



LLMC Circle Discussion Guide #1

Sponsorship and Career Building





Founders' Message to LLMC Participants



Nancy Tremblay
Assistant Deputy
Minister, Materiel,
National Defence

“Thank you” doesn’t feel like enough to describe how happy we are, for you to have made the commitment to join the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program 4th edition, organized by the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, National Defence, and open to all Federal Public Service members.

What began as a simple idea from our consultations has grown into a thriving network, addressing the desire for meaningful networking and professional growth.

There’s Power in People Coming Together

You're now part of a diverse network of 1100+ inclusive-minded leaders, assigned to a Circle: a small, trusted group for goal achievement in a safe space. This Circle will facilitate learning from others' experiences and diverse perspectives, expanding your knowledge and tactical skills.

LLMC offers a unique opportunity for everyone to feel valued and respected for their contributions. The relationships you build will accelerate progress and drive accountability.

By actively engaging with your Circle, sharing experiences, and fostering connections, you'll unlock personal and professional growth opportunities. This knowledge empowers you to advance in your career.



**Samantha
Moonsammy,**
Diversity and
Inclusion, Materiel,
National Defence



Founders' Message to LLMC Participants

The Time to Act is Now!

Thank you for answering the call to action, committing to creating a psychologically safer workplace for all, especially those from equity-deserving groups.

We hope you will feel a real and fundamental shift throughout the program. And together we will celebrate all the hard work you put into this experience. Thank you for showing up for yourself, your family, your organization and the communities you're called to serve.

Going forward, take advantage of all the networking that will take place, meet new LLMC members in MS Teams and on LinkedIn. Lean into the Masterclasses.

Choose to stay consistent with that next level version of you. We are rooting for you.

In collaboration,

Nancy Tremblay
Assistant Deputy Minister,
Materiel, National Defence

Samantha Moonsammy
Diversity and Inclusion Section Head,
Materiel, National Defence

LIFTING AS

YOU LEAD

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE



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ÉLEVANT LES AUTRES

PROGRAMME DES CERCLES DE MENTORAT

CONNECTER • ÉLEVER • INSPIRER

Circle Ground Rules & Values

- **Equality:** Everyone is an equal member
- **Substance:** Share what's important
- **Openness:** Listen and avoid judgements
- **Respect:** Treat others as they would like to be treated

Participant Ground Rules & Values

- Confidentiality - trust is critical
- Bring your full self and beginner's mindset to each session
- Come nourished and stay hydrated
- Keep your camera on so everyone feels safe and connected
- Be candid and honest - listen with empathy
- Be ready to engage with your peers
- Remove outside distractions
- Keep your audio off, except when asking questions and contributing to the discussion
- Be fully present and attend all five weeks - no multitasking



Discussion Guide

Sponsorship and Career Building

“To get real diversity of thought, you need to find the people who genuinely hold different views and invite them into the conversation.”

Adam Grant, organisational psychologist, Wharton School of Business

“Sponsorship is about putting your name and reputation on the line for someone else. It could be as simple as recommending someone for a new role, yet it's one of the most powerful cultural tools any organization has.”

Lynne Doughtie is a certified public accountant and the former U.S. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KPMG

“The path to diversity begins with supporting, mentoring, and sponsoring diverse [people] to become leaders”

Denise Morrison, chief executive officer, Pepperidge Farm

1. Check-In: Warm up and get going (17 minutes)

1.1 Welcome (2 minutes)

Welcome everyone to the first circle of your Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles (LLMC) program! This is a space to create meaningful connections, learn together and foster a deeper sense of belonging in the workplace. I am excited to be here and hope that you are too!

What happens in a Circle? This space was created for us to network, improve our leadership skills, and explore career development opportunities. We'll discuss what we've seen and heard in the thought-provoking group activities, we'll reflect on actions we have taken or can take to practise what we learn during each Circle, and we'll share how we believe our actions will improve our personal and professional lives.

Before we begin our first Circle session, take a moment to review Circle Ground Rules and Values (on the previous page).



Bonding Moment

What is important for you in a group/teamwork setting to build trust, safety and authentic connection?

(discuss as a group, 10 seconds each)



1.2 Your Health Comes First (1 minute)

Before we begin today's Circle, an important reminder. The intent of these sessions is to have safer conversations about important subjects that will help transform the Federal Public Service by creating diverse and inclusive psychologically safer workplaces.

The subjects may be difficult for some people to discuss. If at any point during this session you feel that you need to step away, you may leave the session in order to protect your mental health. There's also a 5 minute break built in partway through the Circle.

Your health comes first.

If you need to talk to someone, whether before, during, or after a circle, there is support available to you 24/7. Please see the support section at the end of this guide for contact information.



1.3 Overview (2 minutes)

Together let's explore the concept of sponsorship - a game-changer that goes beyond traditional mentorship and that has the potential to positively impact our careers. This is the perfect topic to kick off our LLMC program.

Traditional mentorship is an opportunity for experienced professionals to share their knowledge, offer guidance, and provide a safe space for growth.

However, sponsorship takes it a step further. A sponsor is someone who mobilises their own capital to proactively advocate for another person's career advancement, someone who believes in a protégé's potential and is committed to opening doors of opportunity for them. Sponsorship can happen at all levels, through formal or informal processes, and has been happening for decades.

While sponsorship is available for everyone, in today's Federal Public Service, historically there are documented gaps in the representation of deserving equity groups at senior leadership levels.

You'll learn more about sponsorship throughout this Circle and you can always read more about it in the Beyond the Circle content at the end of this guide.



Acknowledging that many talented individuals have been overlooked due to biases in traditional models of career advancement can help to break down systemic barriers and create pathways for the growth and success of marginalized members.

Sponsorship and career building go hand-in-hand, and breaking down barriers to sponsorship is a great way for anyone to advance their careers while also supporting the advancement of under-represented groups.

During today's Circle we will discuss how sponsorship, when practiced through an inclusive lens, can close these gaps and support the career progression of employees across the Public Service.



1.4 Inclusive Workplaces: Cultivating Trust

(2 minutes)

As we get to know each member of our Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circle, we will begin by discussing a key concept for building an Inclusive Circle—fostering greater inclusion and trust at the work-group level. One of the ways we can do this is by focusing on psychological safety.

Psychological safety refers to the shared agreement within a workplace that employees can express themselves without fear of negative consequences such as humiliation, ridicule, or punishment. In a psychologically safe environment, team members feel comfortable taking risks, voicing their opinions, sharing ideas, and asking questions without the fear of being judged or criticised. This fosters a sense of trust, open communication, and mutual respect among colleagues, leading to improved collaboration and innovation.

Psychological safety must be intentionally created and nurtured. One method to create a psychologically safer space is for group members to engage in storytelling or sharing personal information about themselves.



1.5 Icebreaker: Building Trust and Psychological Safety Through Storytelling

(10 minutes)

Instructions: Each Circle member will spend 1 minute sharing themselves with their fellow Circle members by answering one or two prompts from the list below.



Answer & Share:

- A physical attribute (e.g. “I have grey hair” / “I have difficulty hearing”)
- A course or education program (e.g. “I did not attend postsecondary education” / “I speak a language other than English or French”)
- A daily observance (e.g. “I have a daily ritual in my life” / “I am religious or spiritual”)
- A work experience (e.g. “I do volunteer work” / “I have military experience”)
- A circumstance that shaped your upbringing (e.g. “I grew up in a different country” / “I have many siblings”)
- A life experience (e.g. “I am the first generation of a family who immigrated to Canada” / “I am a single parent”)
- A specific learning or note-taking style (e.g. “I am a visual/auditory/kinetic learner” / “I prefer taking notes on sticky-notes, voice recording, etc”)



2. Educational Activity: Lean in, get inspired, and add to your toolkit

(30 minutes) 

2.1 Defining Sponsorship for Inclusive Workspaces

(2 minutes)

Before diving into a further discussion, let's define the differences between a coach, mentor, and sponsor.



A **Coach** is a person who helps the individual they are coaching to develop their soft skills in an informal process. This relationship is driven by the coach and allows them to provide feedback on the development of the coachee.



A **Mentor** is a person that helps a talented individual navigate their career path. A mentor offers advice and guidance to their mentee to help get them where they want to go.



A **Sponsor** is a person in a position of power or influence who advocates for and actively supports a protégé from an equity-deserving group, thereby helping them advance their career and overcome systemic barriers.



2.2 Sponsorship in the Federal Public Service (2 minutes)

One example of a formal sponsorship program in the Federal Public Service is in the Treasury Board. TBS has a formal sponsorship program within the Treasury Board Mentorship program.



What is mentorship?

According to the new Treasury Board [Mentorship Plus](#) program, mentorship is a well-established means of supporting all federal public service employees who want to progress in their careers, including to the role of executive. It provides an opportunity for anyone to learn from an experienced person who can help them determine their career aspirations and strategies for advancement.

What is Sponsorship?

According to the Treasury Board Sponsorship program, sponsorship focuses on federal public service employees from employment equity (EE) designated groups (visible minorities, persons with a disability, Indigenous peoples) and equity-seeking groups (for example, members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and subgroups of EE designated groups, such as Black employees or employees with invisible disabilities).

As part of this program, a senior leader will advocate actively on behalf of their protégé, being an active participant in their career development. This is especially important for those employees who might lack access to certain networks (both formal and informal), helping them acquire the skills and competencies for progression to the executive cadre.

Sponsorship differs from talent management in that it operates outside of the Performance Management Agreement process.

You can find more information about the Treasury Board Sponsorship Program in the Beyond the Circle bonus content at the end of this guide.

Each department or agency will communicate the steps to joining its mentorship program. If you are unsure who to contact, contact your human resources advisor.



2.3 Group Activity: Fly on the Wall Exercise

(15 minutes)

What Is Fly on the Wall Exercise?

This practice is designed to provide a crowdsourced approach to problem solving. As a group, you will choose one or two people to be 'the fly.' 'The fly' will then pose a problem that they've encountered in the workplace to the group, and the group will discuss the problem without any interruption from 'the fly'. In this case, we will use this exercise to brainstorm ways to find or become a sponsor.



Why Do Fly on the Wall?

All too often we can blind ourselves to a solution to a complex problem we face. "I've tried that", "Ahh, but that won't work because..." These are common responses to solutions suggestions from other people; we cut off the idea at the knees before it has been formed.

Through this practice, the 'fly on the wall' must listen and let the conversation flow. They must remain curious and let the ideas fully form before being brought back into the conversation to feedback and add any insight/ commentary upon what has been said.

Instructions:

- Pick one or two "Fly" volunteers to go through this exercise with the group.
- The 'Fly' outlines the problem, which could be their approach to finding a sponsor or becoming one for someone else, ideally without solutions/ efforts to date. These can be discussed later where applicable. **(1-2 minutes)**
- The team asks any questions about the problem to clarify they understand the problem space. **(1-2 minutes)**
- The team discuss the problem in more depth and start to come up with possible solutions. The 'Fly' listens curiously, does not speak and makes notes. **(2-3 minutes)**
- The 'Fly' thanks the group and responds to what they have heard. At this point the fly might have some next steps and is ready to move on, or they may have so ideas on what actions to take next. **(5-8 minutes)**



2.4 Group Activity: Strategies for Securing Sponsorship

(11 minutes)

Instructions: Using your toolkit, what we've learned today, and the video, each member will offer one strategy in response to 1 or 2 questions below. (1 minute per member)



Scenario: Michaela is working within the Federal Public Service and has worked in the same position for the past 10 years. She is considered a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in her field, is very talented, has honed her skills and has made invaluable contributions to her team. She has also demonstrated her leadership skills throughout her employment and is now ready for the next level in her career.

Michaela is dedicated and committed to applying her full potential and contributing to the betterment of the organisation. However, she is not sure how to take the next step, gain allies and move her career to the next level. Michaela is also considering moving to a new department or horizontal career progression. She would like help to build a 5-year career and leadership development plan.

Discussion Questions:

- What action can Michaela apply to take steps in advancing her career?
- How could she locate a sponsor?
- What are the steps to acquire a sponsor?
- What can be done to overcome personal barriers? Guide through breaking down barriers/self-sabotage?
- Who can Michaela reach out to?
- Where can she get started? What would you in your workplace?
- What steps can she take to learn about sponsorship?

Your Health Comes First!

Before the next activity, take a 5 minute mind & body break. Grab some water, use the washroom, stretch—whatever you need!





3. Group Activity: Storytelling and Networking: Share, Learn, and Connect (14 minutes) 🕒

Cultivating Confidence: Strategies for Successful Sponsorship Approaches



Instructions: Using everything we learned today, each Circle Member will select a question below and prepare a response. Then, each Member will take 1 minute to share their responses.
(2-3 minutes to prepare, then 1 minute per member)

Questions:

- How can individuals proactively express their interest in seeking sponsorship?
- Have you ever approached a leader for sponsorship? If yes, what was your experience? If no, what actions can you take to foster self-confidence and initiate the first step towards securing sponsorship?
- If you have taken steps to secure sponsorship, what tools and strategies have you employed?
- Have you ever been a sponsor for someone else? What did it look like? Alternatively, is there someone in your circles that you would like to sponsor?
- Begin by watching the short introduction to the “High Five Habit” here (1m 23s): <https://youtu.be/khujbeJvqcE>

The book "The High Five Habit" emphasizes the importance of taking daily intentional measures for building confidence through actions such as the physical gesture of high-fiving yourself in the mirror. How do you think incorporating physical movements like high-fiving your reflection can impact your mindset and approach when seeking sponsorship?



4. One Action: Apply yourself, pledge to grow, and inspire others (10 minutes)

Group Discussion: Apply what you have learned

Your “One Action” is a concrete commitment that you will undertake this week related to the topics discussed during each Circle. The goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone, practise a new skill, or try something new. Examples of One Actions for this Circle can be found in the table below.



Instructions: Each member declares their One Action commitment for this week.
(1 minute per member)



Sponsorship and Career Building		One Action
1	I am going to reach out to my team and network and see who would like to be sponsored then create a plan of action.	Use the key video messages, the Circle 1 resources, and the experiences of your fellow Circle members to prepare your One Action.
2	I will build a relationship with a potential sponsor and/or sponsoree.	
3	I will put into practise one of the habits identified in “The High-Five Habit” book that builds on self-confidence through movement such as practising positive affirmations.	
4	Take your learning Beyond the Circle!	Explore the Learning Library Resources at the end of this guide
5		Write down your One Action commitment in the table cell to the left and get ready to report about it at Circle #2.



5. Wrap-up: What's next and a few final words (5 minutes) 🕒

Thank you everyone for your active participation in this week's topic. We now have some new thoughts on sponsorship and career building and how we can use this knowledge to take action.

Recap: Please review this discussion guide to help you reflect on today's Circle and implement your One Action for sponsorship and career building.

Masterclass: Our next Masterclass takes place on Monday, October 7, 2024, at 1:00 pm Eastern Time. This 90-minute Masterclass is a hands-on coaching class on Inclusive Leadership: Building Cultures of Belonging. Invitations to all 5 Masterclasses have been sent to you prior to the start of this LLMC cohort. Please see your calendar for details.

Next Circle: The next Circle session will be focused on Inclusive Leadership. We will learn about the characteristics of inclusive leaders and how we can apply this knowledge in the workplace. Please review Discussion Guide #2 and watch Simon Sinek's TedTalk, "[Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe](#)" prior to the second Circle session.

Circle Leader and Assistant Circle Leader Selection: Do we have our circle leader and assistant circle leader for next week? If leaders for the next Circle were not chosen, ask for volunteers for both positions.

LLMC Written Component: Please share your comments by completing the bi-weekly Written Component forms. A link to the form can be found in your calendar. Completion of these forms is one of the commitments you made when you applied. The LLMC Program team relies upon your feedback to continue to grow the program.

LLMC Lounge: Join this Friday's LLMC Lounge if you would like to connect and engage more on this week's topic. This 60-minute session is facilitated by the LLMC Program Team at Materiel Group's Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) every Friday. [Join here.](#)



Thank you everyone! Be well, take care and see you at Circle #2 on Inclusive Leadership.



To Do Checklist: Next Week at a Glance

- Consult the [LLMC Program Overview Wiki page](#) for all checklist links
- Fill out the Circle Members and Reflection Questions (next 2 pages)
- Complete your One Action
- Complete your Written Component
- Review Discussion Guide #2 on Inclusive Leadership
- Watch [Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe](#)
- Attend the Masterclass on October 7 at 1:00pm Eastern
- Attend the LLMC Lounge on Friday at 1:00pm Eastern (optional)
- Join the [LLMC LinkedIn group](#)
- Check out the Beyond the Circle bonus content at the end of this guide & the [LLMC Learning Library](#)





List of Circle Members

#	Name	Department/Position	I remember this member because of... (list 3 characteristics)
1	Circle Leader		
2	Assistant Circle Leader		
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



Reflection Question

Instructions: Write down 3 insights/key takeaways learned from the session

1	
2	
3	

Next Week

Instructions: Write the names of next meeting's Circle Leader and Assistant Circle Leader

CL	
ACL	

Beyond the Circle

Sponsorship and Career Building - Learning Library Resources

Government of Canada Programs

- TBS Mentorship Plus (Sponsorship) Program
 - This program includes a sponsorship component that focuses on federal public service employees from employment equity (EE) designated groups and equity-seeking groups. It aims to help these employees acquire the skills and competencies for progression to the executive cadre.
- CSPS Coaching, Mentoring and Networking Learning Path
 - Offers learning paths to develop capacities in coaching, mentoring, and networking, which are fundamental to maximizing the potential of public service employees
- Aboriginal Leadership Development Initiative
 - Leadership and career development program open to Indigenous indeterminate Government of Canada employees at the EX, EX minus 1, and EX minus 2 levels
- Building Career Development Programs and Succession Planning
- CSPS Development Programs
- GConnex

Government of Canada Websites

- GC Jobs
 - Search for jobs and get daily emails of new opportunities
- Career Marketplace
 - Find job opportunities in the Government of Canada
- Applying for Government of Canada Jobs
 - Details to help you succeed in the job competition process, including sample questions for tests and interviews
- Career Development in the Public Service
 - Career pathing and job competition tips
- Managing Your Career
 - Resources for career development and career counselling

Beyond the Circle

Sponsorship and Career Building - Learning Library Resources

Articles

- Don't Get Lucky, Get a Champion
- Pourquoi et comment faire un plan de carrière?
- Building Confidence and Self Belief to Thrive in your Career
- Comment montrer que vous êtes prête pour une promotion?
- How to do Sponsorship Right
- Tips for working with a sponsor or protégé
- How to Be an Effective Executive Sponsor
- What Great Sponsors Do Differently
- Don't Ask For Mentors, Ask For Sponsors
- 4 Top Tips for Developing an Effective Sponsorship Program in Your Organization

Books

- Betting on You by Laurie Ruettimann (English only)
- What Color is your Parachute? by Richard Bolles (2020 ed)
- The Sponsor Effect: How to be a Better Leader by Investing in Others by Sylvia Ann Hewlett (English only, audiobook available)
- The Start-Up of You by Ben Casnocha and Reid Hoffman (English audiobook available)
- Power Moves by Lauren McGoodwin (English only, audiobook available)

Videos

- Why Everyone Needs a Mentor and Sponsor - 2023 LLMC Masterclass #1 (1h 10m 58s)
- How to build your confidence – and spark it in others (13m 20s)
- The key to building self confidence and what we're doing wrong (6m 25s)
- Why Some of Us Don't Have One True Calling (12m 16s)
- How to find the person to help you get ahead at work (13m 14s)
- The Difference Between Mentorship and Sponsorship by Ritu Bhasin (1m 38s)
- The Value of Sponsorship in the Federal Public Service (15m 03s, more info on next page)

Other Web Resources

- Mentor Canada
 - A hub that offers a wide range of tools and resources to support and strengthen mentoring nationwide.

You can find all these links (and more!) on the [LLMC Program Overview Wiki page](#) and on the [LLMC Learning Library Wiki page](#).

Beyond the Circle

Sponsorship and Career Building - Learning Library Resources

Video: The Value of Sponsorship in the Federal Public Service

<https://youtu.be/e-EroWGB01U>

Key Video Messages

In this video, we learn the difference between sponsorship and mentorship, particularly in relation to individual career development and advancement, and accessing opportunities and insights into the significance of sponsorship.

Sponsors mobilise their influence and networks to support and elevate their protégés, empowering them to undertake demanding initiatives, embrace leadership positions, and adeptly navigate organisational intricacies. By advocating for their protégés, sponsors contribute to a work environment that is more inclusive and vibrant, where potential is acknowledged and achieved, ultimately benefiting both individuals and the organisation in its entirety.

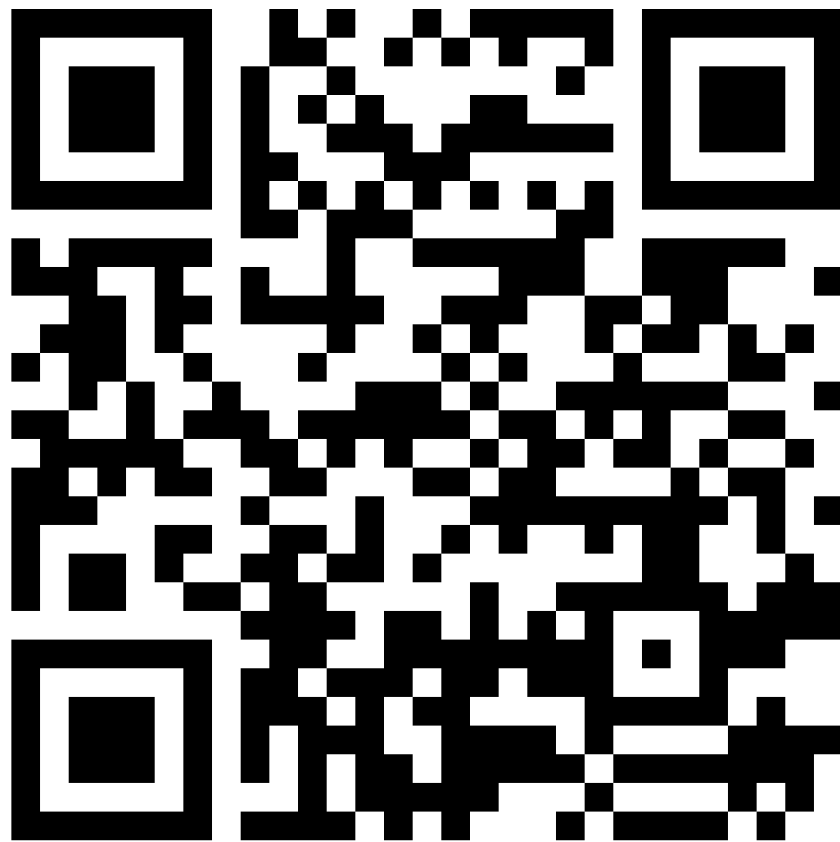
Acknowledging the challenges that marginalised groups face in achieving success within complex systems, sponsorship offers managers an additional tool to identify talent, effectively assisting individuals in advancing through organisations.

We also uncover essential steps for protégés to foster connections with potential sponsors. Protégés bear the responsibility of showcasing their capabilities, a task that proves particularly challenging for marginalised individuals who often grapple with imposter syndrome within environments that undermine their worth. Despite this, self-belief remains crucial. The tasks essential for all protégés encompass introspection on conveying ideas and learning to navigate the executive level. This undertaking demands confidence.

In summary, this video emphasises the empowering role of sponsors in propelling protégés towards leadership positions and navigating complex organisational landscapes. Through advocating for marginalised groups, sponsors foster inclusivity and productivity.



Contact Us



Contact us on the [LLMC Support Form](#)



Support

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAP provides free short-term counselling for personal or work-related problems as well as crisis counselling.

Toll-free: 1-800-268-7708

TTY (for people with hearing impairments): 1-800-567-5803

<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/employee-assistance-program.html#E>



Hope for Wellness Helpline

24/7 access to Indigenous Counsellors

Available in French and English and, upon request, Ojibway, Cree and Inuktituk.

1-855-242-3310

Chat line via: <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

Member and Family Assistance services (Canadian Armed Forces)

The Member and Family Assistance services is a 24 hour, 7 days a week bilingual telephone and face to face counselling service that is voluntary, confidential, and available to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and their families who have personal concerns that affect their well-being and/or work performance.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/health-support/member-family-assistance-services.html>

Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (National Defence)

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) was created by the Department of National Defence but is independent from the CAF chain of command and is not required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the CAF. Support services for CAF members, National Defence public service employees, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers affected by sexual misconduct and their families, aged 16 and older. Guidance and support for leaders and management on addressing sexual misconduct.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/health-support/sexual-misconduct-response.html>



Support

The Canada Suicide Prevention Service

Talk Suicide Canada provides nationwide, 24-hour, bilingual support to anyone who is facing suicide.

Toll-free: 1-833-456-4566.

<https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/>



Wellness Together Canada

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support.

Toll free 1-866-585-0445

<https://wellnesstogether.ca>

The Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles Discussion Guide was created by the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, National Defence.

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 https://wiki.gccollab.ca/Diversity_and_Inclusion_Office