

# Mentoring

## Mentoring Circles

In recognition of January as National Mentoring Month, AWIS held a series of webinars on the topic. On January 16th, Masha Fridkis-Hareli, PhD, past president of the AWIS Massachusetts chapter, gave a presentation on the structure and activities that shape the chapter's very successful **Mentoring Circle Program**. Several AWIS chapters have modeled similar programs after the Massachusetts model and have been very successful.

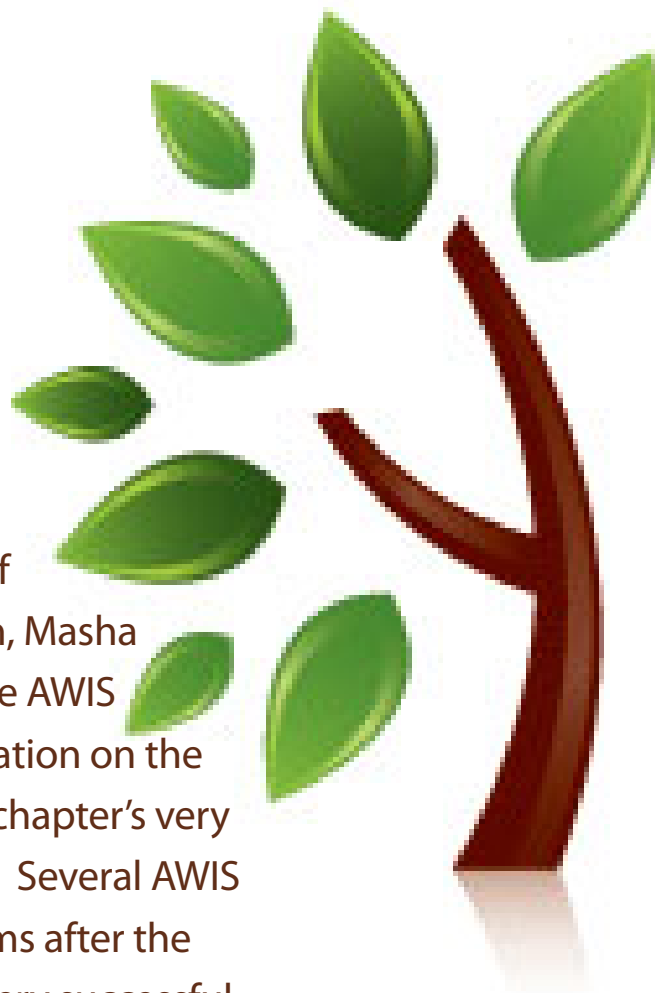


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### What is a Mentoring Circle?

A mentoring circle is a small group of women scientists committed to meeting regularly and supporting one another with advice, encouragement and information. The focus of a mentoring circle is career growth and problem-solving, additionally they can provide a mechanism for sharing frustrations. Trained mentors help guide and promote productive discussions.

Ideally, mentoring circles consist of 3-5 mentees and at least one mentor. They usually meet monthly. The time commitment is about 2-6 hours per month. It can last for as long as the circle chooses to meet, the AWIS Massachusetts program revolves around an academic calendar and officially runs from September to April. This year, they have 74 mentees, 26 mentors and 16 mentor circles..

### Benefits of a Mentoring Circle:

- Share your journey with women who have been there
- Get advice from many people at once
- Develop coaching skills in a comfortable environment
- It's an opportunity to share your experiences
- Broadens your network

### Keys to Success:

- **Commitment.** This only works if all participants are fully committed, attend and prepare for meetings.
- **Confidentiality.** There must be absolute confidentiality and trust among circle members.
- **Organization.** Clearly defined goals, roles, expectations and time frames are a must.
- **Implementation.** Act on your plans.
- **Rewards.** For mentors, it's a great leadership and coaching opportunity. For mentees, solid career advice is invaluable.

Want to learn more?  
Visit [www.mass-awis.org](http://www.mass-awis.org).