

Tip sheet: Six tips to develop your team:

1. Show trust first and define clear commitments

In order to build trust, we need to show it first. Think about how you work, are you delegating effectively or are you always taking on full responsibility for everything? Make sure you clearly define your expectations for your team (use SMART goals to help you) and then trust them to do a good job. The team will grow in ability, productivity and cohesion.

2. Build a psychologically safe environment

Building an environment where differences are respected, researcher's welfare is important, and we are open to the opinions of others. In addition, we need to learn to respect constructive conflict, a safe environment should allow people to say when they don't agree with something without there being a fear of blame. They may have seen an obstacle or risk that we hadn't considered.

3. Share

Think about opportunities for more personal interaction between team members e.g. having a meal or coffee break, taking part in a challenge together, doing a team away day or even starting meetings with an activity designed to find things you have in common. Finding points of connection or interest will help build the ties between team members. Some organisations facilitate voluntary work or socials for its employees to build connection between them and the wider community. Are there outreach or public engagement activities that you can plan and do together?

4. Understand your different communication styles

We all have different ways of communicating, dealing with conflict etc and it can be challenging to work with someone whose style is very different to our own. Try doing a team assessment together e.g. Strengthscope or the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, so that you can see what each person brings to the team and how you can harness their skills and strengths.

5. Be Vulnerable

It's very motivating when someone senior to us shares a story about a time when they failed e.g., to get a job or didn't win an important piece of grant funding – it shows they're human and allows everyone else to realise you don't always get it right. When you share a problem and there is trust and respect in your team, they will respond with empathy and the trust builds.

6. Develop a Team Charter

A charter outlines the rules of the team so you can ask members, for example:

- What is our common objective?
- How will we communicate?
- What does success look like?
- How do we manage stakeholders?
- How are decisions made?

You could use the [example research group charter](#) from the Scientists Toolbox as a template to get started.

A charter makes it easier to start a feedback conversation and for the team to review how they are working for themselves. Ask your team what they want to include and how they want it to be monitored. These are often good questions and conversations to have during an away day or a focused meeting and can set the tone for a high functioning team that trusts each other and hold one another accountable.