

Best Practices and Recommendations for IWL Peer Mentoring Circle

Peer mentoring circles are self-governing. That is, as a group you will decide how the group functions, who will be the facilitator in the meetings, the time and length of the meetings, topics covered, if you meet in-person or virtual, if you want to invite guest mentors (from IWL expert mentoring pool) to a meeting, etc.

IWL recommendations and minimal requirements

1. Participants are required to complete the mentoring circle contract. While participation in the peer circle is voluntary, for the group to maximally function all members should be committed to the group as well as be committed to confidentiality (send contracts to debra.oswald@Marquette.edu).
2. We recommend that the groups meet minimally once a month (recognizing flexibility around breaks) for at least 1 hour. The dates, time, and location (virtual or in-person) are to be agreed upon by group members. The IWL suite (Holthusen 460) has a comfortable, private room for meetings. If you would like to use that space, please email debra.oswald@marquette.edu.
3. The role of the facilitator should rotate so that no one person has an undue burden. The specific role of the facilitator will vary by group, but they should minimally send out a meeting reminder, keep the discussion focused and productive on the selected topic, and provide a summary of shared resources (as appropriate) to the group's Sharepoint site.
4. We recommend that meetings be semi-structured.
 - a. We recommend starting each meeting with members sharing good news or other updates. Celebrating and sharing your accomplishments (even small accomplishments) is important.
 - b. The meeting should have a topic (previously identified by the members) to focus the discussion on and be led by that meeting's facilitator.
 - c. Ideally, there should also be time for a discussion on any other timely issues the members would like to share or discuss.

Please contact [Debra Oswald](#) (IWL co-director and coordinator of Peer Mentoring Circles), with any questions or comments. Please let us know if you need assistance accessing resources or if you have other questions as your circle develops. We are happy to provide support and are committed to helping you establish a successful peer mentoring circle.