



2026 EMPOWER-U MENTORING CIRCLE

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

POWER's Empower-U Mentoring Circle Mentoring Program is a unique opportunity to develop future leaders in a confidential and intimate forum, which allows for the free exchange of lessons learned from experience, first-hand advice from today's leaders and discussions around topics that will accelerate women's full potential in the workplace.

What is Mentoring?

- A practice that empowers individuals to achieve professional and personal goals with the support and guidance of another individual who has a different level of experience.
- An opportunity for individuals to increase self-awareness, maximize potential, to develop skills, improve performance and become the best version of themselves.
- A focused, results-oriented relationship that requires confidentiality, openness, courage and commitment to development goals.

What is a Mentoring Circle?

The mentoring circle is a series of group conversations to develop and enhance the potential in emerging leaders, with the same developmental goals as traditional mentoring; however; the mentoring circle takes one on one mentoring to a new level: it offers more perspectives that are diverse, and insightful.

Advantages of Group Mentoring

- Hearing stories and experiences from all mentees and mentors allow for multiple perspectives, greater advice, and a more diverse array of ideas.
- Expands professional and personal support networks.
- Allows mentees to learn from the challenges, success and failure of others.
- Builds an affinity group that establishes bonds which last beyond the program's duration.
- Encourages teamwork and creative problem solving.
- Increases confidence and improves leadership skills.
- Provides an opportunity to develop meeting facilitation skills.

DEFINING A MENTEE

A mentee is an individual, who is committed to furthering her professional development and eager to learn from other individuals' unique experiences and perspectives.

Role of a Mentee

Student

- Openly accepts new information and advice from mentors and other mentees
- Contributes to the conversation, being careful not to dominate
- Poses questions to mentors and mentees

Friend

- Keeps all discussions confidential
- Expresses appreciation for support of mentors and mentees
- Is honest and willing to share personal experiences, advice, knowledge, concerns and insights

Facilitator

- Takes initiative to lead a session and prepare beforehand (a facilitator guide is provided)
- Send out relevant articles, videos, etc. at least a week before the session you are scheduled to facilitate, to prepare mentees and mentors for the session, consider also sending reminder 1 day in advance
- Keeps group on track and engaged in discussion, making sure to cover the agreed upon topic
- Encourages all mentees to contribute, rather than one mentee dominating the conversation (i.e. group discussion similar to "book club" vs. a presentation style)

Benefits of Being a Mentee

- Sharpens leadership, communication and problem-solving skills
- Increases confidence, job satisfaction and opportunities to lead
- Provides a strong network of support in times of change and/or stressful situations, that lasts far beyond the program's duration
- Expands perspective of professional world and encourages open mindedness to new ways of thinking
- Cultivates relationships while advancing your professional development and network
- Develops executive presence through practice
- Provides opportunities for managing multiple priorities and enhancing time management skills
- Increases more comfort sharing with others
- Develops confidence, job satisfaction and finding one's voice
- Develops a professional "elevator speech"

DEFINING A MENTOR

A mentor is an experienced individual who relates to another individual with a different level of experience and helps to support, advise, and encourage another individual's development, in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Roles of a Mentor

Supporter

- Keeps all discussions confidential
- Offers encouragement and builds confidence
- Provides informal emotional support
- Makes herself available outside of the class and is responsive to emails from mentees

Guide

- Helps Mentee Facilitators to stay on track and provides post-session debrief
- Clarifies feelings and ideas of mentees during discussions
- Promotes self-awareness

Advisor

- Provides knowledge and discusses her own experiences
- Probes mentees to dig deeper during discussions
- Suggests challenging ideas and other perspectives
- Suggests helpful resources

Benefits of Being a Mentor

- Provides opportunities to give back to other women professionals
- Contributes to the community by playing an active role preparing more women for leadership positions in the region
- Improves communication, coaching and listening skills
- Expands perspective and allows a better understanding of the challenges up and coming leaders face in the workplace
- Expands professional network

MENTORING CIRCLE EXPECTATIONS:

The Empower-U Mentoring Circle Mentoring Program has been made possible, thanks to our supportive sponsors and members! We ask that you take this commitment very seriously, as each mentee plays an integral role in the success of the program. We have established the following guidelines to set the ground rules and enable each mentee to successfully achieve her goals.

Attendance and Timeliness

A critical component to the achievement of each mentee's goals is building a foundation of trust within the circle. Consistent attendance is essential for that to happen. We ask that you treat these sessions as you would a client meeting or other work commitment, arriving on time, every time. Mark your calendar now with all of the sessions, making sure to take into account the travel time required.

It is expected that you attend all sessions, but should an unforeseen conflict arise, please contact both the mentors and that month's mentee facilitator as soon as possible. There is a maximum of two (2) excused absences for this program. If you feel you cannot commit to regular attendance, please wait until such a time that you can fully participate.

Communication Protocol

You will receive emails from the POWER Management Office (office@powerw.org) as well as from fellow group mentees, and mentors. It's expected that you respect deadlines and reply promptly to these emails.

If you are the facilitator, you will be expected to post the materials on social media outlets after the session, and also provide the materials to help create a historical resource library.

Respect and Confidentiality

Confidentiality, openness and honesty play key roles in allowing the group to establish a strong bond. What is said during the discussions stays within the circle. We also ask that you are respectful and willing to consider others' perspectives. Each mentee is expected to contribute to the discussion, as the group will benefit from hearing all perspectives. Please be cautious not to monopolize the conversation, and be sure to respect the mentee facilitator's role of keeping the discussion on topic.

Initiative and Responsibility

As a mentee, you will facilitate one or more of the sessions. This is a growth experience that will help you build your leadership and communication skills. Please take some time to prepare and send out a relevant article, video, etc., at least a week ahead of time, to get your circle thinking about the topic. Additionally, please include topic appropriate questions to help lead the discussion.

STRUCTURE OF SESSIONS

- Mentees and mentors are expected to arrive at the designated meeting at **4:15pm**. It's essential that you arrive on time.
- The first 15 minutes will be used for networking and settling in
- Each mentee will give a 1-minute update on current events going on in her personal and/or professional life, along with a challenge associated with the discussion topic of the day.
- The month's assigned mentee facilitators will then introduce the topic and begin the discussion on the assigned topic and any reading material or video that she emailed out beforehand. From there, the group will discuss specific personal challenges related to the topic, look to the mentors for advice and continue the conversation until 6:00pm.
- The mentee facilitators will make sure that the discussion stays on topic and that everyone is contributing. She will step in if a mentee is going off topic or monopolizing the conversation. The mentors will also be available to assist the mentee facilitators if necessary.
- In some sessions, we may have a subject matter expert guest mentor join the conversation and offer advice.
- After each session, the facilitators will be expected to post on social media.

MEETING DATES

Tuesday Circle Meeting Dates

September 15, 2026
October 13, 2026
November 10, 2026
January 12, 2027
February 9, 2027
March 9, 2027
April 13, 2027

Wednesday Circle Meeting Dates

September 16, 2026
October 14, 2026
November 11, 2026
January 13, 2027
February 10, 2027
March 10, 2027
April 14, 2027

May Graduation Date To Be Determined