Module 4 Task 5 Possible answers:

1. How can autostereotypes or heterostereotypes affect you on an individual level?

Autostereotypes can impact self-esteem and limit goals. For example, if I belong to a group stereotyped as weak in maths, I may internalise this belief and underperform or avoid seeking math-related occupations. Heterostereotypes can also lead to making assumptions about people without actually understanding them. This can result in mistreating people or neglecting opportunities for meaningful interactions because I assess them based on stereotypes rather than their individuality. Exposure to negative stereotypes, whether about oneself or others, can lead to stress and anxiety, negatively impacting mental health and views on one's own and others' capabilities. For example, If I, as a person from Poland, hold the stereotype that Germans are "very hardworking and well-organized," I might see them as efficient and reliable. This could make me more eager to work with Germans, assuming their dedication would positively impact outcomes. However, assuming that all Germans fit this stereotype could lead to disappointment if someone doesn't meet my expectations of hard work or precision. It might also put unfair pressure on German colleagues or friends, making them feel they must live up to the stereotype even if it doesn’t reflect their personality or values. Believing all Germans are hardworking could also prevent me from recognizing the diversity of personalities, experiences, and communication styles within the group, leading to biased decisions that don’t fully respect individual differences.

1. How can autostereotypes or heterostereotypes affect you on a group level?

Stereotypes can produce false expectations in my group. If everyone believes in a negative stereotype, it may become established in the group identity, resulting in behaviour reinforcing the stereotype. For instance, if we think that our group lacks leadership, we might avoid taking on such roles. Heterostereotypes can foster prejudice, discrimination, and group division. If my group has stereotypes about another group, it may hinder cooperation and cause conflict. It creates a barrier to empathy and understanding, affecting intergroup relationships. Stereotypes, including autostereotypes and heterostereotypes, can limit representation and opportunity for marginalised groups by influencing who is chosen for specific tasks or feels encouraged to take risks.

1. Do you think autostereotypes and heterostereotypes are changing?

I think they are changing, but progress is uneven and can be slow. With increased awareness and education, many people are starting to question and confront stereotypes, which leads to positive changes. Thanks to social movements and media representations, many stereotypes, such as gender roles and ethnic groups, have been altered. However, while some stereotypes are becoming less noticeable, others are still deeply rooted in society. Stereotypes frequently remain due to cultural factors, exposure, and people's willingness to reflect on and change their beliefs. Additionally, social media amplifies some stereotypes while also challenging others. It can work both ways: creating echo chambers that reinforce stereotypes or providing platforms for diverse voices that challenge them. Political events can also influence our perception of ourselves and others. For example, after the fall of communism, autostereotypes and  heterostereotypes in Eastern Europe changed.  Baltic States redefined themselves from Soviet republics to progressive, tech-savvy democracies. And Czech Republic transitioned from an industrial socialist state to a hub for tourism, innovation, and cultural pride.