

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

# CENTERED LEADERSHIP: PEER SUPPORT POWER HOUR

# Overview

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Peer mentorship is incredibly valuable—and something all women can do for one another. This Peer Support Power Hour activity guides your Circle through the process of working together to come up with creative solutions to problems. Throughout the activity, you'll rely on the Appreciative Inquiry problem-solving framework, which uses positive questions to uncover strengths and opportunities. Your Circle can repeat this activity as often as you'd like, bringing new problems to the Circle that will help you learn and grow together.

## Meeting Goals

- Learn how to pose positive questions using Appreciative Inquiry
- Solve problems with the four steps of Appreciative Inquiry: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver
- Gain new perspectives and uncover solutions to challenges

## Pre-Meeting Prep

- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Encourage each member to come with a personal challenge she's facing. It should make her feel excited, anxious, or fearful.



### Brought to you in partnership with . . .

Joanna Barsh, director emeritus at McKinsey & Company and author of *Centered Leadership* and *How Remarkable Women Lead* along with McKinsey & Company.

# Meeting Agenda

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🕒 Approx. 115 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of twelve members)

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## 1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Warm up, catch up, and get going

p.4

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## 2 Educational Activities 🕒 Approx. 95 minutes

Learn from experts and one another

p.5

- **Activity 1: Learn About Appreciative Inquiry** 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes  
Take a few minutes to discuss the core concepts of Appreciative Inquiry and select a personal challenge to explore

p.5

- **Activity 2: Peer Support Power Hour** 🕒 Approx. 60 minutes  
Learn to reframe challenges into opportunities using the four steps of Appreciative Inquiry: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver

p.6

- **Activity 3: Apply What You've Learned** 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes  
Get a new perspective on a challenge and decide on a course of action you can take to tackle it

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## 3 Wrap-Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

What's next and a few final words

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# Meeting Guide

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## Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

### Step 1: Icebreaker



Group activity



1 minute or less per member

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with one another and ourselves. One by one, fill in the sentence below and share it with your Circle. Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- The insights of my peers are important to me because . . .

# Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

⌚ Approx. 95 minutes

## Activity 1: Learn About Appreciative Inquiry

⌚ Approx. 10 minutes

### Step 1: Review the fundamentals of Appreciative Inquiry

 Group activity

⌚ 5 minutes

Take a few minutes to discuss the core concepts of Appreciative Inquiry as a group.

#### Appreciative Inquiry is a framework for solving problems

It can be easy to sink into negativity when we think about the challenges we're facing. Appreciative Inquiry helps you find positive solutions using four steps—Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver. At each step, you'll ask questions that will help you zero in on strengths and opportunities, instead of focusing on shortcomings and barriers.

- DISCOVER: "What are my strengths?"
- DREAM: "What might be?"
- DESIGN: "What will it take to get there?"
- DELIVER: "What actions will get me started?"


Here are examples of how using Appreciative Inquiry can help you reframe a challenge as an opportunity:


Instead of asking . . .	Ask . . .
What is the biggest problem here?	What is going well right now?
Why did I make that mistake?	How have I handled this type of situation successfully before?
How can I get out of this mess?	What possibilities exist that I haven't thought of yet?

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## Activity 1: Learn About Appreciative Inquiry (cont.)


### Step 2: Pick a personal challenge to explore

 Individual activity

 5 minutes

Take a few minutes to think about a personal challenge you'd like to work through using Appreciative Inquiry. Write about your challenge in the space below.

## Activity 2: Peer Support Power Hour

 Approx. 60 minutes

During this activity, you will break into small groups and select one member's personal challenge to work through in each group. If yours is selected, you become the challenge "owner" and the group will tackle your challenge together for the rest of the activity.

### Step 1: Select one personal challenge to tackle

 Small group activity

 10 minutes

Break into small groups of three or four members. One by one, share the challenge you wrote down. After each member has shared, pick one to focus on. We recommend that you pick a challenge that will call on thoughtful input from the entire group.


We know it can be hard to select a single challenge, so we encourage you to schedule additional Peer Support Power Hour sessions so you can repeat this activity and give other members a chance to be the challenge owner.

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## Activity 2: Peer Support Power Hour (cont.)

### Step 2: Apply Appreciative Inquiry to the challenge

 Small group activity

 15 minutes

Stay in your small groups of three or four. If you are the owner, answer the questions below out loud so the rest of the group can gain a better understanding of the issue you'll be working through together. If you need to organize your thoughts first, it's OK to spend five to ten minutes jotting down notes in the spaces below.

Restate your personal challenge for the group:

DISCOVER: What personal strengths can you apply to this situation? What core strengths do you possess that have helped you be successful in the past?

DREAM: Imagine the future. What does success look like in this situation?



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## Activity 2: Peer Support Power Hour (cont.)

DESIGN: What will it take to get there? Identify the steps—big and small—that will help you get from your current situation to the desired outcome.

DELIVER: What actions will get you started on that path?

If you're not the owner, you'll be able to share your insights in steps 3 and 4—and there's a good chance you'll learn something that helps you, too. If it's helpful, you can take notes below so you are ready to share your thoughts with the group.

### Step 3: Ask clarifying questions and collect your thoughts

 Small group activity

 15 minutes

After the owner completes step 2, other members should spend a few minutes asking clarifying questions. Resist the urge to offer suggestions at this point,



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## Activity 2: Peer Support Power Hour (cont.)

### Step 4: Discuss the challenge as a group

 Small group activity

 20 minutes

Now it's time for the group to share their insights with the owner so she can expand her thinking and land on the best solution. One by one, other members should offer words of encouragement and share their own ideas for addressing the challenge.

If you're the owner, thank each member after her turn. Focus on listening rather than responding. In fact, you should act as if you're not even there so you don't influence the other members and are able to get the full benefit of their perspectives.

If it's helpful, you can use the space below to collect your thoughts as your group discusses the challenge.

## Activity 3: Apply What You've Learned

⌚ Approx. 25 minutes

Now that you've worked through a challenge as a group, you may find that you have a fresh perspective on your own challenge. In this activity, each Circle member will apply key takeaways from the Peer Support Power Hour to her personal challenge.

### Step 1: Decide on a course of action

 Individual activity

⌚ 15 minutes

Use the space below to write down how you plan to tackle your personal challenge.

### Step 2: Share your plan with your Circle

 Group activity

⌚ 10 minutes

Come back together as a large group. One by one, use the prompts below to share your new ideas with your fellow Circle members.

1. As a reminder, my challenge is:
2. One insight I gained using Appreciative Inquiry is:
3. I plan to:

Move quickly from member to member and consider cheering on one another as you go!

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## Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

### Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting: day and time, location, food and drink. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who's going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting and brainstorm improvements going forward.

### Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less

To punctuate the end of this meeting, go around your Circle one by one and complete the sentence below.

- After our Peer Support Power Hour, I am feeling . . .

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# **Congratulations on a great meeting.**