



20+



30 min



4+



You need

Adapted from  
*Minoritetsstress i praktiken*  
(2021, Länsstyrelsen, Stockholm)

# Where are you from?



**"Where are you really from?"**  
by Ken Tanaka, as an introduction.



To encourage reflection among professionals on how to promote thoughtful and inclusive social practices and minimize the risk of alienating or "othering" colleagues, youth, or peers in daily interactions.



Emma, a social worker in a municipal office, has a new colleague, Alex, who recently joined her team. During a coffee break, Emma takes the opportunity to get to know Alex a bit better.

Where are you from?

Right, but I mean, where are you originally from?

Okay, but where are you really from?

I moved here from Aarhus before starting this job.

Well, I grew up in Aarhus...



## Discussion:

- What do you think Emma is actually curious about when she asks where Alex is "really" from?
- Why do you think Emma asks this question?
- How do you think Alex might feel when getting this question
- What might be the unintended result of Emmas question in relation to a sense of belonging?



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### Reflection: Why do you ask?

Ask participants to individually reflect on the last time they wondered about someone's background:

- What made you curious about that person's background at that time?
- Was the question relevant in the context?
- Could your question have unintentionally made the person feel excluded or categorized as "different" or "non-danish"?

Encourage participants to use these questions as a self-check in future situations, helping them assess whether and how to approach such curiosity in a way that respects inclusivity.

### Evaluation:

After individual reflection, bring the group together for a discussion using the following question:

- How can we express interest in getting to know colleagues without making assumptions about their background or identity?
- How can we, as professionals, create an environment that makes all team members feel equally valued and included?
- What can we do if we realize we may have unintentionally made someone feel like an outsider?



We naturally categorize people and things to make sense of the world quickly. While this helps with simple tasks, it can lead to assumptions and stereotypes when we try to understand others. For example, asking someone, "Where are you from?" might seem harmless, but it can feel like categorizing, especially for people from non-majority backgrounds.

This question can carry assumptions about who "belongs" in a place like Denmark, often linking Danish identity to whiteness. For those asked, the question might bring up personal joys or painful experiences, like migration or discrimination. It's important to respect any answer given—whether someone says they're from another country, another city, or just the next room—without making assumptions based on stereotypes.

