



SERVICE UNIT TEAM

Service Unit Administrator Orientation Manual

Unlocking Leadership

Table of Contents

Position Description 3

Service Unit Administrator Check List 5

Service Unit Meetings..... 6

Troop Leaders' Support 10

Closing out the Year..... 12

Conflict Management 13

Defining Roles..... 14

Service Unit Administrator Position Description

Pathway: Troop

- Long-Term Direct Service Long-Term Indirect Service
 Short-Term Direct Service Short-Term Indirect Service

Time Commitment:

Duration 1 year month week day
 For 15 hour(s) per year month week day

Summary: The Service Unit Administrator is responsible for ensuring all program offerings align to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). She or he provides administrative and logistical support to all troop volunteers within assigned jurisdiction.

Place of Service: Service unit

Reports to: Membership Delivery Manager

Responsibilities/Tasks:

- Assist troop volunteers with administrative driven functions and responsibilities of their positions including adherence to all guidelines set forth in Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Assists new Troop/Group Volunteers in conducting parent/guardian meetings to develop troop/group committees
- Assist the Membership Delivery Manager in seeing that all volunteers take the required training within the specified time and encourage them to participate in other opportunities for development
- Be aware of and frequently check the document that tracks new and current volunteers.
- Read and understand the Position Description for Troop Leader and Troop Assistant Leader.
- Provide ongoing guidance, support and feedback to Troop leaders in the geographic area.
- Work with the Service Unit Team to ensure all community program offerings align to the GSLE by using Journeys, Badges and the *Girls' Guide to Girl Scouting*, customized with additional local experiences.
- Provide ongoing support to volunteers in the implementation of Journeys, Badge work, *Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* and other council programming opportunities.
- Provide Troop/Group Leaders with logistical support, conflict resolution and problem solving regarding girls and parents.
- Perform year end assessment with troop leaders and provide feedback to the Membership Delivery Manager for reappointment.
- Be responsible for retention of girls in the Troop Experience through follow up with lapsed girls and troops.

Skills:

- Ability to communicate effectively with adults
- Remain flexible and tolerant in changing situations and surroundings.
- Computer skills, access to internet
- Good organization skills
- Effective writing skills
- Have a good knowledge of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law
- Value, develop, and celebrate group and individual diversity.
- Works well with other adults
- Have experience in working in partnership with groups of adults.
- Listen to others and include their ideas.
- Express ideas and facts clearly and accurately.

Core Competencies-Required:

- Girl focus: Empower girls to lead activities, learn by doing, and cooperate with others on current issues that involve their interests and needs, while having fun
- Personal Integrity: Demonstrate dependability, honesty, and credibility
- Adaptability: Adjust, modify own behavior, and remain flexible and tolerant in response to changing situations and environments
- Oral and Written Communication: Express ideas and facts clearly and accurately
- Fostering diversity: Understand and embrace differences

Support:

The Service Unit Administrator receives support, guidance, and encouragement from the service unit team and the Membership Delivery Manager. She/he has access to relevant learning opportunities and materials that prepare for and support this role. This position will be provided with email updates as needed, quarterly volunteer networking webinars and/or meetings, as well as one on one meetings with the Membership Delivery Manager as needed to ensure capability of fulfilling the responsibilities of the position.

Training and Development:

- Read the SUA Position Orientation Manual
- Answer questions on the SUA orientation review sheet and return to the Membership Delivery Manager.
- Be familiar with and have on hand Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Policies
- Be familiar with and use as resource the Service Unit Team Manual
- Be familiar with the troop leader notebook that is given to leaders at their orientation

Requirements:

- Become a registered member of GSUSA
- Serve as a member of the Girl Scout Service unit Team
- Approved volunteer application
- Approved volunteer background check
- Signed Volunteer Position Agreement
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Accept the principles and beliefs of Girl Scouting and support local and national Girl Scout policies, practices and procedures

- Completes required training for position
- Remains in close communication with the MEMBERSHIP DELIVERY MANAGER on a regular basis

Safety-Related Matters:

- See the volunteer policies procedures on the *Volunteer Resource* page of our www.bdgsc.org website

Agreement:

I have read the Volunteer Position Outline and agree to carry out my responsibilities as described. If for any reason I am unable to perform any of my responsibilities, the council has the right to change my volunteer status. I will fulfill the outlined duties with no monetary compensation. I certify under penalty of perjury that I have not been convicted of any criminal offense. The council will not knowingly accept voluntary services from a convicted sex offender. Volunteers are required to disclose to council if they are living with a sex offender or have regular personal contact with a convicted sex offender, as well as the nature and the extent of such relationships or contacts. Volunteers who violate this procedure will be barred from any further participation in Girl Scout activities.

Name (print): _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Signature of Volunteer: _____ **Date:** _____

Service Unit Administrator Checklist:

- Provide ongoing support and resources to ensure troop leaders are implementing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Connect with the Troop leaders in your Service unit:
 - Work with the Membership Delivery Manager to ensure every troop leader receives the troop leader Notebook and understands GSUSA and GSBDC Policies and Procedures.
 - Act as a mentor to new and current troop leaders.
- Develop a team of (Grade Level) Mentors to support troop leaders in their delivery of a variety of grade appropriate, girl-led, fun activities that address relevant girl interests which aligns to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Schedule and run regular Service unit meetings for troop leaders that are fun, interactive, and leader-led which address current issues involving troop leader interests.
- Conduct Delegate elections to ensure that the Service unit is represented in GSBDC's governance.
- Communicate via email/ text/ or snail mail to troop leaders informing them of upcoming troop meetings and events. (No more than 2-3 contacts per month to troop leaders.)
- Maintain close relationships with troop leaders, Membership Delivery Managers, and other local level volunteers.
- Promote participation in council sponsored product sales, fund raising campaigns, events, series, camps and surveys conducted by Council.
- Work closely with the Membership Advisor and Recruiters to ensure that troop leaders are registering troops on time each year and maintain troop/group size policy.
- Adhere to the Girl Scouts of the USA and GSBDC policies, guidelines, standards and procedures.

Please Note: The above checklist does not necessarily need to be completed in the exact order in which items are listed.

Ensuring a High Quality Girl Scout Experience

Girl Scout activities are open to all girls who are members of Girl Scouting, are based on the Girl Scout Promise, Law, and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Activities should follow health and safety standards, and be done with the support of caring, trained adults. Activities are based on expert research and developed through years of experience; the National Program Portfolio was developed to include the Journeys and the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience provides engaging and worthwhile activities that respond to the needs of today's girls, with flexibility that respects their busy lives—and yours! As adult leaders, it's our responsibility to ensure that all girls, regardless of where they are from, their socioeconomic background, race, and/or religion, that they have a high quality Girl Scout Experience! It's also important to ensure that our adult volunteers and more specifically, our Troop leaders and Co-Leaders equally have a high quality Girl Scout experience.

Service Unit Meetings

Purpose of Meetings

The purpose of Service Unit Meetings is to provide Troop leaders and Co-Leaders with the information, support, and networking needed for them to successfully implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and ensure a high quality Girl Scouting experience for the girls and for themselves. The meetings should be fun, interactive and leader-led and should address current issues involving troop leader interests. This is a time for sharing, learning, supporting and mentoring one another.

Role of Service Unit Administrator

The Service Unit Administrator is responsible for coordinating the meetings in their Service unit. All Troop leaders and Assistant Leaders within the Service unit should be invited along with all the Service unit and regional volunteers. If any of the volunteer positions are not filled, the appropriate Council Staff should be invited. Staff and/or Volunteers may not always be able to attend Service unit meetings and that's OK! If you have a specific need for a volunteer or staff member to be part of the agenda, then work directly with that person to ensure they are available to attend.

Meeting Cadence

Service unit meetings should take place no more than once a month and last no longer than 1-2 hours (some of the time they will be scheduled quarterly). Meetings may be scheduled at any time during the month. It is strongly encouraged to discuss the meeting dates, times and locations at the first Service unit meeting of the year. Meetings are discouraged during the months when leaders will be expected to attend Product Sales training. We anticipate Service unit meetings not being held in June and July, but resume in August. Service unit meeting information should be given to the Membership Delivery Managers, with the date, time and location of the meeting.

Cancellation of Service unit Meetings

In the event that you cannot attend a previously scheduled Service unit meeting, please contact your Membership Delivery Manager and let them know. If the Membership Delivery Manager can lead the meeting in your absence, they will. If they are not available to do so, it's OK to ask another leader to lead the meeting in your absence. You should provide the agenda for the meeting leader to follow. ONLY in the event that you cannot find a replacement to lead the meeting, should the meeting be canceled. It's of the utmost importance that you reach out to all the leaders in advance to let them know that you are NOT able to attend. In addition, it's a good idea to post a sign at the location or perhaps ask someone to go to the location and inform the others that you needed to cancel the meeting. When at all possible, please allow sufficient time for cancelling a district meeting. In the case of inclement weather please notify Service unit volunteers by email and/or phone about cancellation and send new meeting date. Please also notify the Membership Delivery Manager.

Purposeful Meetings

Meetings should be purposeful and leaders will want to attend because they see value in the meeting. Service unit meetings should include discussion and action. The first 30-45 minutes (at most!) may be used for updates from Coordinators or staff. Important updates, deadline dates, etc. will be provided by council staff. Council staff will provide monthly updates to the Service Unit Administrator to share with the leaders in their Service unit.

Best Practices:

- Have contests or game at each meeting (Girl Scout related) to keep it fun and interactive.
- Invite operational coordinators to meetings (Finance, Product Sales, Registration, Recruitment, etc.)
- Invite a camp representative (Camp Coordinators or Camp Staff) to one of the meetings (October) to present camp opportunities for troops.
- Host other trainings such as affordable CPR training at the meeting, Program Books and Journeys, and Road Shows, Enrichments, etc.
- Use the meeting as an opportunity for resource lending (books, supplies, etc.).

- Provide ONLINE registration help/availability at first couple meetings of the year for troops who still haven't registered – get them registered!
- Have leaders share “what worked” stories at each meeting.
- Begin each meeting with an ice breaker – have open talk time.
- Focus meetings on coaching and mentoring for new leadership in operational positions.
- Have 30 minute round tables by grade level (or by school) at the end of each meeting with a focused question.
- Share tips on how to plan an event.
- Additional networking to strategize Service unit/community events.
- Off-site events for leaders – at a park, have a picnic and help build relationships.
- Training on songs to use in troops.
- Assign a veteran troop leader (from same school if possible) to act as a mentor to new troop leaders.
- Locate community organizations (that could use help/services of girls) to speak at meetings (i.e. Police Department, Chamber of Commerce, Social Service Agencies, etc.)-create opportunities for service projects for girls.

Leader-Led Meetings

Agenda topics should be “Leader-Led”. This is where troop leaders and co-leaders should be discussing best practices, sharing ideas, etc. OR networking with one another and having some informal conversations with one another on issues that concern them. At the end of every meeting, ask the leaders how they want to spend this time at future meetings and/or areas of interest to them. Depending on the topic, you may want to let them know in advance so that they can prepare their thoughts and/or bring along examples of what's worked for them. Here are some “suggested” topics for conversation.

- Journeys: Who has used them? What did the girls like about them? What didn't they like? What did you as the leader like or not like about them? What would you do differently next time? Who has not used them? Why not? Can those who have used them address some of their concerns?
- Field trips linked to journeys or badge work: Come prepared with information about your favorite field trips to share with the rest of the leaders. Contact info, cost, etc. – (Email everyone in advance letting them know to come prepared with the info.)

Other possible small group/round table topic ideas:

- Lummi Sticks
- CPR Training
- Songs
- Flag etiquette
- Ceremonies (Investiture/Rededication)
- Girl Scout Traditions
- Thinking Day
- Events
- Outdoors
- Recruiting
- Cookie Sales/ Fall product sales
- Tips
- Outings for Daisies and Brownies
- Outings for Juniors and Cadettes
- Engaging Seniors and Ambassadors to keep them involved in scouting (Leadership opportunities for older girls!)
- Girl Led troops
- Scrapbooking
- Basics

- Journeys – What works?
- Service Projects
- Field Trips
- Bronze, Silver OR Gold award
- Adult recognitions
- Record keeping
- Girl Scout Traditions
- Managing conflicts

Agendas/Minutes/Emails

Service Unit Administrators are expected to send 2-3 contacts (emails or texts) per month to troop leaders and other Coordinators within their Service unit. One should remind Troop leaders of Service unit meeting day, time, location and agenda. If there is Community Event information that needs to be shared, please include that. Another contact should include the minutes of the Service unit meeting. NOTE: Service Unit Administrators may delegate the job of taking minutes at the meeting, but they are responsible for ensuring that there are minutes and they must distribute them after every meeting to the Troop leaders and Co-Leaders in their Service unit. If there is an absolute need for information to go out to Troop leaders due to important event information, then please send. However, emails to Troop leaders should be kept to a minimum. In an effort to respect the privacy of our troop leaders, please blind copy ALL the troop leaders when sending group emails.

Icebreaker/Game Ideas

Starburst Ice Breaker

Have each leader take between one and four pieces of starburst as they walk in. Once meeting begins, inform leaders that they must share something for each piece they collected. Red starburst = favorite pastime, Pink = favorite place in the world, orange = favorite Girl Scout memory (if new leader, why they became leader) and yellow = any thought they would like to share.

Famous People/Cities Game

As each leader arrives, tape a 3 x 5 index card on their back with the name of a famous person or city. They must circulate in the room and ask questions that can ONLY be answered with a YES or NO to identify clues that will help them find out the name of the person or city on their index card.

Circle of Friends Game

Form two circles (or simply form two lines side by side), one inside the other and have the people in the inside circle face the people in the outside circle. Ask the circles to take one step in the opposite directions, allowing them to meet each new person as the circle continues to move very slowly. If lines are formed, they simply keep the line moving very slowly, as they introduce themselves.

Story Time Game

The TSS or LSC starts a story by saying a sentence. It then goes in a circle, each person adding a sentence onto the story-after repeating each sentence that's already been added.

Ball Toss Game

Have everyone stand up and form a resemblance of a circle. It does not have to be perfect, but they should all be facing in, looking at each other. Toss a nerf or tennis ball or bean bag to a person and have them share a funny Girl Scout story. Then they throw the ball to someone else so they can share. Continue the exercise until everyone has caught the ball at least once and shared a story.

Autograph Sheets Game

Prepare a sheet listing traits or facts about people with a line for them to sign their name next to the trait if it applies to them (i.e.: someone who wears contacts, someone who has been to Europe, etc.). People then mingle around the room with their sheets seeking to find people who are eligible to sign their sheets. A person can only sign once on any sheet. The process may also be reversed by having people seek out the autograph of people to which they think the category applies (i.e.: someone who looks like they enjoy the outdoors, someone who is from the east, etc.)

Find Someone Game

Each leader writes on a blank index card one to three statements, such as favorite color, interest, hobby, or vacations. Pass out cards so everyone gets someone else's card. Have that person find the person with their card and introduce themselves.

Finish the Sentence Game

Write the start of a question on the board (i.e. My Favorite job was..., My Hobby is...) and go around the room with each person finishing the sentence. When the group is finished, post another question and start again.

Sunshine Cards Game

Everyone writes their name in the center of a piece of paper and draws a sun around their name. Pass your paper around to the person on your right. That person will write something positive about you and they do not have to sign their name. Continue to pass your name around until everyone has written something on all the papers.

Girl Scout Cookies Game

As each leader arrives, tape a 3 x 5 index card on their back with the name of a Girl Scout Cookie. They must circulate in the room and ask questions that can ONLY be answered with a YES or NO to identify clues that will help them find out the name of the cookie.

When in doubt, you can always bring the leaders together to sing a Girl Scout song, recite the pledge or have a friendship circle!

Delegate Elections

Council delegates and alternates have an important role in the Girl Scout democratic process. As elected members of the corporation they represent their district by voting on decisions that influence the council. It is important to involve girl members in this process and encourage their participation as delegates and alternates.

Each Service unit is allowed 2 delegates and 2 alternates or more depending upon Service unit size. (Please contact your MDM for the exact number of delegates your area should have each year.) Service units should elect alternates in case a delegate is unable to fulfill their term and/or cannot attend any meeting. Adult delegates are elected to a one year term and girl delegates were elected to a one-year term, per GSBDC Bylaws. There are no term limits to being a Service unit delegate/alternate.

Delegate/Alternate Requirements

- Any adult or girl member (over the age of 14)
- Currently registered Girl Scout member
- Must be in good standing with no outstanding Girl Scout debt

Note: Operational Volunteers are allowed to be GSBDC Delegates/Alternates.

Delegate/Alternate Responsibilities

- Required to attend delegate training meeting.

- Required to attend the GSBDC Annual Meeting.
- Attendance at other special meetings held during the year may also be requested.
- Provide report to members in their Service unit regarding topics discussed at Annual Meeting.

Troop Leaders' Support

In an effort to retain more first year leaders, we need to provide more support to NEW leaders as they navigate through their journey as a troop leader. Consider creating a listing of grade level “mentors” to help in the delivery of a variety of grade appropriate, girl-led, fun activities that address relevant girl interests which aligns with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Ask veteran troop leaders in your Service unit if they would be willing to “mentor” a NEW troop leader.

Both new Leaders and those who have been around for a while can benefit from someone to support them. In addition to upholding the Girl Scout tradition of role modeling and mentorship, the practice promotes camaraderie and sense of belonging, assures that girls are getting the best possible Girl Scout experience, and increases volunteer and girl retention.

The primary role of a Service Unit Administrator is to be a friend to a newly recruited Troop leader or team of Leaders. As the SUA, you, or a new leader mentor, can be the person who can sit with new leaders at Service unit Meetings, introduce them to other volunteers, help them understand what’s going on, and explain who everyone is and how everyone is there to help them succeed. In addition, the Service Unit Administrator can offer to help the new Leader in other ways, such as:

Help establish the troop:

- Assist with organizing and providing information at the first parent/troop meeting of the new troop
- Develop a learning plan with each troop leader to comply with current GSBDC training policy
- Help them get the names and contact info of girls from the waiting list
- Invite them to watch a troop meeting
- Assists them in finding meeting places and other community support

Act as a resource for Leaders once the troop is meeting:

- Tell them about program opportunities and other community resources or where to go for information
- Explain and encourage participation in the Service unit and council-wide events and activities
- Ensure that they know about bridging preparation activities and their importance, and provide each Troop with the resources and assistance needed to achieve bridging and other goals

A Service Unit Administrator can help volunteers provide an amazing Girl Scout experience for girls by continually reinforcing and guiding them in the following important areas:

- The Girl Scout Promise and Law – for the adults as well as the girls
- The Girl Scout Program Outcomes
- The Girl/Adult planning process

- Girl Scout policies and standards Safety Activity Checkpoint (formally SafetyOwise & Volunteer Essentials)• Clear communication with parents of girls.
- Diversity as an attitude and way of life central to Girl Scouting
- Evaluation as part of every Girl Scout program and meeting – this can be a formal written evaluation or an informal discussion with the girls, leaders and occasionally parents.

Girl Scout volunteers have a lot to remember for their girls, and it's not uncommon for them to forget about their own needs along the way. One way the Service unit can help them is by identifying a Service Unit Council Trainer. The Service Unit Council Trainer maintains regular contact with the membership services team that organizes workshops, courses, seminars and trainings to meet the needs of volunteers. The Service Unit Council Trainer position is designed to support volunteers in two key ways:

Volunteer Learning:

The Service Unit Council Trainer should act as a liaison between the Service unit membership and the GSDBC staff. The Council Salesforce system will keep track of the classes each volunteers has taken. The Service Unit Council Trainer can help guide volunteers through the training process. When volunteer needs become evident, they can work with staff to create learning opportunities to meet those needs.

Learning Opportunities:

Service Unit Council Trainers can also make sure that Girl Scout Leaders receive on-going education beyond the basics that are presented in the initial onboarding courses. With their help, Leaders can continually improve themselves and their leadership skills, fill gaps in their knowledge as well as learn about the preferred practices and standards for their position. Many Service unit meetings include regular learning opportunities called as a standard part of the agenda. The standard time frame is 15 to 30 minutes.

The Service unit team will develop a general calendar with ideas and timing for the educational opportunity delivery. They will also receive curriculum with easy to follow guidelines on what information to present and how to present it. Anyone can present the information and it's a great way to get those experienced volunteers share their wisdom with the rest of the group. Sample topics include:

- Troop Financial Management
- Girl Scout Ceremonies
- Trip & Event Planning
- Girl Behavior Management & Conflict Resolution
- Planning & Budgeting with Girls
- Summer Program Ideas

This list is just a start. Brainstorm with your Service unit team members about the needs of your volunteers and who can best provide the information.

Troop Leader Notebook

The Troop Leader Notebook is a resource guide that has been developed to find the important policies, procedures and general Girl Scouting information that every Troop leader is expected to know! The Membership Delivery Manager and/or Service Unit Administrator are expected to provide a Troop leader Handbook to every Girl Scout Troop leader

and at least a folder with Volunteer Policies, Volunteer essentials and Safety Checkpoints included to Assistant Leaders.

Closing out the Year

The end of the year comes quickly and with a few things to do. Be sure to help troops follow these steps for a smooth transition from one year to the next.

Bridging

If the troop is completing their last year of a Girl Scout program level (Daisy, Brownie, Junior, etc.) they will need to start thinking about their bridging or flying up ceremony and if they want to earn the award that goes with it. Many troops hold their bridging ceremony at the same time as their Court of Awards and/or end of the year event and invite special guests to witness the event. Bridging is not required, but is a great way to welcome girls to the next level of Girl Scouting. Even if the leader is not sure of her continued participation with Girl Scouts (and we hope she will find lots of exciting ways to be involved, even if leading a troop no longer fits their life), be sure to capture their excitement and work with them as they plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.

Reengaging Girls

The end of the troop year doesn't have to be the end of a girls' time with Girl Scouting, or the end of a leader's time with girls. Some girls may no longer have time for a full-year commitment and will be unsure what's next for them. Others won't be able to imagine their lives without this same group of girls. Here's how leaders can best reengage their troop:

- Some girls may want a more flexible way to continue participating in Girl Scouts. If so, they are welcome to become an iGirl. They can participate in any or all of the programs that are sponsored by the Council or by any Community including series, events, day camps, weekend summer resident camp, travel opportunities, etc. Older girls, especially, may enjoy these shorter-term, flexible options in Girl Scouting.
- If troop leaders want to stay with their troop, but have some girls bridging to the next grade level, the Service Unit Administrator and/or Membership Delivery Manager should help identify which troop the girls might enter next. And if you find that a Service unit, location-based troop isn't available for these girls, they can also join as an iGirl and participate in all of the programs available throughout the Council.
- Troop leaders should be talking to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.
- Troop leaders should ALL participate in the Early Registration Process by re-registering all the girls and adults in the troop! Regardless if girls are bridging up, transferring to a different troop or troop leaders are retiring, the Girl Scout movement will only grow if we are able to retain our membership! Please help to encourage their membership for the following year so that they can continue to cultivate their leadership skills! Once a girl or adult is registered, our Help Desk can transfer girls and/or adults out of troops or into new troops. The bottom line is to get them registered!
- Service Unit Administrators and Membership Delivery Managers need to talk to troop leaders regarding their plans for the following year. If they want to stay with the troop, start working with them and/or encouraging them to plan their group activities next year. Or if they are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, Service Unit Administrator should capture this information and share it with their Membership Delivery Manager.

End of the Year Paperwork and Communication

The end of the Girl Scout year requires a few extra things from the leader such as submitting a financial report to the Service Unit Treasurer for review, assessing their intentions for the coming year, re-registering their troop and completing the evaluation and reappointment process. If your Service unit does not have a Service Unit Treasurer please instruct leaders to email the financial report to you, the Service Unit Administrator or the Membership Delivery Manager.

Volunteer Resignation

An individual may voluntarily resign from his/her position(s) at any time. Written notice should be given to the Membership Delivery Manager and Service Unit Administrator as far in advance as possible. Please also see disbanding troop policies.

Conflict Management

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. Every effort should be made by all parties involved to resolve any situation without having a negative impact on the quality of the leadership experience for the girls. A troop leader cannot dismiss a Girl Scout from a troop for any reason.

Individual concerns should not be discussed with other adults or girls in the troop/group. Absolute confidentiality must be maintained at all times in order to protect the dignity and rights of the individuals involved. Violation of confidentiality may be cause for release from duties.

Conflict Management for Adults

In the event of any problem, conflict, or grievance, between volunteers, parents, and/or girls a confidential conflict management process must be followed.

For conflict between adults, follow the procedures listed below:

1. The troop/group leaders or volunteers should discuss the concerns directly with the person with whom there is a problem. This should be a face-to-face meeting without girls present.
2. After meeting, if an agreeable solution is not identified, the issue should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Service unit support staff person, based upon the situation involved. Written documentation will be required, using the grievance form on our website.
3. Once written documentation is received, the community support staff person will mediate the conflict situation with all parties involved to find a resolution that ensures the highest quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience for the girls and volunteers in the troop or group.
4. If the involved parties come to a resolution during the mediation session, no further action is needed.
5. If the situation is not resolved during mediation session, arbitration will be initiated with council staff. All parties will be bound to honor the decision of the arbitrator.

Conflict Management for Girl Members

Girls in any troop/group should be involved in creating their own group agreement, detailing the behaviors that are acceptable to that group.

If a conflict arises between girls or between a girl and an adult, follow the procedures listed below:

1. The troop/group leaders or volunteers should discuss the concerns directly with the person with whom there is a problem. This should be a face-to-face meeting without other girls present.
2. If a discussion does not yield a resolution that all parties can agree to, the troop/group leader or volunteer will ask to meet with the parent to discuss the situation.

3. After meeting, if an agreeable solution is not identified, the issue should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Service unit support staff person, based upon the situation involved. Written documentation will be required.
4. Once written documentation is received, the Service unit support staff person will mediate the conflict situation with all parties involved to find a resolution that ensures the highest quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience for the girls and volunteers in the troop or group.
5. If the involved parties come to a resolution during the mediation session, no further action is needed.
6. If the situation is not resolved during mediation session, arbitration will be initiated with council staff. All parties will be bound to honor the decision of the arbitrator.

Defining Volunteer Roles and Participant Expectations within Troops and Service Units

A successful year of Girl Scouting depends on many things, but the simple act of setting clear expectations of all parties involved could be your best tool. Since you will most likely be working with a team of adults in your troop you will need to make sure that everyone:

- is aware of their specific responsibilities
- feels comfortable enough to ask for help when needed
- knows what their deadline is
- has the tools and resources they need to complete the job

All girls, parents/guardians, and volunteers of a troop should sign an agreement about their participation, behavior and commitment to the troop. This is a formal, signed agreement. It is our hope that this simple tool can help you and your troop members stay on track throughout the year. It is also recommended to do this at service unit level too.

Giving and Showing Respect

It is of the utmost importance that we respect those whom we work with and serve. As you interact with others be mindful of:

- religion, ethnicity and diversity
- timely replies
- body language
- tone
- volume

Keeping these things in check as we interact, and more importantly disagree, with others will help keep conflicts to a minimum. While it is inevitable that we may not agree with someone in the troop and/or service unit, it does not give us the right to be disrespectful to them. Take a moment to listen to what the other person has to say and maybe everyone will be able to at least understand where others are coming from. By respecting someone and being respectful of their point of view, you all will avoid a lot of frustration.

Communicating with Adults

When working with adults, both volunteers and parents, it is very important to communicate clearly and effectively at all times. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to avoid a common pitfall of assuming. For example, at troop level, instead of assuming the parents know that participating in cookie booths is important, discuss how each girl's participation will help foster the team mentality the troop has established. Instead of

assuming that the parents know to pick up their daughter on time discuss the fact that the girls worry that they were forgotten about and that when they are late they are taking time away from others (you, your family, etc.). At the parent meeting or first meeting be sure to point out what your priorities are--paying dues/costs on time, suggesting a solution instead of complaining, etc. so that they are armed with knowledge which will hopefully lead to fewer misunderstandings or conflicts.

When discussing details, a change in the established plan or other important things with parents and volunteers, it is a good idea to follow up with some form of written communication. A quick e-mail or note home reiterating the conversation, and next steps if necessary, will help ensure that the conversation is not forgotten and that an agreement was reached. This may be another way that a troop or service unit newsletter would come in handy.

Since everyone leads busy lives, a friendly reminder can often help avoid a lot of heartache. This is especially true when parents and volunteers sign up for things far in advance. For example, at troop level: Did you have girls pick a snack day at the start of the year? Help ensure that snack makes it to the meeting with a snack reminder slip or e-mail the week before. Is a second payment due on a trip? Perhaps a balance due and payment date reminder will help get them in on time.

Part of effective communication includes distributing information in a timely and reliable fashion. Information that reaches a parent just before a due date because their child forgot to share info, or worse because the troop leadership got it out at the last minute, will often lead to frustration or the deadline being missed. This is why it is so important to establish a reliable form of communication and reminder system at service unit and troop levels.

Active Listening

In conversation, we often jump in with our own advice or experience and cut the speaker off. This prevents the speaker from expressing the problem clearly. Instead we must become active listeners. An active listener puts her or his own feelings aside in order to better understand the speaker and only interrupts to gain understanding.

In order to be an effective listener it is helpful to choose a time and place that will allow you to focus on the conversation and have few distractions. If this conversation happens in the form of a phone call be mindful that it will be harder to get a full reading of the person and follow the conversation without nonverbal cues. You will need to convey your active listening by giving the caller verbal cues by occasionally saying things like “Uh-huh”, “Hmmm” and such.

When meeting in person, an active listener lets the speaker know she/he is listening by giving non-verbal cues such as nodding their head, squinting their eyes as if trying to understand, as well as the verbal cues mentioned above. Whether you are meeting in person or via phone, try to listen without judging and be sure to pay attention to the speaker’s feelings that underlie their words. It is also helpful to assume that the speaker’s view is a valid one until you know otherwise. Remember that your first goal as an active listener is to understand.

Encouraging Others to Discuss Their Feelings and Concerns

Sometimes a true conflict can be avoided by getting people to talk about things that are bothering them. This does not come easy to everyone and usually the groundwork of trust and comfort must already be established. As you try to get the person to open up so you are able to gather the facts, be sure to stay neutral to the situation and try using some of the following questions or statements to help them open up:

- I’m concerned about you, is everything ok?
- You seem upset, help me understand why.
- Tell me more about why that bothers you.

- What do you need me to do to fix the problem/help you?
- Can you tell me how I've hurt you?
- Help me understand how you see the situation.

At no time should any kind of discipline subject a girl to ridicule, threat, corporal punishment, depriving her of food/water, sleep, or placing her alone without supervision.

Managing Girl Behavior

The first step to managing girl behavior is establishing a group agreement—discuss topics like respect, tattling, and bullying before they become issues.

No matter which tip or tool you use to deal with an issue, the most important thing you can do as a leader is to enforce the rules consistently at all times. Children are quick to pick up discrepancies and preferential treatment so it is not only important to be consistent with all girls. Keep in mind that when applying the consequence of breaking a rule you should do so without anger but in a firm and caring voice. It is important to convey that you are not mad at the person but rather the behavior they chose.

Behavior Modification Tips

- Try nonverbal cues like eye contact, proximity and gestures such as a shake of the head or the Girl Scout quiet sign
- Use gentle verbal reminders like “We need to be making safe choices...”, “Inside voices please”, “We need to be a sister to every Girl Scout....”
- Redirect to the activity if not responding to the reminder: “Sarah, would you like to help with...” play a quick game of Follow the Leader, or move on to a new activity

When behavior becomes a problem it often helps to explore the reason for the misbehavior:

- If for attention: respond to the positive choices the person makes
- If for power: give the person responsibility or choices
- If for belonging: structure activities to help them feel a part of the group

When disruptive behavior continually becomes an issue you may need to spend some time teaching positive behaviors by:

- Complimenting desired/positive behaviors of others
- Discussing and role playing positive behaviors with the troop
- Give constrictive criticism by sandwiching the negative behavior between two positive things the person does

If the misbehavior continues to be an issue, it is most appropriate to have a discussion with the parent to explain how the girl's behavior is of concern and how it affects the group.

When Girls Disagree with Each Other

As a Girl Scout Leader, she will find there are times when the girls do not get along or getting a group of girls to agree on an activity or trip seems to be an impossible task. The following are some tips for preventing and resolving conflicts:

- When girls feel secure, capable and accepted by the group, conflicts occur less often.

- When girls feel accepted, they are more likely to empathize with others and understand a different point of view.
- When girls feel that they are actively making decisions and setting the goals for their activities, then they are less likely to jeopardize those activities through misbehavior.

Refer back to the troop member/leader agreement for resolution and/or follow the due process for girls.

When Problems Arise: Managing Conflict

A troop leader cannot dismiss a Girl Scout from a troop. For assistance, please contact your Membership Delivery Manager.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard we try, at some point someone will get upset. This is ok—as long as the disagreement or issue is addressed quickly and fairly. Conflict that is well managed allows all parties to express their positions and emotions while exploring a range of solutions that meet the needs of all. Those involved will need to work out a way of implementing an agreed upon solution. Here is information to use when a conflict starts to show itself. Hopefully, if these are used the issue can be resolved before it escalates.

Confronting Conflict 101: The Basics

- Do it privately, not publicly.
- Never address adult conflicts in front of the girls.
- Do it as soon as possible. It is more natural than waiting a long time.
- Speak to one issue at a time. Don't overload the person with a long list of issues.
- Once you have made a point, move on.
- Deal only with actions the person can change. If you ask the person to do something he or she is unable to do, frustration builds.
- Avoid sarcasm, which usually signals that you are angry at people, not their actions, which may cause them to resent you.
- Avoid words like “always” and “never”. These words tend to detract from accuracy and make people defensive.
- Present criticisms as suggestions or questions if possible.
- Don't apologize for the confrontation. Doing so detracts from it and may indicate you are not sure you had a right to do what you did.
- Don't forget the compliments! Sandwiching the issue in compliments may make the person more open to the conversation.

Techniques

- **Clarify:** Ask when, where, how and why questions.
- **Re-state:** Show that you are listening by restating comments. “You kept trying but after the third time you were frustrated and gave up. Is that correct?”
- **Reflect:** Help the speaker evaluate her/his feelings with statements like “you sound...”, “you seem...”, “you appear...”
- **Summarize:** Review progress and pull important facts and feelings together. Try to take as much emotion out as possible and get to the facts.
- **Validate:** Acknowledge the value of the speaker's feelings and issues. Show appreciation for efforts to discuss the problem.