

Agenda

Inclusive Leadership

“In today’s interconnected and globalised world, it is now commonplace for people of dissimilar world views, faiths and races to live side by side. It is a matter of great urgency, therefore, that we find ways to cooperate with one another in a spirit of mutual acceptance and respect.”

Dalai Lama XIV, spiritual leader and head of Tibet

“Inclusive leadership is not a destination; it’s a journey of continuous learning, growth, and unlearning biases to create a more inclusive world.”

Ava DuVernay, award-winning filmmaker

1. Check-In: Warm up and get going

(18 minutes total)

1.1 Welcome

(1 minute)

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

Share how you’re feeling as if it was the weather. For example: cloudy, sunny, stormy, etc (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)

Leadership is often identified as the most critical role in an organisation. It is the art of influencing and developing others to achieve their highest potential.

Inclusive leadership refers to a style of leadership that promotes and embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within an organisation or community, as well as aims to cultivate a space of psychological safety. Inclusive leaders are courageous enough to lead with empathy, compassion, and care. They foster an environment where all individuals feel respected, empowered, and included, and in which everyone's contributions are equally valued and recognized.

Let's learn how we can enhance our leadership skills to lead across our differences and cultivate a more inclusive workplace, establish trust, build relationships (up, down, and across the public service), lead change through agility and resilience, have difficult conversations, and so much more.

Inclusive leadership has become a business imperative, at both the operational and strategic levels. The value of diverse teams and organizations has been well researched and leads to improvements in decision-making, engagement, retention, and more. Let's get started!

1.4 Icebreaker - Inclusive Leadership Quotes: Share what inspires you

(10 minutes)

Quotes are a way to raise the subject and start the discussion without worrying about saying the wrong thing. The purpose of these sayings is to inspire thought, discussion, and action about making the world a more equitable and respectful place for all.

Instructions: From the list below, each member selects a quote and shares why their selected quote resonates with them.

(2-3 minutes to read, then 1 minute per member to share)

1. **"We must open the doors and we must see to it they remain open so that others can pass through."**

Rosemary Brown, the first black woman to be elected to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and Canada

2. **"Inuit ways of knowing and being are just as valid as any other. We must be open to learning**

from each other.”

Mary Simon, first Indigenous Governor General of Canada

3. **“If you tell me, I may forget. If you teach me, I will remember. But if you involve me, I will definitely learn.”**

Benjamin Franklin, inventor and statesman

4. **"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence."**

Sheryl Sandberg, American technology executive, activist, and author

5. **"It's hard to keep an open mind if you don't have an open heart. You don't have to agree with what people think to learn from how they think. You don't have to share their identity to be curious about what shaped it. Treating people with civility is a prerequisite for discovery."**

Adam Grant, American writer and Psych professor in the Wharton School

6. **“Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge.”**

Chief Wilton Littlechild, Chief and Lawyer

7. **“Belonging can never be at the expense of being who we are. Belonging only happens when we're being embraced for our authenticity, especially for our differences.”**

Ritu Bhasin, a belonging devotee, empowerment author, leadership speaker, life coach, and justice advocate

8. **“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.”**

Mahatma Ghandi, Indian independence activist

9. **“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.”**

Verna Myers, an American diversity consultant, author, speaker, lawyer, and VP of Inclusion Strategy

10. **“We are strongest when we see the most vulnerable in our society, bear witness to their struggles, and then work to create systems to make it better.”**

Stacy Abrams, American politician, lawyer, voting rights activist, and author

11. **“Everyone deserves to have their lives elevated through the beauty of truthful representation.”**

Rohit Bhargava, author and keynote speaker on trends, innovation, marketing, storytelling and diversity

12. **“Being a leader means taking an active role in ending all forms of discrimination and oppression, consciously and constantly challenging our own biases, and creating an environment in which our employees feel empowered and safe to speak up when they witness barriers to equity and inclusion.”**

Ian Shugart, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet

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

(22 minutes total)

2.1 Video: Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe

(12 minutes)

Instructions: Watch the Simon Sinek Ted Talk “Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe.” (11m 45s)

While watching and listening to the video, reflect on your own experiences of working in environments where you have felt safe and where you have not felt safe. Also, reflect on your own behaviours and how you contribute to creating a psychologically safer environment for others.

You can find further information about the video on the next page.

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_why_good_leaders_make_you_feel_safe

2.2 Group Discussion: Sharing Your Insights

(10 minutes)

Instructions: Share one key takeaway from the video “Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe.”
(1 minute per member)

Video: Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_why_good_leaders_make_you_feel_safe

Key Video Messages

In this video, you will learn how leaders can foster a sense of safety and inclusivity in the workplace. In organisations where people feel safe and included, several key factors sustain the teams: open and transparent communication, mutual respect, active listening, recognition of individual contributions, and a willingness to sacrifice for the greater good.

Strong inclusive leaders model these behaviours and inspire others to follow suit. These actions can also bolster a sense of security in others by demonstrating empathy, providing support, and proactively addressing any concerns or conflicts that may arise.

A true leader goes beyond achieving results and considers the process by which those results are achieved. They are committed to democracy, helping others develop their own leadership skills, and fostering inclusivity.

Self-sacrifice is the pinnacle of strong leadership. Similar to how a caretaker ensures that those under their care are nourished first, effective leaders prioritise the needs and security of their team members.

When individuals feel valued and protected, they willingly go the extra mile, sacrificing personal interests for the collective success of the team. This cycle of sacrifice and support builds trust, fosters collaboration, and empowers the team to overcome challenges and achieve remarkable results. Strong leadership recognizes that nurturing the team's safety and welfare encourages team members to selflessly sacrifice for the greater good.

To create a safe and inclusive environment, leaders should encourage vulnerability, prioritise the needs of team members over their own interests, strike a balance between safety and promoting growth, address fears and anxieties through open communication, and implement strategies such as diversity training, clear communication channels, and inclusive policies.

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: Share your story, learn from others, and make new connections (15 minutes)

Fostering Inclusion Checklist

Leadership exists at all levels. Using the list below as a guide, we will consider the elements that contribute to an inclusive workplace.

(5 minutes to read, then 1 minute per member to share)

Instructions: Take 5 minutes to look at the checklist on the following page. Think about how each point relates to you as an individual, to your team, to a manager (past or present), or to your organization as a whole.

Check off the elements, behaviours or characteristics that are already in place and working well to foster inclusion. The unchecked areas highlight the challenges that need to be addressed to further enhance inclusion.

Then, take 1 minute per member to share your observations of the inclusive behaviours in the following checklist. Are there areas that are doing well? What areas can be improved?

Fostering Inclusion Checklist

- ☐ Demonstrates self-reflection, growth, and understanding through the use of intentional, professional, and inclusive language.
- ☐ Greets people authentically (takes an interest in everyone).
- ☐ Speaks up when people are being excluded (intentionally includes everyone on the team). Ensures that equal representation is met at the decision-making table.
- ☐ Respects confidentiality with regard to information shared.
- ☐ Uses instances of hurt, miscommunication, and misunderstandings as respectful teachable moments.
- ☐ Listens and engages as a co-conspirator for positive change.
- ☐ Creates a sense of safety for all by strategically and intentionally cultivating an empowering and

affirming workspace.

- ☐ Embraces mentorship and sponsorship to promote equity within the workspace.
- ☐ Approaches leadership through a democratic framework by communicating results from staff engagement surveys and applying the data to improve the workspace.
- ☐ Demonstrates empathy by connecting with members of the team.
- ☐ Seeks to understand diverse beliefs and practices.
- ☐ Encourages and enables others to participate in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion events and groups. Leads the team to establish and follow group norms for a safe and inclusive workplace.
- ☐ Adjusts performance goals for team members in ways that exhibit compassion, care, and attentiveness to individual circumstances.

4. Inclusion by Design: Apply yourself, pledge to grow, and inspire others

(15 minutes)

Employees and leaders at all levels can practice inclusive leadership in their day-to-day work by adopting behaviours and strategies that promote inclusivity and respect for diversity.

By intentionally designing inclusive elements into your leadership approach, you can create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and all employees feel included and empowered.

Implementing these practical steps, leaders can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where all team members feel valued and respected. Practicing inclusive leadership involves concrete actions and behaviours that foster a diverse and inclusive environment.

Below are some practical ways to practice inclusive leadership to help you take this back to your organization to TAKE ACTION!

Instructions: Quickly look over the 4 areas for what inclusion by design activities look like (on the next two pages) at the individual, team, manager and organizational levels. Then discuss the following with your group.

(5 minutes to read, then 1 minute per member to share)

- What areas do you see that are going well in your workplace?
- What areas do you see as areas of growth in your workplace?
- What actions would you like to take personally to bring more inclusion by design approaches into your work, team or organization?

Individual

- **Active Listening:** Make a conscious effort to listen to all team members. Encourage open dialogue and ensure everyone's voice is heard, especially those who might be less vocal.
- **Acknowledge and Address Bias:** Be aware of your own biases and work to mitigate them.

Encourage an environment where biases can be openly discussed and addressed without judgment.

- **Model Inclusive Behaviour:** Demonstrate inclusive behaviour in your daily actions. This includes using inclusive language, being respectful of different perspectives, and showing empathy and understanding.
- **Ongoing Education:** Continuously educate yourself and your team on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. Attend workshops, training sessions, and stay updated on best practices.
- **Hold Yourself Accountable:** Set personal goals for inclusive leadership and regularly assess your progress. Seek feedback from your team and be willing to make changes based on their input.
- **Cultivate Self-Awareness:** Reflect on your own biases and assumptions. Understand how these can impact your interactions and decisions. Actively work to challenge and overcome them.
- **Provide and Seek Feedback:** Give constructive feedback in a way that is supportive and encourages growth. Be open to receiving feedback yourself and use it to improve your own inclusive practices.
- **Support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Participate in or support ERGs within your organization. These groups can provide support, networking opportunities, and help drive inclusive initiatives.

Team

- **Celebrate Differences:** Recognize and celebrate the diverse backgrounds and achievements of your team members. This can include cultural celebrations, recognizing different holidays, and acknowledging unique contributions.
- **Inclusive Meeting Practices:** Structure meetings to be inclusive. This can involve setting clear agendas, rotating meeting times to accommodate different time zones, and using technology to include remote team members.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Foster a collaborative environment where team members work together and support each other. Encourage cross-functional projects and teamwork.
- **Communicate Respectfully:** Use inclusive language that respects all identities and backgrounds. Avoid jargon or slang that might exclude or alienate others. Be mindful of cultural differences in communication styles.
- **Challenge Non-Inclusive Behaviour:** If you notice exclusionary behaviour or language, address it respectfully and constructively. Support a culture where everyone feels comfortable calling out non inclusive practices.
- **Be Flexible and Adaptable:** Show flexibility in accommodating different working styles and needs. This could include supporting flexible working hours or understanding cultural or religious practices.

Manager

- **Diverse Recruitment:** Implement recruitment practices that ensure a diverse pool of candidates. This includes using diverse sourcing channels, creating unbiased job descriptions, and utilizing diverse interview panels.
- **Bias-Free Selection:** Use structured and standardized interview processes to minimize bias. Incorporate blind recruitment techniques where possible to focus on skills and qualifications.
- **Foster an Inclusive Culture:** Encourage an organizational culture that values diversity and inclusion. This can be achieved through regular communication, celebrating diversity, and creating employee resource groups.
- **Provide Inclusive Feedback:** When giving feedback, be mindful of cultural and individual differences. Provide constructive and supportive feedback that helps team members grow and improve.
- **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish safe spaces where employees feel comfortable expressing their concerns, ideas, and experiences. This can include regular check-ins, open-door policies, and anonymous feedback channels.
- **Seek Diverse Perspectives:** Actively seek out and consider diverse viewpoints when making decisions. This can be done through diverse brainstorming sessions, feedback surveys, or inclusive meeting practices.
- **Empower Others:** Delegate responsibilities and provide opportunities for all team members to contribute and take on leadership roles. Empowering others builds confidence and fosters an inclusive environment.
- **Provide Mentorship and Sponsorship:** Act as a mentor or sponsor to employees from underrepresented groups. Offer guidance, support, and opportunities to help them advance in their careers.

Organization

- **Define Inclusive Leadership:** Clearly articulate what inclusive leadership means for your organization, including the behaviours, values, and outcomes you expect from leaders.
- **Set Clear Goals and Metrics:** Establish specific, measurable goals for diversity and inclusion at all leadership levels. Track progress regularly and hold leaders accountable for achieving these goals.
- **Leadership Development Programs:** Offer training and development programs focused on inclusive leadership skills. This can include workshops, mentoring, and coaching on topics like unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive decision-making.
- **Inclusive Policies and Practices:** Develop and enforce policies that promote inclusivity, such as flexible work arrangements, equitable pay, and anti-discrimination policies. Ensure these policies are communicated effectively and applied consistently.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish channels for employees to provide feedback on leadership inclusivity. Use surveys, focus groups, and open forums to gather insights and make improvements.
- **Role Modelling:** Ensure senior leaders exemplify inclusive behaviour. When top leaders prioritize and demonstrate inclusivity, it sets a powerful example for the entire organization.

5. 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 below.

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

For example:

- I will balance the mandate for our work while considering the well-being of the people who form my team.
- I will encourage vulnerability and care within my teams by modelling these characteristics.
- I will take me learning beyond the Circle

6. 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 inclusive leadership and how we might all use what we have learned to create a safer, more inclusive and diverse working environment. We hope you are able to take what you learned and put it into 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, October 6, 2025, at 1:00 pm Eastern Time. This 90-minute Masterclass is a hands-on coaching class Say Less, Get More: Mastering the Art of Effective Negotiation.
- **Next Circle:** The next Circle session will be focused on the topic of Mastering the Art of Negotiation. Please review Discussion Guide #2 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 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 #2 on Mastering the Art of Negotiation

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 #2 on Mastering the Art of Negotiation
- ☐ Attend the Masterclass on October 6 at 1:00pm Eastern
- ☐ Attend the LLMC Lounge (optional)
- ☐ Join the [LLMC LinkedIn](#) group
- ☐ Check out the LLMC [Learning Library](#)

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 (CL) and Assistant Circle Leader (ACL)

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>

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