

Ethics and Wellness: Fostering Success: The Art of Being a Supportive Colleague in Neonatal Practice in Times of Transition

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In neonatal practice, success is measured by individual achievements and collective growth and support within our professional community. As colleagues, we must foster an environment where members feel empowered to pursue their aspirations while contributing meaningfully to our shared goals. Central to this ethos is the recognition that supporting one another is not just a nicety but an essential ingredient for progress and fulfillment. (1)

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One fundamental principle guiding our interactions should be empathy—a deep understanding of our colleagues’ ambitions and a genuine desire to help them achieve those goals. This means taking the time to listen and comprehend what drives each individual rather than imposing our own agendas. Whether it is a clinician striving to deliver exemplary patient care or a researcher eager to push the boundaries of knowledge, we must provide the necessary support and encouragement without stifling their autonomy. (1, 2)

“It is crucial to recognize that forcing a square peg into a round hole benefits no one. A researcher overwhelmed with clinical duties or a clinician coerced into research will inevitably find themselves disheartened and disengaged. (3) Instead, we must allow our colleagues the flexibility to explore diverse interests and passions, understanding that their fulfillment is paramount to their productivity and well-being.”

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In the realm of professional endorsements, honesty should always prevail. While it is tempting to embellish recommendations to bolster a colleague’s prospects, integrity demands that we provide candid assessments that reflect their true capabilities and potential. By crafting sincere letters of recommendation, we not only uphold our ethical responsibility but also contribute to the success of our peers by facilitating opportunities that align with their aspirations. (4)

“While it may be difficult to see a valued team member depart for ‘greener pastures,’ we must resist the temptation to impede their progress out of fear or self-interest. Instead, we should celebrate their ambition and support their decision, knowing that their departure may pave the way for new opportunities and perspectives within our ranks.”

Part of being a good colleague is recognizing when to encourage growth beyond our current confines. While it may be difficult to see a valued team member depart for “greener pastures,” we must resist the temptation to impede their progress out of fear or self-interest. Instead, we should celebrate their ambition and support their decision, knowing that their departure may pave the way for new opportunities and perspectives within our ranks. Car-

ing for one another fosters caring for families and their infants as they, too, undergo transitions that are even more profound. This focused caring is at the heart of professionalism but is infrequently taught. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. (5)

Moreover, we must acknowledge that professional growth is not always linear. Sometimes, the path to advancement requires stepping away momentarily to gain new experiences and insights. By reframing departures as temporary detours rather than permanent farewells, we create a culture that values individual growth and welcomes the return of seasoned professionals with renewed vigor and expertise.

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Ultimately, the measure of our success as colleagues lies not in our achievements but in our collective ability to nurture and uplift one another. By fostering an environment of empathy, autonomy, and integrity, we lay the groundwork for a vibrant and resilient neonatal practice where every member is empowered to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully to our shared mission. Remember that our greatest triumphs are not those achieved alone but those forged in collaboration and solidarity. Moreover, sometimes, one has to leave to come back. (1, 2, 4, 5)

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