Course 1: The Strategic Postdoc
Module 2: Applying for and Choosing the Right Postdoc

Session 1: Planning Your Search and Scouting for a Postdoc
Activity 1.1: Self-Reflection: What are you looking for in a postdoc position?

The ideal postdoc will combine the potential of building the profile (skills, knowledge, experiences) needed to be competitive for your desired career and the environment needed to aid your productivity. These exercises will help you identify what elements you're looking for in your postdoc.

A. If you haven't done so yet, identify the training goals of your postdoc by completing Activity 3.2: Building a Game Plan, Backwards-Designing Your Career from Module 1, Session 3.

B. Looking for the perfect environment:
    1. What aspects of your current environment (lab, institution, home, etc) have helped your productivity, professional development, and/or mental health?

    2. What aspects of your current environment (lab, institution, home, etc) have hindered your productivity, professional development, and/or mental health?

    3. Reflect on your answers from **Questions 1 and 2** and create a list of 15 specific things that you want your future lab/institution environment to have (examples). Rank your list in terms of what's most important for you.

C. After identifying the training goals of your postdoc and your ideal environment (Activities A and B), create an action plan:
    1. Provide 3 characteristics about your ideal postdoc position. Consider the scientific topic you'd like to research, the type of institution that would be of benefit to you (e.g., access to undergraduates and/or teaching opportunities), possible opportunities you'd like to have, etc.

    2. Make a list of 3 possible mentors that would be good to talk to about possible postdoc opportunities or for career advice. To find this list, think for example about collaborators, near-peers, mentors you met at a conference, etc. You can also brainstorm ideas with your PhD advisor or your mentoring network (see Activity 1.2).