

Skills and Tips for Empowering Colleagues

Empowering colleagues promotes growth, increases confidence, builds trust and boosts morale. As a result, an empowered team fosters a supportive work environment with improved productivity.

Empowering colleagues is something anyone can do, no matter their place in an organization's hierarchy. Use the skills below, with tips on how to foster those skills, to learn more about what you can do where you are.



Active Listening

Take time to listen and understand the needs of each team member, so you can meet them where they are. Repeat main points to ensure everyone understood the discussion.



Positive Communication

Trust is important and it can take time. Celebrate small wins and don't get bogged down on hiccups. When we trust other's abilities, they will support their work and feel empowered to implement their ideas.



Clear Direction

To instill a level of trust and confidence, set clear expectations and goals. Vague directions are not empowering.



Recognition

Recognize individuals in a meaningful way by understanding how they want to be recognized. Highlight individual team members strengths.



Set Goals

Work with others to set attainable short- and long-term goals. Check in with them about their progress towards achieving those goals.

Use this in conjunction with the other Conflict Resolution 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**.



Provide Constructive Feedback

When providing feedback, ensure the recipient can learn from the information you provide by using specific examples and focusing on the facts and outcomes. This is true for both positive and negative feedback.

After a less-than-ideal situation or outcome, invite those involved to help determine how to prevent the situation from reoccurring. You may also provide additional resources or offer specific suggestions on how the situation can be improved in the future.



Listen to Feedback

Allow others to provide feedback to you. In a growth mind-set, what can you work on to be a better leader? Be receptive to potential areas of growth. Critiques can be viewed as opportunities to be a better leader.



Offer Resources and Support

Effective leaders provide resources that are useful to those around you and to the situation at hand. Guide others to improvement and provide support where/when needed.



Model Appropriately Defined, Well-executed and Meaningful Meetings

Although everyone already has plenty of meetings scheduled, holding 1:1 meetings to empower others can be quite meaningful! Collaborate to determine an appropriate meeting frequency (weekly, monthly, etc.) and then send an agenda a few days ahead of time so all parties can reflect ahead of the meeting. Be sure the agenda includes agreed upon goals, quantifiable measures of performance, etc.