

# NETWORKING 101

## YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS AT ASHP MIDYEAR CLINICAL MEETING

*This resource guide provides valuable insights and strategies on how to successfully network and build valuable connections while attending ASHP's Midyear Clinical Meeting & Exhibition.*





The ASHP Midyear meeting isn't just any conference; it's an unparalleled opportunity that can shape your future as a pharmacy professional. With over 20,000 attendees from around the globe, the Midyear is the most important event for students to attend to launch their career.

Networking at a professional conference can be a valuable opportunity to connect with pharmacy leaders, peers, and other influencers. The Midyear offers more than 60 structured networking events, plus countless organic opportunities to make connections with other attendees who could potentially help advance your career. In-person networking is especially valuable as it allows you to develop a rapport and a more personal relationship that you just simply cannot recreate virtually. Whether you're pursuing a career in health-system pharmacy or a PharmD industry fellowship, the Midyear is the catalyst for career success.

Here, you will connect with industry leaders, discover the latest advancements in pharmacy practice, and build relationships that will accelerate your professional success. In this resource document, we will provide the knowledge you need to make the most of your Midyear experience.

## SETTING NETWORKING GOALS

Before you set foot at the Midyear, take some time to define your networking goals. Whether it's connecting with potential mentors, meeting new people each day, securing a Personnel Placement Service (PPS) interview, connecting with your dream residency program, or simply expanding your professional network, having clear goals will help you focus and get the most out of your conference experience.

## PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Effective preparation is the foundation of successful networking. Research the background of the residency or fellowship programs you plan to connect with so you are prepared with specific questions to ask. Avoid asking questions that can be easily found on the program's website (e.g., what rotations are available, staffing requirements, the general organization of the program). Program directors expect you to ask specific and thought-provoking questions, such as:

*"What personal characteristics do you look for in a resident/fellow?"*

*"How often do you meet with your residents/fellows? Will I be matched with a mentor?"*

*"How does the program encourage personal and mental well-being of the residents/fellows?"*

If you're attending a session in an area that interests you, check out the presenters' research and try to connect with them. Introduce yourself to the people sitting on either side of you at the session. Feeling nervous about talking to strangers? Prepare a few questions in advance you can ask attendees and exhibitors to strike up a meaningful conversation, such as:

*"Can you tell me about your experience and background in pharmacy?"*

*"What sessions or events have you found particularly interesting so far?"*

*"What advice would you give to a pharmacy student interested in your practice area?"*

*"Are there any networking events or sessions you recommend attending during the Midyear?"*



When meeting someone for the first time, have a concise and engaging elevator pitch that highlights your skills and career aspirations. Here are some tips to help you craft your perfect elevator pitch:

- 1. Keep it Concise:** An elevator pitch should be brief, typically around 30–60 seconds. Begin with a concise introduction of yourself, including your name, what stage you are at in your pharmacy education, and your career aspirations.
- 2. Tailor to Your Audience:** Customize your pitch based on the person you're speaking to. Highlight aspects of your background and aspirations that align with their interests or the context of the conversation.
- 3. Practice Makes Perfect:** Rehearse your elevator pitch until it flows naturally. Practice in front of a mirror or with a friend to build confidence and ensure you can deliver it smoothly.
- 4. Be Engaging and Enthusiastic:** Your enthusiasm and passion for pharmacy should shine through. Speak with energy and genuine interest in the conversation.

Your elevator pitch is a tool for making connections and sparking interest in your professional journey. It should leave the listener wanting to learn more about you and your career goals.

## ATTEND EVENTS AND EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Participate in conference sessions, poster sessions, structured networking events, and social functions. Engaging in these events enhances your knowledge and creates opportunities to meet like-minded colleagues. Go to the poster sessions — research who will be presenting and strike up a conversation about their poster. This is a great way to stand out with potential program directors and employers.

## NETWORKING ETIQUETTE

Navigating a networking event requires purposeful planning. Strike a balance between enthusiasm and professionalism. Be approachable by smiling, making eye contact, and using open body language. Listen actively to others and ask open-ended questions. Consider exchanging contact information if the discussion goes well, and follow up with an email afterward.

Things to avoid include interrupting or monopolizing conversations or continually checking your phone. Dress appropriately for the event and be mindful of personal space and body language. When you're ready to wrap up the conversation, thank the other participants for their time and interest and offer to connect further if the discussion was productive. Politely excuse yourself if you need to move on, and avoid abrupt departures to maintain professionalism and leave a positive impression.

If you choose to drink while attending a networking function, do so responsibly and in moderation, and avoid overconsumption and any behavior that may compromise your ability to act in a professional manner.

## BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Approaching strangers can be intimidating. Remember that everyone there has at least one thing in common with you: They are passionate about pharmacy! You can ease into networking by attending one of the 49 facilitated networking roundtable sessions at Midyear.

When you are meeting someone new, a simple introduction, such as “Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I'm a pharmacy student interested in [your area of interest],” can initiate conversations smoothly. Don't be afraid to comment on things like conference badge ribbons or common interests (e.g., attending the same session) as conversation starters.



## TIPS FOR OVERCOMING SHYNESS OR NETWORKING ANXIETY

Even seasoned professionals can have networking anxiety. To overcome shyness or anxiety, start by setting realistic expectations for yourself. Recognize that feeling nervous is perfectly normal. Focus on the value you will bring to each interaction or conversation and potential to create a new connection.

Prepare some conversation starters or questions in advance to ease the pressure. Practice active listening to shift the focus away from your anxiety and onto the other person. Consider attending small, intimate networking events, such as roundtables, to build your confidence before tackling larger gatherings. Lastly, remember that everyone is there to network, so don't be too hard on yourself if not every interaction goes perfectly. Each connection is an opportunity for growth!

## NETWORKING FOLLOW-UP

Your networking efforts don't stop when the Midyear ends. Send personalized emails to the people you met, including any employers or program directors for residencies or fellowships you connected with. If you participated in PPS, follow up with an email after each interview.

Keep your follow-up emails short and sweet by expressing your appreciation for the recipient's time, and consider making a reference to your in-person conversation.

## TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND HAVE FUN AT THE ASHP MIDYEAR

Take a deep breath and enjoy the experience. Networking is not just about building professional connections; it's an opportunity for personal growth and career exploration. Have fun, be yourself, and embrace the excitement of meeting fellow pharmacy enthusiasts. Each interaction is an opportunity to learn and inspire.

## ASHP RESOURCES

1. [Building and Maintaining a Professional Network](#)
2. [10 Tools for Becoming a Great Networker](#)
3. [ASHP Student Residency Resource Center](#)
4. [Interview Guide for PPS Interviews](#)
5. [InterviewPrep](#) (mock interview resource)

## ASHP MIDYEAR RESOURCES

1. [Student Midyear Information](#)
2. [Student Hotel and Travel Information](#)
3. [Student Programming](#)
4. [Discover the Benefits of Midyear: Sign up to join our Live Q&A Sessions!](#)