

Small Group Activity: Connection Roleplaying

This roleplaying scenario will allow participants to practice behaviors that encourage thoughtful communication and to examine how their values shape these behaviors. The long-term goal is for these connection-enhancing behaviors to become habit, allowing you to more easily solidify positive and deep connections.

This activity will focus on building the following behaviors of connection:

- Listen actively.
- Use validating language.
- Be genuine—show you care.
- Be curious, open and non-judgmental.

Instructions

Complete the activity with a partner.

1. **Identify Values:** On your own, look at the “**Values Inventory**” and circle the four words that most resonate with you.
2. **Pick a Scenario:** With your partner, select one of the options from “**Scenarios**” on page 2, or come up with your own and keep the list growing.
3. **Act it Out:** Roleplay the scenario with your partner for five minutes. Practice the behaviors of thoughtful communication and keep your values in mind as you move through the conversation. If you get stuck, use the “**Optional Conversation Starters**” on page 2.
4. **Repeat:** Pick a different scenario and repeat the roleplay exercise for another five minutes. Switch which partner initiates the conversation.
5. **Reflect:** After your conversation, reflect with your partner on the questions in “**Reflection**” on page 2.

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**.



Values Inventory

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Integrity | • Perseverance | • Responsibility | • Flexibility |
| • Empathy | • Courage | • Growth | • Collaboration |
| • Health / Wellness | • Open-mindedness | • Self-discipline | • Spirituality |
| • Respect | • Equality | • Independence | • Family / Friends |
| • Authenticity | • Creativity | • Optimism | • Efficiency |
| • Kindness | • Empowerment | • Generosity | • Truth |
| • Gratitude | • Harmony | • Curiosity | • Rules |

Scenarios

- **Networking Event:** You find yourself standing next to another attendee at a reception and initiate a conversation with them.
- **Coffee Run:** You see a new employee from a different department at the coffee shop and strike up a conversation.
- **Super Break:** You enter the lunchroom and see the only open seat is across from a new supervisor in your department. You sit down and break the ice.

Reflection

Take **five minutes** to reflect on the following questions with your partner:

- How may your values have impacted your conversation?
- Reflecting on the conversation, what could you do differently?
- What barriers did you overcome (if applicable)?
- How might your behavior make your partner feel validated/heard?

In one sentence or a short phrase, summarize your answer to the following question and write it on a sticky note to share with your partner: *What is the most important consideration in fostering a successful, productive conversation?*

Optional Conversation Starters

Networking Event

- How are you enjoying the conference?
- What was the most exciting session you've attended/will be attending?
- This is my first time at this event/conference. Have you been here before?
- Have you visited the exhibitors/posters yet?

Coffee Run

- What's your favorite thing about working at the lab?
- How long have you lived in the area?
- Discuss the things you enjoy doing in the area.
- Is there a current project you are excited about? Something new you're looking forward to?

Super Break

- What's led you to a career in public health?
- What's the best book you've read or movie you've seen lately?
- Discuss the things you enjoy doing in the area.
- What was your first day like here?