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# Case Study: Women In Leadership

Massachusetts General Hospital Oncology  
Women in Leadership Program: Leadership skill  
development through community



*This case study was adapted from a conference presentation written and presented by program participants: Elizabeth Carstens, MD, Rebecca Zon, MD, and Kerry Reynolds, MD.*

## Introduction

Female physicians face unique obstacles from their male colleagues which leads to persistent gender related disparities in medicine related to leadership positions, wages, publication and funding. This is compounded by the inherently stressful nature of Oncology. Although the number of women in Oncology is increasing, opportunities for individual leadership development and group networking across career development phases are limited.

Funded by the Massachusetts General Physician Organization (MGPO) Uplift grant, the MGH Oncology Women in Leadership Program set out to develop communication, management, leadership and strategic planning skills of participants. Curriculum focused on recognizing internal and external barriers to female leadership and practicing reframing for improved risk taking and self promotion.



## Overview & Logistics

Massachusetts General Hospital ran a Women In Leadership program funded by an MGPO Uplift grant and hosted by Orange Grove Consulting

### Attendees:

24 women (fellows to senior faculty)

### Duration:

8 weeks

### Format:

Four synchronous go-minute workshops; peer coaching through accountability partner meetings; intersession practice assignments

## Synchronous Session Workshop Topics

- Advancing Your Career
- Quantify Your Value
- Understanding Bias
- Strategic Shifts

## Outcomes



Outcomes were assessed based on pre- and post-program surveys. On a 1-5 rating scale (not at all, a little, somewhat, a lot, a great deal) participants reported self assessed improvements in skill.

Post-course survey had 18/24 participants (75%) responding.

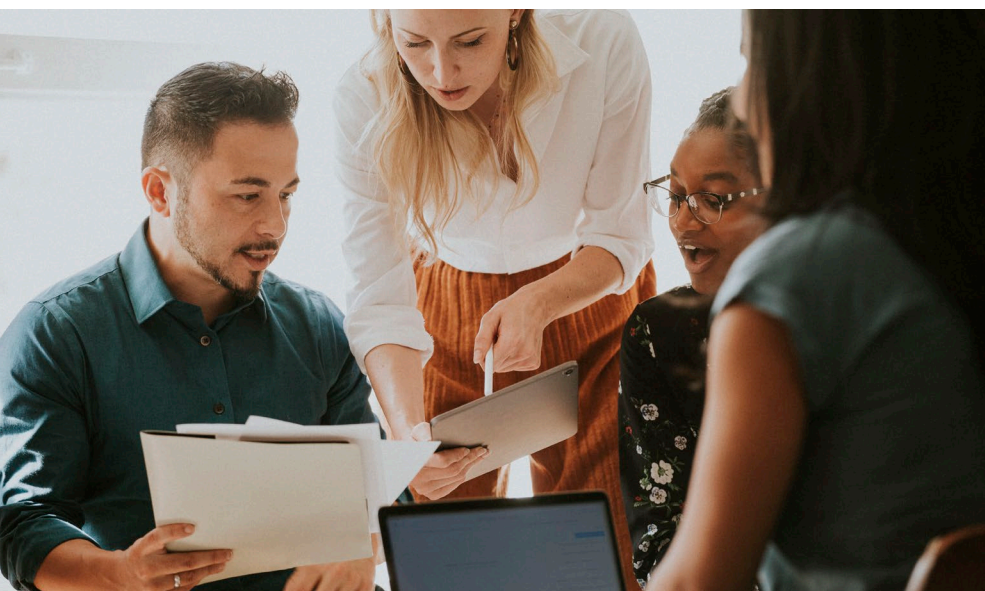
- 100% reported at least some progress in achieving their self identified goals with 42% reporting high levels (denoted by score 4-5)
- 88% reported improvements in recognition and shedding of perfectionism as it related to career advancement
- In terms of skill set improvement 67% felt that they improved strategic thinking, 55% in self promotion, 61% in results orientation
- Overall, 82% noted a large (score 4-5) increase in their commitment to career growth, and 49% felt more willing to take risks to improve their careers



## Summary

Taken together, data and qualitative feedback on post-course survey suggest that the course helped participants identify both personal and structural barriers to taking on leadership roles and provided a venue for learning critical skills for career advancement. Additionally, the group nature of the program was successful in creating a supportive community of women to share in personal development which in turn improved engagement and application of learned skills.

Future directions could include dedication of gender specific networking opportunities, perpetuating the established community of leadership, acknowledging limitations based on work demands, as well as working on structural barriers to career advancement which will help women see the full benefit of their developed leadership skills.



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