

COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS: EXPERIENCES FROM PATIENT-CLINICIAN TEAMBUILDING PILOT SESSIONS ERNS RECONNET, ITHACA & LUNG

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Area	Training and education
Duration	1h 30 min
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1. OVERVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICE

i Improved patient-clinician shared leadership and collaboration was a cross-cutting need identified by all 24 European Reference Networks (ERNs) and European Patient Advocacy Groups (ePAGs). To address this need, EURORDIS organized and co-funded with 3 ERNs patient-clinician team building pilots.

The aim of the team building sessions was to show the value of developing a mutual understanding of partnership and shared leadership in the context of the ERNs.

The specific objectives of the training were to:

- Foster a common sense of purpose among ERN clinicians and patient representatives
- Clarify and understand roles within the team
- Communicate effectively both internally and externally
- Improve the effectiveness of teamwork by aligning on vision, goals, and ways of working

The team building pilots consisted in series of live, online sessions on Team Working and Communication. 3 ERNs piloted 2 similar team building pilots provided by one of the following trainers: [Maynard Leigh Associates & Ana Merlino](#)

The ERNs that participated were ERN ReCONNET, ERN ITHACA and ERN LUNG.

A total of 41 people participated in the 3 pilots of which 18 people participate in the ReCONNET pilot, 18 in the ITHACA pilot and 5 in the ERN LUNG pilot. 16 clinicians and 25 patient representatives participated in these pilot sessions.

2. PATIENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVEMENT OF CARE

i Developing joint ERN patient-clinician team building can be a powerful and effective tool to (i) foster meaningful relationships, (ii) establish or improve communication strategies and (iii) identify new and common objectives to work on and towards. Also, it offers the opportunity to clearly define the roles and expectations of the team members as well as to ascertain the skillset individual each team member brings to group.

Implementing these high-level team building sessions enables ERN patient representatives and clinicians to work together more effectively towards defining ERN priorities and actions that best meet the needs of the rare disease community. The ultimate beneficiaries of this virtuous circle are people living with a rare disease in Europe who will have access to better and more responsive healthcare services.

3. SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED. SHARE YOUR TIPS!

i The 3 ERNs which piloted the team building presented 3 different perspectives and experiences. While ERN LUNG decided to suspend the training, both ERNs ReCONNET and ITHACA successfully completed it and reported that it can positively impact on the **collaboration** within the ERN. The participants also agreed that the pilots were a textbook example of 'learning by doing'.

Additional relevant and common tips included:

- Plan the training in advance – define dates and invite participants as early as possible to make sure everyone blocks the time in their agendas
- Tailor the training to your ERN needs – make sure to listen to your ERN team (clinicians and patient representatives) define with them their needs and expectations. Use that to develop the training agenda and content
- Online vs face to face training – both formats have pros and cons. Ask your team what their preferred format is and choose that one, if possible.
- Involving clinicians in the training is key to ensure the effectiveness of the training – make sure the training format is suitable to all participants.
- There are different levels in the Governance of the ERNs in which the team building can be implemented – discuss it within your Network and design it based on your needs and priorities

- Make sure that all participants can take home something useful from the sessions
- Consider the possibility of organising team building sessions on a regular basis

Selection criteria:

1. All sections are complete
2. The description of the good practice is clear
3. The good practice is innovative in terms of its impact and results
4. The good practice is easy to replicate