

Whenever a group of people get together, conflict can occur. As a Girl Scout leader, you will find there are times when getting a group of girls to agree on an activity or trip seems to be an impossible task. The following are some tips for resolving conflicts:

- Girls need to feel secure, capable and accepted by the group. When they do, 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.

**When a problem does arise, consider one of these approaches:**

- **Mediation** - A third person just listens without deciding who is right or wrong. Each person gets a chance to tell her side of the story without any interruptions. Then the mediator helps girls think of possible solutions to the problem and helps them choose one.
- **Time Out** - Ask the girls to go to a quiet spot and give them a set time period in which you expect them to return with a solution. If they cannot come up with one, then you might need to appoint a mediator.
- **Role Reversal** - This is a form of role-playing in which the participants reverse their roles. This can increase empathy and problem-solving skills.
- **Contracts** - For a continuing problem, make a contract. Work out a compromise, decide on a solution, and write up a contract that the participants sign. Make sure the contract is realistic. Remember, contracts can always be renegotiated.

## Discipline Approaches

### **Disruptive Behavior**

- Respond consistently
  - Try nonverbal cues to behave
  - Use gentle verbal reminders
  - Redirect to the activity if not responding to the reminder
  
- Explore the reason for the behavior
  - If for attention: respond to positive choices
  - If for power: give responsibility or choices
  - If for belonging: structure activities to help them feel a part of the group
  
- Teach positive behaviors
  - Discuss and role play positive behaviors
  - Notice when behaviors are positive
  - Ratio should be 3 positive to 1 negative comment
  
- If misbehavior continues
  - Establish consequences
    - Loss of privileges
    - Leave the activity
    - Time-out on the chair
  - Give options:
    - Describe behavior of concern
    - How it affects the group
    - Choices: list positive behaviors first, then consequences

### **Individual Contracting Sheets**

- Set goals of behavior
- Concrete description of desired behavior
- Leader agrees to reward or reinforce for meeting the goals.

## Tattling

A common problem with children in a group setting is tattling. Once the practice of tattling is established, it can become an ever increasing problem. Below are some discussion items and an activity you can use with your troop to deal with tattling.

Discussion with the troop:

- What is a "tattletale"?
- Why do people hate to be called a tattletale?
- Why do we tattle?
- Who are we hurting?
- Who are we helping?
- How do you feel when you tattle? How do you feel when someone tattles on you?
- What are the alternatives?
- When should you report wrong-doing and when not? Ask yourself: Is the behavior I am thinking of reporting really harmful to others, or unsafe, or destructive of property? Is the behavior really any of my business?

### Activity: Is Telling Always Tattling?

Below are some things that could happen in a troop setting. Suppose that someone told in each example. Ask the girls to indicate those times when telling would be tattling.

- *On the way to a troop meeting, Beth made ice snowballs and threw them at younger children.*
- *Amy turned the water on too fast in the rest room. She got her face wet and spilled water on the floor. She wiped it up.*
- *Sue was playing kickball. She kicked the ball and it hit Kim and knocked her down.*
- *Most of the troop is interested in working on Badges at home. Jean saw Bess write down a lot of Badges as completed. Jean did not think that Bess could have finished all of the Badges.*

## HURT FEELINGS

A common situation that troop leaders face is hurt feelings. Below are some discussion items and activities designed to help girls become sensitive to each other's feelings.

Activity: Hurt Feelings

Ask each girl to cut out pictures of people who look as if they have hurt feelings. Some leading questions you might ask:

- How does the person feel?
- Why does she feel that way? (Use imagination in addition to picture content.)
- What could the person do about his feelings?

Discussion:

As a group, discuss the ways we sometimes hurt other people (i.e.: laughing at them, talking behind their backs, not including them in the group.) Ask girls how they would feel if they were on the receiving end of these actions.

Activity: How Would You Feel?

Present the situations below to the girls and ask them to role play a variety of responses to each situation - responses they consider good and those they consider bad. Ask others to describe the feelings of the role players. To extend the exercise, ask the role players to describe how their actions would affect others. Sample situations are as follows:

- *Susan was having a birthday party. She invited every girl in her class except Laura and Sandy. Laura and Sandy saw Susan giving the invitations to the other girls. What would Laura and Sandy do?*
- *Sara's mother spent a lot of time making a new kind of food for supper because Billy's family was going to be visiting. After the families started eating, Billy said he did not like the food. If you were Billy's brother or sister, what would you do? If you were Billy's mother, what would you do?*
- *One night at the zoo, after all of the people had gone home, the animals began talking. They talked about why some of them did not have any visitors that day. If you were the monkey, the elephant, or the giant snake, tell how you would feel if you didn't have any visitors. Talk and act like the animal you have chosen to be.*