MAKE VALUABLE CONNECTIONS—Don’t Just Grow Your Network

It’s no wonder why “networking” is a buzzword. Your network gives you social capital, which lends you:

» Access to resources
» Social cohesion, including support and inclusion
» Introduction by a network contact to someone new

Your network’s size may not be as significant as its characteristics.

The variety of shapes indicates diversity in terms of professions represented (e.g. nursing, physical therapy, medicine, dentistry).

A broker is the main connector between at least two groups and shares information between the clusters to the benefit of all.

An isolated member (outlier) is not well connected to others within the network (e.g., an individual from a different university or industry) and may provide unique information.

An embedded network contact is highly connected, central to a sub-group, and shares information and resources among many.

A high-density cluster is a sub-group with many shared connections, which may lead to social integration, trust, and cohesion among members. (higher density = many connections)

A low-density cluster is a sub-group with fewer shared connections (lower density = fewer connections)

» Strategies for Further Network Analysis

Answer these questions to get the most out of your connections.

» Does the structure of your network enable efficient sharing of information and resources?
» Is there a strong network core that is sustainable over time?
» How do changes in the network structure impact professional goals?
» Is your network capable of growing more inclusive while sustaining collaboration?
» Which network connections could be leveraged for more collaboration?

Additional Resources


BETSY J. BECKER, PT, DPT, PhD, CLT-LANA
UNMC College of Allied Health Professions