



## NHSN's Quarterly Newsletter

### ¡BIENVENIDOS!

Welcome to *El Faro*, the quarterly newsletter of the National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN)!

In this issue, we focus on preparing trainees and early-career scientists to make the most of the upcoming NHSN Conference: ¡Si Se Puede! The Power of Community and Innovation in Health Research. Hosted by the University of Miami.

Our Conferencing 101 series offers practical tips on everything from navigating your first conference to presenting posters, building your schedule, and networking with confidence. You'll also hear directly from our Conference Co-Chairs, who share their advice, guidance, and perspectives on how to create a meaningful conference experience.

We look forward to another stimulating meeting filled with innovative ideas, dynamic discussions, and opportunities for mentoring, networking, and collaboration. As always, the NHSN Conference brings together trainees and scientists from diverse backgrounds, across gender, ethnicity, discipline, and geography, creating a truly unique and multidisciplinary scientific community. We can't wait to welcome you in Miami!



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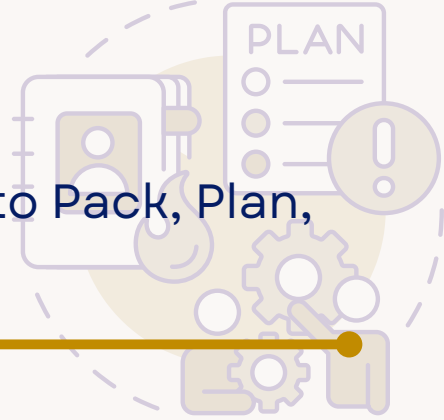
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# Conferencing 101:

## Preparing for Your First Conference: What to Pack, Plan, and Expect



Attending your first conference is exciting, but it can also feel overwhelming. A little preparation goes a long way toward ensuring that you not only absorb new science but also leave with meaningful connections and a sense of belonging in the field.

**Start with the basics:** pack comfortable shoes (you'll be walking more than you think), a water bottle, a notebook or tablet, and set up your LinkedIn QR code to share quickly. Bring layers, since conference rooms are notorious for fluctuating between freezing and warm.

Next, **set clear goals before you arrive.** Do you want to meet potential collaborators? Get feedback on your research? Explore career paths? Defining two or three goals helps you make decisions about which sessions and events to prioritize. Skimming the program in advance is key, highlight must-see talks and posters, and build in time for networking breaks or meals with colleagues.

Finally, give yourself permission to **be present.** Conferences are full of opportunities, but you don't need to attend everything. The most valuable moments often come from chance hallway conversations, meals with peers, or even just taking time to reflect on what you've learned.

### Resources:

How to Get the Most Out of a Attending Conferences [\(Click here: Science Careers\)](#).

Conference survival guide—the dos and don'ts [\(Click here: Cell Death Discovery\)](#).

# Conferencing 101:

## Posters, Talks, Seminars, Oh My! Creating a Conference Schedule That Works for You



The program booklet (or app) can feel overwhelming: so many talks, poster sessions, and symposia! The key to a successful conference is not attending everything; it's creating a schedule that serves your goals and energy.

**Start with your “must-sees.”** Mark talks and posters directly relevant to your research, and any career development sessions that fit your stage. Then, add a few sessions that stretch your perspective, perhaps a new methodology or a policy discussion you wouldn't normally attend. These often spark fresh ideas or connections.

**Avoid the trap of over-scheduling.** Back-to-back-to-back talks may seem productive, but you'll quickly burn out. Build in buffers for networking, meals, and informal discussions. These in-between moments are often where collaborations begin.

Finally, be flexible. Sometimes, a spontaneous hallway chat or an invitation to join colleagues for coffee is more valuable than the session you planned. Your schedule is a guide, not a rulebook.

### Resources:

How to Get the Most Out of a Attending Conferences ([Click here: Science Careers](#)).

10 Tips for Attending Scientific Conferences ([Click here for STEM Cell Technologies](#)).

# Conferencing 101:

## Designing a Poster That Gets Attention (and Starts Conversations)



A scientific poster isn't just a way to present data, it's an invitation to start a conversation. The best posters are clear, visually engaging, and easy to follow even from a few steps away.

**Keep text minimal and informative.** Use bullet points, large fonts, and figures that tell the story quickly. Your title should be bold and readable across the room. Stick to two or three main colors with high contrast for accessibility.

Practice your **“poster pitch”**, a one-minute overview of your research that hooks the listener. Be ready with both a short version for casual interest and a longer version for deeper discussions. Posters aren't static, they're opportunities to engage and get feedback.

Don't forget the **power of design tools**. Templates from your current lab or available online help streamline your message, but even small changes—like leaving white space or aligning figures make a big impact.

### Resources:

Online Resources Available: Tips and Suggestions for Academic Poster Designs  
([Click here for PDF resource](#))



# Conferencing 101:

## Mastering Your Elevator Pitch: How to Share Your Research in 60 Seconds

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Every trainee should have a clear, concise way to introduce themselves and their work. An elevator pitch, 30 to 60 seconds long, lets you communicate who you are, what you do, and why it matters in a way that sparks interest.

### A simple structure:

- **Who you are:** “I’m a postdoctoral scholar in addiction neuroscience at UC San Diego...”
- **What you study:** “...I study how women’s health factors influence addiction-related behaviors in a preclinical model...”
- **Why it matters:** “...to better understand female vulnerability in substance use disorders.”
- **Your goal:** “...and I’m looking to connect with others interested in translational approaches.”

Practice saying it out loud until it feels natural. Tailor it depending on whether you’re speaking with a peer, a PI, or a policymaker. Have an end goal for *why* you want to connect with this individual. The goal of an elevator pitch isn’t to recite, it’s to open a door for conversation.

### Resources:

Networking in Science: How to Perfect Your Elevator Pitch ([Click here for Cell Signaling Technology](#)).



# Conferencing 101:

## How to Break the Ice: Networking 101 for Trainees and First-Time Attendees

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Networking can feel intimidating, but at its core, it's simply about starting conversations. Conferences like NHSN are designed to create these opportunities. You just need a few strategies to break the ice!

**Start with simple openers:** “What did you think of that talk?” or “Is this your first NHSN?” Poster sessions are particularly easy networking spaces; presenters are ready and eager to talk about their work.

**Be genuinely curious.** Ask open-ended questions, listen actively, and share a little about your own research when it feels natural. Remember: networking is about building relationships, not just handing out business cards or gaining followers.

Don't forget to follow up. Connect on LinkedIn or other social media, exchange emails, or send a quick message after the conference. A short, thoughtful follow-up can turn a five-minute chat into a long-term professional connection.

### Resources:

Career Symposium - Networking! Networking! Networking! [\*\*\(Click here for NIH Videocast\)\*\*](#)



## Making the Most of NHSN 2025: Co-Chair Perspectives



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**  
National Institute on  
Drug Abuse  
Staff Scientist



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**  
University of Miami  
Research Assistant  
Professor



**Kathryn Nowotny, Ph.D.**  
University of Miami  
Associate Professor



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**  
University of New  
Mexico  
Assistant Professor

Our NHSN Conference Co-Chairs bring a wealth of experience and perspective to this year's meeting. To help attendees get the most out of their time at NHSN 2025, we asked them to share their advice and reflections. They offer guidance on how trainees can maximize their conference experience, tips for networking with senior scientists, and insights into what makes NHSN unique compared to other scientific meetings. They also reflect on their favorite parts of the conference and share ideas for staying engaged with the NHSN community year-round. Read on to hear directly from our Co-Chairs and learn how you can make the most of NHSN 2025.



# What is the best advice you would give to a trainee on how to maximize their experience at NHSN 2025?



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**

Take full advantage of every opportunity the conference offers: attend all the sessions, from keynote addresses to workshops and panels. Make time to visit posters, stay after talks to ask questions, and interact with other trainees. The connections and knowledge you gain in those moments can be just as valuable as what's presented formally. Be curious, present, and open; the NHSN environment is built to support your growth.

Plan ahead and stay open. Review the agenda and identify a few must-attend sessions but also leave room to explore new topics. Introduce yourself to people, ask questions, and don't be shy about sharing your interests. Many casual and informal conversations can lead to new connections and collaborations.



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**

Attend all sessions and don't be afraid to ask questions. This is a safe space and everyone is very welcoming. Utilize the social events (dinner, mixers) to personally introduce yourself to anyone you are interested in meeting. NHSN is not an exclusive conference, everyone is very welcoming, especially if you are a first-time attendee. Don't be afraid to join a table at lunch or dinner or a group at the mixer of individuals you do not know. Attendees will be very excited to meet you and welcome you to the conference and you never know the connections you may make by just saying hello to someone.

## Do you have any tips on networking with senior scientists? How can a first-time conference attendee build their network?



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**

Yes, one of the most effective ways is to ask a mentor or senior colleague to introduce you to other senior scientists. These personal introductions can open doors and make conversations much more natural. Also, make time to attend poster sessions and stay after talks to chat with speakers. Many senior scientists are genuinely interested in engaging with trainees, especially in a space like NHSN that values mentorship and community.

The senior scientists at NHSN are just as eager to network with you. A simple “I appreciated your talk” goes a long way and asking thoughtful questions after presentations/panels shows you are interested. Capitalize on connecting at the social events too, where conversations can flow more naturally. Following-up via email following the conference can keep the conversations going.



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**

Review the science program prior to attending and highlight any scientists you would like to personally meet. Ask a co-chair or a junior/senior scientist to introduce you to investigators you are interested in meeting.

# What is your favorite part of the NHSN Conference?



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**

The strong sense of community and belonging. NHSN creates a space where everyone feels welcomed and supported, especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Events like the Gala Dinner not only celebrate our shared experiences but also strengthen the personal connections that make this conference so special.

My favorite part of the conference is the community of researchers who not only care about rigorous science but also about the people and communities behind the data. There's a warmth and shared commitment to mentorship, equity, and making a real-world impact that you don't always find at other conferences.



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**

Networking, mentoring, strong feeling of inclusivity and safe space at NHSN



## From your perspective, what makes NHSN unique compared to other scientific conferences?



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**

NHSN is more than a conference: it's a community. There's a shared understanding here that being from a diverse background shapes how we move through academic and scientific spaces. At NHSN, you're surrounded by people who recognize that, embrace it, and want to see you succeed. Seeing scientists who look like you, who've walked a similar path and are now leading in their fields it's powerful. That sense of support and representation is unlike anything I've experienced elsewhere.

NHSN brings together interdisciplinary scholars from the basic and social sciences who center Hispanic health, blending community voice, advocacy, and science. The commitment to lifting up early career researchers and creating pathways for leadership also makes it incredibly special.



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**

We all share many life experiences and have had to overcome similar challenges in our career. NHSN is a great place to discuss these experiences and get advice on how to overcome adversity. I feel very proud to attend NHSN every year to see the strong representation of Hispanic scientists in the field. It is encouraging and keeps me optimistic and hopeful for the future of our field.



## Are there ways to stay engaged with the NHSN community after the conference ends?



**Flavia Barbano, Ph.D.**

Absolutely. NHSN offers regular webinars and events throughout the year. There's also the Early and Mid-Career Leadership Committees, which are a great way to stay connected and involved. The key is your willingness to engage; there is always someone in the network ready to connect, support, and help you grow. NHSN is truly a year-round community if you want it to be.

Definitely. I would suggest joining the Early Career Leadership Committee and participating in webinars and other initiatives they organize. Stay connected through the listserv and social media, there are always ongoing opportunities to engage with the network throughout the year, not just at the annual conference.



**Alyssa Lozano, Ph.D.**



**Laura Ornelas, Ph.D.**

Email people you met at the conference to build a report and stay in contact. Join social media, such as Blue Sky, to build a network. Invite people to give a talk at your university





# Social and Behavioral Science Datablitz

## Breakout Session Invited Speakers



Congratulations to the selected speakers for the 2025 Social and Behavioral Science Datablitz Breakout Session! All speakers were selected from the pool of submitted abstracts.

**Yajaira Cabrera Tineo, PhD, MS, CGS**

Postdoctorate Associate, Florida International University

**Talk Title:** *Marianismo Beliefs Predict Resilience Above and Beyond Acculturation Processes Among Latina Immigrant Women*

**Ramiro D. Garza**

Graduate Research Assistant, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health

**Talk Title:** *Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Guided Analysis of Associations that Contribute to Latinx Youth Mental Health*

**Mariana Mendoza Ruiz,**

Oklahoma State University

**Talk Title:** *Resilience Amidst Uncertainty: Latino Adolescents' Emotional Stability Across a Polarized Policy Era*

**Esmeralda Ramirez, MA,**

Doctoral Student, University of Texas at Austin

**Talk Title:** *Mental Health of U.S. Return Migrants to Mexico City*

**Barrett Wallace Montgomery, PhD,**

Assistant Professor, Michigan State University

**Talk Title:** *Exploring Demographics and Sociocultural Factors Associated with Health Literacy Among Hispanic/Latino Adults Through the All of Us Study*

## Funding News!

We are pleased to announce that the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has awarded continued support for the National Science Network on Drug Abuse Annual Conference (Grant #2R13DA026647), led by Dr. Patricia E. Molina, Co-President of the National Hispanic Science Network.

This R13 conference grant will strengthen NHSN's mission to:

- Advance interdisciplinary and translational substance use research
- Foster collaboration among biological, behavioral, social, and cultural scientists
- Support and mentor the next generation of emerging researchers in the field

With this support, the NHSN 2025 Annual Conference will continue to serve as a unique space where trainees and senior investigators come together to build professional relationships, receive mentorship, and create cross-disciplinary collaborations that translate science into practice and policy.

We are grateful to NIDA for investing in this important work and proud to help shape the future of substance use disorder research.





# Announcements

## ¡Sí Se Puede! The Power of Community and Innovation in Health Research

### NHSN 25th Annual Conference

October 23rd – 25th

Miami, Florida

**Hosted by:**

**University of Miami**

1320 S Dixie Hwy

Coral Gables, FL 33146



### Call for Nominations: ECLC Co-Chairs for Basic and Social Science

The National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN) Early Career Leadership Committee (ECLC) is now accepting nominations for the positions of Basic Science Co-Chair and Social Science Co-Chair (2-year term).

#### Nomination Period:

- Open now through the conclusion of the final ECLC meeting before the NHSN Annual Conference on October 13.

#### Eligibility & Nomination Guidelines:

- Self-nominations are strongly encouraged.
- Nominations on behalf of others are accepted only if the nominee has confirmed their willingness to serve.
- Nominees should be early career professionals (e.g. students – 10 years post terminal degree) with a demonstrated commitment to NHSN and ECLC's mission.

#### Nominee Submission Requirements: All nominees will be asked to submit:

- A professional photo
- A current CV or resume
- A brief bio including:
  - Educational background
  - Research interests
  - Past involvement with ECLC
- Vision and goals as an ECLC Co-Chair

#### Questions?

For Social Science Co-Chair inquiries, contact: Angel Algarin – [angel.algarin@asu.edu](mailto:angel.algarin@asu.edu)

For Basic Science Co-Chair inquiries, contact: Adelis Cruz - [adelis.cruz@nih.gov](mailto:adelis.cruz@nih.gov)

# A note from the editor:



Hi everyone,

As we head into the NHSN 2025 Conference, I hope this issue of El Faro helps you feel prepared, connected, and inspired. Whether you're a trainee attending your first scientific meeting or a long-time member of our community, this conference is about more than presentations and posters—it's about mentorship, collaboration, and building a network that lasts well beyond Miami.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue, especially our Conference Co-Chairs for sharing their advice and perspectives. I look forward to seeing many of you at NHSN 2025 and to continuing the conversations that make our network so special.

If you're interested in being featured in the next issue or if you have any topics you wish to see covered, I'd love to hear from you! You can email me by [clicking this link!](#)

Warmly,  
Elizabeth Sneddon-Yeppez, Ph.D.



## Stay connected with NHSN!

Click icon:



## Thank you to our funding sources!



National Institute  
on Drug Abuse