Trainees’ Guide
to the Annual Meeting

Before You Arrive

Packing tips:
• Pack light! Avoid fees for checking baggage and make travel easier.
• Bring business casual clothing that will work for both daytime and evening social events.
• Bring comfortable shoes! You’ll be walking a lot.
• Put together a small “survival kit.” Include painkillers for the inevitable headache, Band-Aids in case your shoes start to rub your heels raw (even if you brought “comfortable” shoes), snacks, etc.

Travel tips:
• Find out who else is going (colleagues, friends) – they may be interested in sharing taxi or hotel costs.
• Research transportation options from the airport to the hotel and review maps to gain a basic knowledge of the area around the hotel.

Planning your conference schedule:
• Consider registering for Pre-Conference Workshop #7 “NIH and FDA Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers” (Wed. 3/2/16 from 8am-12pm) sponsored by the SRNT Trainee Network
• Carefully review the program and mark sessions that interest you. Also, read the poster abstracts and circle the ones you would like to see. This is a good airplane activity! Consider downloading the SRNT smartphone app so you don’t have to carry the program around.
• Review the authors’ list to see who will be attending the conference. Contact colleagues or researchers you’d be interested in meeting.

Get the most out of the Annual Trainee Network Mixer!
• Join conversations! Institution representatives are at the mixer to meet new trainees. We encourage you to approach and introduce yourself to the representatives.
• Having difficulty initiating conversations? Ask a Trainee Network Advisory Board Member to introduce you to an institution representative.
• Prepare your “elevator speech.” Use this to briefly introduce yourself and your work when you meet new people at a conference. It may help to practice introducing yourself with your fellow trainees before heading to the conference.
• Introduce yourself to researchers that you recognize from paper or symposium presentations. Asking relevant questions is a great way to break the ice!
• Make notes to yourself (e.g., in your program, on your cell phone) about who you spoke to and what you talked about. You can use this information after the conference to send a brief thank-you note.
At the Meeting

- Make sure your nametag is visible so that people can easily identify you.
- Attend at least one session that is outside of your primary interest area. You never know what you might learn, and it may help you generate new research ideas.
- Carry some healthy snacks with you. Conference days can be long, and dinners are often late.
- Stop to ask questions when browsing poster sessions. Posters provide a great opportunity to learn about the latest research in the field, and opening with a question is a great way to facilitate conversation.
- Attend a network meeting to learn more about the resources available and how you can get involved.
- Pace yourself and make sure to have some downtime. Make sure to schedule some time for fun! Conference days are long and tiring. Take advantage of your surroundings and explore the city after conference activities have concluded for the day. This can also be a fun way to get to know your colleagues and new conference acquaintances in more relaxed, informal settings.

When You Return Home

- Organize and file notes, business cards, poster reprints, etc. that you collected. These are easy to misplace!
- Follow-up with new contacts.
- Share what you learned with colleagues who could not attend!

Helpful Websites with More Information

https://www.training.nih.gov/assets/Transcript_Meeting_Webinar.pdf
http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2013/01/conferences.aspx
https://brainthatwouldntdie.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/surviving-academic-conferences-without-crying/

Interested in joining the SRNT Trainee Network or Following our Activities?

Log in to the SRNT website and select “Networks” from the “Members Only” menu. Then select Network→Trainee→Join Group

More information about network activities: http://www.srnt.org/members/group.aspx?id=156396 (note: this page is accessible to SRNT members only)

Social Media: “Like” SRNT on Facebook and follow SRNT (@SRNTorg) on Twitter