Older adults (OA) perform worse on emotion perception accuracy compared to young adults (Ruffman et al., 2008). Worse emotion perception is associated with decreased interpersonal functioning, reduced quality of life, sense of belonging, and social connectedness (Shimokawa et al., 2001; Spell & Frank, 2000; Szanto et al., 2010). OA have greater emotional control compared to young adults (YA; Carstensen et al., 2011) and maintain important relationships into late adulthood (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995). Past work found that an accountability manipulation reduced YA emotion perception accuracy to that of OA (Stanley & Isaacowitz, 2015). This suggests that more deliberative (versus heuristic) processing may disrupt emotion perception accuracy.

### Hypotheses

**H1:** YA will outperform OA on the traditional emotion perception task.

**H2:** YA and OA will not differ in accuracy on both an explicit and implicit emotion perception task.

### Materials: Perception Tasks

**Traditional Emotion Perception Task**
- Emotional facial images displayed on screen in a multiple-choice paradigm displaying the six basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, fear, surprise, disgust) and neutral
- Participants select emotion category associated with facial expression
- Face and choices remain on screen until participant answers

**Explicit Emotion Perception Task**
- Same format as the traditional task
- Participants were forced to wait 5 seconds before they were able to respond

**Implicit Emotion Perception Task**
- Facial emotional expressions were used as primes to elicit emotional response ratings to validated neutral photos (similar to the Affect Misattribution Procedure; Payne, 2005).

### Procedure
1. Demographics form, dementia screener, visual acuity chart
2. Implicit emotion perception task
3. Traditional and explicit tasks – order counterbalanced across participants

### Analyses of Traditional & Explicit Tasks

A repeated measures Age (young, old) x Task (traditional, explicit) x Emotion (happy, sad, angry, fear, surprise, disgust, neutral) ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were age differences in emotion perception accuracy.

- **YA did not outperform OA in emotion perception accuracy, F (6, 20) = 1.67, p = .13, η² = .027** (H1 not supported).
- **The Age x Task x Emotion interaction was not significant.**
- **There was a significant Task x Emotion interaction, F (6, 20) = 4.19, p < .001, η² = .365.** Participants were more accurate in the explicit task perceiving both fear and disgust (H2 partially supported; see Figure 3).

### Analyses of Implicit Tasks

A repeated measures Age (young, old) x Congruency (congruent, incongruent) ANOVA was used to determine if there were age differences in implicit priming for the neutral images.

- **YA showed greater implicit emotion priming compared to OA (see Figure 4).**