
Leadership Within the Community

Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand that the development of leaders is a critical part of Scouting.
2. View leadership as an activity, not a role or position.
3. See that there are opportunities for anyone seeking to “move the needle” on a challenge within their community.
4. Understand that they must share responsibility for acting together in pursuit of the common good.

Suggested Presenter(s)

District chairs make ideal presenters for this topic if they are well experienced in leadership. Other good candidates are community members who have demonstrated the ability to encourage others to take on leadership roles.

Presentation Method

Start with opening remarks from the designated presenters. Then the session can be opened to discussion with participants. The objective is to build understanding about how adults and youth can be developed as effective leaders in their communities.

BSA Reference Materials

- *District Operations Handbook*, No. 34739
- Chrislip, David D., and Ed O'Malley. *For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership*. 2013, Kansas Leadership Center (www.kansasleadershipcenter.org)

Presentation Content

- **Intervene skillfully.** The activity of leadership starts with a personal intervention. Nothing happens until someone takes initiative. Making conscious choices about whether, when, and how to intervene most skillfully will help you maximize the likelihood of progress.
- **Make conscious choices.** Most of us react to situations in unconscious, instinctual, or habitual ways. Becoming aware of these tendencies can help us make conscious choices to intervene in different, more effective ways.
 - How do you commonly react (your “default mode”) when faced with leadership challenges?
 - In a given situation, what is the purpose of your intervention?
 - What kind of intervention from you might help make some progress? How would this compare to or contrast with your usual response?

- **Raise the heat.** Leadership challenges, especially those in the civic arena, are filled with potential drama. If done properly, focusing everyone’s attention on the disagreement can help “raise the heat” in a constructive way. What is your default?
 - Do you typically lower the heat, thereby avoiding conflict?
 - Do you raise the heat to a level appropriate for getting the work done?
 - Or do you raise the heat so much that it keeps people from engaging productively with each other?
 - Given your diagnosis of the level of heat in a particular situation, what could you do to raise or lower the heat so some work gets done?
- **Share the work.** Sharing the work lightens everyone’s load.
 - Do you tend to go it alone (Lone Ranger syndrome)?
 - Do you rely on others to exercise leadership?
 - Or do you mobilize others to help do the work? What could you do in a given situation to accomplish this?
- **Hold to purpose.** Clarity of purpose helps to orient and guide interventions.
 - What helps or hinders your capacity to stay attuned to your purpose?
 - In a given situation, what might throw you off from your purpose?
 - How could you reorient yourself to your purpose and “get back on track”?
- **Speak from the heart.** When we communicate our care and concern honestly, we can help to energize others.
 - What makes it easier for you to speak from the heart?
 - What makes it harder for you?
 - In a given situation, how could you share your concerns in a way that also shows respect and appreciation for others?
- **Act experimentally.** There is no certainty about how to make progress on adaptive challenges. This means that one must anticipate the unexpected and be prepared to improvise and experiment.
 - What keeps you from being more experimental in the way you exercise leadership?
 - In a given situation, what experimental interventions might you undertake in order to make progress?