

CIRCLES FOR COMPANIES

How to be an ally to women at work through Lean In Circles

#InspireInclusion in partnership with



International Women's Day

MODERATOR GUIDE

Preparing to host your
International Women's Day event



About LeanIn.Org

Lean In is non-profit organization. Our mission is to help achieve their ambitions and create a more gender equal world. Our original research and free diversity, equity, and inclusion training programs equip organizations and individuals, with the knowledge and tools they need to create a more inclusive workplace culture and thrive at work.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE



Women in the Workplace

Provides valuable insight into state of women in the corporate workplace and recommended strategies for addressing the core challenges women are facing at work.

[EXPLORE ORIGINAL RESEARCH](#)

CULTURAL CHANGE



50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS

Empowers employees to identify and challenge bias against women head-on.



ALLYSHIP AT WORK

Helps employees of all levels recognize their privilege and positional power and take meaningful action as allies.

[EXPLORE 50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS](#)

SUPPORTING WOMEN



CIRCLES FOR COMPANIES

Lean In Circles combine a world-class leadership curriculum with the power of women coming together, in small groups, to learn new skills and support one another.

[EXPLORE CIRCLES FOR COMPANIES](#)



This workshop will provide a taster of Lean In Circles for Companies

How Circles work:

- 8–12 employees who come together around a common thread (i.e. function, location, identity)
- Circle Leaders are employees at any level who want to flex their leadership muscles
- Circles meet once a month for 60–90 minutes, in-person or virtually
- Circles typically meet for a minimum of 7-9 months and stay connected between meetings
- Lean In provides monthly discussion topics and research backed skill-building content for Circles – for free



Workshop Objectives

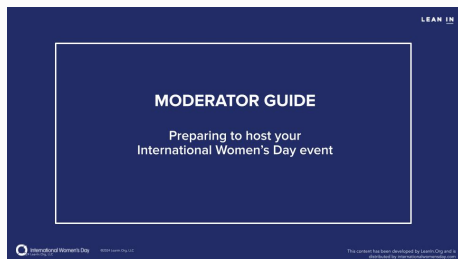
This International Women's Day, help #InspireInclusion: Share concrete actions all employees can take to practice inclusion, by being an ally for women at work and starting Lean In Circle this year.

- Part 1: you'll run a connection activity to bring employees together to experience the power of peer support first hand (through answering a series of connection questions) – because we know that for many women, finding connection and support at work is a major challenge.
- Part 2: includes a short video and group activity where employees will learn 4 specific ways to be an ally for women at work – because by working together and amplifying each other's voices, we can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture for all women.
- Part 3: is focused on inspiring employees to commit to an action they can take to continue to #InspireInclusion all year round – including sharing more information on **Lean In Circles** as a way to create a community of women are committed to advocating for each other at work.



Preparing to host your International Women's Day Event

Download and review this presentation



Slides 3-21 are moderator notes. Read through these ahead of your workshop for tips and advice on how to run a successful event and how to learn more about bringing Lean In Circles to your organization.



Slides 22-55 is what you should present to the audience, when you host your International Women's Day event.

Recommended agenda and timing

5 minutes	Welcome and introductions (<i>slides 22-24</i>)
20 minutes	Connection activity + reflection (<i>slides 25-31</i>)
10 minutes	Introduce and watch video (<i>slides 32-37</i>)
15 minutes	Group discussion (<i>slides 38-43</i>)
5 minutes	Introduction to Lean In Circles (<i>slides 44-51</i>)
5 minutes	Commit to One Action and close (<i>slides 52-55</i>)
Total time: 1 hour	

Note: *This presentation is ideal for groups of mostly women (but anyone is welcome to attend!). If you have a mixed-gender audience, you may prefer to leverage our 50 Ways to Fight Bias toolkit, available at leanin.org/IWD.*



Ice-breaker: Experience the power of peer support

Slides 25-31

You will kick off your workshop with a **connection activity** that is focused on sharing personal stories and benefiting from one another's ideas, experiences, and support.

This activity facilitates the process of sharing deep information with one another quickly through a series of questions. The goal of this activity is to get to know one another better by answering questions and sharing a lot of information fast.

You will break into smaller groups of 5-7 participants for this activity.

The connection questions are also available in six other languages [here](#).

Connection Activity 12 mins

Take a photo of this slide so you have the prompts at hand!

Go around the group and take turns answering these questions

- Who's had an impact on your life whom you haven't thanked? Why?
- If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?
- When have you felt most powerful?
- How has your childhood or upbringing shaped the way you show up at work?
- How would your closest friend describe you?
- What is your greatest professional ambition and why does it motivate you?

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International Women's Day

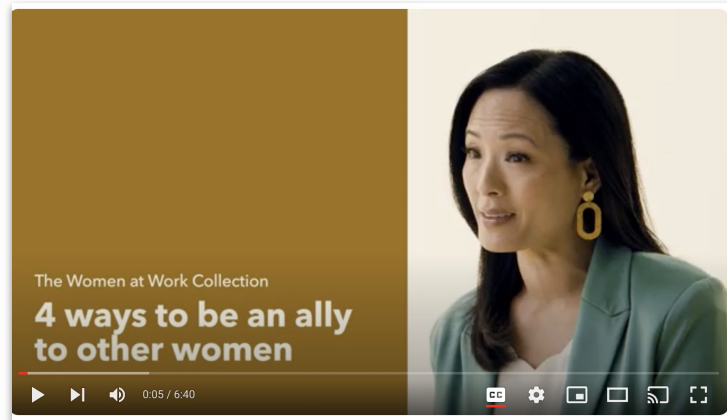
Learn: 4 ways to be an ally to women at work

Slides 32-37

Next you will bring the full group back together and introduce and watch a short ~7 minute video as a whole group.

This video is all about the power of women supporting one another and explores the critical role that women with more privilege can play by showing up as allies to those who face additional barriers—such as women of color, LGBTQ+ groups, and women with disabilities. By working together and amplifying each other's voices, we can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture for all women.

Turn on closed captions and auto translate functionality to add translated captions.



<https://leanin.org/women-at-work/4-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-other-women>

Practice: how to make sure women's ideas are heard

Slides 38-43

Next will you create space for participants to practice one of the strategies they learnt about in the video: **how to make sure women's ideas are heard**. This is just one of the activities from our [full discussion guide](#) that accompanies this video.

We recommend breaking into smaller groups again for this discussion (then bring the full group back together for the reflection if you have time).

- Before breaking into small groups, read aloud the questions on slide 41. The steps these questions refer to are shown on the next slide (slide 42).
- If you are meeting in person, we recommend printing slide 41 and 42 so participants have these have in front of them during the discussion.
- If you are meeting virtually, we recommend pasting the questions from slide 41 and the steps on slide 42 into the chat. *You can copy and paste the text from the next slide so it's easy to paste into the chat.* Alternative you can broadcast slide 42 to your breakout rooms, if you have this functionality.



Practice: how to make sure women's ideas are heard

Slide 42 [COPY AND PASTE INTO THE CHAT WHEN YOU GET TO SLIDE 42, IF MEETING VIRTUALLY]

READ: Ways that you can make sure women's ideas are heard:

1. Invite other women to speak
2. Distribute speaking time equally
3. Ask to hear from women who are being interrupted and spoken over
4. Amplify other women's ideas by repeating them and giving credit
5. Praise and showcase other women's work
6. Create systems to distribute "office housework," such as note-taking, in meetings
7. Share public speaking opportunities with women who have less power or privilege
8. Share pronouns

ACTION: Take a few minutes to journal the answer to these questions on your own and then take turns to share out in your small groups

1. Which of these steps do you consistently take today?
2. Are there any steps you'd like to make part of your regular workday?
3. Do you have any strategies that are not listed for supporting other women in meetings and group conversations?



Practice: create an advocacy alliance through Lean In Circles

Slides 44-51

Next you will share a concrete way participants can act on another of the strategies featured in the video: to form an advocacy alliance committed to supporting and advocating for others at work, by starting a Lean In Circle.


Lean In Circles combine a world-class leadership curriculum with the power of women coming together to learn new skills and support one another – for free.

Read aloud the information on the slides to explain more about how Circles work and encourage participants to sign up to start their own Circle – as a meaningful commitment to #InspireInclusion this year.

A Lean In Circle is a great way to get started!

Lean In Circles combine a world-class leadership curriculum with the power of women coming together to learn new skills and support one another – for free.

Start a Lean In Circle to go further, faster, and help other women do the same.




LEAN IN

This content has been developed by LeanIn.Org and is distributed by internationalwomensday.com

International Women's Day

How Circles work

- 8–12 people who come together
- once a month for 60-90 minutes
- either virtually or in-person
- to learn new leadership skills and practice strategies to navigate bias, together
- ...your very own team of career coaches!



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International Women's Day

Commit: one action you can take to #InspireInclusion this year

Slides 52-55

Finally, you will close by encouraging participants to think about and share one concrete action they commit to taking to #InspireInclusion this year, based on everything they have learnt and experienced from this session. Sharing these commitments out loud to the group is a great way to drive accountability.

Think about ways you might capture all of the One Actions and find ways to revisit them throughout the year.

Encourage people to join in the global conversation and share their One Actions on social media using the hashtags:
#InspireInclusion and **#IWD2024**

GROUP ACTIVITY 10 mins

Take a moment to think through an action you will commit to take after today's workshop. Then take turns going around the room to share.

***“My One Action to
#InspireInclusion
In 2024 is...”***

You can also join the conversation and share your commitment on social media using the hashtags **#InspireInclusion** and **#IWD2024**

LEAN IN

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Technical requirements

Breakout groups

- During the icebreaker connection activity and group activity we recommend you split the group up into small groups of 5-7 people to enable richer discussion in small groups settings.
- If you are hosting your event virtually you can do this by putting people into breakout rooms. We recommend using Zoom, which allows you to assign breakout rooms within the meeting. For other platforms, you will need to pre-assign breakout rooms.

Audio and video capability

- On slide 37 you will play a video for the group. If you are meeting in person make sure you have a way to play audio during your presentation and if you are meeting virtually, make sure both audio and video sharing are enabled. It's a good idea to load up the video before your workshop starts to make sure there's no issues.
- Link to video: <https://leanin.org/women-at-work/4-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-other-women>



Bring Lean In Circles to your organization

After today's session, we hope you'll consider bringing Lean In Circles to your organization to continue supporting and empowering women employees all year round.

Circles are easy to get started and many companies plug them into Employee Resource Groups or as a complement to their existing Learning and Development initiatives. We make it simple to launch and scale your Circles program—and tailor it to your existing diversity and inclusion efforts. And it's all completely free.

Circles are active in 183 countries and in more than 3,000 companies, including Adidas, P&G, Salesforce, and Walmart.



Circles drive real change

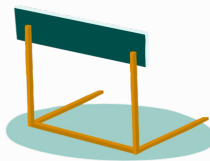
Thousands of women tell us their Circle has helped them reach and exceed their career goals

Women in Circles are more likely to:



Lean into leadership

73% of women in Circles feel equipped to be better leaders as a result of being part of a Circle



Embrace new challenges

Two-thirds of women in Circles say they've taken on a new challenge with the support of their Circle

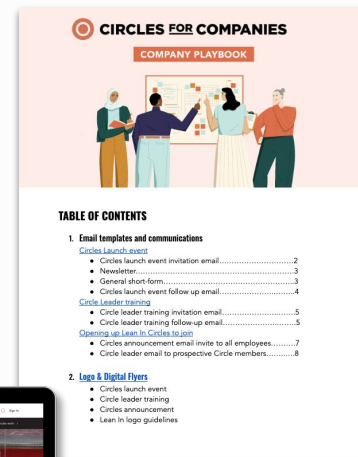
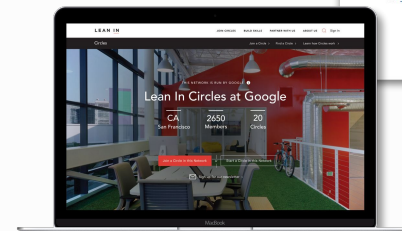
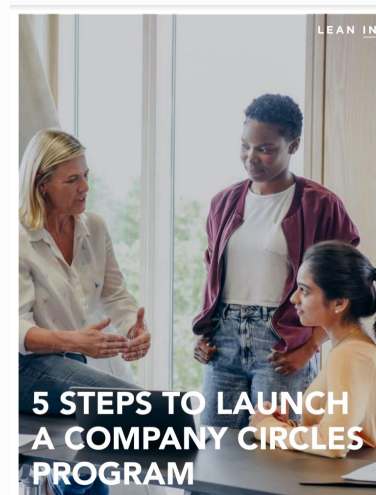


Make positive change

85% of women in Circles credit their Circle with a positive change in their lives

Lean In provides all the resources to run Circles – for free

- [Training](#) with the Lean In team on How to Bring Circles to your Company – we walk you through everything you need to get started.
- [Circles Start-Up Kit](#) for a step-by-step guide of everything you need to launch and grow your program including a marketing toolkit to get employees excited.
- A world class [leadership program](#) for women in Circles to follow in their Circle meetings and learn new skills together.
- A central online platform to manage and track your Circles program.
- And because we believe all companies, regardless of size or budget, should have the tools they need to advance women and create an equal and inclusive workplace—we offer all of our resources and programming for free.



Leadership Training designed for women in Circles

The **Women at Work Collection** is Lean In's leadership training designed specifically for women in Circles, by women, to build new skills, navigate bias, and advance their careers.

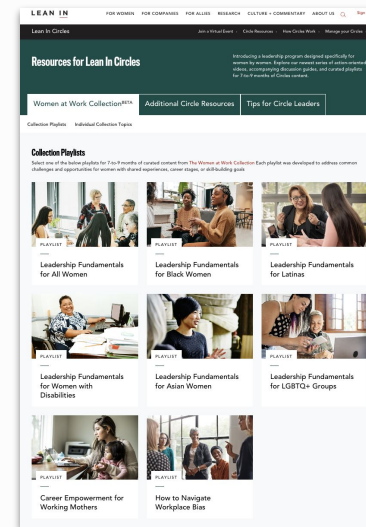
Drawing upon decades of research and insights from our global community, this video-based curriculum features the topics that are most important to women in the workplace: from mastering negotiation techniques, effectively combating burnout, and becoming a transformational leader. Each 5-to-8 minute video is accompanied by a discussion guide to apply your new skills and participate in meaningful conversations with your Circle members.

Also check out our [curated playlists](#), such as Leadership Fundamentals for Black women. Each playlist is designed for women with shared experiences, career stages, or skill-building goals and guides Circle members through a 7-to-9 month curriculum.

Through the video and discussion activity featured in this workshop (4 ways to be an ally to women at work) you will experience one of topics in the Women at Work Collection first hand.

EXPLORE THE COLLECTION

The Women at Work Collection



Let us help you get started

1. Attend a free webinar on How to bring Lean In Circles to your Company (register [here](#))

Our 75-minute virtual training will provide a step-by-step walkthrough of how to bring Lean In Circles to your organization – for free.



2. Connect with the Lean In team for hands on support to scale your Circles program (complete [form](#))

If you're ready to get your Circles program started, book time to connect with our business development team for tips and advice on planning your launch and guidance to help you scale the impact of your Circles program.



LeanIn.Org wants to thank its partner Getty Images for the imagery of powerful women at work. Images used in this document may not be re-distributed to any party or used apart from this document.

Presentation starts on the next slide

CIRCLES FOR COMPANIES

How to be an ally to women at work through Lean In Circles

#InspireInclusion in partnership with



International Women's Day

LEAN IN



International Women's Day

LeanIn.Org and InternationalWomensDay.com are working in collaboration to #InspireInclusion this International Women's Day.

This content has been developed by LeanIn.Org and is distributed by InternationalWomensDay.com.



Agenda

- 01 **Experience:** the power of peer support
- 02 **Learn:** 4 ways to be an ally to women at work
- 03 **Practice:** how to make sure women's voices are heard
- 04 **Commit:** to One Action to #InspireInclusion in 2024

ICE-BREAKER

**Let's start by getting to know
one another on a deeper level
in a short amount of time**

ICEBREAKER: Connection Cards

Instructions:

In a minute you'll be placed into small Circles of 5-7 people

- **Step 1:** Introduce yourself to the group (~3 mins)
- **Step 2:** Take turns answering the questions (~12 mins)
- **Step 3:** We'll come back together to debrief on your experience (~5 mins)

Take a photo of this slide so you
have the prompts at hand!

Icebreaker 3 mins

Start by taking turns to introduce yourself

1. My name is ...
2. Something that brings me joy is ...



Connection Activity

12 mins

Take a photo of this slide so you have the prompts at hand!

Go around the group and take turns answering these questions

Who's had an impact on your life whom you haven't thanked? Why?

If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?

When have you felt most powerful?

How has your childhood or upbringing shaped the way you show up at work?

How would your closest friend describe you?

What is your greatest professional ambition and why does it motivate you?



Circle Fundamentals

In order to get the most out of this activity and make sure people feel comfortable to share, we ask that you commit to the following fundamentals, when participating in this group activity:

Confidentiality

Trust is crucial.
What happens in
your should stay in
your Circle.

Compassion

Practice empathy,
consider different
perspectives, and try
your best to express
yourself openly and
sincerely

Communication

Listen with intent
and make space for
everyone to talk
without distraction
or interruptions

Commitment

Everyone should be
invested in your
Circle's success and
fully present at
meetings.



**We're going to head into
our breakout groups now.**

**See you back here in
15 minutes.**

Full group reflection

3 mins

Bring the full group back together and invite 1-2 people to share their reflections with the group



1. Did the questions help you to feel a connection with other members of the Circle? How so?
2. Did you learn anything about yourself or others that you didn't expect?

LEARN TOGETHER

Now that we've got to know each other better – let's think about role we can all play a role in creating a more inclusive workplace

**Today we're going to
think about ways you can
be an ally to women in
the workplace**





We'll explore the critical role that those with more privilege can play by showing up as allies to those who face additional barriers—such as women of color, LGBTQ+ groups, and women with disabilities



DID YOU KNOW?

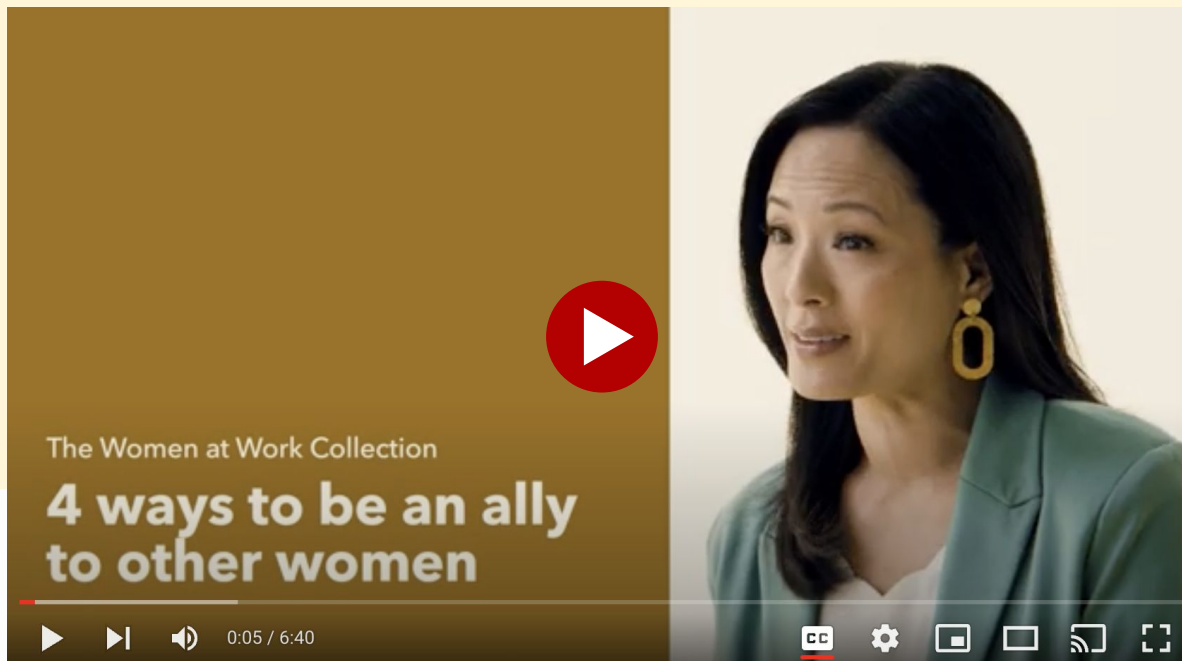
Research shows that when people with more privilege advocate for equality, their voices are heard, and they're less likely to face backlash.





By working together and amplifying each other's voices, we can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture for all women.





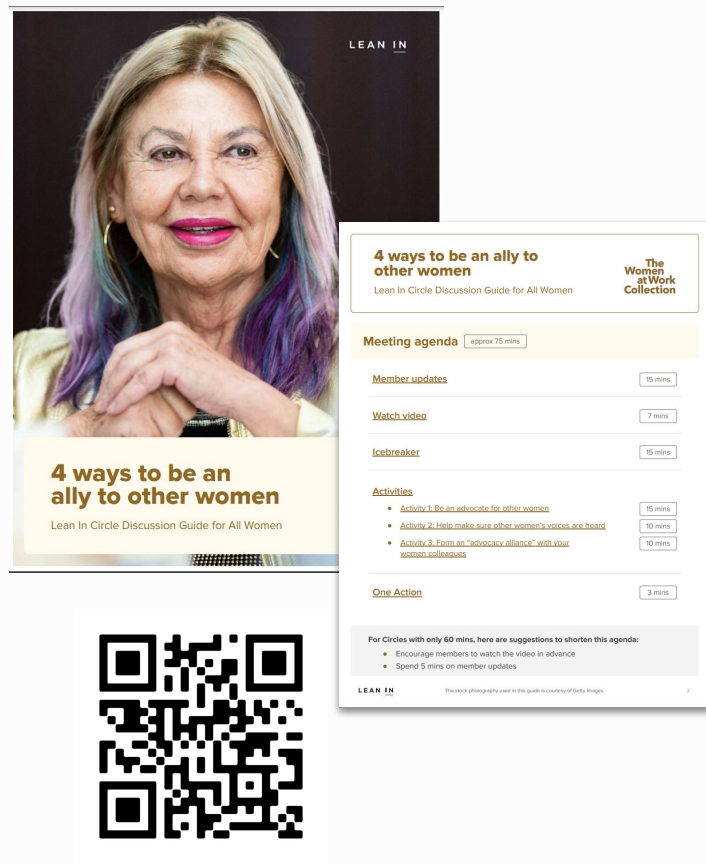
CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO

ACTIVITY:

Today we will have time to explore two of the strategies highlighted in this video:

1. Making sure other women's voices are heard
2. Forming an advocacy alliance and committing to advocating for other women

If you would like to learn more about the other strategies referenced in this video, scan the QR code to download the full discussion guide



4 ways to be an ally to other women	
Lean In Circle Discussion Guide for All Women	
Meeting agenda (approx. 75 mins)	
Member updates	15 mins
Watch video	7 mins
Icebreaker	15 mins
Activities	
• Activity 1: Be an advocate for other women	15 mins
• Activity 2: Help make sure other women's voices are heard	10 mins
• Activity 3: Form an "advocacy alliance" with your women colleagues	10 mins
One Action	3 mins

For Circles with only 60 mins, here are suggestions to shorten this agenda:

- Encourage members to watch the video in advance
- Spend 5 mins on member updates

LEAN IN

The stock photography used in this guide is courtesy of Getty Images.



PRACTICE TOGETHER

**Help make sure women's
voices are heard**

ACTIVITY:

In this activity, you'll brainstorm ways to help ensure other women are heard and included in group conversations.

It's especially important to take these steps to include women with less power or privilege than yourself



ACTIVITY

15 mins

Take a few minutes to journal on your own and then share out in your small groups, to learn from one other

1. Which of the steps (on the next slide) do you consistently take today?
2. Are there any steps you'd like to make part of your regular workday?
3. Do you have any strategies that are not listed (on the next slide) for supporting other women in meetings and group conversations?



Steps to ensure women are heard and included in group conversations

Invite other women to speak

Praise and showcase other women's work

Distribute speaking time equally

Create systems to distribute "office housework," such as note-taking, in meetings

Ask to hear from women who are being interrupted and spoken over

Share public speaking opportunities with women who have less power or privilege

Amplify other women's ideas by repeating them and giving credit

Share pronouns



Full group reflection (OPTIONAL only if time)

3 mins

Bring the full group back together and invite 1-2 people to share their reflections with the group



1. What, if anything, surprised you from the video or the group discussion today?
2. What was your biggest takeaway from your breakout group conversation?

FORM AN ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

To continue to #InspireAction all year round – consider starting a community of women who commit to advocating for each other at work

A Lean In Circle is a great way to get started!

Lean In Circles combine a world-class leadership curriculum with the power of women coming together to learn new skills and support one another – for free.

Start a Lean In Circle to go further, faster, and help other women do the same.



How Circles work

- 8–12 people who come together once a month, for 60-90 minutes, either virtually or in-person
- Together you'll learn new leadership skills, practice strategies to navigate bias, and amplify each others achievements
- And you'll benefit from the peer mentorship and advice of your Circle members... your very own team of career coaches!



Lean In.Org's Leadership Library

Choose any topic from our library to discuss with your Circle each month

The
Women
at Work
Collection

Skill Building

- How to become a transformational leader
- How to handle being the only one in the room
- How to find sponsors who'll accelerate your career
- How to negotiate as a woman—and get what you ask for
- How to get the recognition you deserve at work
- 5 ways to overcome self-doubt at work
- How to make assertiveness work for you
- 5 Ways to fight burnout at work

Women Supporting Women

- [4 ways to be an ally to other women](#)
- 5 ways to intervene when other women face disrespect

Microaggressions

- How Black women can respond to microaggressions
- How Latinas can respond to microaggressions
- How Asian women can respond to microaggressions
- How women with disabilities can respond to microaggressions
- How LGBTQ+ women can respond to microaggressions

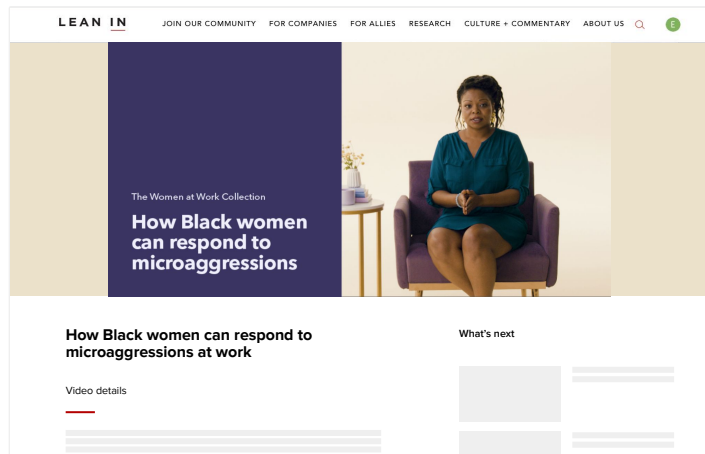
Navigating Bias

- How to respond to microaggressions at work
- Working mothers face a lot of bias—here's how to push back
- 5 pro tips for mothers returning to the workforce

Learn more at leanin.org/women-at-work.



Each topic includes a short video to watch together, and discussion questions to put into practice what you've learnt with your Circle



Video

Each brief video includes research-backed insights and is enriched with personal stories from the global Lean In community to validate women's experiences.



Discussion guide

Step-by-step meeting agendas for women to come together to discuss key takeaways from the video. Discussion prompts encourage rich discussion, peer-to-peer mentorship and sharing of ideas.

There's also curated playlists for you to follow based on your identity, life stage or career goals

Leadership Fundamentals for All Women



Leadership Fundamentals for Black Women



Leadership Fundamentals for Asian Women



Leadership Fundamentals for Women with Disabilities



Leadership Fundamentals for LGBTQ+ Groups



Leadership Fundamentals for Latinas



Career Empowerment for Working Mothers



How to Navigate Workplace Bias



Circles change lives

More than 88,000 women who have started Circles in 183 countries.

85%

of Circle members credit their Circle with a positive change in their lives

73%

of Circle members feel equipped to be better leaders

2/3

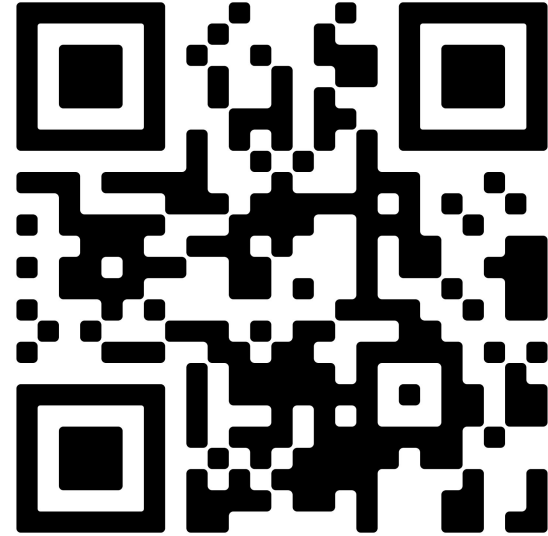
of Circle members have taken on a new challenge



It's easy to get your Circle started today!

To get started, scan the QR code to register your Circle in just a few short steps.

Or go to **leanin.org/events** to sign up for a Circle Leader Training where you'll learn how to get your Circle up and running, from deciding on your Circle's purpose right up to hosting your first meeting.



COMMIT TO ACTION

**Commit to one concrete action you
will take after today's session, to
#InspireAction**

GROUP ACTIVITY

5 mins

Take a moment to think through an action you will commit to take after today's workshop. Then take turns going around the room to share.

***“My One Action to
#InspireInclusion In 2024 is...”***

You can also join the conversation and share your commitment on social media using the hashtags **#InspireInclusion** and **#IWD2024**



LEARN MORE

If you enjoyed this workshop, scan this QR code to learn more about LeanIn.Org's research and programs, to create more inclusive workplaces and cultures where women can thrive at work and achieve their ambitions.



LEAN IN

WHAT WOULD YOU DO
IF YOU WEREN'T AFRAID?

#InspireInclusion