

Handshakes, Eye Contact, Small Talk: How to Network Effectively as a Student at a Professional Mixer



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Office of
Career & Professional Development

Our Agenda & Learning Outcomes

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1. **Conceptualizing:** Have an understanding of why you network as a student
2. **Language & Logistics:** Entering & exiting conversations professionally
3. **Growing your Garden:** Understand how to maintain a professional relationship over time

The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

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Your Professional Community

Your Professional Goals



Feeling a little
isolated – want to
connect with others.

Learn how to find out
about different job
options in my field

The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

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What is 'networking'?



Networking is just the **conversations** you have, and **relationships** you build, **with people** you meet in your professional community...**while you're pursuing your professional goals.**

The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

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Your Professional Goals

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Diana's Goals

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Diana Prince: 4th year pharmacy student.

- Residency.** What questions should I ask residency programs to see if it's a good fit for me?
- Clinical Issues:** How could I have provided better care to a recent patient experiencing PTSD?

Peter's Goals

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Peter Parker: 1st year dentistry student.



- Succeeding in school:** Feeling overwhelmed with study load. How do I find resources, strategies and support to deal with this?
- Career options:** Is endodontics or orthodontics a better fit for me?

Nick's Goals

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Nick Fury: 2nd year nursing student.



- Job search:** Find what is negotiable in NP compensation package, and figure out how to negotiate it.
- Lead team:** Figure out how to delegate effectively to my student group leadership committee so I'm not stuck doing all the work.

Lois' Goals

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Lois Lane: 3rd year medical student.



- Clinical presentations:** I'm freezing up when I present. How do I improve?

Barbara's Goals

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Barbara Gordon: 3rd year physical therapy student.



- Working with my clinical instructor:** I'm not getting helpful performance feedback from my clinical instructor. I'm struggling and concerned about our professional relationship. How can I get better feedback?

Bruce's Goals

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Bruce Banner: Life or Social Sciences Phd or Postdoc



- Negotiating Authorship:** I have some questions about how authorship should be assigned. It would help to have some information about criteria to determine authorship, and advice about how to discuss this with colleagues.
- Exploring Careers:** What are career options available for someone with my training and interests, both inside and outside academe?

Think, Pair & Share!

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What are your 1-2 current personal, academic or professional goals? *These will be the basis of your conversations.*

The Concept: Networking in a Nutshell

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Your Professional Community



Your Professional Goals

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Our Agenda

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Your Professional Goals

1. You know your 1-2 current personal, academic or professional goals. *These will be the basis of your conversations.*



Your Professional Community

2. **Language & Logistics:** You how to initiate a conversation or relationship with someone in your professional community.

Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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To start any conversation, Diana uses *The “N.O.W.” Approach*, which stands for:

Name



Organization
(school/year)



What do you want to talk about?



Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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Name



Organization
(school/year)



What do you want to talk about?



Pro Tip: Think ‘conversation’ not ‘counseling appointment’. It’s your goal, but THEIR story.

Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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Name



Organization
(school/year)



What do you want to talk about?

**Dr. Clark Kent? Hi.
I'm Diana Prince.**



I'm a first year in
medical school at
UCSF



Have you attended First Generation
Student mixers before?

Why do you attend? What do you
enjoy about them?



Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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Name



Organization



What do you want to talk about?

**Dr. Stark? Hi. I'm
Diana Prince.**



I'm a 4th year in
dentistry at UCSF



One of my goals for the past month has
been to ask everyone for one piece of
advice about selecting a residency
program.

Do you mind if I ask you what two things
you think are important to consider when
evaluating programs?



Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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Name



Organization



What do you want to talk about?

Clark Kent? Hi. I'm
Diana Prince.



I'm a Physical
Therapy student at
UCSF



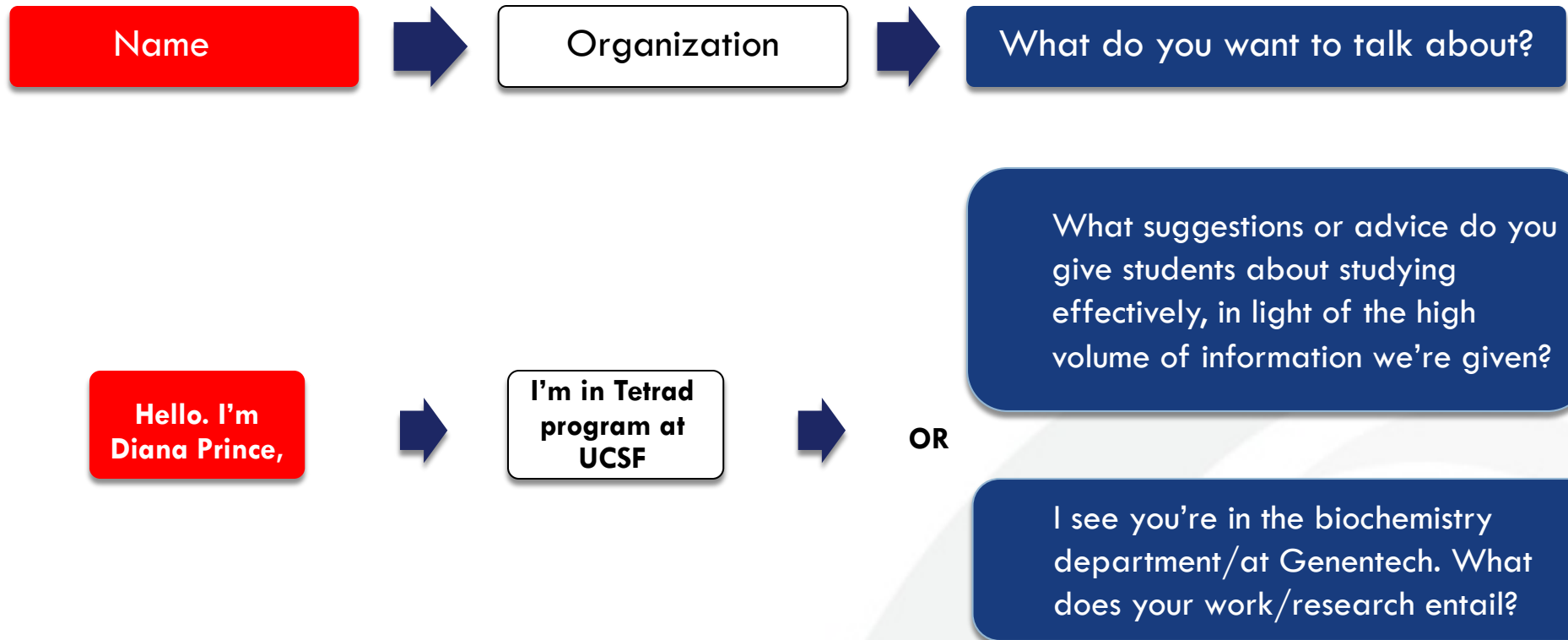
I understand you're completing
residency at UCLA

Do you like it? Why did you select
their program to further your training?

Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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It's your goal, but their story:



Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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Name



Organization



What do you want to talk about?

Hello – I’m Diana
Prince



I’m in the NP
program in the
School of Nursing

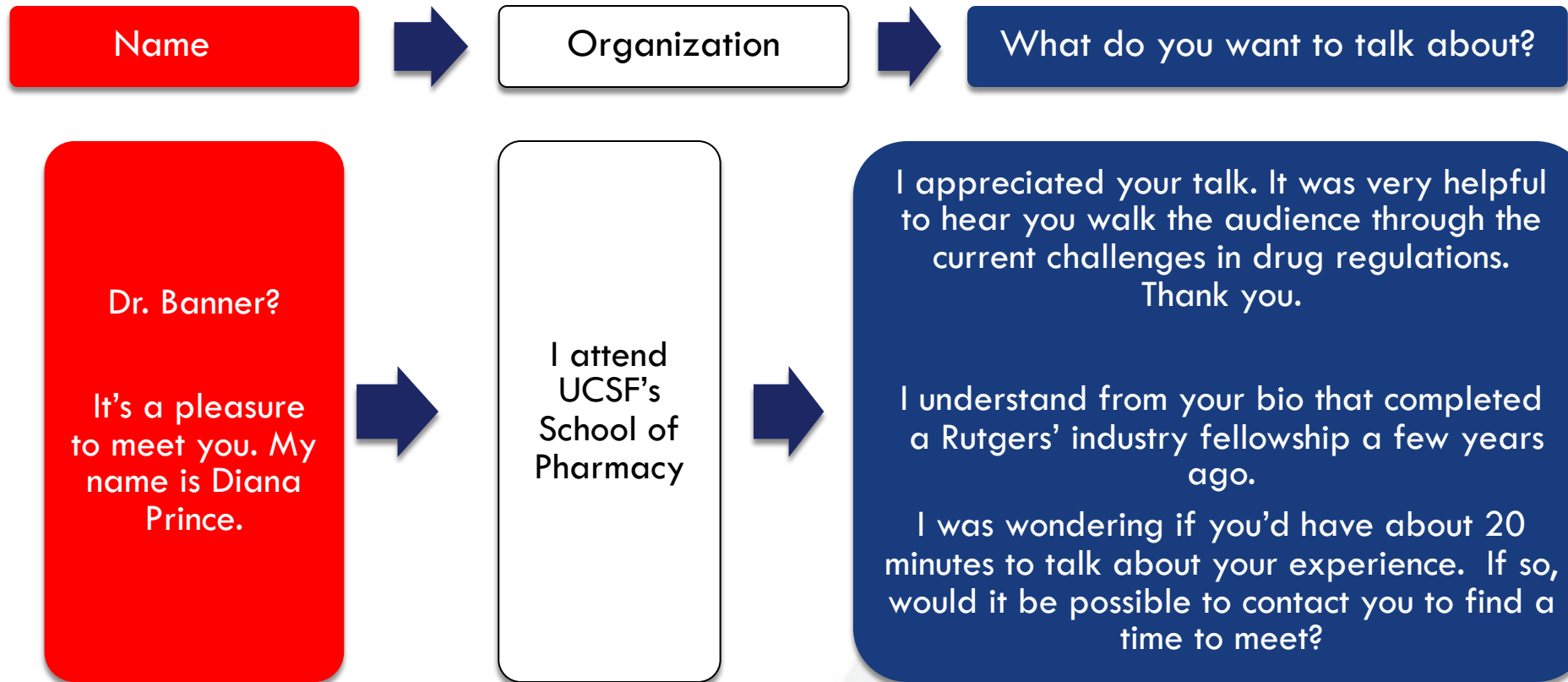


I see the the keynote will focus on
the challenges and strategies of
providing care to veterans
experiencing PTSD.

Does your work also involve
working with PTSD patients?

Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation-with a presenter

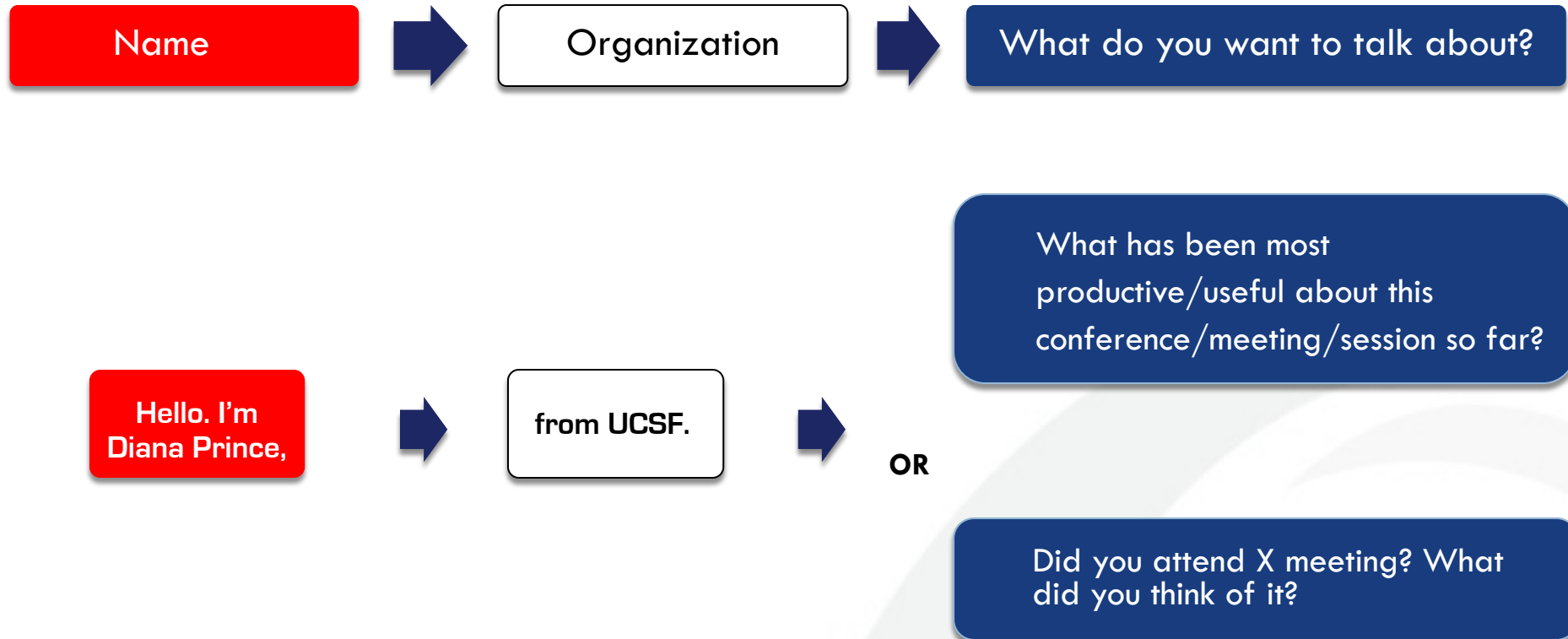
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Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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It's your goal, but their story:



Language: Using “N.O.W.” to start a conversation

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It's your goal, but their story:

Name



Organization(school/year)



What do you want to talk about?

Have you heard Naledi speak on this topic before?

OR

Why did you decide to attend this networking session?

OR

What are you finding useful about this session so far?

OR

I see you work at organization/dept. Y. What does your work entail?

Start a conversation!

Engage!

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Start a conversation with someone in the group regarding your professional goals.

*Remember: It's your goal, but their story!
Focus on asking them a question to start the conversation.*

Logistics: Strategies to navigate the event

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- 1. Case the joint:** Who is here? What is the set up? What's the vibe? Who's 'open/closed'? Who's 'in the center, on the edges'?
- 2. Take your networking notebook/pen:** So you can write down people's contact info, how you met them, what you talked about & impressions
- 3. Take a wingperson:** Approach people together, tag team conversations with senior individuals, speak well of each other

Logistics: Navigating the Buffet Table

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1. While in line, make preliminary eye contact, smile, and talk to people in front and behind you.
2. Always have one hand free (beverage OR plate)
3. Small plate: 4 items – don't crowd!
4. Go back for seconds / thirds
5. If you're taking home a plate – cover with a napkin.
6. Eat first and then start networking

Logistics: Entering a group conversation

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1. **Be considerate:** Assess if the conversation is 'open' or 'closed'
2. **Be graceful:** Enter in the line of sight of the speaker or slide in right next your friend
3. **Be the host:** Recognize others and invite them into the conversation with introductions/ getting them up to speed; share the talking stick
4. **Don't fight/ follow up:** If one person is dominating the conversation, consider following up with the key person later

Engage!

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Half of the group – strike up a conversation using the skills we just covered.

The other half: Wait 30 seconds, and when you hear the bell – enter an existing group conversation.

Language: Exiting a conversation gracefully

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Pro Tip: Don't suck people dry. Build the relationship over time.



- When first meeting someone, a conversation could be as short as 5 minutes.
- Long enough for Diana to introduce herself, ask and receive advice on a residency program, and end the conversation.

Language: Exiting a conversation gracefully

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Pro Tip: Don't suck people dry. Build the relationship over time.



- Don't try to get all your questions answered at once. (it's a first date!)
- Instead, employ a graceful exit and plan to connect with them again later. **This is how you build your relationship.**

Language: Exiting a conversation gracefully

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When winding down the conversation, Diana waits for a pause and says:

Well, thank you for your time. It was very helpful hearing what three criteria you used to evaluate residency programs and what questions you asked during the interview. Thank you.



She then gives the other person a moment to register the end of the conversation and shift gears.

Think, Pair & Share!

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A general ending:

1. It was a pleasure speaking with you. I hope you have an enjoyable evening.
2. I'm sorry to interrupt (because this is interesting), but I wanted to connect with Dr. Bruce Wayne before he leaves. It was great to speak with you. I hope we will run into each other again.

Ending if the person offered you advice.

1. Well, it was great to meet you. Thanks so much for your advice. I really appreciate it.
2. It was good talking with you – it was very helpful hearing your strategy of asking fellow students about the five most common clinical issues they saw in a rotation before you start. So smart. Thank you.
3. Thank you. I'll follow up with you by email before next week.

Exiting a conversation gracefully

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Diana knows that she is responsible for ending a conversation professionally.

She doesn't rely on non-verbal cues like:

- fidgeting
- Looking around, rather than making eye contact.
- Looking uncomfortable, while giving one word responses- “oh”, “huh”, etc.
- A tight lipped smile.

...and hope that the other person will get the idea.



Exiting a conversation gracefully

Pro Tip: Give a person to register the conversation is ending. It may take a minute and a cluster of verbal & non verbal clues.



- ❑ Winding down a conversation could take between 1-5 minutes
- ❑ Smile, hold out your hand to shake theirs, or ask for a business card/how to keep in touch, to signal that the conversation is ending.
- ❑ **The person who ends the conversation is expected to move from their seat/ walk away.**

Engage!

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Rotate, and start a conversation with a new person.

When you hear the bell – one person should exit the conversation gracefully!

Our Agenda

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Your Professional Community



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Growing your Professional Garden: How often do I keep in touch?

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Pro Tip: Let people follow your adventure

Your Professional Community



1. Every time something the person said helps you.
2. Every time you see something of interest to the person.
3. 6 months to one year.

Keeping in touch

- Jan. Initial conversation at mixer
- Thank you follow up email. Reminder about the book you suggested?
- Feb.
- Mar. Thanks for suggesting resource. It was helpful because of X. Would appreciate keeping in touch.
- Apr.
- May Hope you're well. Just wanted you to know I came across another resource, Y. You might find it interesting.
- Jun.
- Jul. I joined the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. Thanks for suggesting it.
- Aug.
- Sep. Hope you're well. I am finding the strategies from the book you suggested still helpful in these ways. This is a brief summary of what's going on for me now.
- Oct.
- Nov.
- Dec. Will you be at the mixer this year? Would be great to see you.

Keeping in touch

Jan. Initial conversation at mixer

Thank you follow up email. Reminder about the book you suggested?

Feb.

Mar.

Apr.

May

Jun.

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Oct.

Nov.

Dec.

Main points!

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- ❑ **Be curious & collegial!:** Consider how you would want to be approached and treated, and try to discern what the person you are networking with seems to value.
- ❑ **Be gracious:** Remember to thank people for their time and efforts, regardless of how helpful their advice immediately appears to be.
- ❑ **Keep Track:** Develop some sort of system to keep track of who is in your network, how you met them and when you last spoke.
- ❑ **Follow up!:** Send an email and tell them it was a pleasure to meet them, or that you've been considering what they said. If you have another question, ask it. Baby steps!

Want more help?: Explore resources, programs and services at career.ucsf.edu

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Office of Career & Professional Development at UCSF. At the top right, there is a search bar labeled "Keyword Search" and a dropdown menu labeled "How Do I?". Below these are navigation links: "About | Appointments | Contact | Staff | Home". The main header features the UCSF logo and the text "Office of Career & Professional Development". A horizontal menu lists various student groups: "Dentistry Students", "Grad Students & Postdocs", "Medical Students", "Nursing Students", "PT Students", and "Pharmacy Students". The main content area includes a large image of three people (two men and one woman) looking at a screen together. To the right of this image is a blue box titled "Our Goal" with the text: "Teaching students and postdoctoral scholars the information and skills they need to navigate their careers successfully." Below this text are links for "45 reads", "Edit", "Configure", and "PDF version". A small blue box below the image says "Operating in off-line mode." Below the main content is a "Welcome to OCPD!" message: "Welcome to OCPD! We offer career & professional development for UCSF students and postdoctoral scholars." To the right of this message is a "Letter from the Director" section with a photo of a man in front of a bookshelf. Further right is a "Quick Links" section with a list of links: "Students/Postdocs: View Resume/CV Samples", "Dentistry Samples", "Medicine Samples", "Nursing Samples", "Pharmacy Samples", "Physical Therapy Samples", and "Researcher Academic Samples".

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