WGs:

Stress & Time Management

Workplace Culture & Environment

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Outline

- What is the ideal work-life balance?
- Some statistics from MPG (2018 survey)
- How to accomplish **YOUR** ideal work-life balance?
- Good Habits and Stoppers
- In this workshop: collaborations
- Future workshops: parenting, dealing effectively with referee reports, (any other suggestions?)

What is the ideal work-life balance?

(answers from astronomers)

- Having time to achieve work-related, hobby-related and happiness-related goals.
- Being able to disconnect from work when not actually working.
- Enjoying both work and life as work is not detached from life.
- Not being overwhelmed by work and being happy to work.
- Being able to work flexible.
- Having a secure plan for the next year(s).

PhDNET Max Planck Survey 2018

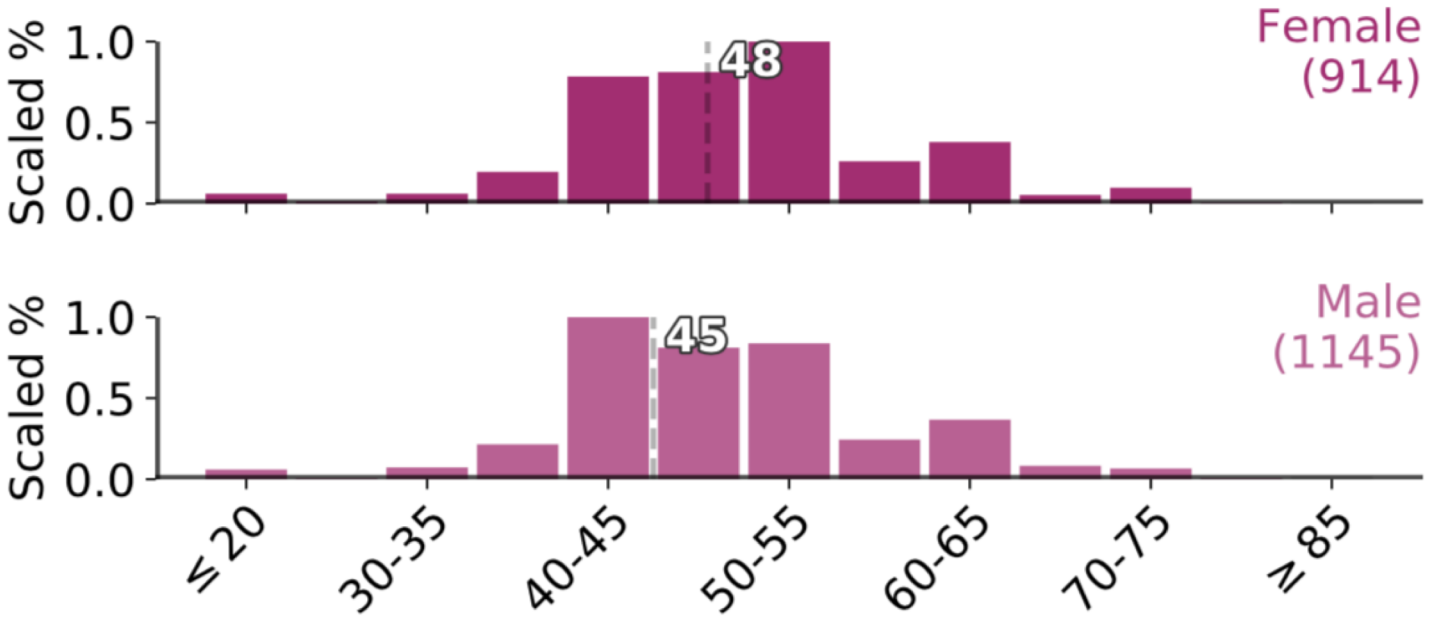


Figure 3.4: "How many hours per week do you usually work for your doctoral research, the institute or the university (courses, teaching, etc. included)?" Y-axis shows number of responses relative to each section and gender and the dashed line the median of each class.

PhDNET Max Planck Survey 2018

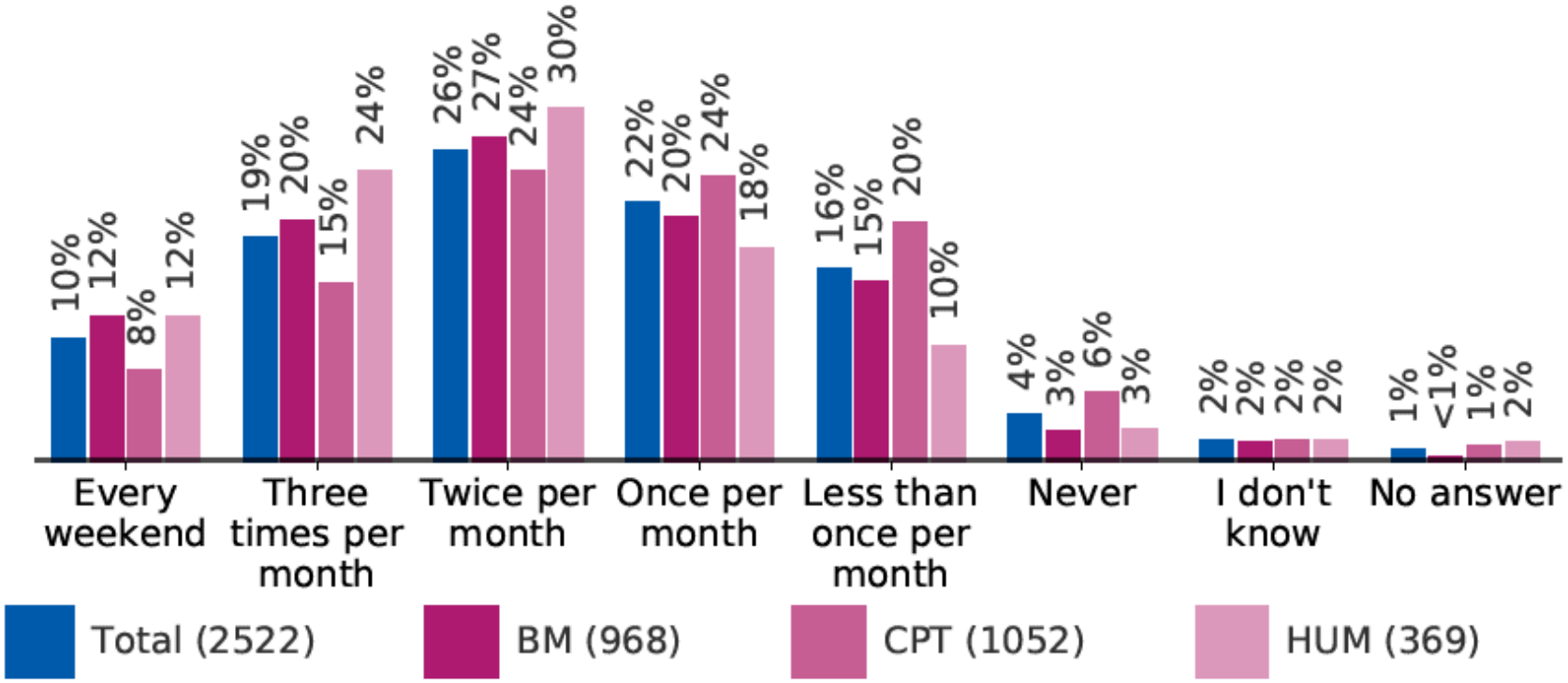


Figure 3.5: "How often have you worked during weekends or public holidays in the past year?" Relative response rates grouped by section. The total number of responses is shown in brackets.

How to accomplish YOUR ideal work-life balance?

- Reminding yourself that your priority is pursuing happiness in life.
- Defining ***your*** goals in life and proactively find the ways to reach these goals
- Good planning (time management workshop)
- Good habits: self-care (exercise, meditation)

Why can't you have your ideal work-life balance?

- Deadlines
- Travel
- High workload
- High levels of stress/ Impostor Syndrome
- Partner living abroad
- Having to move every few years

Some Stoppers
(answers from astronomers)

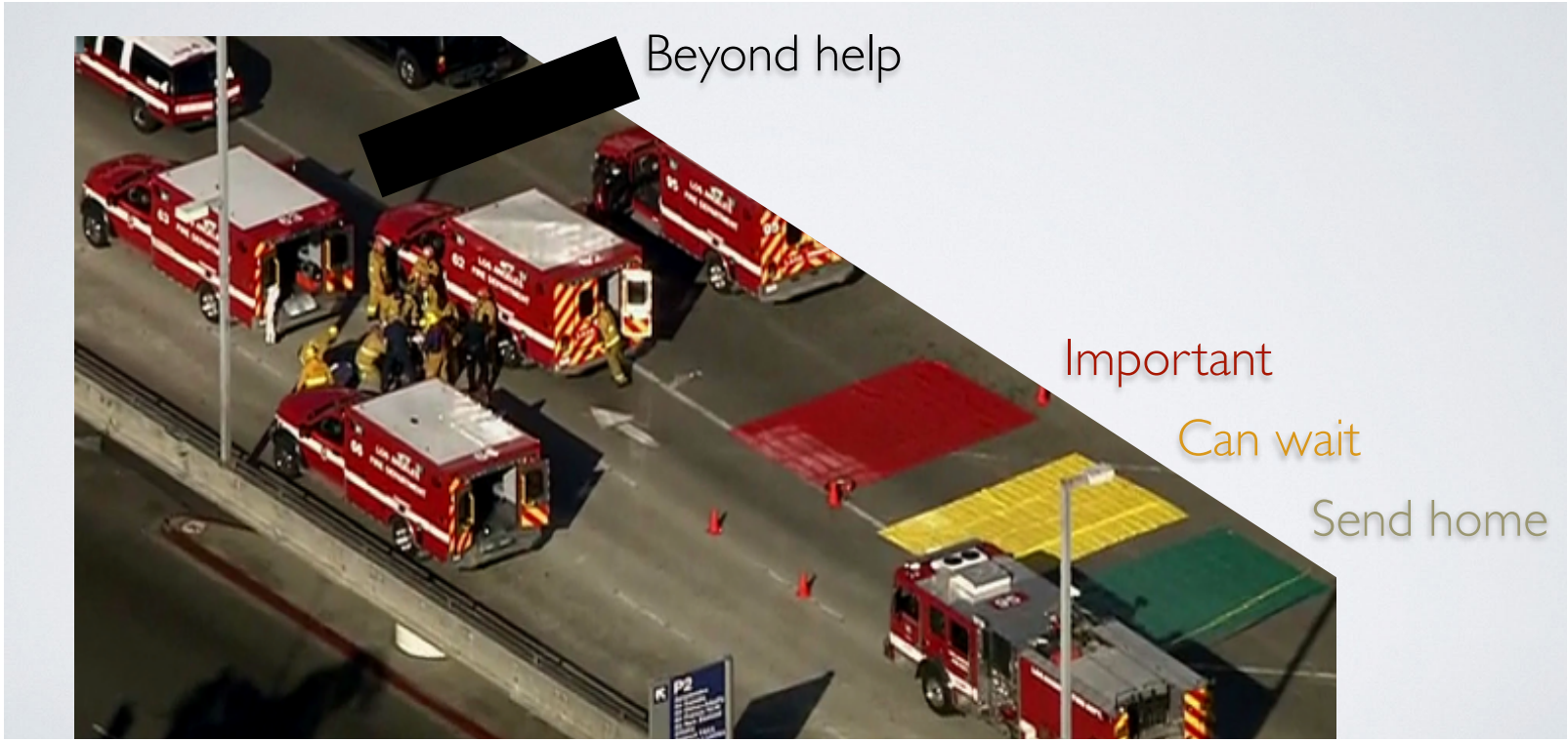
- Being an evening person in a morning world
- Juggling too much information without writing it down.
- Overestimating the importance of things
- Doing the unimportant before the important
- Software problems
- Too many meetings (distractions)
- Getting stuck when working alone
- Not taking breaks/holidays

Good Habits
(answers from astronomers)

- Get organized (TODO lists – great advices from previous workshop)
- Realistic goals – (unrealistic plans may lead to a feeling of failure)
- Physical *and* mental exercise
- Sleep well
- Take breaks, vacation
- Listen to your mood, act accordantly
- Learn what works *for you*

Good Habits
(answers from astronomers)

- Seek help when needed
- Triage (TODO lists are endless)



Science

WORKING LIFE

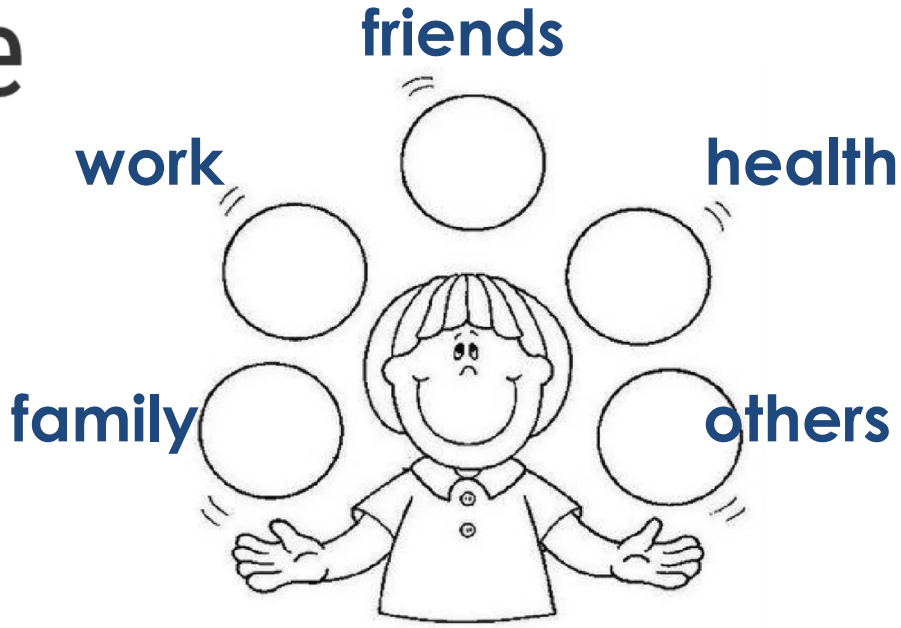
The art of triage

Emma White

If I drop a rubber ball, it bounces back. However, a fumbled glass ball may chip or even shatter.

The trick is knowing when a ball is rubber and when it's glass

Each ball is made of either rubber or glass, and the material changes with the circumstances



What is important?

- What is relevant for key deadlines?
- What excites you?
- What can yield to a *(key)* paper soon?
- Balance short- and long-term goals
- Ask a colleague or mentor for advise

Balancing Collaborations

Collaborations

- How to create/start collaborations
- How to keep healthy collaborations
- The art to say "NO"
- What kind of collaborator you are?

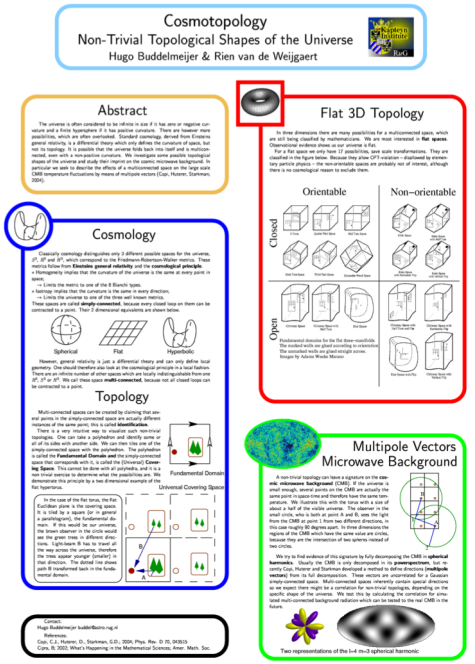
Collaborations start through many routes

- **Conferences:**

Ask questions

Use coffee breaks to look for people who you are interested to work with

Visit posters and show interest

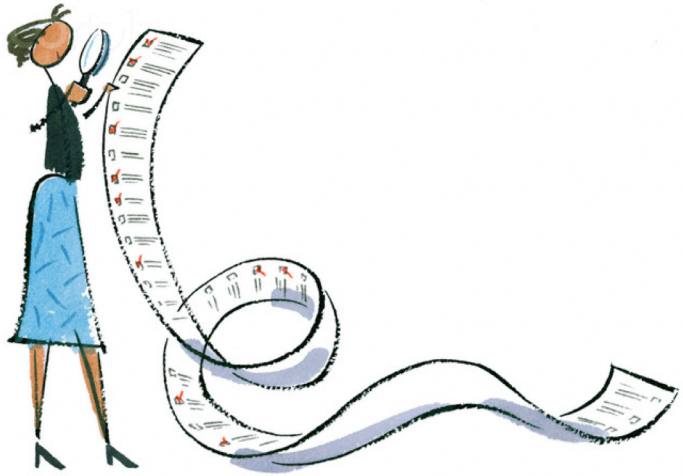


Collaborations start through many routes

- **Conferences:**

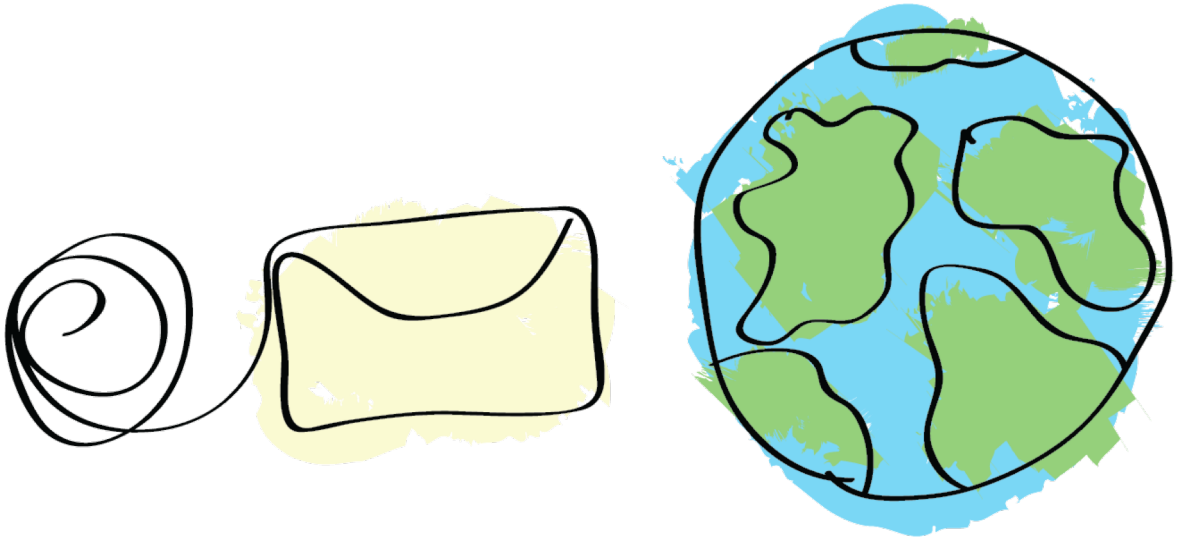
During dinners talk to new people, offer your experience for a current project if you see it fits.

Check the list of participants and email potential collaborators before the start of the conference (specially big conferences)



Collaborations start through many routes

- **Email** someone who you're interested in discussing or working with and ask if you could go visit (+give a talk)



Collaborations start through many routes

- **If you read a new paper**, find it interesting, and you want to follow up some of the ideas → Write an email to the first (second and third author too?), show your interest. You may ask some questions regarding the paper.

Collaborations start through many routes

- **<u>If you arrive to a new group, institution:</u>** have an overview to the members' research. Look for the colleagues who you can start new projects.

Collaborations start through many routes

- Initiating and volunteering are important!

- Go to colloquium or visitors dinners.

Healthy Collaborations

Healtly collaborations can lead to fruitful results, greater impact, and the even more important sense of having a community of support.

To be a good collaborator, know yourself

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you love to do and what can you not stand?

Tip: Think about things that you are really good at, and things that you feel you would be better off delegating or at least getting help on from someone else.

Engage your future collaborations to learn about your strengths and weaknesses (and vice versa).

Set clear expectations and roles

- What do you want to achieve from your collaboration?
- How will working together benefit all people involved, not just yourself?
- Set clear ***goals*** for what you want to achieve together and set the ***tasks*** each person will contribute towards attaining that goal.
- Clear roles support clear expectations for all group members and ensure that everyone is contributing at a level they feel comfortable.

Check-in, listen carefully and assess the state of the collaboration

Make a regular time to check-in about your project

Ask each other questions that are precise, but also free of judgement and listen carefully and openly to the responses

Examples: What are you working on right now? What is your favorite part of the project right now? What is a challenge or a blocker for you? How can I help you work through it? What do you need from me?

Healthy Collaborations:

Specific Tips in Astronomy

Be a good co-author

- Always carefully read the papers and give comments on time.
- If you are late, communicate asap and propose a new deadline.
- People will remember if you are or not a good co-author.
- Promote the work of your co-authors

Be organized

For example, If you ask for a telecon, plan what you want to communicate (slides, plots, next steps)

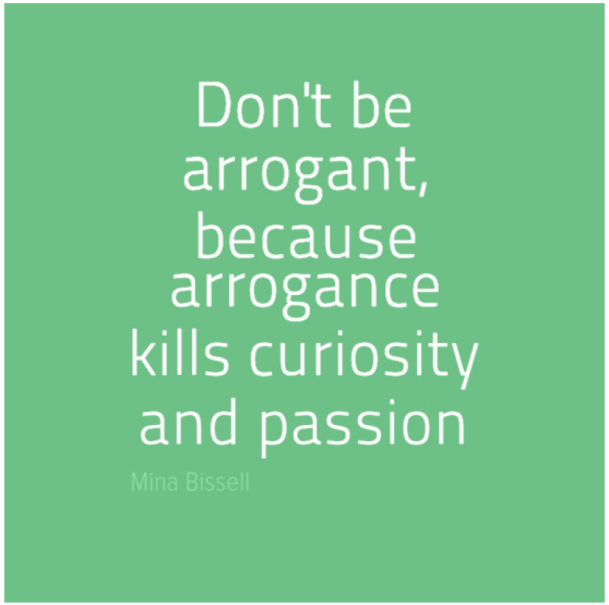
Demand of effort vs. coauthor-list order

- Try to negotiate your co-author position before you start any work that requires a lot of effort.
- Ask for the possibility to be second/third author.
- If it is not possible, are simpler models a possibility?
- Can we split the paper in two parts?
- Say “no” if you still feel that it is unfair

For Healthy Collaborations

- Besides comments for papers: Offer your help to improve the paper (run simple models, re-write certain parts, re-check the math, simulations).

- Always be polite. Don't be arrogant. Don't dismiss anyone and respect all opinions in case of contradictions.



For Healthy Collaborations

- Offer to visit or invite your main collaborators to visit you.

- **Be fair with the co-authors list:** don't give the impression that you or any of the co-authors didn't do enough to deserve certain position in the co-author list. For large collaborations: try alphabetic order after the main authors?

"You should spend the next week typing down names of all co-authors on your paper."

For Healthy Collaborations

- Don't ask to be included in a paper if your contribution is very minor. Being in the acknowledgements can be enough.
- Don't ignore your co-authors comments for papers or proposals. If you neglect them for certain reasons, explain why.
- Avoid sending too many drafts of your papers. Only after major changes.
- **Work with people you like! ☺**

For Healthy Collaborations

- Cite, cite, cite!
- In case you organize a meeting/workshop/conference, discuss your plans with your collaborators and -if you have enough budget- invite them.
- Suggest their name to your institution as potential seminar speakers.
- Present their paper in your journal club (our group meetings) and let them know that you are doing this!

Don’t try to have too many collaborations at the same time

You don’t want to disappoint people and you don't want to overwhelm yourself

It is ok to say “no” to some projects (or delay some of them)

The Art to Say "NO"

1. Ask the correct questions and take notes

You are showing respect and interest, which will help to say NO

With the questions, the other person may realize about the priorities and amount of work

The Art to Say "NO"

2. Acknowledge the task and give good reasons/alternatives when you say "NO"

The Art to Say "NO"

3. If you know someone with the right skills (and who will be happy to help) offer his/her/their help as an alternative. You can also say that you will learn the right tasks in the meanwhile.

The Art to Say "NO"

4. Even if you say "no", follow the case/project. Ask questions
   - Did you find the right person?
   - Did you solve your problem?
   - How is it going?

Large or small collaborations?

Small groups: Usually lead to papers with few co-authors (2-5). It is possible when you work in models. Difficult for observational projects.

Large groups (consortiums, large proposals, "small" proposals). Usually leads to papers with a lot of co-authors (and probably several papers), you should be ready to ***plan, coordinate and face with "political" issues.***

Both have cons and pros. In the best case, try both!

Cons/pros of large/small groups

- **Large groups**:
  - Takes time to coordinate (much longer than expected). You need to "satisfy" many people *(co-authorship management can be quite complicated)*
  - Give always strict deadlines, plan regular telecons (prepare in advance).
  - Delegate work
  - Preparing guiding principles before organizing a large program
    - Members and roles
    - Data access and management
    - Project distribution and working groups
    - Publications and Presentations policy
    - Any other?

Cons/pros of large/small groups

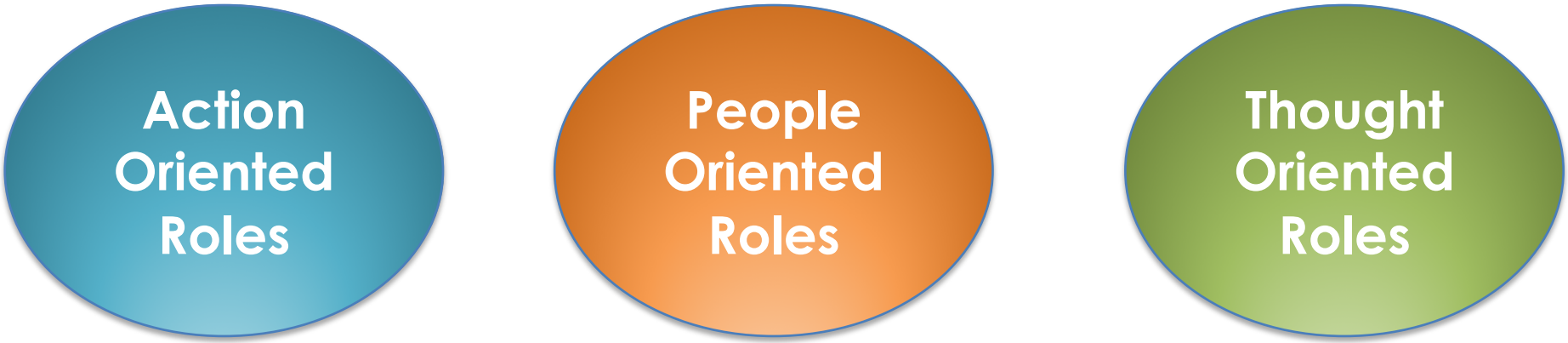
- You get to know many people in the large groups and this can lead to more collaborations
- For applications (it is tricky). Both can be seen as a strength or a weakness.

  - Referees of your applications may question what is your real contribution in a paper with too many people.

  - On the other hand, they may think that you are a good coordinator and can bring different communities together.

Identify what kind of collaborator you are

Belbin's Team Role Theory



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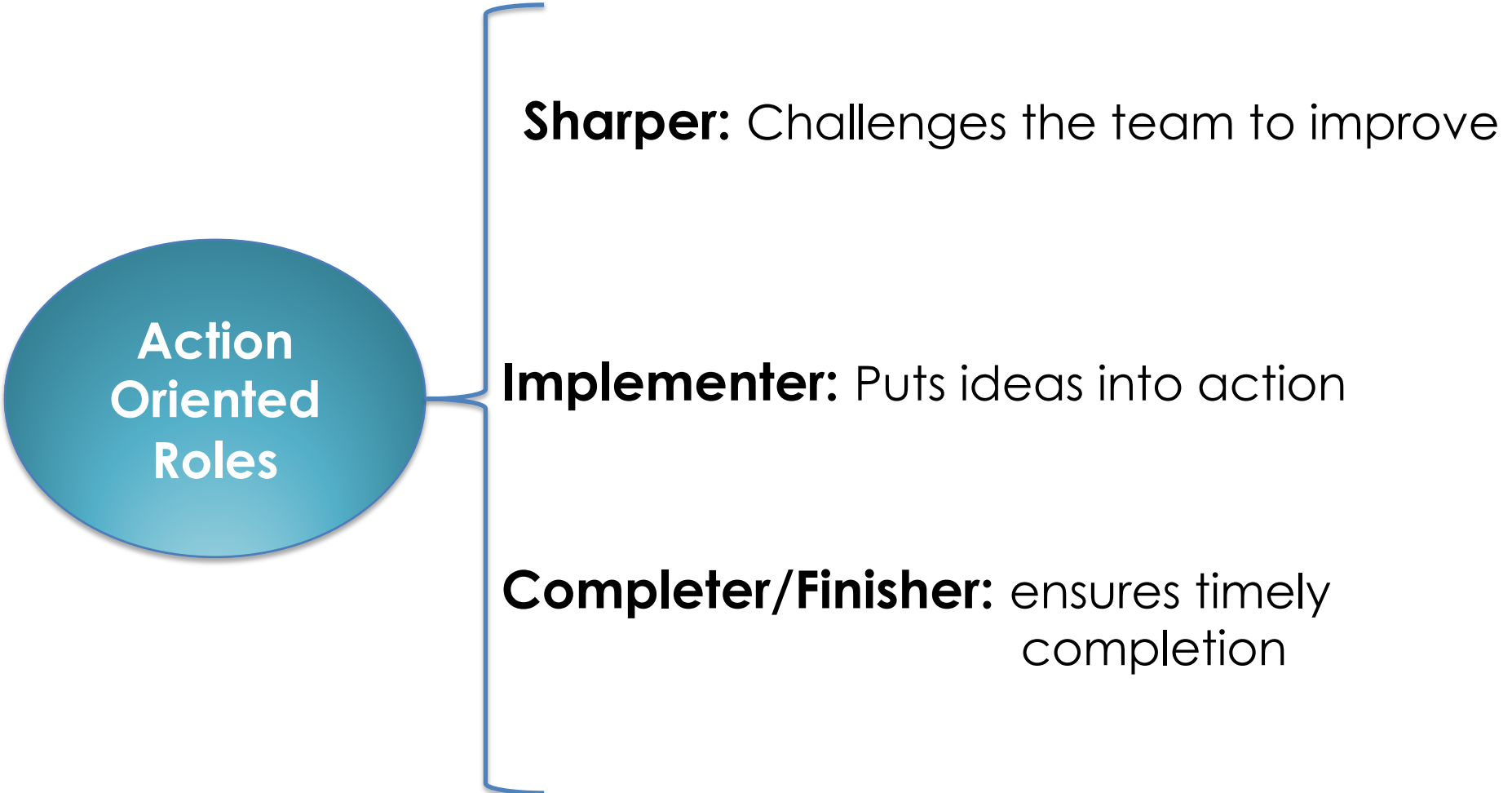

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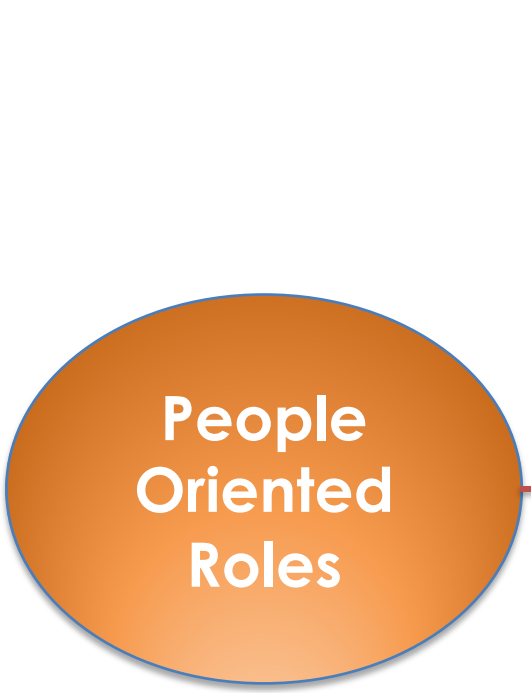

Coordinator: acts as a chairperson

Team worker: encourages cooperation

Resource Investigator: explore outside opportunities

Identify what kind of collaborator you are

Belbin's Team Role Theory

Plant: present new ideas and approaches

Evaluator: analyses the options

Specialist: provide specific skills

Thank you for your participation!