

Top Tips...

5

Learning and development for the public

These tips may help you think through what knowledge, skills or experience you might want to learn or develop to support you in your role, and how you might find suitable opportunities to learn and develop.

1. Talk with your involvement contact or coordinator about what training or development might help you in your role

Don't be worried about contacting your coordinator, as they are there to support you in your role. If you are starting a new role, ask your contact what knowledge, skills or experience they might be expecting from you – and there are no silly questions.

2. Identify what you may need to learn or develop

When discussing your learning needs, you might find it useful to use a Learning Needs tool to assess what may help you in your role. These tools help you to see what skills, knowledge and experience might be useful, and match these to skills, knowledge and experience that you have already. See where any gaps exist and discuss these with your involvement contact or coordinator to plan the next steps.

www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/learning-needs-and-tools/

3. Consider how you prefer to learn

Some people learn best by attending training sessions in groups, while others like to learn while doing the role. Some prefer to learn on-line or by reading about a topic. Much can be learned from attending seminars or conferences, where expert speakers or group discussions share knowledge and insights. It isn't all about training sessions, although these too can be informative and useful.

4. Find a learning or development opportunity

Use the 'Find and Share' website to see if there are courses or other resources to help you develop skills or learn more about a subject. You can also recommend resources that you have found useful on this website, so that others can use them.

www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/ [Coming Spring 2018]



5. If you find a learning or development opportunity, talk with your involvement contact or coordinator before booking

It is likely that you will need to discuss and agree what opportunities might be most useful for you with your involvement contact or coordinator. If funding is needed for registration or travel costs, for example, this may not always be available. And some research organisations and coordinators develop bespoke courses to meet specific needs, or they might be able to find suitable training for you through the local university or healthcare centre.

6. It might be useful to observe before doing the role

For some activities, it may be possible to observe others doing the same or similar roles. This allows you to get a feel for the type of activity or the discussions that you may be joining. Ask your involvement coordinator whether this is available.

7. Ask about a 'buddy'

In some roles, especially in committees, panels or boards, you may be offered a 'buddy' or a 'mentor'. This may be especially helpful when starting in a new role. The buddy or mentor will likely be someone who is currently active in the committee, board or panel, and will be able to answer any questions before, during and after meetings.

8. Record your activities

You may find it useful to keep a running record of your involvement activities and what learning or training you have gained. This record may help you to demonstrate the experience and skills that you have developed while involved in research, which may be useful when applying for future roles.

9. Do you know where to find new involvement opportunities or roles?

You may find it useful to visit the People in Research website, where new involvement opportunities are posted all the time.

www.peopleinresearch.org/



November 2017 (to be reviewed June 2018).

These tips are one of a set, produced as part of the INVOLVE Learning and Development Project.

