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SKILLSETS
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HBHL-SKILLSETS Skills Snapshot:

Negotiation

This Skills Snapshot will teach you:

- [What negotiation is](#)
- [Why building your negotiation skills is important for you, as a neuroscience research trainee](#)
- Some negotiation basics, including:
 1. [The difference between distributive and integrative negotiation](#)
 2. [How to prepare for a negotiation](#)
 3. [How to choose an appropriate negotiation strategy for a variety of situations](#)

At the end of the document, you will find a [practise scenario](#) to apply what you learned, as well as [resources](#) to further your knowledge of negotiation.

What is negotiation?

A negotiation is a discussion intended to produce a settlement or agreement¹.

Why is negotiation important?

In many professional situations, you don't get what you deserve – you get what you negotiate!

Negotiation is essential for effective collaboration in the lab. As a research trainee, you will likely encounter situations in which you may wish to engage in negotiation². These can include clarifying the topic of your research project with your supervisor, and determining the schedule of use for shared equipment.

Negotiations are also very common in both academic and non-academic workplaces, as demonstrated by the classification of negotiation as a core work-related skill by the World Economic Forum³. For example, you may benefit from a negotiation when creating a partnership agreement with a person or company that you will work with. In addition, negotiation is often required during the job search process, particularly when discussing salary and other compensation⁴.

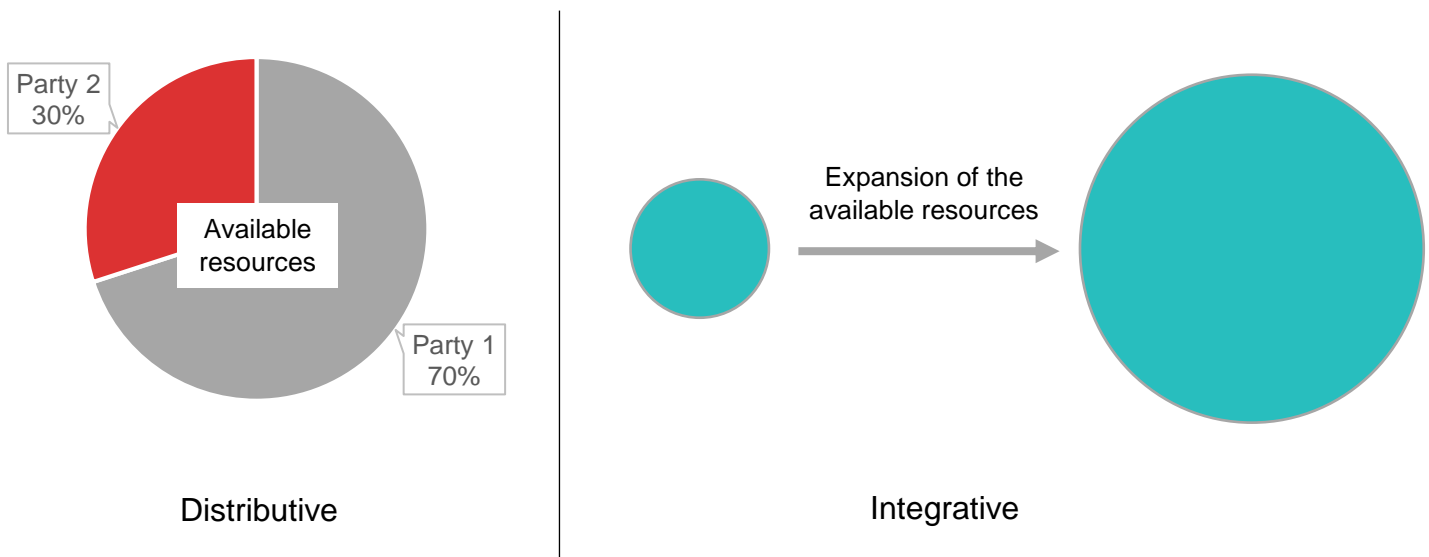
Building your negotiation skills can help you work through such situations in a way that will maximize your benefit, and may benefit other parties as well.

Get started with some negotiation basics:

1. Understand the difference between distributive and integrative negotiation⁵

In distributive negotiation, there is a fixed amount of resources to be divided among the parties involved. For example, consider a situation where two people are negotiating the split of a fixed sum of money (and there are no other resources relevant to the discussion). Distributive negotiations are win-lose; i.e. in order for one party to gain more of the resources, the other must get less.

However, it is very possible (and encouraged, where appropriate) to facilitate win-win negotiations where all involved benefit. This is called integrative negotiation, in which the resources are expanded so that there is enough for everyone. For example, consider a situation where you (as a busy research trainee) are asked by a new student to teach them a complex technique. You feel overwhelmed with all the statistics you need to do, and prefer not to take on any new projects. Through a discussion, you realize they come from a statistics background. They would be happy to contribute equal time helping you get through your statistics as you spend teaching them the technique. You help each other equally, develop your teaching and research skills, and are acknowledged on your respective papers.



2. Build a preparation matrix before entering into a negotiation

Prior to a negotiation, consider the following variables for yourself and the counterparty. If you don't have (and cannot research) all of this information about the counterparty before the negotiation, try to collect or infer (but not assume!) as much as you can early in the discussion.

- **Position:** What does each party say they want⁶?
- **Interests:** What are the reasons behind the position – why does each party want what they say they want? This can include substantive interests (i.e. items - objects, money, time, accomplishment, etc.) and/or relational interests (i.e. building, changing or maintaining a relationship with the counterparty)⁶. ([Example](#))
- **Best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA):** What is the best case scenario for each party if they walk away from the negotiation? Based on this, would they be likely to consider walking away⁶?
 - Example: Your local computer store sells used laptops for \$200. A student is selling the same brand of used laptop. They are asking for \$250, so you decide to negotiate. Your BATNA is \$200, so if they do not lower their price to below \$200 then you will walk away and take the alternative.
- **Bargaining power:** What is the relative ability of each party to influence each other⁷? Bargaining power may be similar across parties, or one may have higher power than the other. Differences in bargaining power can be driven by a variety of factors including but not limited to:
 - Alternatives: Having a better BATNA increases bargaining power⁶.
 - Authority or status: Greater authority or status relative to the other party can increase bargaining power⁸.
 - Expertise: Knowing more about the resources being negotiated can increase bargaining power⁸.

Let's look at a sample preparation matrix based on the scenario below to further understand these concepts.

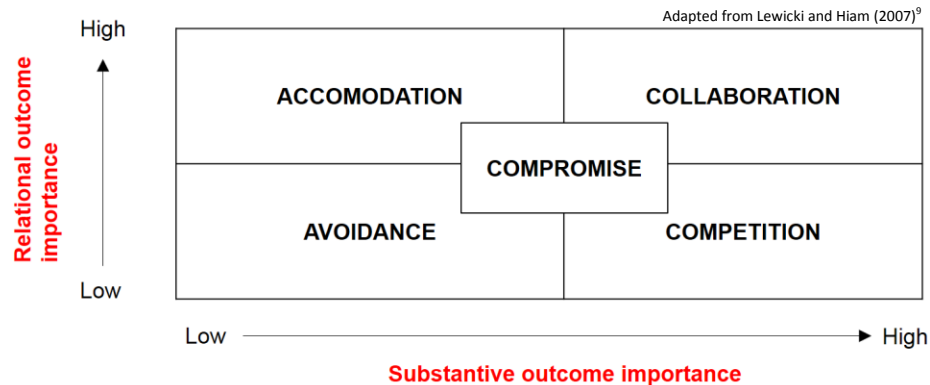
You are writing your fourth manuscript on your PhD project investigating the correlation between brain structure and cognitive task performance. You collected all the neuroimaging data, conducted most of the statistical analysis, and wrote the manuscript. A summer undergraduate student that you supervised contributed substantially, but much less than you – they collected the behavioural data and assisted with some statistics. Based on standard practises in your lab, you believe this is enough to warrant second-authorship but not first. They approach you asking to be a co-first author because this will help them to find a job when they graduate.

<u>Preparation Matrix</u>	You	Counterparty (The summer student)
Position	Sole first-authorship	Co-first-authorship
Interests	Accurately demonstrating contributions in the author list, and being consistent with the lab's standard practises	An easier job search after graduation
BATNA	Leaving the authorship as-is with you as a sole first author As this is what you want, you would be likely to walk away	Leaving the authorship as-is with them as a second author, or pursuing the issue with your supervisor As this is not what they want, they are unlikely to walk away
Bargaining power	Higher You have a more appealing BATNA than the counterparty, higher authority since you were their supervisor, and higher expertise as you have published previously	Lower

Identifying these variables can help you make appropriate and appealing suggestions based on interests, and not only position. In the above scenario, understanding why the counterparty wants the first-authorship can lead you to suggest other ways that that this interest can be satisfied (e.g. you will write them a strong reference letter for their job applications). Having an idea of the other party's BATNA can help you to avoid them walking away (if that is in your best interest), and knowing your BATNA will help to ensure that you don't take less than what you can get elsewhere. Considering bargaining power will help you decide how firm or authoritative you would like to be during the discussion.

3. Consider the importance of substantive and relational outcomes when choosing a negotiation strategy

Lewicki and Hiam (2007) propose 5 strategies based on the relative importance of substantive outcomes (i.e. items - objects, money, time, accomplishment etc.) and relational outcomes (i.e. building, changing or maintaining a relationship with the counterparty)⁹.



- **Avoidance:** If neither outcome is important, then it is not worth entering into a negotiation at all.
 - **Example:** During your undergraduate studies, you had a summer job at a camp in Florida. Since starting your graduate studies, you have committed to work on your research in Montreal all year. Your former boss from the camp emails you asking if you want to come back next year. You would not go back regardless of what they offer, and maintaining a connection with them is not valuable to you. You avoid a negotiation by telling them that you have other commitments and won't be coming back.
- **Accommodation:** When the relationship between you and the counterparty is more important to you than any substantive outcome, you may choose to accommodate (i.e. give the counterparty what they want) in order to avoid hurting the relationship.
 - **Example:** Your colleague, who is a crucial contributor to your research, asks you to help them with an experiment for 2 hours. The experiment involves PCR, and you're the only one in the lab that knows how to run it. You would rather spend the time working on your own experiment because you have a deadline tomorrow. You start a discussion about this and see that they are getting angry. In order to preserve this important relationship, you help them and then stay later at the lab to finish your own work.
- **Competition:** When the substantive outcome is more important to you than the relationship, you may choose to compete (i.e. push for what you want, even if the counterparty gets less and the relationship may be damaged).
 - **Example:** You are in charge of ordering reagents for your lab. You have been using Supplier A for years. You recently saw a flyer for Supplier B showing that they sell the same reagents for a lower price than A. You call B, and they tell you that the flyer is outdated and their prices are higher now. You push for the lower price even if they get angry. If they won't lower their price, you will walk away and keep using A.
- **Collaboration:** When both substantive and relational outcomes are highly important, aim to collaborate with the counterparty (i.e. facilitate an integrative negotiation where everyone is able to get what they want).
 - **Example:** You are new graduate student discussing your project topic with your supervisor. They want you to use functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) to collect brain functional data, but you prefer to use the new functional Near Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS) machine that the lab just bought. Your discussion ends with an agreement to use both methods in your study and directly compare their results.
- **Compromise:** When both substantive and relational outcomes are highly important, but collaboration is not feasible (e.g. if resources or discussion time is limited), aim to compromise. In a compromise, all parties give in a little so that everyone gets at least some of what they want while damage to the relationship is minimized.
 - **Example:** Your lab has one electroencephalography (EEG) machine that both you and your close colleague need for different projects. You are both about to start collecting EEG data, and prefer to do this from 1-5pm on weekdays. You each need 16 hours of testing per week to get your data in time for a conference. Neither of you will finish in time if you both collect data only in the preferred time. At a meeting, your supervisor allocates 5 minutes to creating the EEG schedule. You decide that each of you will get the EEG for 2 weekday afternoons per week, and will also collect data 2 mornings each week.

Practise the negotiation basics:

Think about the following scenario, and answer the questions below.

You are a new tenure-track faculty member. You were hired under the condition that your lab will conduct research using a 7T MRI scanner, which the university does not currently have. You have grant money to buy this scanner, but there is not enough money to cover the set-up of the room that will house the scanner. There is a perfect space down the hall from your office that used to house a 1.5T scanner so the room is already set up. The PI of the lab who uses the space around the room does not want you to use the room because installing new equipment would increase noise in that area. This PI is much more senior than you and has a lot of influence at the university, therefore it is important that you maintain a positive relationship with them. Tomorrow, you have a meeting with them to discuss this room (to which they have hesitantly agreed to attend).

Build a preparation matrix for this scenario.

Would you aim for an integrative or distributive approach, and why?

Which strategy (or combination of strategies) would you take in this situation, and why?

Click [here](#) for example answers.

Build on these concepts by reading the references cited above:

1. ["Negotiation"](#). Collins Dictionary.
2. ["Discussing expectations"](#). McGill's Graduate Supervision Website.
3. ["The future of jobs: Employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution"](#). World Economic Forum. 2016.
4. ["Who asks and who received in salary negotiation"](#). Marks, M. & Harold, C. 2011. Journal of Organizational Behaviour, 32:371-394.
5. "A behavioral theory of labor negotiations: An analysis of a social interaction system". Walton, R. and McKersie, R. (Ed.). McGraw-Hill, 1965.
6. "Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in". 2nd ed. Fisher, R., Ury, W. and Patton, B. (Ed.). Houghton Mifflin, 1991. (e-book available from the [McGill Library](#)).
7. ["Bargaining power"](#). Collins Dictionary.
8. "The social psychology of bargaining and negotiation". Rubin, J. and Brown, B. Elsevier, 1975. (e-book available from the [McGill Library](#)).
9. ["The flexibility of the master negotiator"](#). Lewicki, R. and Hiam, A. 2007. Global Business and Organizational Excellence, 26:25-36.

This Skills Snapshot is based on the [HBHL-SKILLSETS](#) workshop entitled *Putting the "Go" in Negotiation: Strategies to drive your collaborations forward*, held on September 21, 2018 at the Integrated Program in Neuroscience retreat at McGill University. This workshop was adapted from the Professional Negotiation Skills workshop developed by [SKILLSETS](#) at McGill University and [GradProSkills](#) at Concordia University.

Expand your knowledge of negotiation through further resources:

- ["After the offer, before the deal: Negotiating a first academic job"](#). Golde, M. 1999. Academe, 85:44-49.
- ["Behavioural science: Secret signals"](#). Buchanan, M. 2009. Nature, 457:528-530.
- ["Negotiation and neuroscience: Possible lessons for negotiation instruction"](#). Schenk, T. 2012. Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School.
- ["Salary and negotiation"](#). McGill Career Planning Service.
- ["Salary negotiation: Get what you seek"](#). Brown, E. 2017. Nature, 546:441-442.
- Video: ["Getting to yes"](#). Ury, W. 2016. Published by Creative Mornings.
- Video: ["When you're making a deal, what's going on in your brain?"](#) Camerer, C. 2013. Published by TED.

Example answers for the practise scenario:

You are a new tenure-track faculty member. You were hired under the condition that your lab will conduct research using a 7T MRI scanner, which the university does not currently have. You have grant money to buy this scanner, but there is not enough money to cover the set-up of the room that will house the scanner. There is a perfect space down the hall from your office that used to house a 1.5T scanner so the room is already set up. The PI of the lab who uses the space around the room does not want you to use the room because installing new equipment would increase noise in that area. This PI is much more senior than you and has a lot of influence at the university, therefore it is important that you maintain a positive relationship with them. Tomorrow, you have a meeting with them to discuss this room (to which they have hesitantly agreed to attend).

Build a preparation matrix for this scenario.

<u>Preparation Matrix</u>	You	Counterparty (The senior PI)
Position	Use of the room for the 7T scanner	No increase in noise around their lab area
Interests	To fulfill the conditions of your hiring (i.e. conducting research using a 7T scanner) and not have to apply for more money to set up a new room	To maintain a calm environment for themselves and their lab members
BATNA	Finding space for the scanner in another building, which would be farther from your office and may require money for room set-up You are unlikely to walk away as this alternative is not appealing to you	Keeping the room and maintaining noise at its current level This is what they want, so they are likely open to walking away
Bargaining power	Lower Your BATNA is less appealing than the counterparty's, and you may have less authority and/or a lower status than the senior PI	Higher

Would you aim for an integrative or distributive approach, and why?

Aim for an integrative approach. This situation does not involve only fixed resources (e.g. an unchangeable amount of time or money), therefore there is an opportunity to expand the available resources so that both parties can gain from the situation.

Which strategy (or combination of strategies) would you take in this situation, and why?

Both substantive and relational outcomes are important. Getting this space for your scanner is important in order for you to fulfill the conditions of your hiring, while saving money and maximizing location convenience. It is also important for you to maintain a positive professional relationship with the other PI, as they could be a valuable connection for you given their influence in the university. You also have to see them every day in your lab building, and a cordial relationship would make this much more pleasant.

Therefore, aim to collaborate. For example, you could make both of your office/lab spaces accessible to both lab groups so that your group can be closer to the scanner when needed, and the other group can use your space if theirs is noisy. If collaboration is not feasible, a compromise would also be an appropriate strategy in this situation. For example, you might give in a little bit regarding your budget and offer to install a soundproof wall between the scanner room and their office space. You could also discuss a schedule for scanner use, so that your lab would only use the scanner at times when noise would be less disturbing for the other group (e.g. when they have meetings).