Transitioning Successfully From Postdoc To Faculty
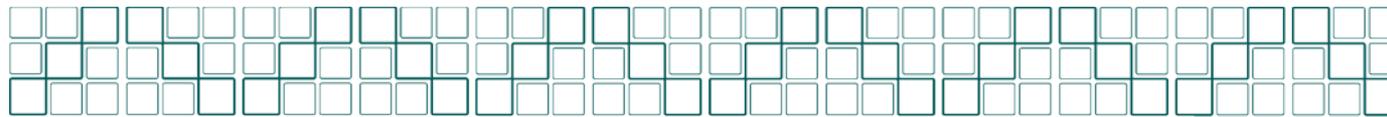
Sharon L. Milgram, PhD
NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education
**milgrams@od.nih.gov**

Office of Intramural
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Lots To Take Care Of

- Setting research goals
- Setting clinical goals
- Setting teaching goals
- Setting up your lab/office
- Finding students/staff
- Getting funded

- Publishing your work
- University service
- Broader scientific service
- Campus relationships
- Science relationships
- Personal relationships
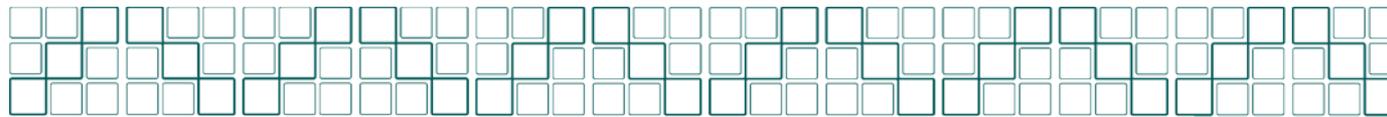
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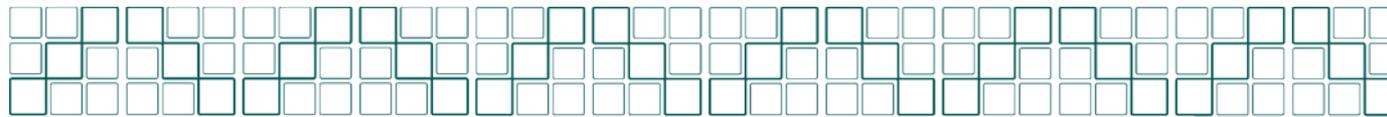
To Take Care of You, Reflect On:

- What energizes, nurtures and sustains you
- Your most important non-work activities and hobbies
- How you deal with transitions and stress
- How you deal with set-back, and disappointment
- How you develop and maintain your resiliency
- Your self-doubts and "head tapes"

- What it means to be "in charge" and not the one doing the work
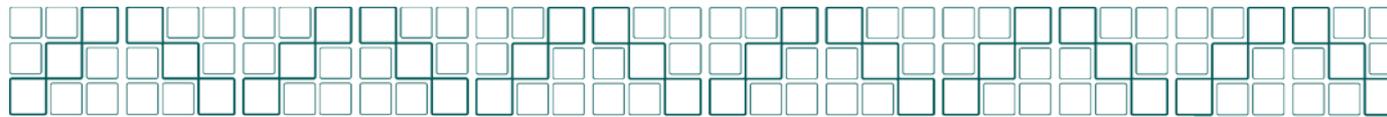
To Hit the Ground Running:

- Take care of your personal life

- Find or reconnect with mentors

- Establish realistic first-year goals as soon as possible

- Get set up; buy what you need

- Set up your office and computer

- Address required approvals and paperwork

- Make a plan for hiring staff and/or recruiting students

- Begin integrating into department/university life
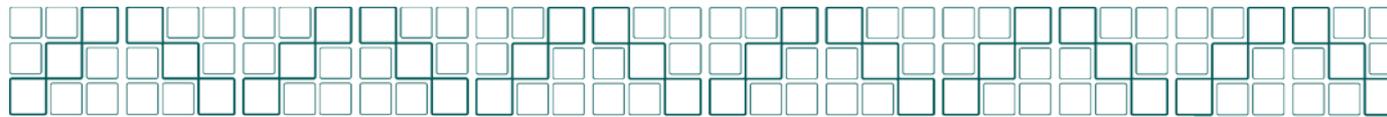
Wet Lab Space

- Expect 600 - 1000 square ft; may or may not be renovated

- Choice may include "open lab" or more traditional space

- You typically need to find space for each lab member, their desk, common equipment and storage

- Configurations include individual-based, assay-based, or a hybrid approach

- Put your work space in a central spot

- If possible, keep your office close-by
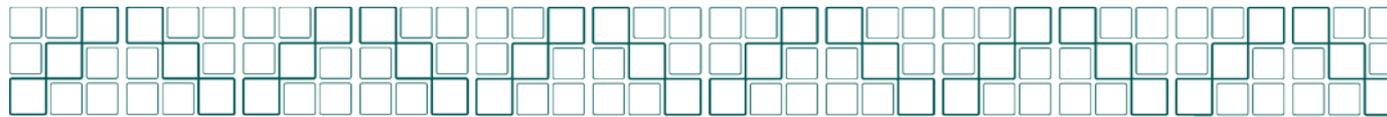
Considerations When Purchasing Major Equipment

- Do you really need one of your own?
- Will the equipment be a lab mainstay?
- How long you will use it?
- Is the technology changing?
- Do you need all the bells & whistles?
- Is local service available?
- Can you afford it?
- Do you have room for it?
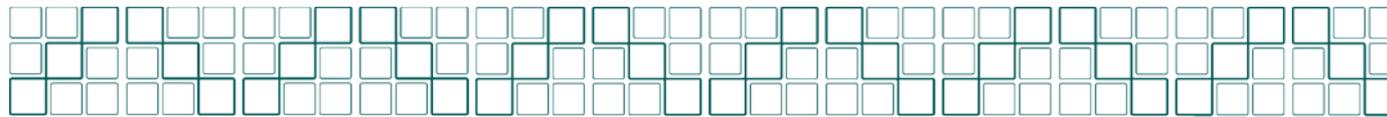
Going Shopping?

- Survey your current work environment

- Consider your immediate research plans

- Learn about local purchasing rules and regulations

- Make sure you have appropriate storage in place

- Find vendors with new-lab "specials"
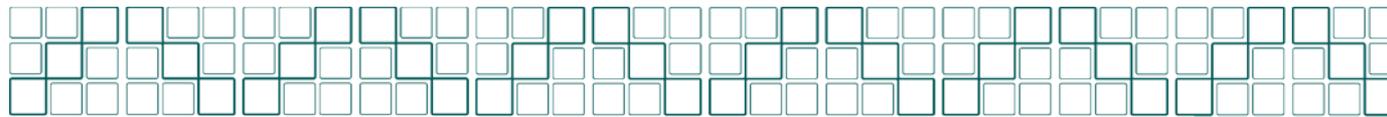
Some Things That Are Often Over-looked:

- IACUC and IRB approvals

- Required training courses and paperwork

- Advanced planning for housing animals

- Organizational systems for your research group

- Establishing relationships with core facility managers
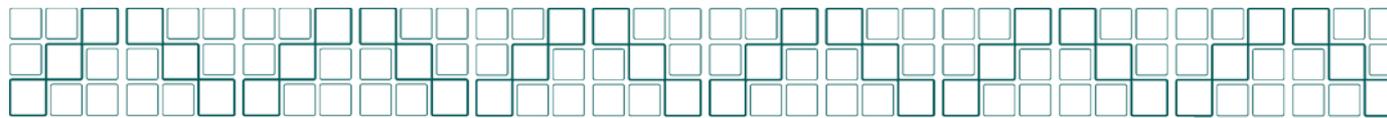
Things You Need to Be Successful

- Feedback relevant to your research projects

- Feedback relevant to your teaching and/or clinical responsibilities

- Access to professional development opportunities

- Access to appropriate networks, on- and off-campus

- Sense of community and personal support
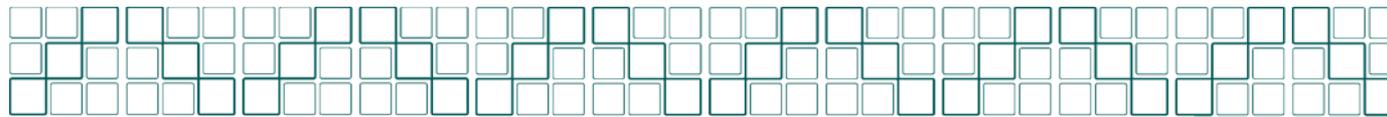
Teaching

- Learn about on-campus resources

- Talk with other faculty about the types of students you will be teaching

- Collect syllabi and materials from previous lecturers

- Attend classes given by well-respected teachers

- Find well-respected teachers to observe you and provide feedback

- Begin compiling your teaching portfolio from the outset
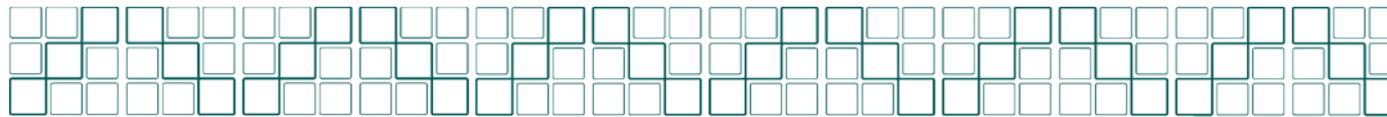
Tenure

- Be sure you have a clear understanding of what is expected and what goes into a tenure package

  - ❑ Ask to see examples

  - ❑ Carefully read all university guidelines

  - ❑ Understand your rights regarding slowing the tenure clock

- Talk with your chair to begin an on-going dialogue

- When talking with mentors and considering options "talk to tenure"
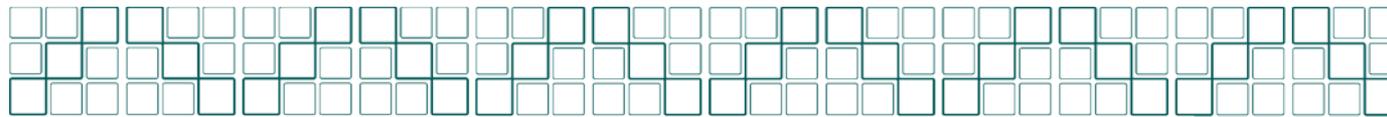
Relationship Management

- Identify key players, potential mentors, and advocates
  - ❑ Your department or center chair/chairs
  - ❑ Senior leadership in the department, Dean's office, university, etc
  - ❑ Junior faculty who remember what you are going through
  - ❑ Graduate and training grant program leadership
  - ❑ Faculty in your field – on and off campus
  - ❑ Faculty in courses you will teach in or want to teach in
- Establish regular meetings with key players and supporters
- Attend seminars and social functions
- Realize you will get overwhelmed with information early-on so plan accordingly
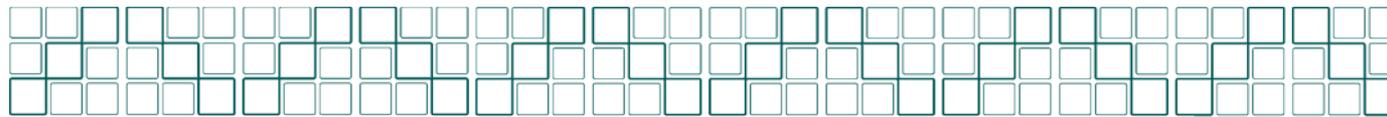
Time Management

- Find resources now if this tends to be a sticking point

- Be pragmatic and plan wisely – it is easy to get overwhelmed with requests

- Engage your chair and mentors in helping you choose when to say "yes" and when to say "no"

- Understand "the only" factor

- Balance pragmatic decision-making with attention to your passions

- Ask yourself – can this wait a year?, two years? Until I have tenure? Until…..?
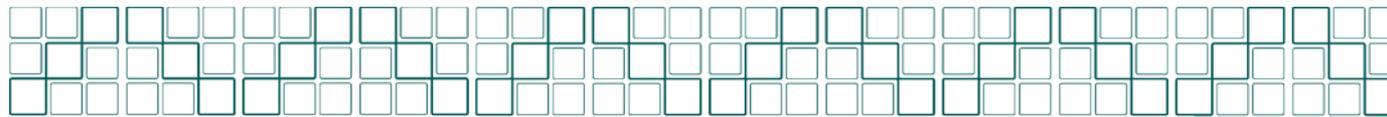
Staffing Your Research Group

Consider:

- What you can afford

- Stability of your funding

- Progress of your research

- How much time you have to train and mentor new employees

- Quality and quantity of graduate students

- Presence of strong undergraduate research programs
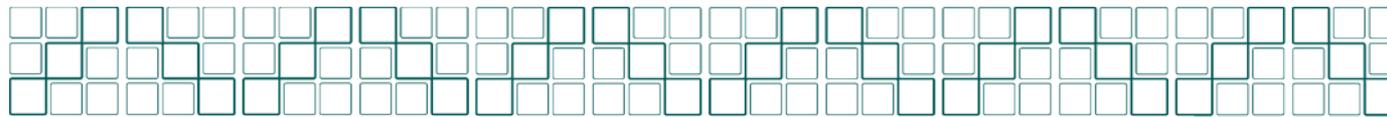
Checking A Reference

- Best done by phone

- First describe the job and work environment

- Ask short, open-ended questions

  - ❑ Why is s/he leaving your lab?

  - ❑ Is s/he reliable? Why do you say that?

  - ❑ How does s/he get along with others in the research group?

  - ❑ Will s/he go the extra mile at crunch time?

  - ❑ Would you rehire?

  - ❑ Can you describe strengths and weaknesses?

- Probe for further information by asking for examples
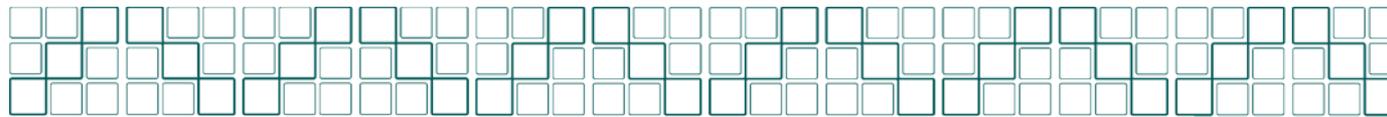
Issues To Address During the Interview

- Experience and skills

- Commitment and initiative

- Working and learning styles

- Time management skills

- Decision making and problem solving skills

- Interpersonal skills
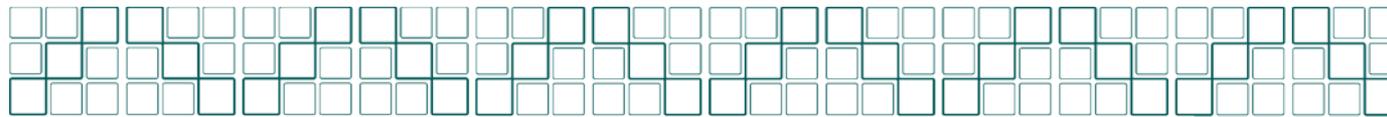
Some Common Themes

- Learn the "rules" - spoken and unspoken

- Talk to experts

- You need mentors and advocates; find them on- and off-campus

- Collect necessary information before deciding

- Deadlines matter

- There is no such thing as a free lunch

- Learning to say "NO" is a critical skill to develop early

- We all make mistakes – turn them into learning opportunities
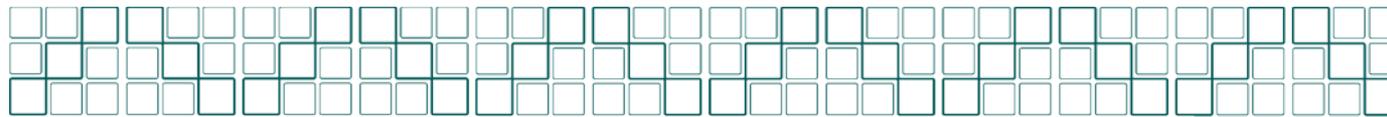
Leadership

"Although you've been hired for your scientific skills and research potential, **your eventual success will depend heavily on your ability to guide, lead, & empower others to do their best work.**"

Dr. Tom Cech, HHMI
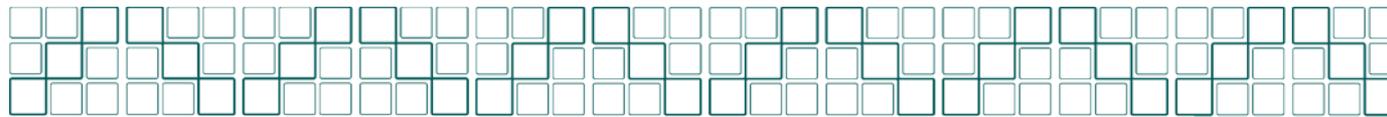
Leaders Who Succeed:

- Create high morale, pride and spirit within their team

- Ensure that resources are available and remove barriers that hinder team effectiveness

- Adapt and develop during transitions; help employees do the same
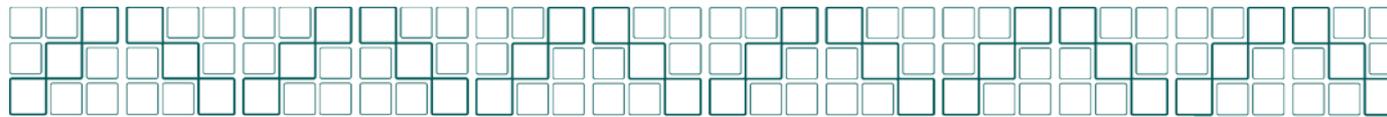
Leadership Skills are Developed Over Time By……

- Understanding yourself

- Understanding your employees and trainees

- Developing outstanding communication skills

- Developing and using your emotional intelligence

- KEY RESOURCE: OITE Workplace Dynamics series and the 2-day management boot camp
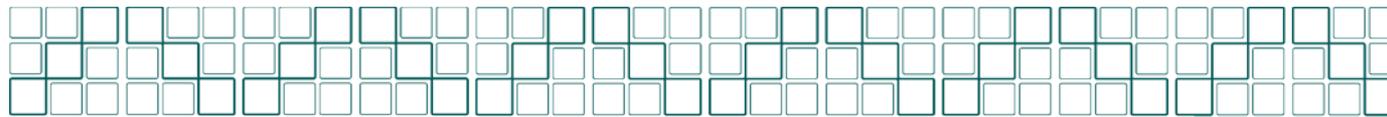
Important Questions

- What is it we are trying to accomplish?

- What is our shared vision for how we should work together?

- How will we work together to build and maintain team morale?

- How will we work cooperatively to resolve conflicts and deal with issues that come up?
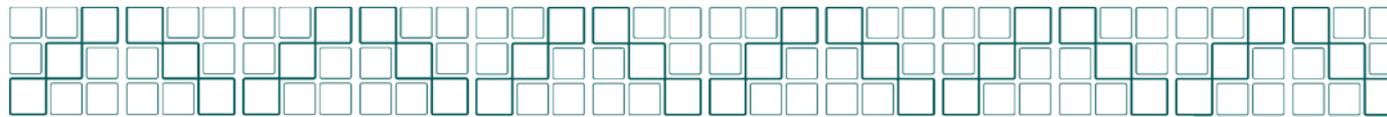
Why We Run Into Problems

- Expectation mismatch

- Differences in personalities, work and communication styles

- Discomfort relating to personal differences

- Competition for resources - including (your) time
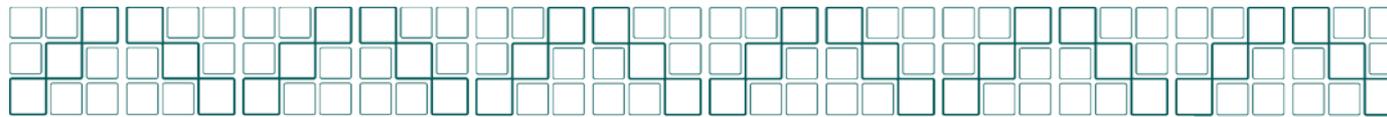
Communication Within Your Team

- Informal interactions fostered by time in the group office, "walk-by's, an open-door policy, and social interactions

- Weekly group meeting

- One-on-one meetings with team members

- Small group meetings/project meetings

- Strategy sessions

- Performance reviews and progress reports

Morale, Pride & Team spirit

High

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High productivity
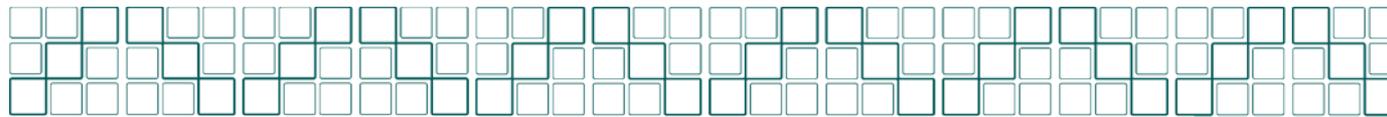
Cooperation & teamwork

Fun environment

Low

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Low productivity & lethargy

No cooperation or teamwork

Negativism & friction

Ways to Build & Maintain Morale

- Show genuine concern & interest in people; interact with them in a variety of ways

- Manage your stress and emotions so they don't infect the group

- Develop group traditions

- Be a "real person"; develop your sense of humor

- Be open, honest, and self-disclosing (but not too much)

- Share your passion about your work

- Be visible and available for the team - lead by example

- Try not to be be aloof, arrogant, impatient, overly critical

- Share credit, both privately and in public ways

- Take responsibility for getting the team back on track when necessary
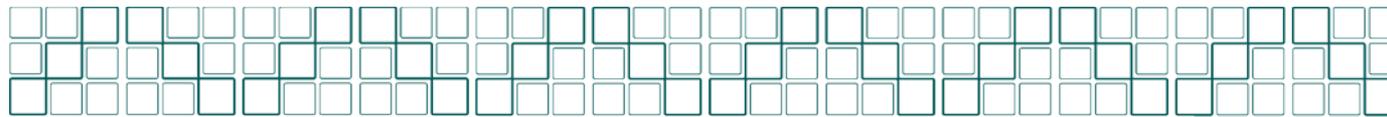
Final reflections

- Even with the best intentions, we can not be the "best" leader <u>all</u> of the time for <u>all</u> of our team.

- Apologies & effort go a long way, but only if we are honestly making the effort.

- We all have our weak spots; figure out what "gets your goat" and work on dealing with these issues more calmly

- View each "failure" as an opportunity to learn for the next time; find a "mentoring mentor" and talk it out.
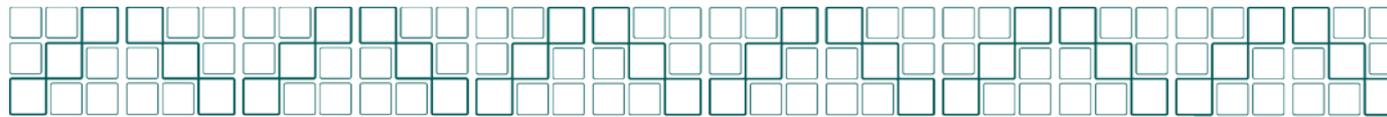
Use NIH Resources Now!

- Workplace Dynamic Series
- Management Boot Camp
- Mentor Training
- Assertiveness Training
- New wellness program
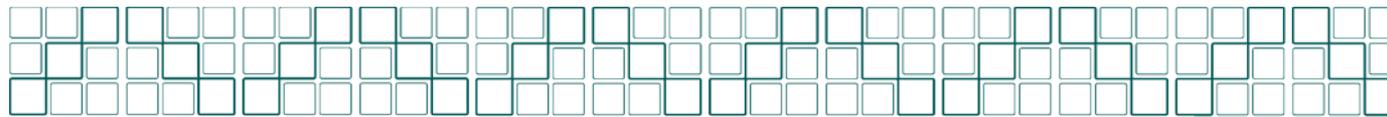
Resources

- www.hhmi.org/labmanagement for *Making the Right Moves*

- BWF book, *Staffing the Lab*

- Books available in the OITE Career Library including *Entering Mentoring, At the Helm, Motherhood: The Elephant in the Laboratory, Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment, Academic Scientists at Work, etc*

- A variety of websites including the OITE, your IC Training Office, the NPA, Science Careers, Naturejobs Careers, The Chronicle of Higher Education, newfacultysuccess.com