



## **Case Study: Peer Learning Group Coaching**

**Meet Jeremy, a mid-level leader in a regional office of a federal agency.**

### **Initial Peer Coaching Focus: Managing Up**

Jeremy was a participant in an Executive Leader Development Program for high potential managers sponsored by his agency's succession planning program office. As part of the leader development program, Jeremy and seven of his peers participated in a peer learning circle. The goal of the peer learning circle was to help leaders help each other address individual leadership priorities and challenges, by sharing wisdom, diverse experiences, and ideas.

The group met once a month for two hours. At each meeting, a different group member had the opportunity to present a challenge and ask for help working through it.

### **The Challenge**

Jeremy had unsuccessfully been trying to obtain management approval for a new agricultural initiative in his region. Feeling discouraged, he joined the peer learning circle and asked the group to help him "convince my supervisor to support my idea."

### **Desired Result**

Jeremy wanted to launch the new initiative because it was innovative, it would serve many stakeholders, and it supported the strategic direction of his agency. He wanted his manager's approval to move forward.

### **Reframed Coaching Focus: Expanding my influence**

In peer learning, as the inquiry process unfolds, the person asking for help often comes to see their initial challenge in a new way – we call this reframing. As the group asked him more questions, Jeremy came to see that he had other sources of power he could use to influence the outcome: other enthusiastic stakeholders.

## Choices and Actions

As the group uncovered the wider network Jeremy had on his side, someone asked him if he had autonomy to move forward without his boss' support. Jeremy's insight in that moment was that he might be able to leverage the positive feedback he was getting from other stakeholders to influence his boss indirectly, rather than continuing to hit a brick wall by trying to persuade his boss on his own. The group had helped Jeremy reframe his challenge from "persuading my boss" to "using many sources of influence to support the initiative."

## Coaching Outcomes

Jeremy left the meeting feeling energized at discovering a new avenue for taking action to present and champion his idea for the new agricultural initiative. He outlined for the circle members some actions he would take to rally stakeholders to help influence his boss, including inviting his boss to attend an upcoming public forum where many who supported his initiative would be present, creating the ideal opportunity for his boss to hear from them directly.

The team was pumped knowing that their questions and different perspectives had helped Jeremy achieve this breakthrough in his thinking and develop a new plan of action.

