

Networking Tips

Simple Strategies for Building Confidence at Social and Networking Events



Attending social and networking events is an opportunity to build relationships, exchange ideas, and strengthen your sense of community. While it may feel like you need to meet everyone in the room, research shows that the quality of social interactions is more important than the quantity. Meaningful conversations are associated with greater well-being, stronger interpersonal connections, and increased feelings of belonging.

Before the Event

Review the Event

- Read the event description and agenda.
- Learn about the organization or host.
- Identify speakers or attendees you'd like to meet.
- Think about how the event relates to your personal or professional goals.

Set Realistic Goals

Instead of trying to meet everyone, choose a few achievable goals.

- Examples:
 - Introduce yourself to 3 new people.
 - Learn about someone's role or career path.
 - Exchange contact information with one new connection.
 - Leave knowing one new opportunity or resource.

Research shows that SMART goal-setting helps improve motivation and increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

If you feel nervous

- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Take a few slow, deep breaths before entering.
- Volunteer to help at the event.
- Remember that most attendees are there to connect too.
- Be yourself and enjoy the experience—people connect with authenticity, not perfection.



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During the Event

Build Meaningful Conversations

- Approach individuals who are standing alone or in small groups.
- Avoid interrupting.
- Be mindful of welcoming others who may want to join your conversation.
- Reflect on what the other person shared.
- Focus on learning about others instead of trying to impress them.
- Exchange contact information when appropriate to help continue the connection after the event.

People tend to like conversational partners who ask thoughtful questions and show genuine curiosity. Showing genuine curiosity can foster trust, psychological safety, and stronger relationships.

After the Event

Reflect and Follow-Up

- Reflect on what you learned and the conversations you enjoyed most.
- Send a brief thank-you email or LinkedIn message within 1-3 days.

Taking a few minutes to reflect and follow up can help turn meaningful conversations into lasting relationships.

Questions or Want to Learn More?

For more information, contact Julie Chobdee, Associate Director, Health & Well-being Program, at Jchobdee@usc.edu.

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