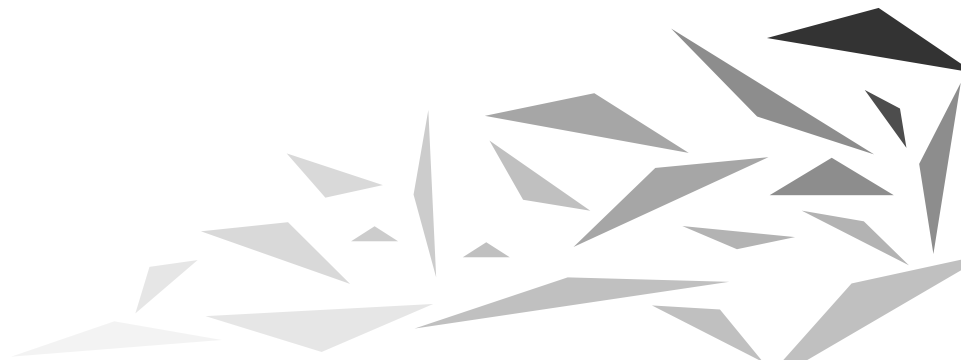
Theories regarding the challenges of age diversity

Social Identity Theory

1. People want to confirm their self-image in interactions with others.

2. Because of this, they tend to prefer to interact with similar others.

3. People who are perceived as similar are classified as belonging to the in-group.

4. People who are perceived as more dissimilar are assigned to the out-group.

Own identity → Interaction with others → Social categorization → In-group / Outgroup

Van Knippenberg et al. (2004): Categorization-Elaboration Model

Consequences of in-group / out-group categorizations

«In-group / Out-group categorization»

- The categorization in in-group and out-group influences how people explain the behavior of others.
- People tend to make positive behavioral attributions about the behavior of in-group members.
- People tend to make negative behavioral attributions when explaining the behavior of out-group members.
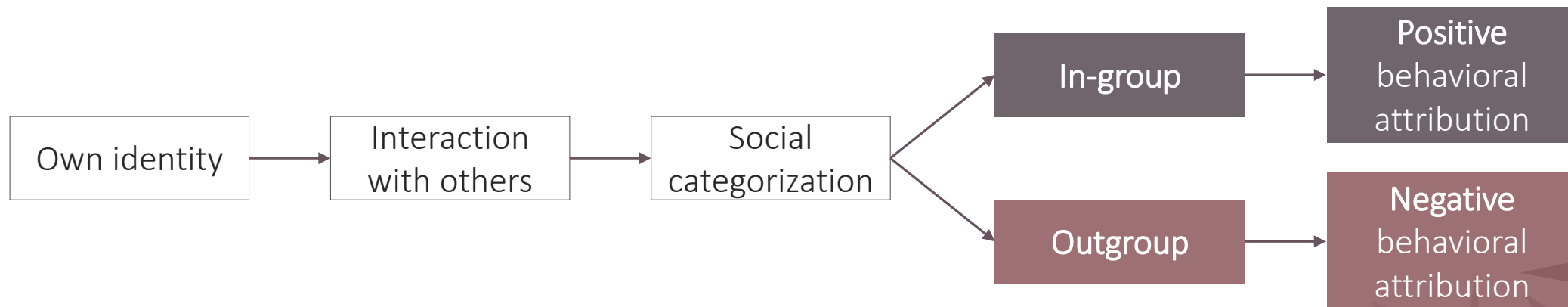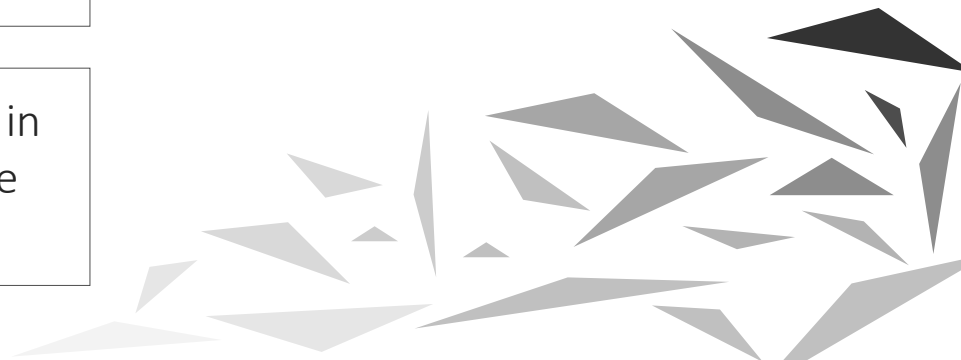
What does research tell us about in-group bias?
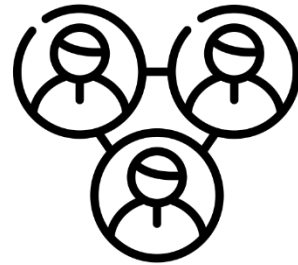
The tendency to classify and **favor similar people** as an in-group is described as in-group bias.

In-group bias can occur **between and within teams**.

Sub-groups can form within a team, in which similar team members come together.

Is age diversity always a challenge in organizations?

Individual studies show that age diversity can have negative effects on:

| Knowledge transfer in teams (Ellwart et al., 2013) | Organizational performance (Kunze et al., 2011) | Implementation of innovations (O'Reilly et al., 1998) |

BUT: The perception of individuals can significantly influence this relationship, so that it becomes insignificant or even positive:
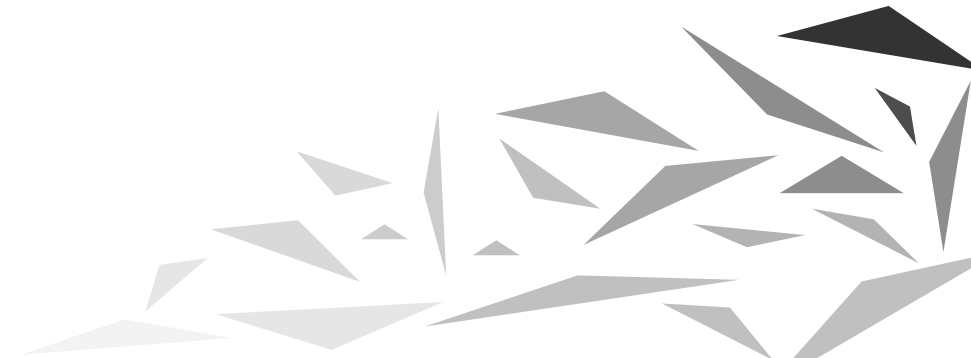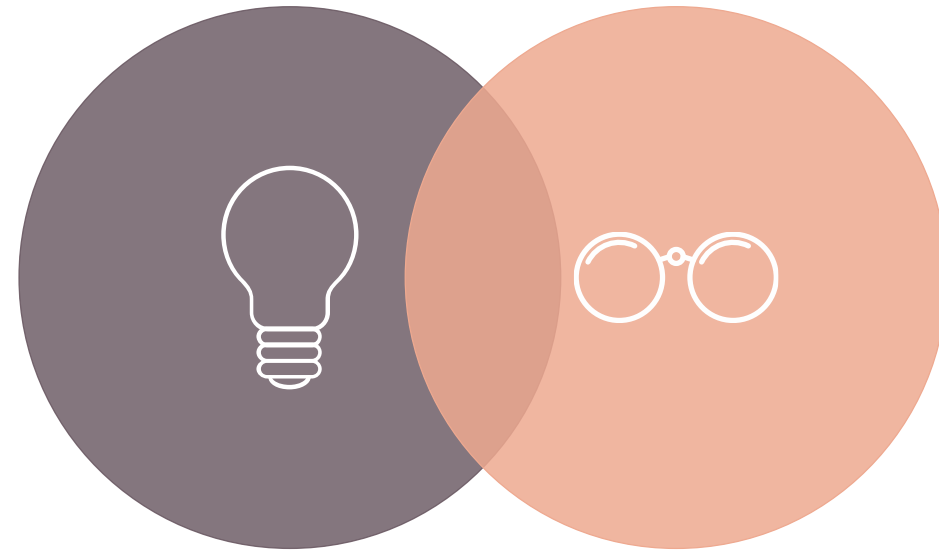
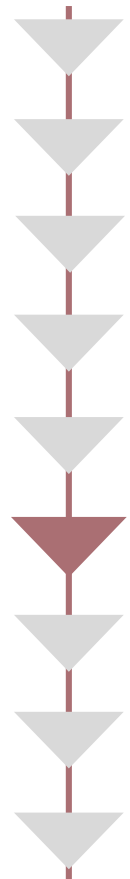| Interdependence of tasks / goals (Van der Vegt & Janssen, 2003) | Identification with the team (Van der Vegt & Bunderson, 2005) | Positive attitude to age diversity (Homan et al., 2010) |

Does this match your experience?

Break

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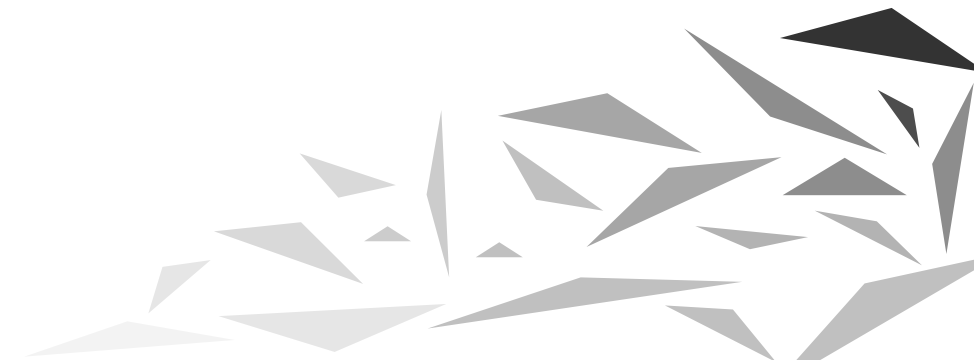
Reflection: How do you see members of the other age group? How do they see you?

1 Please select the adjectives on the worksheet that best describe the members of the other age group.
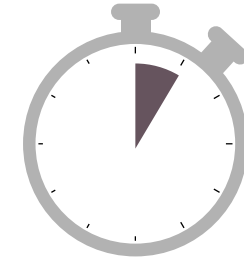
5 minutes

2 On the worksheet, please select the adjectives that you think members of the other age group use to describe members of your own age group.
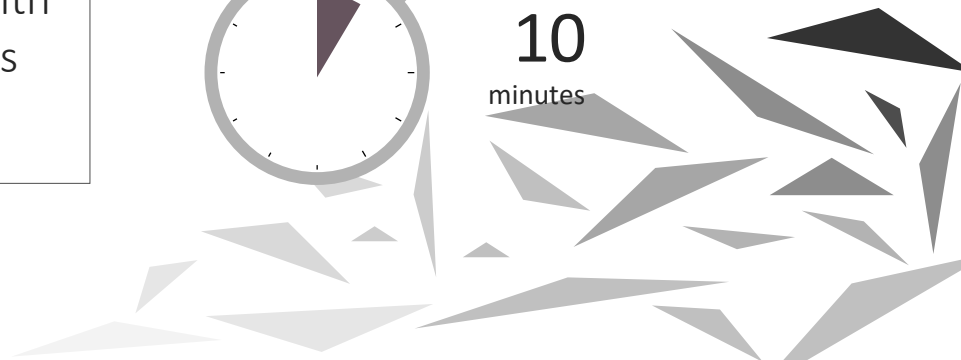
5 minutes

3 Then compare your adjective lists with those of your dyad partner. Discuss similarities and differences.

10 minutes

Please select five adjectives that describe best how you perceive the other age group (5 minutes)

Arrogant	Organized
Enthusiastic	Pessimistic
Selfish	Reflective
Ambitious	Subdued
Energetic	Fast
Committed	Status-oriented
Narrow minded	Structured
Decisive	Stubborn
Learning	Technically savvy
Extrovert	Traditionally oriented
Patient	Unexperienced
Meticulous	Impolite
Prioritizing own needs	Nonconventional
Innovative	Unfocused
Conservative	Unmotivated
Creative	Immature
Slow	Insecure
Boring	Irresponsible
Loud	Uninhibited
Bearish	Wise
Naïve	Appreciative
Optimistic	Reliable

Adjectives that describe the other age group:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

This exercise is based on the work on metastereotypes by Finkelstein, L. M., Ryan, R. M., & King, E. B. (2013). What do the young (old) people think of me?: Content and accuracy of age-based metastereotypes. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 22(6),* 633–657.

DIVERSITY TRAINING

Please select five adjectives that best describe how members of the other age group experience your own age group (5 minutes).

Arrogant	Organized
Enthusiastic	Pessimistic
Selfish	Reflective
Ambitious	Subdued
Energetic	Fast
Committed	Status-oriented
Narrow minded	Structured
Decisive	Stubborn
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Slow	Insecure
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Adjectives that describe how the other age group perceives your age group:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Additional comments / thoughts:

Joint discussion in plenary

- How many "common adjectives" have you discovered?

- What were the most noticeable differences?

- What surprised you?

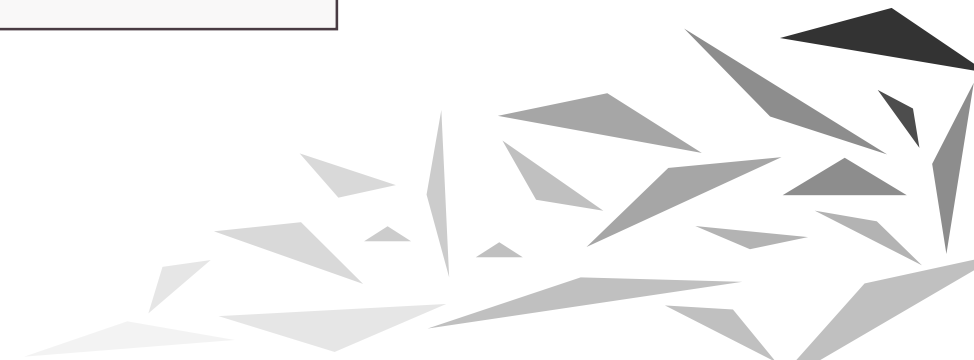- Which adjectives are missing from the list?
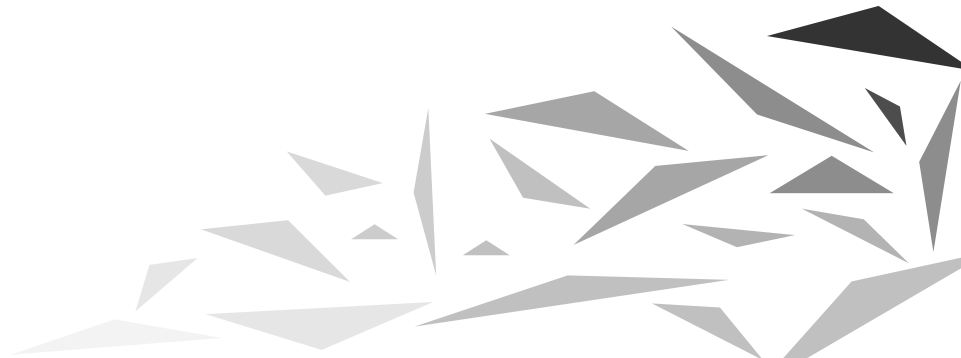
Background information: Meta-stereotypes
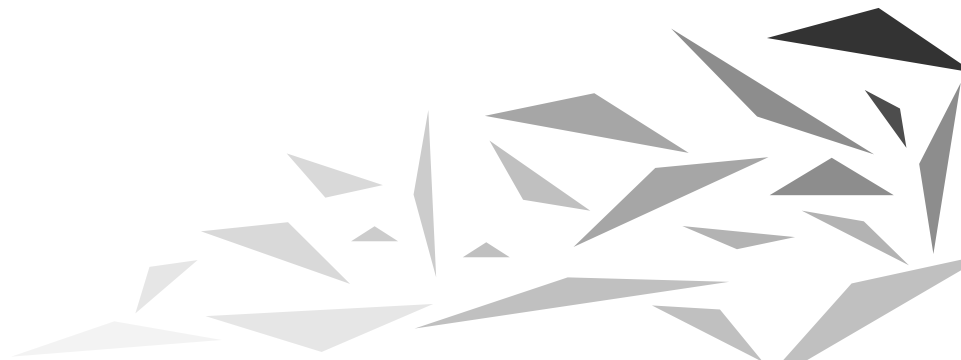

Stereotypes

Meta-stereotypes

Background information: Meta-stereotypes

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are prejudices that we have against others and that are usually activated automatically

BUT: Reflection on your own stereotypes can contribute to a more conscious approach

Background information: Meta-stereotypes

Meta-stereotypes describe our idea of what prejudices others might have against us

Meta stereotypes are, so to speak, stereotypes about stereotypes

Meta-stereotypes can be detrimental when they inhibit and limit our actions

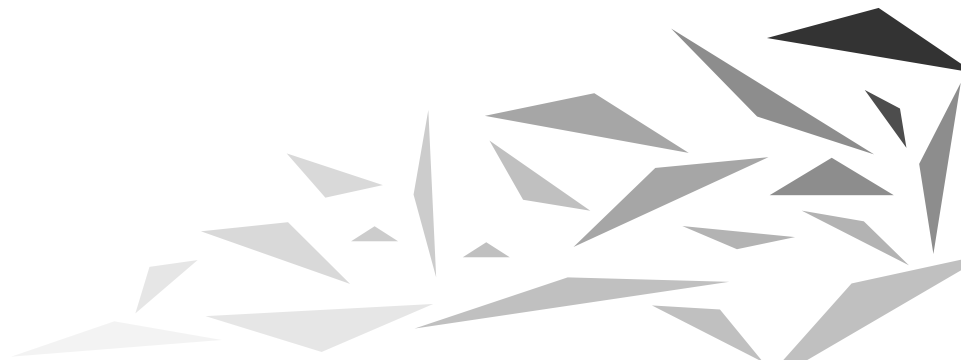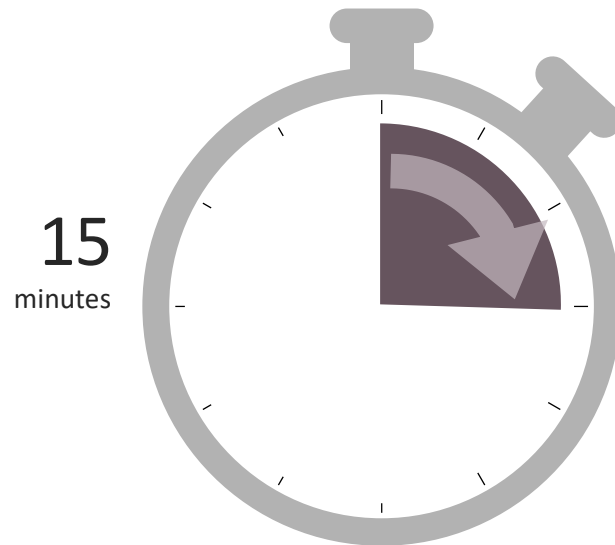Here, too, reflection helps to reduce the impact of meta-stereotypes
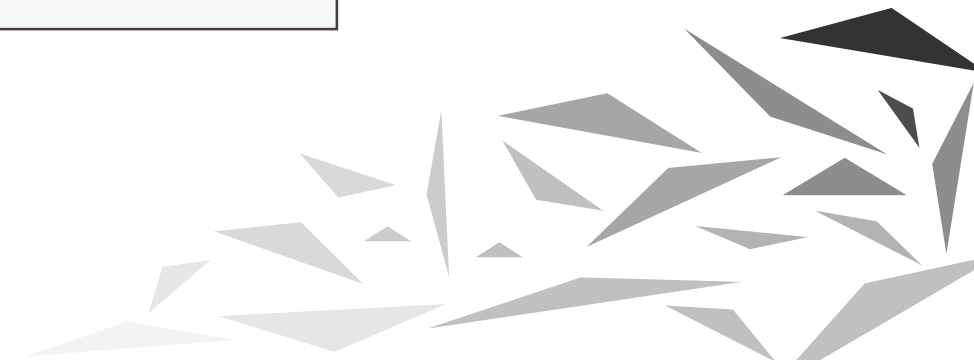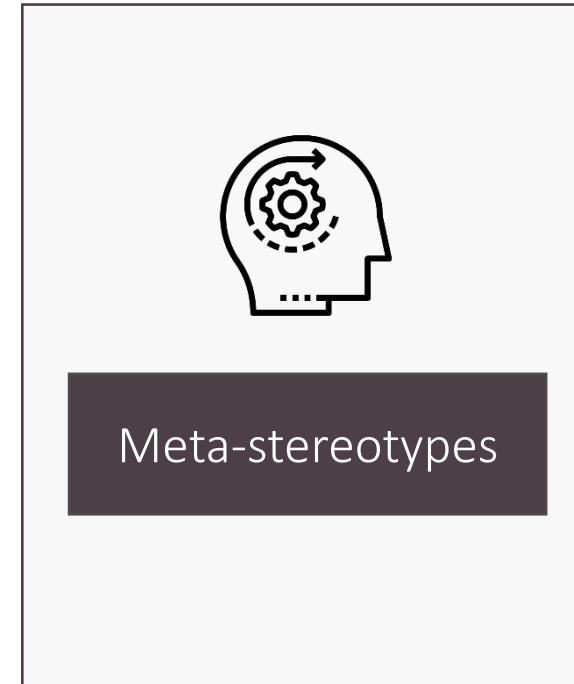
Meta-stereotypes

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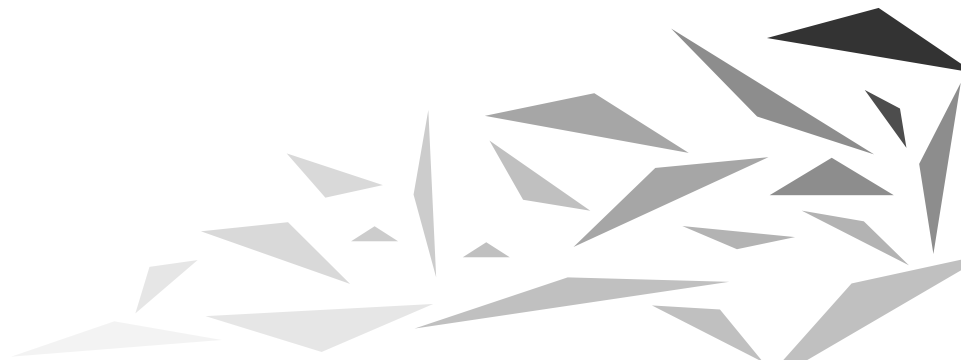
Reflection: Identifying similarities

1. Please consider five similarities with your colleague of the other age group (5 minutes)

2. Discuss these similarities with your colleague:
   - What do you have in common?
   - Are there similarities that are particularly useful for your collaboration at work?

3. Note the similarities on the handout (10 minutes)

15
minutes

DIVERSITY TRAINING

Please write down similarities / things you have in common with your colleague of the other age group.

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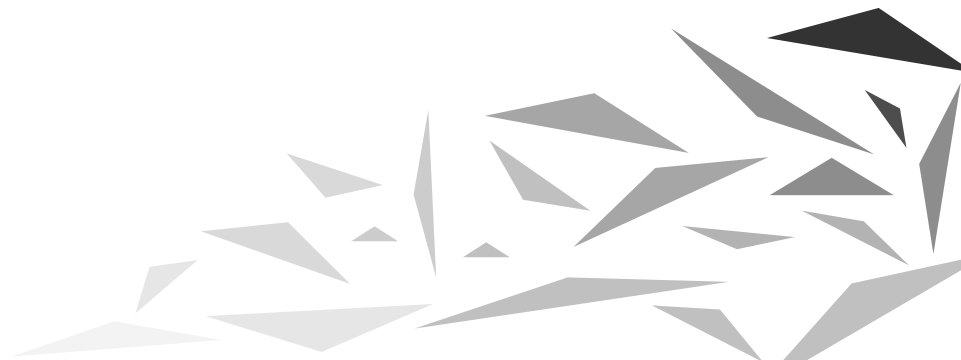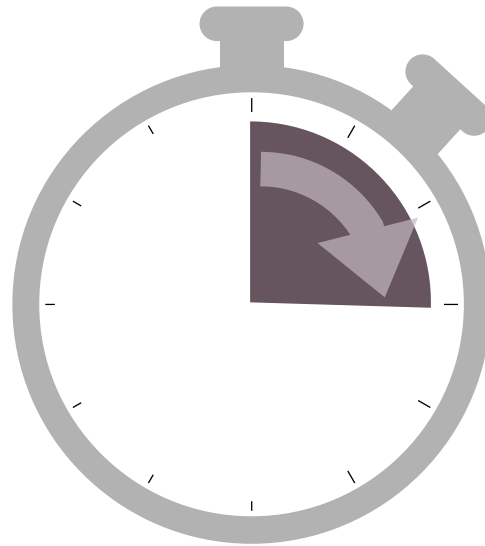9. Reflection and goodbye [~15 mins]
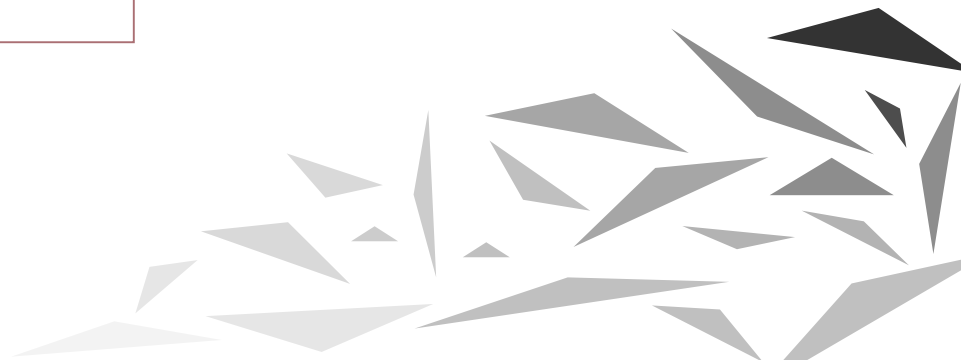
Which activities could you do together at work?

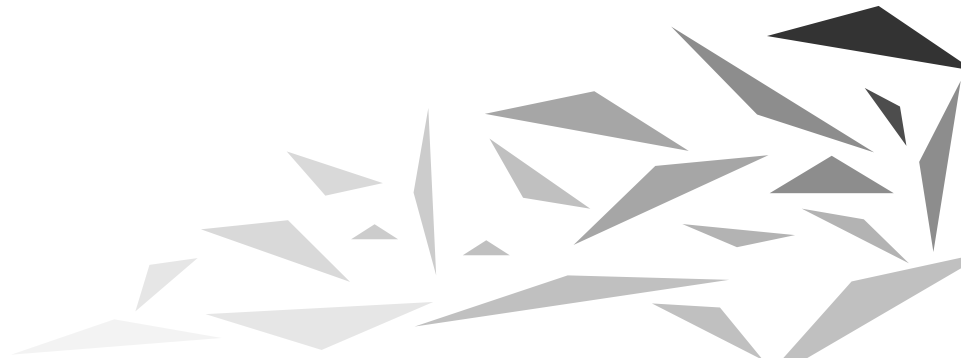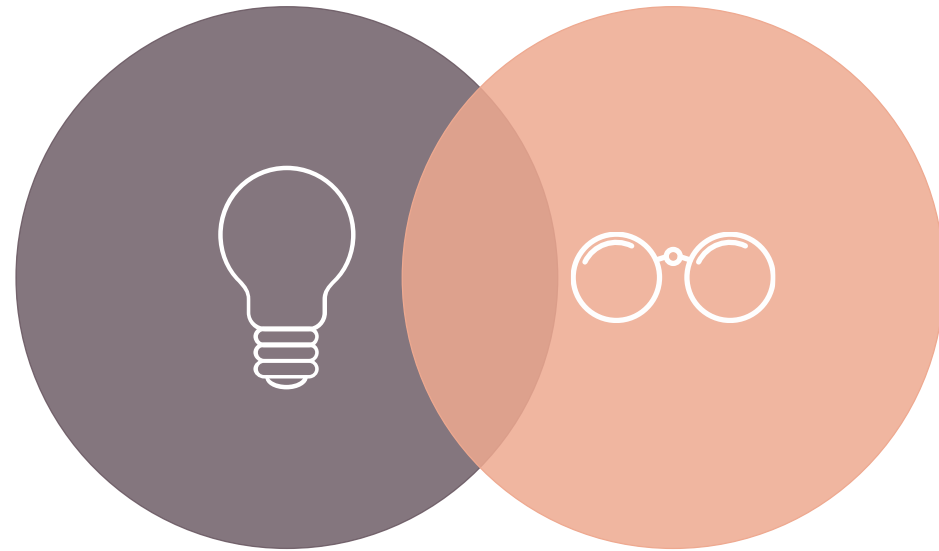Together, please identify joint activities that:

    1) Encourage discovering common ground

    2) Use the strengths of each age group

    3) Increase effective collaboration

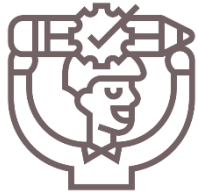Write down your ideas on the moderation cards and put them on the pin board.
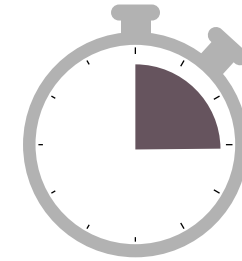
15
minutes

Discussion: Which activities are particularly useful?
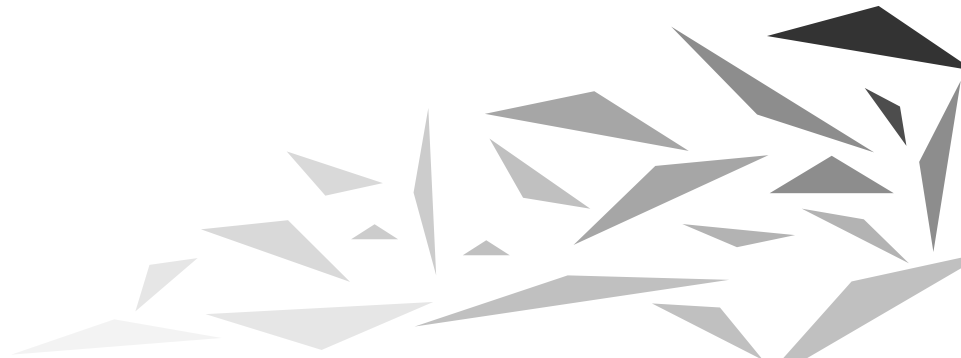
Integration: Creation of an action plan

Please create an action plan together that will translate the activities into concrete behavior in the next month.

15
minutes

Use the worksheet for this. S**ign the action plan.** Set up an appointment in 3-4 weeks for joint reflection.

DIVERSITY TRAINING

Please create an action plan together that will translate your learnings during the training into concrete behavior in the next month.

| #	Name of the measure	Description of the measure	Date/time
1			
2			
3			
4	Reflection meeting	Meeting of approximately 30 minutes in the coming 3-4 weeks, during which the agreed measures 1-3 are discussed.	

Participant 1: _____

Participant 2: _____

_____, _____ 2020

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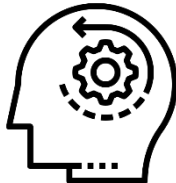
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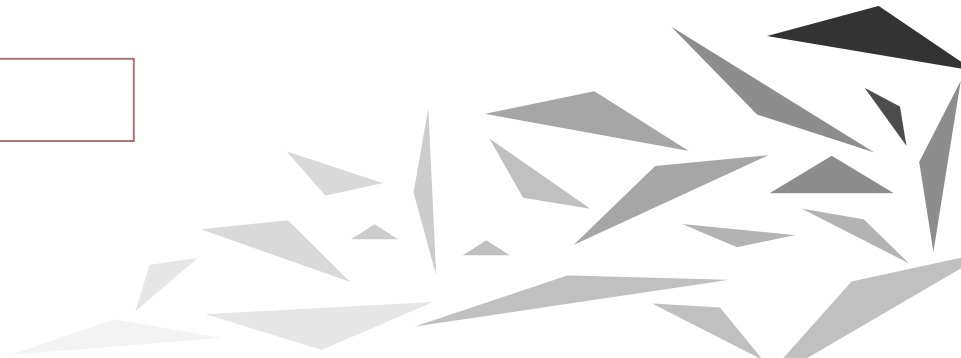
Reflection

Knowing, understanding		I have learned / dealt with the fact that …
Emotions, social relations		I was amazed / pleased / annoyed / touched / that …
Skills, methods		I can and want to do more / less in the future …