

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM GUIDE



**LIFTING AS
YOU LEAD**

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

CONNECT • ELEVATE • INSPIRE



**DIRIGER EN
SOULEVANT LES AUTRES**

CERCLES DE MENTORAT PROGRAMME

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WELCOME

Welcome and congratulations on becoming a member of the Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles (LLMC) program. We are pleased to announce that LLMC has launched with over 600 participants! As this is the second cohort of the LLMC program, you and your continuous feedback and active participation are imperative to the development of sessions for 2023 and years to come.

LLMC will take place over ten (10) weeks and is intended to provide a platform for employees to network with colleagues and leaders across the Public Service, improve leadership skills, and explore career development opportunities.

Every second week, Circle members will meet virtually to tackle a new discussion topic. Topics were selected through an active consultation process. In addition, there will be 5 optional enrichments sessions on each discussion topic with invited expert speakers and a Q&A section.

Circles will consist of 6 to 10 participants who are intended to meet on a bi-weekly basis.

The objective of this guidebook is to equip Circle Leaders and Circle Leader Assistants with the tools to lead a mentorship circle. In these roles, you will have a unique opportunity to inspire and provide members with a chance to build confidence, improve leadership skills, and engage in career development through active facilitation.



OVERVIEW

Who is a Circle member?

The mentoring Circles are open to all Government of Canada employees. There are currently over 600 members - ranging from students to executives and everyone in between!

Program schedule

There are five Circle meetings and five optional enrichment sessions over a ten-week period. Specific dates and times for Circle sessions are determined by each circle. The time for each optional enrichment session is set by the Diversity and Inclusion Office team.



OVERVIEW

Meeting schedules and Curriculum Themes

Week	Theme	Meeting Type	Week of
1	Confidence and Career Building	Circle Meeting	September 26
2		Enrichment Session	October 3
3	Leadership Essentials	Circle Meeting	October 10
4		Enrichment Session	October 17
5	Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion	Circle Meeting	October 24
6		Enrichment Session	October 31
7	Negotiation	Circle Meeting	November 7
8		Enrichment Session	November 14
9	Work Life Balance	Circle Meeting	November 21
10		Enrichment Session	November 28



OVERVIEW

Why participate?

The LLMC program will develop leaders at all levels and foster a deeper sense of community and belonging for the people in our organizations. This is a great opportunity to make new connections with people who share common interests and learning objectives. Your active participation can also yield these results:

Build a stronger sense of belonging in the Public Service

- community engagement
- mentoring across levels
- networking opportunities across departments

Build your skills

- relevant discussion themes
- leadership opportunities within Circle
- increased access to talent development programs

Networking for your future

- developing relationships with diverse participants
- connecting with senior management across the Public Service
- sharing knowledge and opportunities



VISION AND MISSION

Vision

We are committed to taking major, measurable actions so that employees with diverse backgrounds and abilities are able to access opportunities, are accepted and valued for their differences, and can thrive in a welcoming, safe, secure, and inclusive workplace.

The Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circle program is grounded in the 2020/2021 Deputy Minister Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion and strives to build on the Clerk's Call to Action to address anti-racism, equity, and inclusion in the Federal Public Service.

Mission

LLMC aims to equip members with a toolbox of new skills and ideas, connect you with people across the public service and lift them higher.

Each week's session is constructed to provide empowering and challenging activities to amplify your voices, increase awareness of possibilities and bring people together.

Why a Circle?

There's power in people coming together. Learning and developing is much easier when you are not alone. In fact, it is enriched when you are surrounded by a like-minded community focused on transformation.



CIRCLE STRUCTURE

Circles are a safe space to share, listen, provide advice and guidance on dealing with difficult and challenging situations and celebrate each other's differences, successes and growth. As an Office, we are aware that a space cannot be completely safe for everyone. However, we are committed to creating safer spaces for individuals.

Circle participation is 100 per cent voluntary and free. As a Circle member, we ask that you fully participate and uphold the Circle fundamentals, principles and values.

Circle Size

The optimal number is 6-10 members per Circle.

Circle Timeframe

Each weekly session is 60-75 minutes long. Each meeting follows this formula for maximum collaboration and clear expectations.

Circle Toolbox

Circle leaders and members are provided with the following resources to ensure that they are fully equipped to conduct mentoring Circles that will encourage maximum participation of members and the ability to provide support to their Circle.

- Circle Discussion Guides
- Circle Leader Guide
- Circle Member Guide
- Weekly Q&A meetings from 12:00 to 12:30 pm EST
- Email communication



CIRCLE EXPECTATIONS

Circle Ground Rules

It is requested that the following are adhered to/respected in order to ensure that members feel secure and that they are in a safe space to share and participate openly and freely.

- **Confidentiality:** Trust is critical
- **Communication:** Be candid and honest - listen with empathy
- **Commitment:** Be fully present and attend all five week. No multitasking.

Circle Values (What we believe in)

- **Equality:** Everyone is an equal member. Everyone has something valuable to share.
- **Substance:** Share what's important.
- **Openness:** Listen and avoid judgements. Lifting others as you lead is critical.
- **Respect:** Treat others as they would like to be treated.



CIRCLE EXPECTATIONS

Touch Points with Program Production Team

#	What	How	When
1	Optional orientation sessions for all program participants e-mail with the calendar invites	e-mail with the calendar invite	September 21 and 23
2	Weekly message with the materials deck for next circle session	e-mail message	Every Monday of a Circle week
3	Weekly e-mail message with request for Circle and optional enrichment session feedback	e-mail message	Every Friday except for 30 September and 11 November will be Thursday instead.
4	Optional weekly Q&A meetings for all program participants (pre-scheduled calendar invites)	e-mail with the calendar invite	Every Friday except for 30 September and 11 November will be Thursday instead.
5	Post-program survey	e-mail message	Within two weeks after the last enrichment session
6	Certificate + thank you note	e-mail message	Within 6 weeks after the post-program survey has been completed



CIRCLE MEMBER

Circle Member Expectations

People coming together is powerful. The better your Circle experiences, the stronger and more resourceful the Public Service becomes. In order to ensure that members walk away from from these sessions feeling enlightened and empowered it is expected that members encourage and demonstrate the following:

- Follow Circle ground rules and values.
- Be committed.
- Be respectful. If an unexpected circumstance occurs, notify your Circle that you are unable to attend the meeting or will be late (minimum 1 hour prior to meeting).
- Be camera ready. Seeing one another fuels one another.
- Upload your best photo on your MS Teams account avatar.
- Have a stable Wi-Fi connection. Consider using your personal device.
- Mute your microphone when you aren't speaking.
- Complete home assignments and be ready to report on your one action.
- Actively participate - speak, type, pass, circle back if you need more time.



CIRCLE LEADER

Who is a Circle leader?

A Circle leader is the host of the session.

What is the role of a Circle leader?

The role of a leader is to encourage the Circle members, to prepare for and engage them in the meeting activities. The Circle leader sets the tone.

How to be a good and effective Circle leader?

1. Bring positive energy

As a leader, it is imperative to consistently display a positive and dynamic vibe while on camera. Being authentically enthusiastic about the program will create an atmosphere where Circle members feel welcome, at ease and it encourages participation and discussion.

2. Keep track of time

The Circle leader is responsible for the time management of the meeting activities. If one segment runs over, see if you can recover by cutting some time off another segment. If one segment is too short, you can extend the following segment. Ultimately, you ensure that the meeting starts and ends on time. The Circle leader assistant will monitor time within each activity and advise their fellow Circle members if they have gone over the time allocated to each member.



CIRCLE LEADER

3. Ensure the rules and expectations are observed

You are responsible for managing the community. Facilitate a friendly and trusting atmosphere that makes members feel safe and respected.

4. Attend pre-session meetings

Save the date and time of pre-session training. You can ask questions and empower yourself with confidence and knowledge necessary to run a successful Circle.

5. Speed of speech

Make sure that the speed of your delivery is easy to follow. If you speak too slowly or too quickly, your audience will have difficulty following what you say. A tip to add life to your dialogue is to change the pace of your delivery. A slightly faster cadence might convey enthusiasm. A slightly slower pace can add emphasis or caution.

6. Build Rapport

We recommend you speak more like a coach or a friend than an instructor. Wrap instructions into memorable and clear phrases to maintain mutual trust and respect with your Circle members.



CIRCLE LEADER

7. Logistics

- Join the meeting early (at least 15 minutes ahead)
- Check the background noise so it doesn't interfere with discussion
- Have a list with participants' names at your fingertips. Learn/know how to pronounce them correctly.
- Choose next Circle meeting's leader and assistant leader (if not already chosen at the pre-Circle meeting).

8. Circle leader communications

- **Object:** Sending invites: Send invite to calendar via e-mail. Attach any complementary documents. **When:** Immediately following the current week's meeting (if not already done following the Circle pre-meet prior to the start of the program).
- **Object:** Post-meeting event follow-up if any 'homework' is required, send a reminder to all Circle members. **When:** Immediately following the meeting.



CIRCLE LEADER ASSISTANT

Who is a Circle leader assistant?

A Circle leader assistant is the facilitator of the session.

What is the role of a Circle leader assistant?

The role of assistant is to back up the Circle leader with the following: share the screen with videos and/or discussion guides, monitor timing and be ready to take the role of a Circle leader during the meeting in case of emergency (e.g. internet connection lost).

How to be a good and effective Circle leader assistant?

1. Share the screen with video and session guide document

It is highly recommended to download the video and discussion guide to the device you will use during the Circle session.

2. Monitor timing

Timing is important to make Circle sessions productive and successful. For each activity there is a clear time allocated per participant. If you notice the participant's speech runs over the time limit, flag it in the form of the MS Teams notification tool (e.g. raised hand).

3. Be ready to take on the role of Circle leader.

Have the Circle Discussion Guide and a list of participants handy.

4. Join the meeting early (at least 15 minutes ahead).



CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

Icebreaker

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with one another and ourselves. Every Circle starts with an icebreaker. See discussion guides for examples.

One Action

This is where we ask ourselves and the members: Starting today, what will we do to take this one step further? How will I commit to improving (fill in applicable session subject) ?

Every session includes a commitment to “One Action”— one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

This is a public promise for accountability. Be ready to report on your “One Action” progress at the following Circle.

Sample Agenda

#	Section	Time	
		Per member	Total
1	Opening remarks	-	1-2 min.
2	Ice-breaker, connection cards, sharing layers	1-2 min.	10-20 min.
3 a	Educational Activity	-	7-15 min.
3 b	Discussion	1-2 min.	15 min.
4	Group Activity		20 min.
5	One Action (take home assignment)	1 min.	10 min.
6	Closing (upcoming session update, questions)	-	5-10 min.



CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

Use of Technology

- Microsoft Teams is the platform to host virtual Circles.
- Videos will be used in some sessions.
- To avoid delays and buffering, do not rely on 3rd party applications to play videos. Please download the video from the LLMC Wiki Page and stream directly from your device.
- Practice playing videos before each session. Have another member in your Circle prepare the video on their device as back-up in case of technical difficulties.

Wrap Up

- One Action. Bring attention to the workbook assignment and reflection questions.
- Housekeeping. Inform members about the next session topic, date and time.
- Recap. The Circle leader assistant or the Circle leader briefly summarizes the main points and asks the group to confirm. This is helpful in the subsequent analysis process. When the one-minute summary is completed, the leader invites questions, comments, amendments, or corrections. “Have we missed anything?”



WHAT TO DO WHEN...

Here are some suggestions and recommendations for situations that can come up unexpectedly:

Nobody Shows up

Review your calendar invitation to be certain you are at the right meeting link, date and time. Always have list of invited participants with their emails/phone numbers.

Only A Few Attend

Conduct the session as planned.

The Group Doesn't Want to Talk

Consider calling on individuals or going around the group to answer a specific question. Ask participants for advice. Use your Circle leader assistant to help drum up conversation.

You Are Short of Time

Skip an activity.



ZERO TOLERANCE CRITERIA

Zero Tolerance Criteria

We value and champion equality, substance, openness and respect. Discriminatory feedback, consistent negative energy and insulting comments could result in blocked access to the rest of the meetings and other program sessions in the future. Ensure to inform the group as a whole that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated and can result in expulsion from the Circle and subsequent sessions. Try to have a one-on-one exchange with the disruptive member outside of the session either through discussion or email to advise of their inappropriate behaviour and subsequent consequences.



THANK YOU

Thank you for participating in the Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles Program. Through your involvement as a Circle member and leader you are lifting others higher as you lead. Thank you for committing to take significant and measurable actions so that employees with diverse backgrounds and abilities are able to access opportunities, feel accepted and valued for their differences, and can thrive in a welcoming, safe, secure, and inclusive workplace. There's power in people coming together!

CONTACT US

For more information about the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles Program, contact the Materiel Group's Diversity and Inclusion office at National Defence: DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca