

Dilemma:

“My age hurts my career”

Each group has a host.

This dilemma card is for the host and contains:

- A host guide
- A dilemma
- Fact boxes
- A question guide for dialogue one and dialogue two

Host guide As a host, your role is to facilitate a good, constructive dialogue where everyone gets to speak. Your role is not to participate by sharing your own perspective, but you are welcome to put your perspective into play by phrasing it as a question (“What if they ...?”).

Try to be curious (“Why do you think that?”) and investigative (“What if they react differently than you assume?”).

Aim to make it safe for participants to say or share something vulnerable by making it clear that different perspectives are welcome and that everyone should be respectful.

The dialogue is divided into two parts.

The first part is about giving advice to the person who posed the dilemma, and the second part is about the theme of the dilemma from the perspective of the panellists and their experiences at DTU.

On pages 3 and 4, you will find questions and data, which you can use to qualify the dialogue.

After reading this guide and skimming the question guide, please read out the dilemma to the panel. Give them a moment to reflect on the dilemma. Then initiate dialogue one.

Dilemma:

Kurt has contacted us. He is looking for his next dream job, but even though he has already sent out lots of applications, including to DTU, he has not been invited to any interviews.

He suspects that it is because of his age—at 59 years old, he thinks some people may consider him too old for the Danish labour market.

When he was younger, he never had trouble getting invited to interviews. Furthermore, he has had friends and acquaintances read through his application and CV and only received positive feedback.

Kurt is highly motivated to keep contributing and growing professionally, and he has a strong CV and great recommendations, but no job offers. He is therefore considering making it difficult for future recruitment officers to know his age by deleting his date of birth from his CV, removing his picture, and deleting other dates that reveal his age.

But it bothers him that this is necessary, and he is worried about what an employment committee will think, when they see him at an interview, if they had imagined him being younger.

He would like the panel to discuss whether or not it is a good idea to hide his age.

Dialogue one:

1
What advice does the panel give?

- [Start by hearing each panellist's thoughts on the dilemma so everyone gets the chance to speak from the start]
- "What could the underlying cause(s) for the dilemma be?"
- "Age discrimination is illegal. Why do you think it happens anyway?"
- "What do you think of the options stated by the person who posed the dilemma?"
- [Feel free to use the data from the boxes to boost the discussion]
- [Other investigative questions]
- "We have to come up with an answer, but you don't all have to agree. What does each of you think the person who posed the dilemma should do?"

45 per cent of unemployed people over 50 have experienced discrimination in the labour market in 2022. (The National Working Environment Research Centre (Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø))

The unemployment rate among seniors was no higher than for other age groups in 2023. However, if you end up unemployed as a senior, it is harder to get a new job. (Statistics Denmark for the Dane Age Association (Ældre Sagen))

2 Dialogue two:

What do you do, and what could you do?

This part of the dialogue focuses on the panellists' own experiences at DTU.

Start dialogue two by telling the panel that the focal point is still the theme of the dilemma, but now they should look at the conditions in their own unit as well as considering other solutions.

Please note that dialogue two may be a bit more sensitive. Aim to create a safe and respectful space for everyone. The goal is still not to agree on everything, but to learn more about each other's perspectives.

- "Do you recognize the dilemma or parts of it, either on a personal level or through observation?"
- "Is there age diversity in your unit?"
- "Have your colleagues above the age of 50 been employed for a long time or were they employed after they turned 50?"
- "Do you do anything specific to avoid age discrimination and create age diversity in your unit?"
- "Is there a part of the advice you gave that you practise in your unit? If yes, what? If no, would that be possible?"
- "What else could you do? At individual, group, and organizational level?"
- [Other investigative questions]
- "What will each of you take with you to your unit, either as a point of attention or as possible solutions related to the theme of the dilemma?"