

# Individual Activity: Practice, Practice, Practice

Humans are social creatures; we crave connection and fulfilling relationships in our lives. The following activity will help you take small steps to form deeper relationships with your coworkers and strengthen your relationship building skills. Stretching yourself emotionally can be challenging, but your actions will result in stronger bonds and deeper connections, and the behaviors will become more automatic over time.

## Instructions

1. **Make Connection Goals:** Create a list of two to five goals for connecting or integrating with people in your laboratory, either within or outside of your department.
2. **Identify Supporting Skills & Specific Actions:** Using the Relationship Building Skills and Tips section as a guide:
  - Identify **at least two skills per goal** that will help you form the deeper connections with coworkers needed to achieve the goal.
  - Detail how you will put that skill into practice, such as a set time or duration, and the situations in which you will practice.
3. **Keep Yourself Accountable:** So that your goals don't fade away, set specific deadlines or schedules for your goals, such as committing to practicing a certain number of skills per week or focusing on each goal for one month at a time. This will help keep them front of mind and to ensure you practice all the skills you identified.

See **Examples of Relationship Building Goals** on page 2.



## Reflection

Think about someone in your life that has positively impacted you:

- How did they interact with the Skills and Tips listed in this toolkit?
- What can you learn from them and incorporate into your everyday interactions?

Use this in conjunction with the other Relationship Building resources in the [Effective Communication for Aspiring Laboratory Leaders Toolkit](#), designed by Cohort 17 of the [APHL Emerging Leader Program](#) to empower public health laboratory professionals to be better leaders by improving communication skills.

The toolkit has three sections: **Relationship Building**, **Empowering Colleagues** and **Conflict Resolution**.



## Examples of Relationship Building Goals

### Connection Goals

- Improve my relationship with bench level staff in the [insert] department.
- Get more comfortable approaching new people.

### Supporting Skills & Specific Actions

- **Learn Names:** Learn the name of one new coworker a week. During that week, greet them by name when I see them, or strike up a conversation when time allows.
- **Reach Out:** Every Monday, reach out to someone I don't know well and ask how their weekend was.
- **Active Listening:** Pick one causal conversation a day and one meeting a week to be completely present in—listening to what other people are saying—even if I'm sure where the conversation is leading.
- **Relationship Focus:** When checking in with someone about a task, ask them about more than the deliverable. See how they're doing, not just when the task may be completed. Do they need support? What challenges are they facing?

### Keep Yourself Accountable

- Every week, practice at least two actions that are different than my typical interactions.
- Every Friday, reflect on the week and record how I implemented my skills.