Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles:
Networking Best Practices

Welcome to the Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles program!

Networking is a powerful tool for personal and professional growth. This ten-week program provides the right platform for members to network with colleagues and leadership across the Federal Public Service while developing interpersonal skills, learning about key leadership and cultural competencies, and finding career building opportunities.

Yet, the way we network, that is how we conduct ourselves professionally, online and offline, reflects on the longevity and the success of the relationships we form. So, here are some respectful approaches to networking tailored to our program's values:

- **Attend Meetings and Events:** The Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program is intended to foster deep connection between the participants; however, the success of the program hinges on your active participation. To ensure that you are getting the most out of this curriculum, attend all meetings and events as they provide a great platform for networking.

- **Genuine Connection**: Networking provides the opportunity for professional connections, yet these connections shouldn't be merely transactional. Approach networking as a chance to cultivate significant relationships, centred on understanding others' viewpoints and interests. In general, people tend to respond more positively to sincere and authentic encounters.

- **Mindful Outreach:** When engaging in online networking, it's essential to uphold proper netiquette (networking + etiquette). Focus on maintaining communication exclusively on professional platforms such as work emails and LinkedIn. Begin connections with personalised`` messages that highlight shared interests or experiences. In the spirit of mindful outreach, please pay close attention to how someone would like to be addressed and the correct spelling of their name. This approach ensures that your networking interactions remain respectful and aligned with a professional context. It is important to **maintain professional conduct** in all forms of communication and exchange.

- **Respectful Timing:** While it's advisable to reconnect with your professional network after the initial meeting, it's important to do so thoughtfully. Refrain from overwhelming individuals you've recently met with an excessive number of email or social media connection requests. Honour your network's time and personal boundaries by sending follow-up messages only if there's a valid motive for prolonging the discussion.

- **Respond Promptly:** Timely communication is important in maintaining professional relationships. When addressing emails, strive to respond promptly. This demonstrates your respect for others' time and commitment to effective collaboration. Aim to reply within 24-48 hours, acknowledging receipt even if you need more time for a detailed response. Your swift replies foster efficient communication and strengthen your professional rapport.

- **Engagement:** Be open to dialogue and contribute to discussions within your Circle. Share insights, ask questions, and contribute thoughtfully. Remember, networking is an opportunity to position yourself strategically to secure connections that may bolster your professional profile. This means participating in the meaningful conversations taking shape within your Circle and contributing authentically.

- **Value Exchange:** Just as it is important to contribute to discussions, it is equally crucial to exercise active listening. Be courteous in conversations and allow for other people to contribute equally to discussions. Networking is a two-way street. While offering your insights, expertise, or assistance, be open and amenable to other people's contributions. Pay attention to others' stories and experiences. This not only shows respect but also helps you understand their needs better. A reciprocal relationship is more likely to flourish.

Being respectful in your communications with others is an ethical and expected behaviour outlined in the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. Remember, networking is about building relationships that are rooted in authenticity and mutual respect. By adopting these best practices, you'll create a network that adds value to your professional journey while contributing positively to others' growth as well.

Resources
https://careers.umbc.edu/students/network/networking101/tips/

https://www.forbes.com/sites/sallypercy/2021/06/23/six-top-tips-for-networking-in-the-new-world-of-work/?sh=5380cd4332b4

https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=25049

Netiquette:
https://www.verywellmind.com/ten-rules-of-netiquette-22285