



BUILDING YOUR RESEARCH IDENTITY: MODERN NETWORKING STRATEGIES FOR SCIENTISTS

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DISCLOSURES

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OBJECTIVES



What do you want to be known for?



How will people discover and remember you?



How do you turn encounters into relationships?



**YOUR RESEARCH IDENTITY
ALREADY EXISTS**

“WHAT DO YOU WORK ON?”

“I’m a third-year postdoc studying urinary tract physiology.”

“I study why some patients with lower urinary tract dysfunction develop persistent symptoms even after we correct the obvious physiologic problem. I’m especially interested in linking mechanistic models with patient-reported outcomes.”

People cannot connect you to opportunities if they cannot understand what you are interested in.

DEFINE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR

“When someone in my field hears my name, I would eventually like them to think of _____.”

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR?

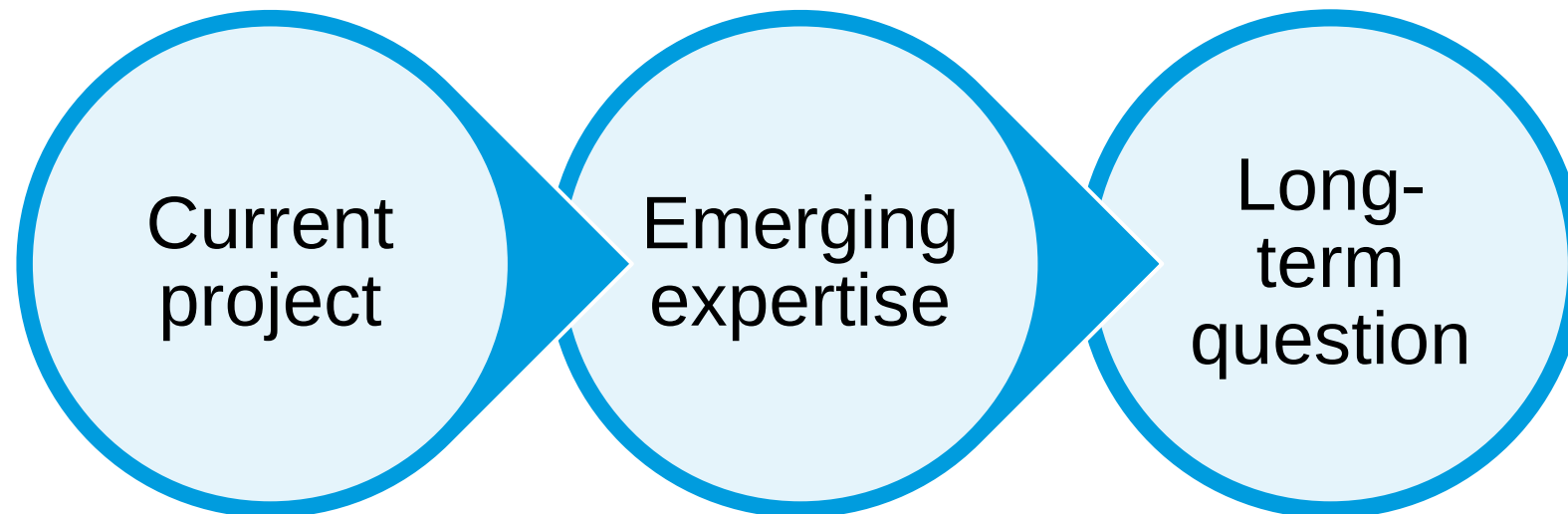
- An expertise, not just a topic

INSTEAD OF	CONSIDER
“RNA sequencing”	“Understanding how aging changes bladder sensory signaling”
“Machine learning”	“Using clinical data to predict which patients with recurrent urinary infections are most likely to benefit from different prevention strategies”

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR?

- An expertise, not just a topic
- Identity is broader than your current project

- Consider this framework: *“I study [problem] in [population/system] using [approach] because I want to understand/improve [larger goal].”*





**MAKE YOUR WORK
DISCOVERABLE**

MAKE YOUR WORK DISCOVERABLE

- Online presence as scientific infrastructure, rather than self-promotion

- Consider your “digital handshake”
 - If someone searches for you online, what do they find?

- Institutional profile
- ORCID
- Google Scholar or equivalent publication profile
- LinkedIn and/or a field-relevant professional platform
- Optional personal/lab webpage
- A professional photo
- A short, consistent description of research interests

MAKE YOUR WORK DISCOVERABLE

- Online presence as scientific infrastructure, rather than self-promotion

- Consider your “digital handshake”
 - If someone searches for you online, what do they find?
- Is your online identity telling a consistent intellectual story?

- Search for yourself online a few times a year
- “Would a scientist who knows nothing about me understand what I work on within 60 seconds?”

MAKE YOUR WORK DISCOVERABLE

- Online presence as scientific infrastructure, rather than self-promotion
- Contribute before you broadcast

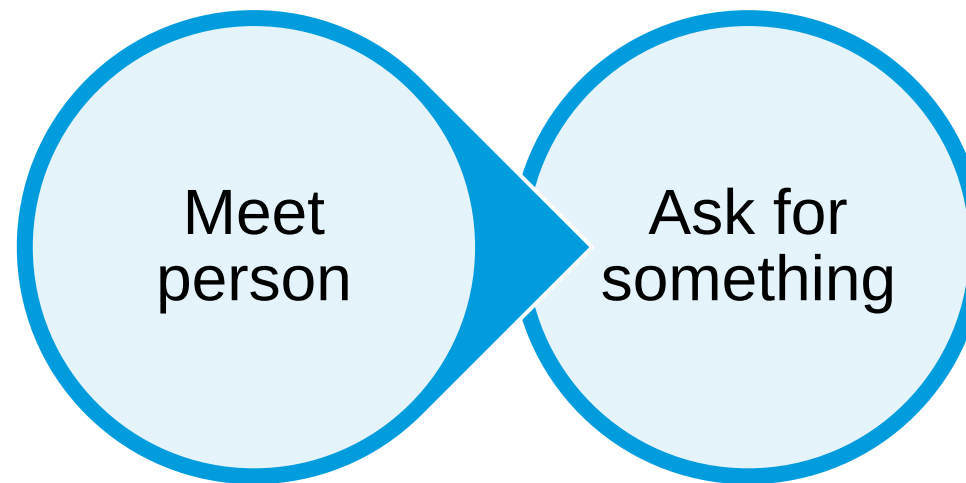
- Consider your “digital handshake”
 - If someone searches for you online, what do they find?
- Is your online identity telling a consistent intellectual story?
- Posting strategically
 - You do not need to be an “influencer”

- A new paper
- A conference presentation
- A thoughtful observation about a paper
- Congratulations to collaborators
- An interesting scientific question
- An opportunity for trainees or collaborators

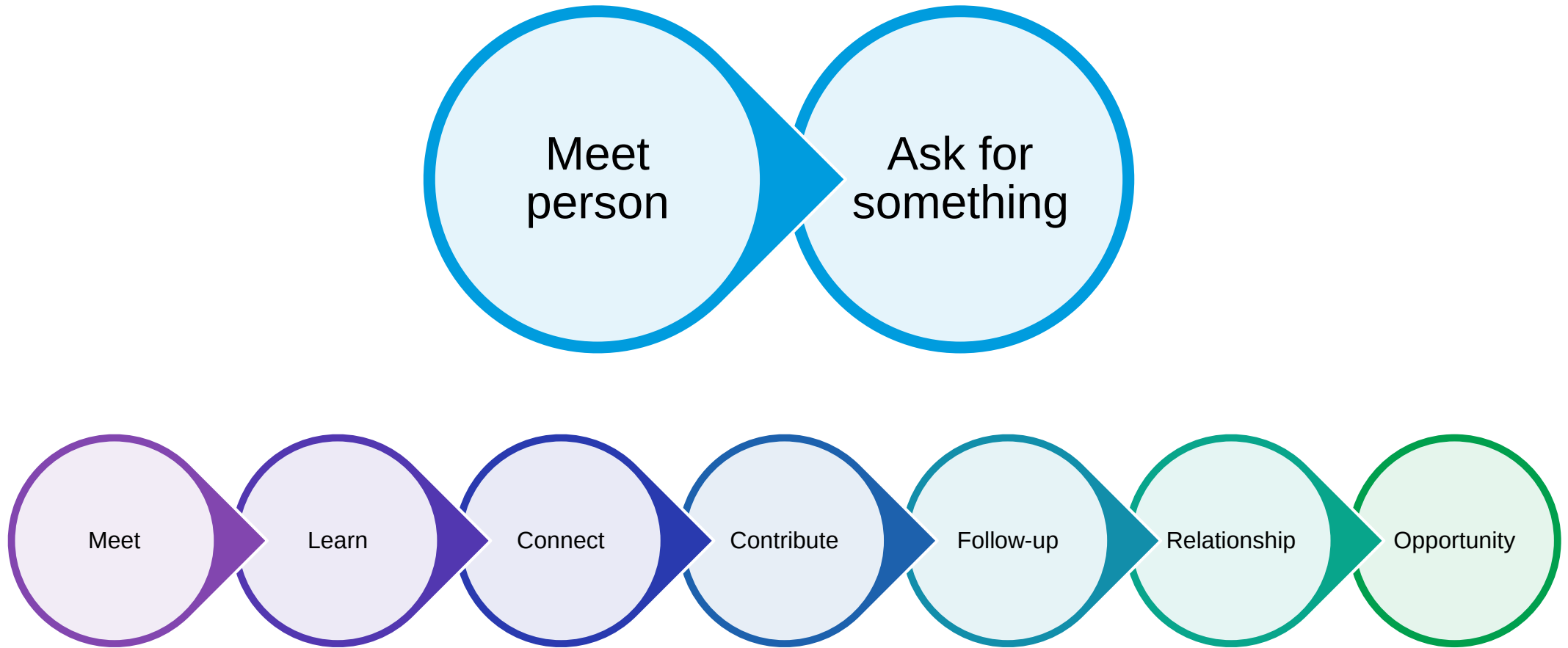


NETWORKING IS RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

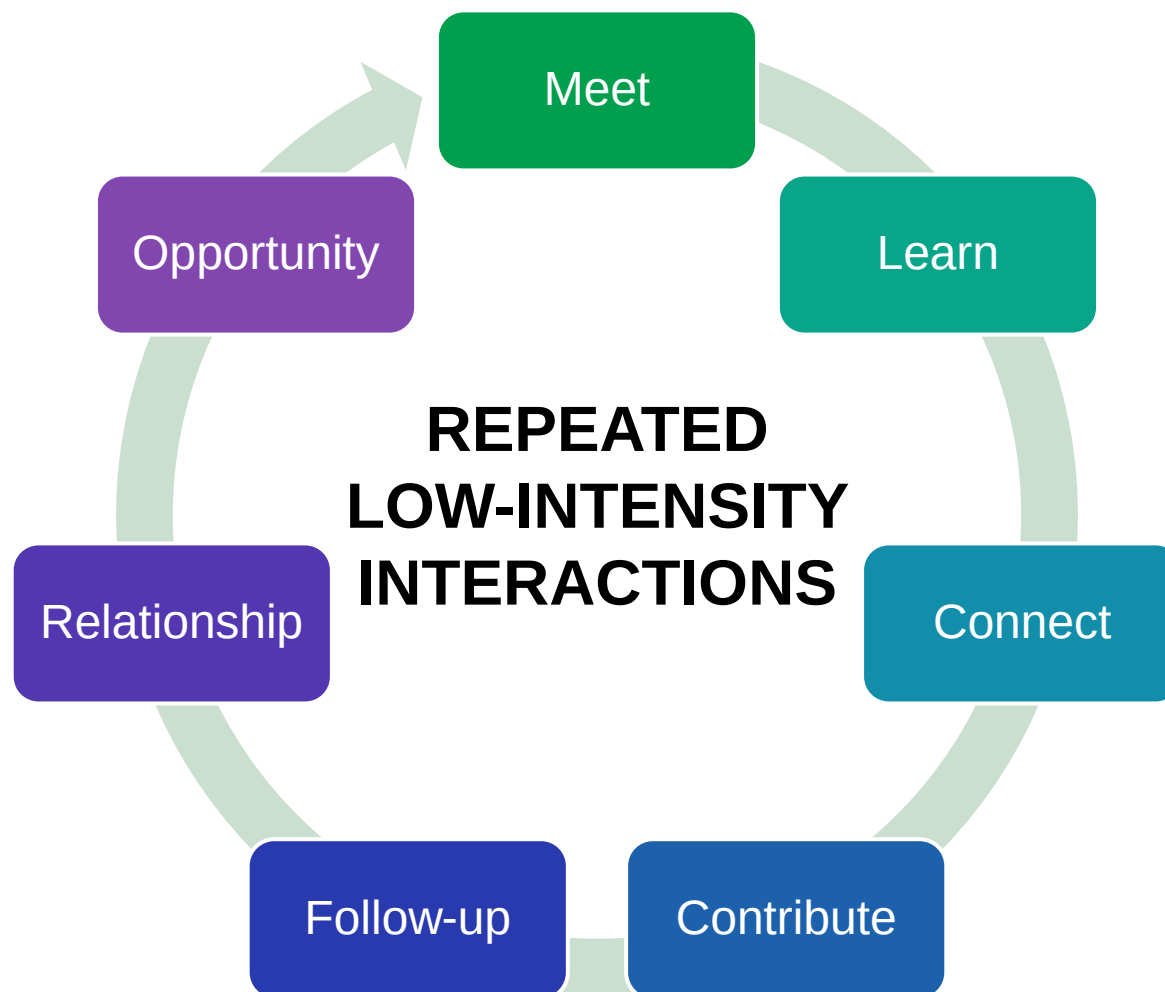
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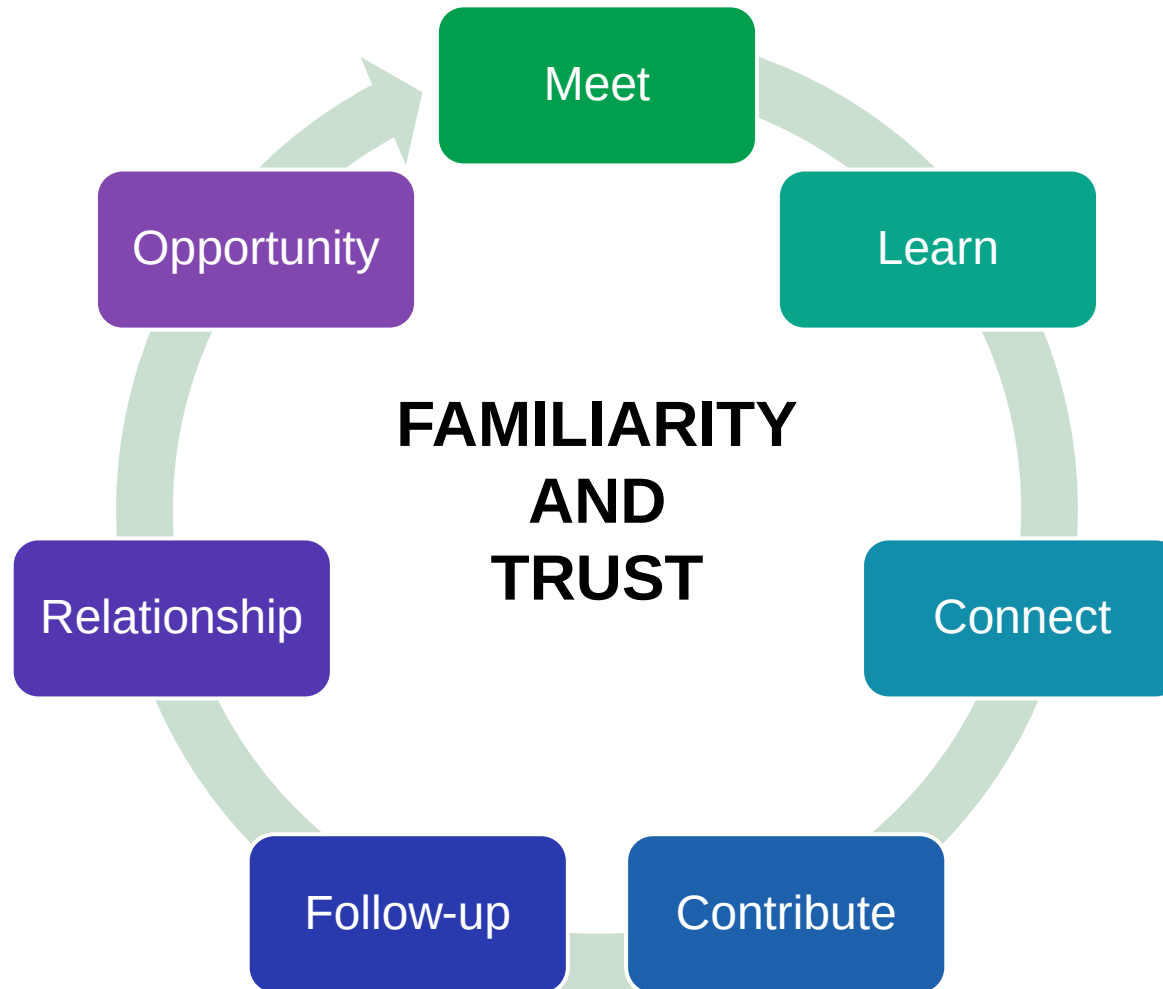
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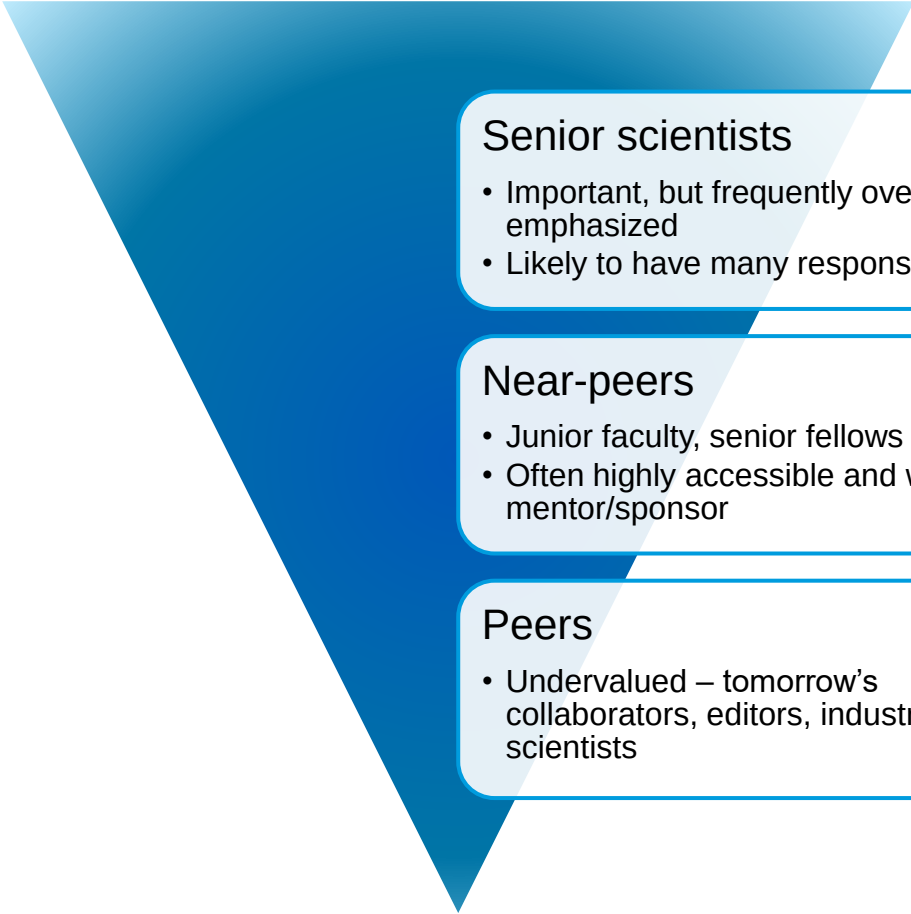
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SCIENTIFIC NETWORK LEVELS



Senior scientists

- Important, but frequently over-emphasized
- Likely to have many responsibilities

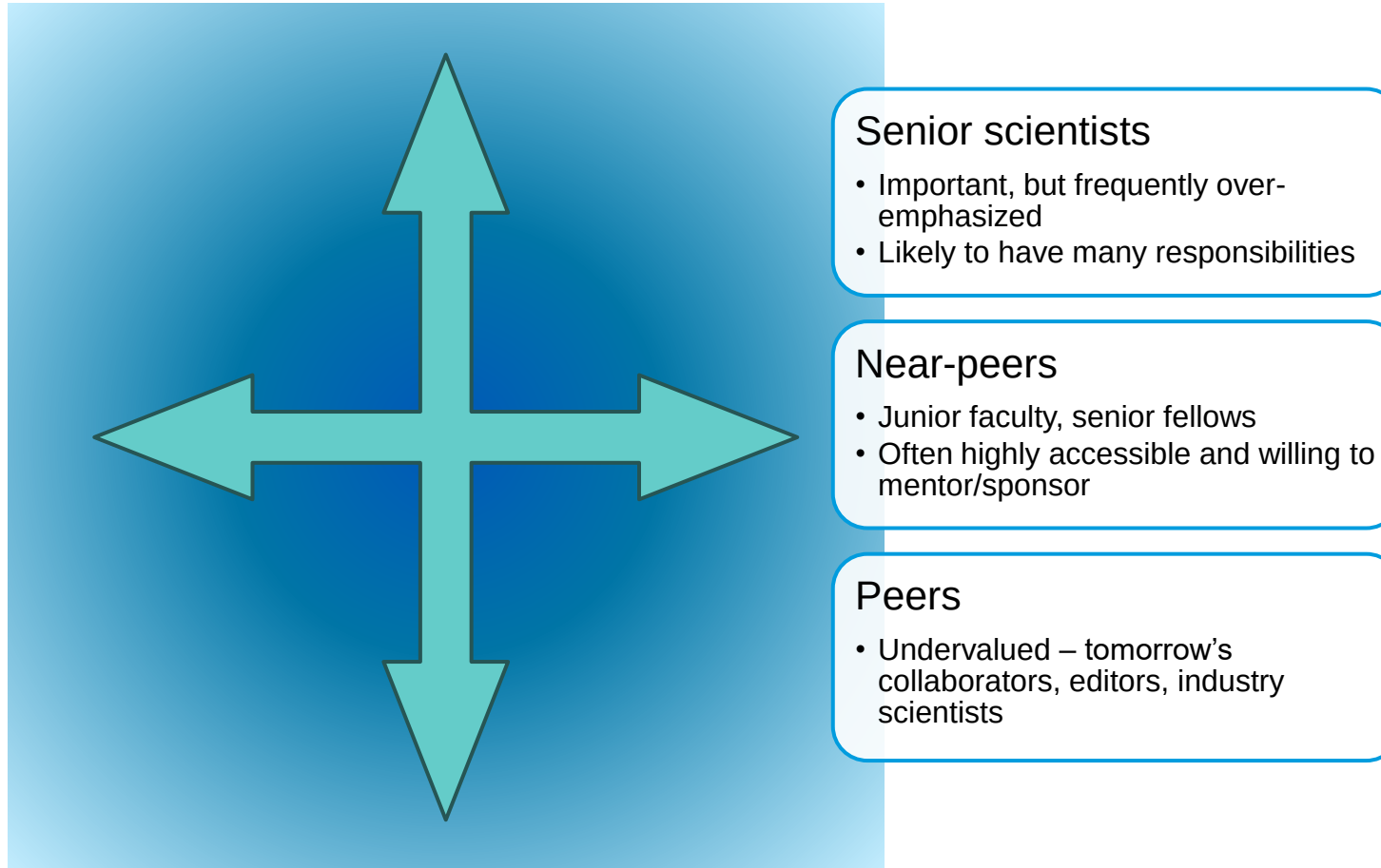
Near-peers

- Junior faculty, senior fellows
- Often highly accessible and willing to mentor/sponsor

Peers

- Undervalued – tomorrow's collaborators, editors, industry scientists

SCIENTIFIC NETWORK LEVELS



COMMUNICATION TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Context → connection → conversation
- Give them something to respond to
- Create conditions for a relationship, instead of asking for one

“Hi, Dr. Garcia—I'm a postdoc at the University of Wisconsin studying neural mechanisms of bladder dysfunction. I enjoyed your presentation on sensory pathways, particularly the finding about hyperactivation. We're seeing something potentially related in our model. I'd love to hear how you're thinking about that connection—would you be able to meet with me over Zoom for 15 minutes in the next few weeks?”

COMMUNICATION TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

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Who you are - I'm a postdoc at the University of Wisconsin studying neural mechanisms of bladder dysfunction. I enjoyed your presentation on sensory pathways, particularly the finding about hyperactivation. We're seeing something potentially related in our model. I'd love to hear how you're thinking about that connection—would you be able to meet with me over Zoom for 15 minutes in the next few weeks?"

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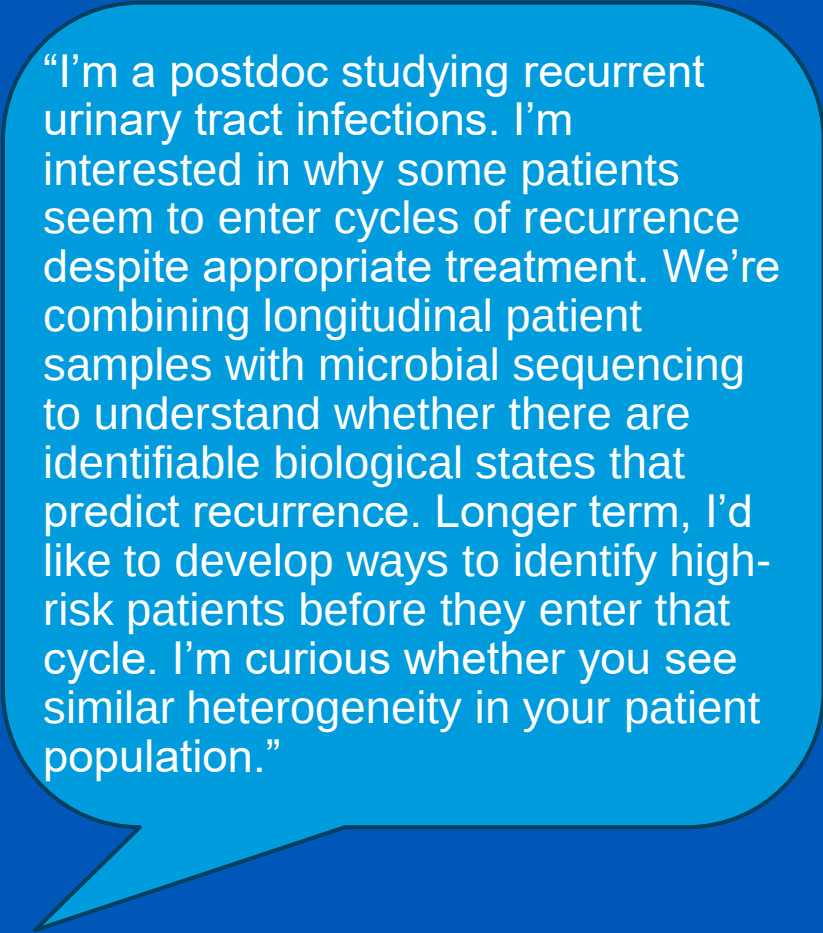
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CRAFTING YOUR NETWORKING PITCH

“WHAT DO YOU WORK ON?”

- 1. Who are you?**
Your role or training stage.
- 2. What problem interests you?**
Not just your technique or project title.
- 3. What are you doing about it?**
Your approach or current work.
- 4. Why does it matter / where are you going?**
The larger scientific or clinical relevance.
- 5. Conversation hook**
Something that makes it easy for the other person to respond.



“I’m a postdoc studying recurrent urinary tract infections. I’m interested in why some patients seem to enter cycles of recurrence despite appropriate treatment. We’re combining longitudinal patient samples with microbial sequencing to understand whether there are identifiable biological states that predict recurrence. Longer term, I’d like to develop ways to identify high-risk patients before they enter that cycle. I’m curious whether you see similar heterogeneity in your patient population.”

NETWORKING PITCH EXERCISE

- Groups of 3
 - Speaker – delivers the pitch, 30 –45 seconds
 - Listener – responds naturally, identifies what they would ask next
 - Observer/coach – provides feedback
- Ideally each person pitches twice
- Rotate until everyone has spoken
- Feedback
 1. What do you think this person studies?
 2. What phrase or idea do you remember?
 3. What question would you naturally ask them next?
 4. What could be removed or clarified?

ONE PITCH, THREE VERSIONS

Someone in your field

- More technical

A scientist in another discipline

- Problem-oriented
- Less jargon

A potential mentor/collaborator

- Emphasizing intellectual overlap
- Future direction

CONCLUSIONS



What do you want to be known for?

Define your identity and expertise, not just the current project.



How will people discover and remember you?

Your online presence is an infrastructure to build and sustain.



How do you turn encounters into relationships?

Create conditions for relationships, just not requests for help.

THANK YOU

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