

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Service Unit Workshop

Managing Girl Behavior

(Adapted from workshops from Girl Scouts of Western Washington and Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama)

Total Time: 30 minutes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Recognize their peers as resources.
- Identify at least 2 new management ideas they can use with their troop.

Timing	Strategies	Resources
5 min	Set up a Group Agreement with the Group and Post It. A group agreement is an agreement that covers being considerate to each other and their leaders, conduct in the meetings, how they want to be treated, etc.	Piece of large paper/pad and markers.
15 min.	<p>Identifying Problems and Finding Solutions</p> <p>A. Explain: Managing girl behavior in a meeting is a very large subject. Our goal tonight is to give you some ideas and resources to try with your troop. We'll look at common problems instead of spending time dealing with particular situations.</p> <p>B. Ask: In three words or less, can you tell me some behavior problems you have in your troops? (List ideas on pad) Examples: cliques, bullying, shyness, rowdiness, lack of interest</p> <p>C. First you need to make sure the problem isn't YOURS, a program problem. Which of these might be program problems versus behavior problems? (Program problems – no group agreement, no pre-meeting activity, not enough active time, nothing for girls to do who complete project early, no girl input)</p> <p>D. Say: Let's take a couple of these one at a time. What solutions have you found were successful for _____?</p> <p>Examples – Establishing group agreements, using the Promise and Law, assigning team buddies, team building games, talking with the girl, talking with the parents/guardians, changing the meeting format to use excess energy before the project.</p> <p>Refer back to the Group Agreement and discuss what this would be helpful in solving behavior problems.</p> <p>Complete this step by emphasizing how valuable they can be to EACH other as problem solving resources.</p>	
10 min.	<p>Conversations with the Girls</p> <p>A. Explain that one of the challenging things about managing girl behavior is keeping our own composure. When we decide to sit down and discuss the problem with a girl and /or her parents we want to keep calm and we want to</p>	

	<p>listen to what the girl has to say.</p> <p>B. Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divide the participants in twos - Explain it can be helpful to practice the conversation you want to have with the girls and/or her parents. - Have partners take turns being the disruptive girl and have a little fun with it so the buddies get some real practice. Switch roles. - Debrief the activity – what did they learn from each other? <p>C. Share with the group what worked or didn't work</p>	
5 min.	<p>Closing</p> <p>A. Ask: What two things you learned that you think you can use with your troop? Have them share with partner.</p> <p>B. Final Word – Never make assumptions about girl behavior. Listen to them and help guide them to become Girls of Courage, Confidence, and Character.</p> <p>C. Distribute handout which will provide some additional ideas.</p>	

Managing Girl Behavior

1. First and foremost make sure the problem isn't **YOURS**, a program problem. Do not proceed with steps 2-5 until you have met with the girls.
 - Plan the troop goals/program together. (Remember "Girl-led".)
 - Create "troop agreement" together. Make sure they buy into these rules and you might want each girl to sign a copy of this agreement and place in their files.
 - Plan your meetings with an action-packed program. This is done in agreement with your assistant leader and the girls suggestions when they made their troop goals/programs together. (Doing)
 - Plan your meeting for every girl. (Have extra activities for some that finish first.)
 - Plan for every minute of your meeting. Have things ready if everyone finished ahead of time. Girls have tendencies to finish things faster when we think they will take longer on other things. "Be Prepared" for all situations.

If you have determined that it is a behavior problem and not a program, here are some tips to handle the situation.

2. The first step in a behavior problem is taking her aside and correct. (Never in a room or area by yourself.)
 - Praise in public, correct in private. This prevents the girl from being embarrassed when you point out her mistakes in front of all the girls.
 - Talk with the girl so she has a crystal- clear understanding of what "troop agreement" wasn't followed. Talk to her and not at her and ask questions to see if something might be going on in her life that has caused her to act out.
 - Privately, for your records only, document the correction: date, what agreement was broken and what was said in the correction.
3. The second step in a behavior problem is taking the girl aside and placing her in time out. Be sure that Time Outs are outlined in your Troop Agreement so girls know that is a possible consequence.
 - Talk with the girl so she has a crystal-clear understanding of what agreement was broken. This may be done before or after the timeout but make sure she understands the reason for the discipline.
 - Privately, for your records only, document the correction: date, what agreement was broken, what was said in the correction, and the length of the time-out.
 - You may repeat step 3 for as many times as it is effective and the girl is learning/growing, but if misbehavior continues, at some point other action must be taken. Inform the girl that if she has another instance of time-out, her parents will be notified.
 - Privately, for your records only, document the correction: date, what agreement was broken and what was said in the correction.
 - Inform the girl that you will inform her parents and you must follow through.
4. Schedule a meeting with the girls' parents.
 - Set up an appointment with the parents to discuss problems you have been having with their daughter. Make sure they understand this will be a private meeting and cannot take place during a Troop meeting.
 - Show the parents your "troop agreement" and explain how it was derived from the girl's input, including their daughter.
 - Calmly describe all the incidents that have occurred from "memory" or have a list to refer to if your memory is not accurate.

- Enlist their help: “how can we work together” to get her to consider the feelings of others before she displays bad behavior.
 - 1) Do not discuss future corrections; you are enlisting the parents help.
 - 2) Assure the parents you look forward to working with their daughter.
 - 3) Assure the parents you will keep in touch with them about their daughters’ behavior.
 - 4) Keep your commitments to the parents and keep them informed.
 - Privately and for your records only, document the meeting with the parents: date, their responses to the discussion, how they are going to work with you to help their daughter.
 - Remember when having these discussions with the parents and the girls YOU must always be considerate and polite.
5. If the girl breaks the “troop agreement” again:
- Talk with the girl so she has a crystal-clear understanding of what agreement was broken.
 - Privately, for your records only, document the correction: date, what agreement was broken and what was said in the correction, and length of time-out. You might also want to inform the Service Unit Manager and if appropriate, the Membership and Community Development Specialist at this time to inform them what is going on and what is about to take place.
 - Inform the girl that you will inform her parents and you must follow through.
 - 1) Contact your Service Unit Manager and if appropriate, the Membership and Community Development Specialist if you haven’t done so already.
 - 2) Next you will contact the parents and decide on the next step of action. She could be suspended from the troop for a length of time with the agreement of the parents and leader. We hope that it does not get to this point and we do not have to suspend the Girl Scout.

Remember: make sure it is a behavior problem and not program problems before the above steps are taken. Misbehavior is not to be condoned. Make sure every action is documented.

Additional Resources

In Volunteer Essentials 2011, Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Level provides ideas on communicating with girls and helping with conflict.

You can also find many helpful articles on the internet.

Strategies that work with Children

	Give Choices		Redirect
When to use:	Girl not doing what's expected/girl resisting task, etc.	When to use:	Girls doing something they shouldn't.
Example:	You can finish this craft alone, or I can help you.	Example:	No, you cannot race around in here, but you can work on this puzzle.
	This for That		State Your Expectations - Detach
When to use:	Girl not doing what's expected/girl resisting task, etc.	When to use:	Girl resisting rule or threatening not to comply. Especially effective with teens.
Example:	If you can help me out...I'll help you with your clean up.	Example:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State the expectation 2. Stay out of any arguments 3. Restate the expectations 4. Disengage
	Smoothing		Using Warnings about Time Outs
When to use:	Girls uncooperative/stalling and there is little time for a more involved response.	When to use:	Girls misbehaving/testing limits.
Example:	I know we're all tired, but let's get through this last five minutes and then we can do something else.	Example:	Are you telling me you need a time out?