

MONTH 5

# BUILDING SKILLS

HOW TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AT WORK

INSTRUCTIONS

LEAN IN



# INSTRUCTIONS

## Activity (60 minutes)

1. Set a timer for 60 minutes and place the **Situation Cards** in a pile.
2. Pass one pack of **Strategy Cards** to each Circle member.
3. Ask Circle members to read **Strategy Cards** 8-12 to themselves. (5–10 minutes)
4. Circle members will use **Strategy Cards** 1-12 for this activity and set aside cards 13-16.
5. To start, one Circle member picks up a **Situation Card** from the pile, reads the front and back out loud, then places it where everyone can see it.
6. All Circle members pick 1 or 2 **Strategy Cards** that they would use in that situation and place their choices in front of them. There are “in the moment” and “long-term” strategies, and we encourage choosing one of each.
7. As a group, take a few minutes to discuss the strategies that members chose.

(Flip card)

## INSTRUCTIONS

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8. Take turns reading out a **Situation Card**, choosing **Strategy Cards**, and discussing as a group until you've completed the deck or there are 20 minutes left in the meeting.
9. Be sure to return all **Strategy Cards** to the Strategy Card box for future meetings.
10. A digital version of these cards is available at [leanin.org/tradeswomen](https://leanin.org/tradeswomen).

### Meeting wrap-up (20 minutes)

Close the meeting with the Wrap-Up and Reflect and One Action (refer to the Moderator Guide for instructions.)

## SITUATION

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You notice a pattern: every time you suggest how to do a task, your foreman or crew dismisses it.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Women are given less credit for their ideas.<sup>1</sup> This can send the signal that their contributions aren't valuable and that they are not full members of the team. And when people don't feel heard, they may also stop speaking up and sharing their views, which deprives the team of good input and can create a cycle of feeling invisible and overlooked.

## SITUATION

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A crew member says you were chosen to do a task because of something other than your skills and experience. For example, implying that you got the job because you're a woman, or because you're romantically involved with the foreman.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Comments that undermine a person's abilities also discount the skills and qualifications they bring to the job. Not surprisingly, women who receive these comments may feel invisible, minimized, or defensive.

## SITUATION

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Your new supervisor says you're not worth training because mothers don't last long in the trades.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Many people fall into the trap of believing that women can't be fully committed to both work and family.<sup>2</sup> This bias can make people question or underestimate mothers' abilities, though they do not make the same assumptions about fathers.

## SITUATION

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You get the feeling that you're being tested by your foreman and your crew. They keep mixing up your tasks and making things harder than they should be, and you want this pattern to stop.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Giving intentionally incorrect or misleading instructions is setting someone up for failure. It makes it harder for both the individual and the team to get the job done, and it is never OK.

## SITUATION

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Your partner on the job, who is a man, will barely talk to you—only enough to get the job done. You'd like to establish a better working relationship.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Good relationships with crew members are key to safety and job satisfaction. Especially for apprentice or junior tradeswomen, productive working relationships with men are important, as they provide key on-the-job learning opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

## SITUATION

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When you talk to your supervisor, he often interrupts you or cuts the conversation short, and you want to find a way to make sure your concerns and ideas are heard.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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At work, women (especially women of color) often get less time to speak than men do.<sup>4</sup> This means they have fewer opportunities to contribute to the team or project, which could make it easier for others to discount their abilities and not take them seriously.

## SITUATION

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Your supervisor tells you that you need to “tone down” your personality at work or says that you’re getting a reputation for being angry.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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When women assert themselves at work, they are much more likely than men to be called “aggressive,” and Black women are especially likely to be described as “angry.”<sup>5</sup> Not being able to be yourself at work can be emotionally draining,<sup>6</sup> and research on Black women shows that repeatedly being seen as aggressive or angry can lead to stress and long-term emotional strain.<sup>7</sup>

## SITUATION

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A leadership opportunity opens up that you believe you are qualified for, but you're not even considered for the role.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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When women are routinely passed over for promotions, their career and pay suffer, which can be both unfair and frustrating. Not being promoted also prevents women from being visible role models for other women.

## SITUATION

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You hold a leadership position on your crew, and you notice a task has been completed incorrectly. When you explain how to redo the task, the crew member ignores you and asks someone else how to complete it.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Ignoring instructions from a supervisor is disrespectful. Being disrespected in this way might cause someone to feel they need to work harder to assert their status and authority, and that feeling can have dangerous and frustrating consequences for women in the trades.

Women who feel the need to work harder to prove themselves are at increased risk of injury on the job.<sup>8</sup>

When women are not shown the same respect as men, it can lead to fewer women in leadership positions. Having women leaders tends to be associated with more employee-friendly policies, greater diversity, and better results.<sup>9</sup>

## SITUATION

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You are in the middle of a task when a journeyman hands you a note with his phone number on it.

CHOOSE 1 IN THE MOMENT AND 1 LONG-TERM STRATEGY THAT YOU WOULD USE IN THIS SITUATION AND PLACE THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

## WHY IT MATTERS

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Feeling sexualized in the work environment is distracting and can be uncomfortable or threatening. And it puts women in a difficult position. Many women in trades avoid calling out sexualized comments or jokes as inappropriate for fear of being seen as overreacting or not fitting into the masculine culture.<sup>10</sup>