

### What You Need to Complete This Activity

- **A facilitator:** The facilitator should guide the discussion and keep the activity on track by using the instructions and worksheet. Anyone on the team can play the facilitator role.
- **A worksheet note taker:** The note taker should capture the team members' ideas throughout the discussion. Anyone on the team can play the note taker role.
- **A copy of the worksheet** for each team member.
- **A large drawing tool** (e.g., flip chart, whiteboard, computer screen) to capture ideas for everyone to see. If a computer is used, the image should be projected for the entire team to see or shared on screen if the activity is conducted virtually.

Your team will need about 90 minutes to complete this activity. Plan on 30 minutes to describe the task and identify strengths (Step 1), and 1 hour to match research tasks with team members who have the necessary strengths (Step 2).

### Activity Goal

**E**very team member has specific strengths—not just skills, but experience, perspectives, and knowledge—that can help make a research study stronger. The focus of this activity is to think broadly about what team members can contribute, and where their contributions can fit with specific tasks in the research process.

### Who Should Participate and When?

This activity is best done by the entire team. It is valuable to conduct the activity early in the team's formation, for example, after identifying the steps of the research study (see the Creating a Visual Map Activity Guide With Worksheet). It is important that as many team members as possible—including researchers and stakeholders—be present and participate. Completing the Team-Building Activity Guide With Worksheet first may also be helpful so that team members can get to know each other.

### Why This Matters

Matching team members' strengths to research tasks can make optimal use of each team member's skills, some of which may be unknown to the team. Leveraging the team's lived experience and expertise can make research more patient centered, relevant, and useful. Stakeholders can also provide valuable insights or different perspectives that enhance research questions, study design, or recruitment and get findings into the hands of the people who can use them.

### Step-by-Step Directions

- 1 Agree to complete this activity and worksheet as a group, and schedule a time to work together.**
- 2 Assign the roles of facilitator and note taker.** The facilitator and note taker should meet briefly to confirm what each will do during the meeting.
- 3 The facilitator should introduce the activity, explain its goal, and briefly describe roles. For example:**
  - The goal of this activity is to co-create, as a team, a list of strengths that team members bring to the research study, and to match those strengths with specific study tasks. Strengths can be knowledge, skills, experiences, and personal traits.
  - Discuss the set of questions on the worksheet as a full team. Note that the worksheet contains two steps; Step 1 is on page 3, and Step 2 is on page 4.
  - There are no right or wrong answers, and it is important that every team member participates. Please ask questions and make comments to contribute to this discussion.
- 4 Working together, the team will answer each relevant question in the worksheet, depending on where the team is in the study process.**
- 5 As team members contribute ideas about strengths and tasks, the note taker will fill out tables (see pages 5 and 6) for each step for everyone to see.**
- 6 After the activity, the note taker, with help from the facilitator, will transform tables into documents the team can use when planning study tasks.**

### Additional Guidance for the Facilitator

- Be inclusive and creative. This activity provides an opportunity to help all team members see where they can contribute. For example, both the statistician's skill and the patient advocate's experience are strengths for the team in interpreting data.
- Draw on experience and skills from outside the context of the study. Team members may bring strengths from other roles or professions that may not be obvious. Ask about non-research skills, knowledge, or interests that might be relevant. Ask about past jobs and volunteer roles. Invite team members to suggest strengths and expertise that they see in other members.
- Take time to help stakeholders understand how their involvement will help the team complete different steps.

### Step 1 • Identify Strengths (30 minutes)

One of the benefits of team-based research is the ability to draw on the strengths of individual team members. Strengths may be specific skills, such as training in statistics or nursing. Strengths can be experience living with a health condition, or connections in the community. Strengths also can be rooted in personal traits, such as being a clear communicator or being detail oriented.

In the table on page 5, start by identifying strengths present among team members, using the categories in the sample table below as a guide. Next to each strength, list team members who share that strength. Especially if the team is new to working together, this exercise is an opportunity to learn about each other and past experiences that could contribute to the work ahead. The following questions can help team members think creatively about their strengths and how they match what the study needs:

- What made you interested in working on this research project?
- What roles have you played in teams, including work or volunteer roles, in the past?
- What strengths have you seen others bring to teams in the past—at work, on other studies, or elsewhere—that might be valuable to this study?
- What study tasks do you know how to do today, and what would you like to learn?

### Identifying Team Member Strengths: Sample Table

Strength Category	Strength	Team Member Name or Initials
<b>Knowledge</b>	Patient Experience	KL, AT
	University Research Policies	TO
	Treatment of Side Effects	BT
<b>Skills</b>	Public Speaking	SS, PM
	Research Design	TO
	Writing and Editing	AT, DW
<b>Experience</b>	Research Participant	KL
	Managing Data	LP
	Recruiting Study Participants	CM, RY
<b>Personal</b>	Strong Ties to Community	SS, RY
	Detail Oriented	BT, CH
	Strong Communicator	SS, DW

### Step 2 • Match Strengths to Tasks (60 minutes)

Place the team strengths identified in your table on page 5 down the left side of the table on page 6. Across the top, list the major tasks required to carry out the study, such as defining the study question, recruiting participants, and sharing study findings (see the sample table below). The activity *Creating A Visual Map of the Study* can help identify specific tasks.

In the table on page 6, mark off the strengths in the column for each task that could help the team complete that task. For example, for the task “create recruitment materials,” the team might want such strengths as writing skills (for clearly worded materials), community outreach or experience with the condition (to get feedback about whether the materials make sense to participants) and knowledge of university policies (to make sure the materials fulfill the requirements of the Institutional Review Board).

Talking about different tasks might uncover additional strengths the team needs or has. Add to the table on page 6, as needed, to document those strengths.

Make note of who on the team has the strengths needed for each task (see the sample table below). The purpose of the exercise is not to make assignments, but to start identifying how team members can contribute throughout the study process.

If no one on the team has the strengths a task needs, brainstorm how that role could be filled. For example, does the team need additional members? Do team members know someone who has a specific strength who could help in a more limited capacity?

### Matching Team Member Strengths to Study Tasks: Sample Table

Team Strengths	Major Tasks			
	Determine the Study Question	Write the Proposal	Plan and Conduct Training for Study Staff	Create Recruitment Materials
Experience with Health Condition	X (KL, AT)	X (KL, AT)	X (KL, AT)	X (KL, AT)
University Research Policies		X (TO)	X (TO)	X
Treatment of Side Effects	X (BT)	X (BT)	X	X
Public Speaking			X (SS, PM)	
Knowledge of Research Design	X (TO)	X (TO)		
Writing and Editing		X (AT, DW)		X (AT, DW)
Research Participant	X (KL)	X (KL)		X (KL)



# Matching Strengths to Research Tasks

## ACTIVITY GUIDE WITH WORKSHEET

### Worksheet

#### Identifying Team Member Strengths

Strength Category	Strength	Team Member Name or Initials
Knowledge		
Skills		
Experience		
Personal		

