



# LIFTING AS YOU LEAD

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE

## Circle #3 Sponsorship and Career Building



Brought to you by  
the Diversity and Inclusion Office,  
Materiel Group,  
National Defence



# LIFTING AS YOU LEAD

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE

## 2025 Masterclass Teachers



**Dr. Jody Carrington**

**Inclusive Leadership:  
Psychological Safety and  
Belonging as the  
Future of Work**

September 22, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET



**Fotini Iconomopoulos**

**Say Less, Get More:  
Mastering Effective  
Negotiation**

October 6, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET



**Jenny Chen**

**The Power of Sponsorship:  
Turning Connection into  
Career Momentum**

October 20, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET



**Richard Sharpe**

**Innies and Outies:  
Maintaining our Humanity  
During the Age of AI**

November 3, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET



**Charles Achampong**

**Confidence:  
Strengthen Your Mindset for  
Career and Leadership Success**

November 17, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET

# LIFTING AS YOU LEAD

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE



# DIRIGER EN ÉLEVANT LES AUTRES

PROGRAMME DES CERCLES DE MENTORAT

CONNECTER • ÉLEVER • INSPIRER

## 2025 Schedule

### September

September 9 – Official Program Launch

September 16 – Tuesday Circles Introduction:  
Meet Your Circle

September 17 – Wednesday Circles  
Introduction: Meet Your Circle

September 22 – Masterclass #1 Inclusive  
Leadership: Psychological Safety and Belonging  
as the Future of Work

September 25 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

September 30 – Tuesday Circles #1: Inclusive  
Leadership

### October

October 1 – Wednesday Circles #1: Inclusive  
Leadership

October 2 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

October 3 – Optional French Lounge

October 6 – Masterclass #2 Say Less, Get  
More: Mastering Effective Negotiation

October 9 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

October 14 – Tuesday Circles #2: Mastering  
the Art of Negotiation

October 15 – Wednesday Circles #2:  
Mastering the Art of Negotiation

October 16 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

October 17 – Optional French Lounge

October 20 – Masterclass #3 The Power of  
Sponsorship: Turning Connection into Career  
Momentum

October 23 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

October 28 – Tuesday Circles #3: Sponsorship  
and Career Building

October 29 – Wednesday Circles #3:  
Sponsorship and Career Building

October 30 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

October 31 – Optional French Lounge

### November

November 3 – Masterclass #4 Innies and Outies:  
Maintaining our Humanity During the Age of AI

November 6 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

November 11 – Tuesday Circles #4 DEIA:  
A Non-Performative Approach

November 12 – Wednesday Circles #4 DEIA:  
A Non-Performative Approach

November 13 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

November 14 – Optional French Lounge

November 17 – Masterclass #5 Confidence: Strengthen  
Your Mindset for Career and Leadership Success

November 18 – Tuesday Circles #5 Confidence: Strengthen  
Your Mindset for Career and Leadership Success

November 19 – Wednesday Circles #5 Confidence:  
Strengthen Your Mindset for Career and Leadership  
Success

November 27 – Optional Bilingual Lounge

November 28 – Optional French Lounge

# LIFTING AS

## YOU LEAD

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE



# DIRIGER EN

## 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, Certified Public Accountant, 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 to you third Circle which focuses on Sponsorship and Career Building

Sponsorship and career growth don't just happen at the senior levels or through formal titles. Each of us has a role to play in fostering opportunities, opening doors, and actively supporting the advancement of others. In this week's Circle, we will explore the power of sponsorship as a catalyst for career building. We will look at strategies for identifying and nurturing sponsor-protégé relationships, examine how sponsorship differs from mentorship, and discuss how deliberate actions can help create pathways for growth and success.



#### **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.

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 organizations, 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 Learning Library resources 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 One Action from the last meeting

(5 minutes)

**Instructions:** Go around your Circle and have each member share their One Action update from week #2: Mastering the Art of Negotiation. Your One Action is a concrete commitment you made during your previous Circle session.  
(1 minute or less per member)



## 1.5 Icebreaker: Building Trust and Psychological Safety Through Storytelling (10 minutes)

**Instructions:** Each Circle member will have 1 minute to introduce themselves by responding to one or two prompts from the list below. This is a chance to share a little about who you are and help the group get to know you better.



### 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 Case Study: Sponsorship in the Federal Public Service (2 minutes)

One example of a formal sponsorship initiative in the Federal Public Service is the Treasury Board’s [Mentorship Plus](#) program. This program builds on the foundation of traditional mentoring—providing guidance, advice, and support—and adds the “plus” of sponsorship, where leaders actively advocate for their protégés, create visibility, and open doors to new career opportunities.



### What is mentorship?

According to Treasury Board’s [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 an 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?

In the [Mentorship Plus](#) 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.

## 2.3 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 do 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 and 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 3 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 #4.

## 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 and Learning Library:** Please review the Discussion Guide content and [Learning Library](#) Resources to assist in implementing your One Action for sponsorship and career building.

**Masterclass:** Our next Masterclass takes place on Monday, November 3, 2025, at 1:00 pm Eastern Time. This 90-minute Masterclass is a hands-on coaching class Innies and Outies: Maintaining Our Humanity During the Age of AI.

**Next Circle:** The next Circle session will be focused on the topic of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. Please review [Discussion Guide #4](#) prior to the fourth 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 the 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).

**LLMC LinkedIn:** Join the LLMC LinkedIn if you would like to connect with Cohort 5 members and past cohort graduates. [Join here](#).



**Thank you everyone! Be well, take care and see you at Circle #4 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**





## To Do Checklist: Next Week at a Glance

- ☐ Consult the [LLMC Program Overview Wiki page](#) for all checklist links
- ☐ Fill out the Reflection Questions (next page)
- ☐ Complete your One Action
- ☐ Complete your Written Component
- ☐ Review Discussion Guide #4 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
- ☐ Attend the Masterclass on November 3 at 1:00pm Eastern
- ☐ Attend the LLMC Lounge (optional)
- ☐ Join the [LLMC LinkedIn group](#)
- ☐ Check out 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	

# Important Links



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



Visit the LLMC [Learning Library](#)



Join the LLMC [LinkedIn Group](#)





## 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.**

✉ [liftingasyoulead-dirigerenelevantlesautres@forces.gc.ca](mailto:liftingasyoulead-dirigerenelevantlesautres@forces.gc.ca)

🌐 [https://wiki.gccollab.ca/Diversity\\_and\\_Inclusion\\_Office](https://wiki.gccollab.ca/Diversity_and_Inclusion_Office)