

MIXING/MINGLING TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING (WITH RESEARCHERS!)

Entering a conversation:

- Avoid “clumping” with friends; approach others who are alone
- Nametag on right, in line of sight during handshake
- Proper handshake: not too firm, not too limp, not too long (no pumping)
- Introduce yourself
- Be aware of non-verbal communication: open body language, good eye contact, smile
- Approach a group that seems more open and inviting; observe their body language and volume of conversation to determine if they are having a private conversation

Talk, listen and be interested:

- Ask open ended questions, this is a great way to initiate a conversation. For example, “What is the topic of your current research?”
- Avoid certain topics: alcohol, partying, relationships, negative comments about past employers, politics, religion
- Do not dominate the conversation; listen as much as you talk (if not more)
- Be genuinely present with the person

Social interaction:

- Make everyone comfortable, be inclusive
- If you notice someone alone near your group, invite them to join you

Be aware of managing your food/drink:

- Juggling food and drinks can make it difficult to shake hands and meet people – keep one hand free
- Networking events are not about the food; eat beforehand to fill yourself up a bit if you need to
- Don’t forget to focus on your goal (job offer, new connection).
- Avoid alcohol, and if you choose to indulge make sure you are of legal age and that you limit it to one

How to exit a group gracefully:

- Make everyone comfortable and feel good about themselves around you.
- Don’t end conversation when the other person is talking/responding – it can give the impression that you were bored.
- Wait until you are the one talking or responding, then politely excuse yourself. Example, briefly answer then say, “I’d really like to talk with you more about that. I need to excuse myself, but let’s try to connect again later.”

Potential conversation starters:

- “What research topics have you investigated in your field, and how did you get started?”
- “From your perspective, what is the importance of having an undergraduate research experience in your field?”
- “How do undergraduate research experiences compare to more advanced research, particularly to that conducted in graduate school?”
- “What advice do you have for a student who wants to be involved in research and what resources do you direct them to?”
- “What are your tips for asking faculty for letters of recommendation when applying to research experiences?”