

What would you do?

Leading through Lab Challenges

Scenario 1: Addressing authorship conflict

I am a PhD student working on a project with another PhD student in my lab. Our advisor suggested we work on this shared project originally. Although the work was supposed to be split relatively evenly, the other student fell behind in her research. I tried to include her by attempting to make sure she could attend our meetings and keeping her informed on progress and only recently has she begun catching up. Even so, I have done three-quarters of the work, but since she's working really hard to catch up now, she is insisting that she should be first author on the manuscript. How do I navigate this situation?

Scenario 2: Communication with Busy Mentors

A first year postdoctoral trainee feels overwhelmed with his research mentor, Dr. Smith, and doesn't know how to improve communication with her. Dr. Smith regularly publishes in high impact journals and won a prestigious award for teaching. During their weekly meetings, however, she gives him so many ideas, resources, and tasks to complete he has trouble taking it all down. She uses terms and acronyms unfamiliar to him, but he doesn't want to look incompetent and inconvenience her by asking for clarification since she is so busy with her own work. He has considered seeking advice from other members of the research group, but as the new member of an established team, he feels too timid to approach the others.

Scenario 3: Personal Life Challenges affecting work

- A postdoc in your lab has a family emergency, and he has to fly back home for the next month. This means he will not be able to perform one last experiment to help with an upcoming manuscript submission due in one week.
- How would you respond to this scenario?

Scenario 4: Work Environment/Personal Life Conflict

- I am a postdoc and the father of a young child, whom I need to pick up from daycare in the afternoons. Our project manager keeps scheduling in-person team meetings in the late afternoon and despite me informing her that I am unable to attend the meetings, she has refused to change the time or format. Additionally- at the last team meeting, the team decided that for the next conference, someone else will travel and present my work, citing my parental responsibilities as a barrier to travel. I am able to travel for work if given advance notice and my PI is aware of that. How do I navigate this scenario?