



**LLMC DISCUSSION GUIDE
SPONSORSHIP AND CAREER
BUILDING**





Agenda

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

“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 the 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!

Before we begin our first Circle session, I want to take a moment to review Circle Ground Rules and Values.

Circle Ground Rules

Confidentiality: Trust is critical

Communication: Be candid and honest - listen with empathy

Commitment: Be fully present and attend all five weeks - no multitasking





Circle Values

Equality: Everyone is an equal, contributing member

Substance: Share what's important

Openness: Listen and avoid judgements

Respect: Treat others as they would like to be treated



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.

1.2 Your Health Comes First

(1 minute)

Before we begin today's Circle, let's do a check-in. The intent of these sessions is to have safe 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. 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'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.

In today's Federal Public Service, there are documented gaps in representation of deserving equity groups at senior leadership levels. 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 marginalised members. During today's circle we will discuss how sponsorship, when practised through an inclusive lens, can close these gaps.



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 belief 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, either by answering one or two questions from List #1 or by stating some of their layers using examples provided in List #2.



List#1:

1. Where did you grow up?
2. How many kids were in your family?
3. What was an important challenge of your childhood?
4. What are some of your fondest memories from high school?
5. Did you have any specific hobbies or interests that shaped your upbringing?

List#2:

1. A physical attribute (e.g. “I have grey hair” / “I have difficulty hearing”)
2. A course or education program (e.g. “I did not attend postsecondary education” / “I speak a language other than English or French”)
3. A daily observance (e.g. “I have a daily ritual in my life” / “I am religious or spiritual”)
4. A work experience (e.g. “I do volunteer work” / “I have military experience”)
5. A life experience (e.g. “I am the first generation of a family who immigrated to Canada” / “I am a single parent”)



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

(27 minutes) 

2.1 Defining Sponsorship for Inclusive Workspaces

(~ 1 minute)

Before we watch a video discussing mentorship and sponsorship, let's talk about the differences between a coach, mentor, and sponsor.

Inspiration: Employment Humanity



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 protegee from a deserving equity group, thereby helping them advance their career and overcome systemic barriers.



2.2 Video: The Value of Sponsorship in the Federal Public Service

(15 minutes)

Instructions: Watch the video linked below to hear from Samantha Moonsammy and Gérard Étienne about the importance of sponsorship.

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



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 the question below.

Scenario: Michaela is a Senior Mechanical Engineer 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 the Mechanical discipline, 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, aspiring to become an executive.

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.

Discussion question: What action can Michaela apply to take steps in advancing her career?

(1 minute per member)



3. Group Activity: Storytelling and Networking: Share, Learn, and Connect (11 minutes)

Cultivating Confidence: Strategies for Successful Sponsorship Approaches



Instructions: Select one of the questions below to share your ideas on sponsorship. Each Circle member will have 1 minute to share their response. (Circle Leaders, please allow a few minutes for Circle Members to prepare their response).

- 1- How can individuals proactively express their interest in seeking sponsorship?
- 2- 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?
- 3- If you have taken steps to secure sponsorship, what tools and strategies have you employed?
- 4- 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 you undertake 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 that follows:

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.	
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		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 first Masterclass takes place on **Wednesday, October 4, 2023**, at 1:00 pm Eastern Time. This 90-minute Masterclass is a hands-on coaching class on sponsorship and career building. 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 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.





Office Hours: Join this Friday's office hours to connect and engage more on this week's topic, Sponsorship and Career Building. This 60-minute session is facilitated by the LLMC Program Team at Materiel Group's Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) every Friday. Senior leaders will also be dropping by to share their thoughts on the theme explored that week.



https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MDc0Yml4OTgtMDZiMS00OGUzLTg5ZjctNTcwYWFmZDk2MwVh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22325b4494-1587-40d5-bb31-8b660b7f1038%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22c2d093df-2beb-4796-b59e-3fe19605c039%22%7d

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



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, advancement, and accessing opportunities, accessing 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 impostor syndrome within environments that undermine their worth. Despite this, self-belief remains crucial. The tasks essential for all protégés encompass introspection on conveying ideas, comprehending 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.



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	



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.

1-800 #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.



diversityandinclusion-diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca



https://wiki.gccollab.ca/Diversity_and_Inclusion_Office