



Women's Leadership Working Group

Discussion Synopsis

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Overview: As part of the Women's Leadership in Global Health virtual seminar series we held a working group event on January 13, 2021. Participants registered to participate in one of 5 moderated groups:

1. Mentorship
2. Strengthening Networks
3. Building Essential Skills
4. Authentic Leadership
5. Building Job-Seeking Skills

Brief Notes from each section are included below followed by key takeaways and recommendations.

MENTORSHIP

Challenges & Barriers

- Time and access: Connecting despite technology and Zoom © fatigue. Finding time to take advantage of your networks; breaking barriers to access people while also **maintaining** relationships.
- Program structure: Lack of structures for mentorship outside of academic programs; Identifying avenues for finding mentors.
- Teams of mentors: One mentor cannot meet all needs – building a team of mentors, particularly beyond your immediate bubble (identifying mentors for different aspects of your career).

Strategies and Approaches

- Engage in forums (like ours!) that create communities and share resources.
- Leverage networks; use connections to find people. Use tools like LinkedIn © to show connections but take the next step to connect!
- Develop a clear definition of your 'mentor persona' – what areas of expertise should they have? Communication and personality traits? Reflect on your own 'mentee persona' as well.
- Institutions should create groups within institutions to formalize mentorship relationships.
- Normalize different concepts of mentorship.

STRENGTHENING NETWORKS

- Get out of your comfort zone. Seek and seize opportunities.
- Present your work to meet people with similar interests. Remember that global health people tend to be altruistic and want to make a difference.
- Ask your mentor/sponsor to expand your network and provide introductions.
- Engage in continuous network growth and identify your main goals (What do you want out of your network? What can you offer to others?)
- Invest your time smartly – keep in touch, use existing resources (i.e. LinkedIn), and consider depth in addition to breadth.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Challenges/Issues

- Communication & Active Listening
 - o Of your science to diverse audiences
 - o Of your self – how to translate essential skills for potential employers/mentors/networks.
 - When transitioning, how do you translate your skills and experience for others outside of your organization?
 - o Of complex but necessary topics (i.e. racism, gender identity, etc.)
- Creating Space: “When women lead, other women speak up”. How do we step up as leaders while also creating space for other women leaders, particularly from low-and middle-income countries.
- Increasing confidence!
 - o In speaking
 - o And feeling that what you have to say is valuable.

Strategies

- Leverage experiential and applied learning experiences to effectively learn and practice many of these skills, particularly communication, team work, problem solving.
- Institutions should provide more strategic training on science communication. This should be seriously embedded into curriculum and not one-off courses.
- Create groups where people can present their work and receive feedback (builds confidence and expands knowledge base).
- Training on incorporating essential skills in resumes/cover letters. (Adding to an initial profile section, outlining explicitly in ‘skills’ section)

JOB SEEKING SKILLS

- Highlight essential or soft skills (i.e. project management, organization, group leadership, communication, time management” in addition to hard skills that make you the best person for the position.
- Develop a cover letter, resume, or CV that sets you apart from other applicants (and includes soft-skills).
- Include dissertation, thesis, capstone projects – examples of working independently and managing competing demands.
- Highlight volunteer experiences and skills developed by working in low-resource settings.
- Use these seminars and Slack © as a network to meet and learn from professionals across disciplines.
- Develop Slack© group to continue specific discussions in job seeking, networking, resource sharing
- Conquering imposter syndrome – supporting each other and recognizing our own skills/expertise.

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Challenges

- Managing vs. Leading – Understanding the difference and how transform management to leadership.
- Intentional Decision-making
- Influencing when not in a ‘designated’ leadership role

Solutions

- Engaging people to join your vision.
- Amplify the voices of other women.
- Institutions should:
 - o Create affinity groups to bring together female faculty and women of color faculty.
 - o Offer courses in leadership; Connect students to leadership training resources.
 - o Bolster mentorship programs
 - o Create structured discussions and reflections that focus on proactive steps in addition to challenges/barriers.

Key Takeaways for Institutions

- Many offices offer many resources – it's difficult to keep track and strategize.
- Support mentors (provide dedicated time and training resources).
- Create networking opportunities (both within and beyond the institution!). Provide guidance on maintaining, in addition to establishing, networks.
- Develop leadership courses/trainings that are responsive to young women in global health and support essential skills.
- Embed science communications skill-building throughout curricula.