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AGE-SPECIFIC CAREER COUNSELLING

Module 2 Workbook



SASSI
Later-life Careers

<https://www.sassi-llc.eu/>



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1 INTRODUCTION

As HR and C-VET professionals, it's vital to understand and address the specific needs of individuals aged 55 and above, a demographic group increasingly significant in the labour market landscape. Age-sensitive career counselling acknowledges that career development is a lifelong process, recognizing that individuals' needs and aspirations evolve over time. This approach considers a person's life experiences along with the unique challenges and opportunities encountered in later stages of their career.

Age-sensitive career counselling encompasses various aspects, including transitioning to new roles or fields, skill development, exploration of encore careers or volunteering, and managing transitions into retirement.

2 MODULE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the module is to equip HR and C-VET professionals with the necessary skills to effectively support individuals aged 55 and above in their later stage of career. It seeks to raise awareness and sensitivity towards the unique circumstances and needs of older workers, promoting a deeper understanding of age-specific career development issues.

The module aims to highlight the multifaceted nature of age and the heterogeneity of older people, recognising the wide range of experiences and circumstances that shape the group of 55+.

Learners will be equipped with the tools to address ageism and negative perceptions, empowering their clients to overcome obstacles and gain self-confidence thanks to their age.

Additionally, the module will provide insights into late-career decision-making processes and alternative career development pathways, equipping learners with the knowledge to guide their clients through these transitions effectively.

3 MODULE DELIVERY

The module is structured into four units, each offering a combination of self-study materials and group activities tailored for facilitation during face-to-face sessions.

Each unit begins with self-study content accessible to learners via the Sassi-website. Additionally, facilitators are equipped with comprehensive instructions to lead group activities outlined in the present document. These activities are designed to engage participants in collaborative learning experiences during face-to-face sessions.

4 MODULE CHAPTERS



4.1 Unit 1

4.1.1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able:

- capture the multidimensional concept of age and its implications,
- recognise the heterogeneity of older people,
- understand the individual differences of aging processes.

4.1.2 Self-Study (Short Description)

The unit begins with the question of what is aging and explains the multidimensional concept of aging, which includes chronological, biological, psychological, cognitive, social, and subjective age. It then moves on to the notion of diversity among older workers, emphasizing that older individuals constitute a heterogeneous group rather than a single category.

At the end, you are invited to reflect on the following questions:

- What does our society mean by young and old? What images appear in your head when we talk about older workers?
- In how far does age matter when it comes to work and career?

4.1.3 Group Activity

Group Activity Unit 1

Name	How old do I feel?
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to differentiate between the different categories of age.
Type of Activity	Discussion in pairs
Timeframe	30 minutes



Materials needed	PPT-presentation slides 8 - 15
Introduction	Present the multidimensional concept of age using slides 8-15 of the PPT presentation. Then, ask the participants to split into pairs and discuss their age along the different aspects of age.
Activity description	<p>Person A begins and says to Person B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- "My chronological age is"- "Based on my health and lifestyle, I estimate my biological age to be ..."- "Based on my ability to adapt to change and to use my skills, feelings, emotions and experiences, I estimate my psychological age to be ...".- "According to my interests and the way I do things, my cognitive age is ..."- "According to my interpersonal skills and my ability to fulfill the norms and expectations associated with my social role, my social age is"..." <p>Person A ends the round with his subjective age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- "If I did not know my age, I would be ... years old". <p>The participants switch and repeat the exercise. Afterwards, the pairs should take a few minutes to discuss their experience. How does it feel to give your subjective age?</p>
Debriefing	<p>Bring the participants back into the group and ask them to share their subjective age and their experience of the activity. Does the majority of the group feel younger or older than their chronological age?</p> <p>As a trainer you can take some time to reflect with the group on the construction of age and the impact of subjective age on physical and mental health.</p>
Adaption to online mode	The structure of the activity can remain unchanged in an online environment. The discussion in pairs need to be done in breakout rooms.
Tips for the trainer	Here you can find more interesting information on the power of subjective age:



<https://modernage.medium.com/how-old-are-you-really-learn-the-power-of-subjective-age-4096488d5d8b>

4.2 Unit 2 Ageism and Stereotypes

4.2.1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- uncover common prejudices in the context of ageism,
- encounter negative stereotypes,
- help older people to develop strategies against ageism and own stereotypes towards themselves,
- to value and acknowledge the experiences and know-how of older people.

4.2.2 Self-Study (Short Description)

The unit addresses ageism and age discrimination introducing various types of ageist attitudes. Through a short video, learners witness a social experiment to understand subconscious ageism. Following this, they are asked to reflect and examine their own stereotypes concerning individuals aged 55 and above. Subsequently, learners are exposed to diverse stereotypes associated with older workers, alongside counterarguments. To challenge these stereotypes, the unit presents the unique strengths of older workers, encouraging a reframing of the narrative regarding their contributions to the workforce.

4.2.3 Group Activity

Group Activity Unit 2

Name	How does ageism feel?
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the prevailing stereotypes of the older workforce.
Type of Activity	Video and discussion



Timeframe	30 minutes
Materials needed	<p>Video-clip 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYCxAIqjyCA</p> <p>Video-clip 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vk_eoTFhlko</p>
Introduction	<p>Present two short videos on age discrimination to the participants.</p> <p>The first video is about a social experiment that shows a food truck refusing to serve anyone over 40.</p> <p>The second video examines the historical forces that form our (mis)perceptions of the value of today's Baby Boomers in the workforce.</p>
Activity description	<p>After presenting the videos, ask participants to discuss in pairs what the videos evoked in them. Possible questions to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the first video make you feel? How do you think people reacted? - What does it mean for you to age in our society? - What age stereotypes do you have internalised yourself?
Debriefing	<p>In the plenum, ask the participants to share their thoughts and ideas. They are asked to think of possible strategies to create new perceptions of the "older generation". Encourage participants to reflect on how these insights can inform their approach to counselling older individuals.</p>
Adaption to online mode	The structure of the activity can remain the same.
Tips for the trainer	<p>Here you can find more information on ageism in the workplace:</p> <p>https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2022/02/03/ageism-in-the-workplace-the-privilege-of-being-the-right-age/</p>

4.3 Unit 3 Career transition at older age



4.3.1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand how and why older adults change their career pathways,
- apply alternative career development models,
- capture the nature of older workers' late career decision-making.

4.3.2 Self-Study (Short Description)

The learners are introduced to the 5 career stages and different levels of career change (Functional, Industrial, Entrepreneurial, Double career change). They also get to explore different types of later-life careers such as sabbatical, encore career, legacy career, or bridge employment along with the associated benefits of making such career transitions. The unit further offers insights by presenting two case studies involving individuals aged 55 and above who have successfully navigated their career change. These case studies serve as exemplary illustrations, inviting learners to think of diverse scenarios surrounding career changes and the questions that arise, thus offering valuable guidance for the counseling process.

4.3.3 Group Activity

Group Activity Unit 3

Name	Why do people change careers at a later stage in life?
Learning Objectives	Being able to understand the motivations behind career changes in individuals aged 55 and older. Being able to identify common factors that influence career decisions later in life. Being able to reflect on the implications of career transitions for older individuals
Type of Activity	Group discussion/ Brainstorming/ Discussion of an article
Timeframe	Approximately 30-45 minutes
Materials needed	Whiteboard or flipchart Markers Article: It's never too late to switch careers (Download here: https://hbr.org/2022/12/its-never-too-late-to-



	<p>switch-careers)</p> <p>Sticky notes</p> <p>Pens/pencils for each participant</p>
Introduction	<p>Start by explaining the importance of understanding why individuals may choose to change careers later in life. Emphasize the value of empathy and insight in providing effective career counselling to older adults.</p>
Activity description	<p>Divide participants into small groups of 3-5 individuals.</p> <p>Distribute the article and ask the participants to read it. Invite participants to discuss the main points with respect to motivation for career change and recommendations. Also, distribute cards or sticky notes and pens/markers to each group.</p> <p>On the whiteboard or flipchart, write the 2 questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Why do people change careers at a later stage in life?"2. "What are crucial aspects when changing career?" <p>In their groups, participants brainstorm and write down their ideas and findings on separate sticky notes.</p> <p>Encourage participants to consider both internal and external factors that may contribute to career changes, such as personal fulfillment, health concerns, financial reasons, or societal expectations.</p> <p>After 10-15 minutes, have each group share their responses, sticking their sticky notes onto the whiteboard or flipchart.</p> <p>Facilitate a brief discussion to explore common themes and patterns across the responses.</p>
Debriefing	<p>Summarise the main reasons identified by the groups for career changes in later life.</p> <p>He/She encourages participants to reflect on how these insights can inform their approach to counselling older individuals.</p> <p>Discuss any surprises or new perspectives gained from the activity.</p> <p>Highlight the importance of considering the unique circumstances and motivations of each individual when providing career guidance.</p>



Adaption to online mode	The structure of the activity remains the same. Use breakout rooms for the activities in smaller groups.
Tips for the trainer	-

4.4 Unit 4 Learning at older age

4.4.1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- identify advantages and obstacles to learning after 55+ applying neuroscientific knowledge,
- understand older peoples' approach to learning and skill acquisition,
- motivate older people to learn new skills and try out something new.

4.4.2 Self-Study (Short Description)

The unit starts by presenting the key question: what constitutes learning? It provides neuroscientific findings to illuminate the mechanisms underlying learning processes. Learners are then introduced to the concept of neuroplasticity, facilitated by a brief video showing how the brain's adaptive capacity enables the acquisition of new knowledge.

Subsequently, learners will reflect on the correlation between age and cognition, exploring both the challenges and cognitive strengths associated with older age. The unit also looks at the differences between two types of intelligence, fluid and crystallized, and includes a quiz to test understanding. It also explores how older people learn best, focusing on creating ideal learning environments for those aged 55 and above.

4.4.3 Group Activity

Group Activity Unit 4

Name	Test your fluid and crystallised intelligence
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to differentiate between fluid and crystallised intelligence,



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being able to understand the different impacts of age on competences and abilities.
Type of Activity	Individual Test Group discussion
Timeframe	20 minutes
Materials needed	PPT slides 16-19 on fluid and crystallised intelligence. A copy of the test per participant.
Introduction	Introduce the concept of fluid vs. crystallised intelligence to the participants. Following this introduction, participants are provided with copies of the activity and instructed to complete the test.
Activity description	<p>The test comprises two sections: a fluid intelligence section, involving solving three problems related to spatial ability, and a crystallized intelligence section, testing associative thinking skills. Upon completion of the test, share the solutions and participants discuss their findings.</p> <p>In the next step, participants are asked to reflect on the following points and take notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare the following competences to a point when you were younger: short-term memory, knowledge, abstract thinking, structured work, decision making. Is it harder/easier, better/worse, more/less?• How do you memorise new information? <p>Participants are invited to share their findings in the group.</p>
Debriefing	Compare the findings to the theory of fluid vs. crystallised intelligence (and neuroplasticity).
Adaption to online mode	The structure of the activity can remain the same. The facilitator provides the test in the chat for participants to download it.
Tips for the trainer	-



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