

## **SUPERVISORY MENTORING CIRCLES**

The USGS Supervisory Development Program has chosen to utilize “Mentoring Circles” to enhance the learning experience for their Supervisory Challenge class participants. These mentoring circles are a valuable tool for growth and development. Here is a look at a “mentoring circle” model.

### ***Mentoring Circles***

The mentoring circle model involves one mentor working with a group of supervisory protégés. Mentoring circles typically have an experienced person as their mentor who focuses the group and provides technical and organizational advice and guidance. The mentor assists the circle members in utilizing their combined energies and experiences to help one another go beyond what any member knows or contributes as an individual. The benefit of mentoring circles is that they generate many different perspectives rather than a single point of view. Additionally, as new supervisors, many of these individuals may be experiencing similar challenges at the same time and will have the opportunity to learn from each other as well as from their seasoned mentor.

Mentoring circle participants should be aware that they are working with a group and by the very nature of group mentoring, their access to assistance and guidance is multiplied. Because of the various backgrounds of members of the mentoring circle, the protégé has a vast array of resources to draw on. In group mentoring some of the intimacy can be lost but it can also be magnified by the relationships formed by mentoring partners. Because a variety of personalities form the circle and circle members will interact with each other, many relationships will be formed. The gains made by having multiple resources can enrich the mentoring process rather than diminish it, as indicated below:

- Capitalize on the unique skills of many individuals who can strategically share them with their peers.
- Support team building and mutual competency development within a team. Team mentoring is great for cross-training on specific skills.
- Reduce the learning curve among multiple individuals beginning a process at the same ---- level.
- Take advantage of the seasoned expertise of one knowledgeable individual in your organization and make it available to multiple learners at one time.

**Objective:** Supervisory Mentoring Circles create a perfect and safe sounding board on how to be a better supervisor and do the right thing. Now that you are a new supervisor and have attended the Supervisory Challenge class, you will be in a position to put these new skills to use and discuss successes and pitfalls with your circle.

**Mentoring Circles in Action:**

- Attend the Supervisory Challenge Post Class Kick Off WebEx with your proteges
- Participate in at least 1-2 hours of mentoring circle discussions per month
- Continue “mentoring circle” participation for 6 months
- Complete the 6 month post-mentoring circle evaluation

**Mentor Responsibilities**

- Determine the schedule of meetings attended by mentor and circle members
- Coordinate regular meetings between circle members and the mentor (you)
- Facilitate meetings involving you (the mentor) and all the members
- Require circle members to submit to you (the mentor) their objectives and goals for the mentoring circle
- Address and discuss topics related to the goals and objectives of the circle members
- Encourage circle members to meet among themselves or even in a group separate from you

**Protégé Responsibilities**

- Determine your goals and objectives for your mentoring experience
- Submit topics for discussion for the mentoring circle meetings
- Attend the regularly scheduled mentoring circle meetings
- Participate in meetings with other members of the mentoring circle
- Commit to your own personal growth and development