

Short and Snappy

Information for Girl Scout Volunteers

What you will need:

- Volunteers
- Activity Leader

Time: 20-30 minutes
depending on activity
chosen

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Basics **Why Can't We all Just Get Along?**

Conflicts are a normal and natural part of everyone's life. We deal with them every day, whether in our Girl Scout lives or in our personal lives. Conflicts are simply the disputes and disagreements that occur between people. While we tend to think of conflict only in terms of its negative effects, conflict can also be very positive. Without conflict there is no growth or progress.



It is the constructive use of conflict that allows us to move forward. By learning from its "constructive" potential we can avoid the destructive aspects of conflict. It is not about one person winning and the other losing but rather promoting a *win-win* resolution where all participants get what they need and feel good about the agreed resolution.

There is no one right way to handle all conflicts – approaches differ depending on the nature of the conflict. Recognizing that there are "options" in conflict situations is one of the first steps toward resolution. Encourage options that are nonviolent, meet the needs of the people involved and improve relationships.

In Girl Scouting, conflict can occur between our girls during troop/group meetings. How we manage that conflict is the key to group happiness. Often the conflicts occur because of differences between the girls that they do not fully comprehend. Help your girls get to know each other better. One of the best ways to do this is by building community amongst the girls. This should be an on-going *process* and allows the girls to get to know each other on a more personal level.

- As *Daisies*, fun, interactive games are appropriate. They want to play anyway.
- As *Brownies*, begin to encourage group work and group decision making. Role-playing at this age is valuable.
- As *Juniors*, guided discussions and active reflection activities promote inclusive conversations and an environment for group problem-solving.
- As *Cadettes, Seniors or Ambassadors*, girls continue to build on already established conflict resolution skills looking for venues for their voices to be heard. Provide them with longer time together. Plan relaxed day and/or overnight sessions at a local program center. Our program centers have open space for activities, crafts and interactive games as well as sleeping and cooking space.

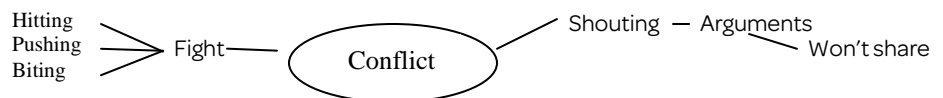
Simple ice breaker activities will help the girls to get to know each other and will go a long way in creating a more positive environment for the girls as well as the adults. The more laughter they can share, the easier it will be to break down any barriers between them. Be sensitive to the causes of the conflicts between two girls. It may be a misunderstanding of differences. When this happens, the discussions need not include the whole troop/group and can be held off to the side to allow for some privacy.

Specific activity needs:

- Beach Ball
- Strategy Cards
- Paper/easel pads
- Markers/pens
- Index cards

ACTIVITIES

1. **Ball Toss** – to get to know a little more about each other.
Prior to the meeting, take a beach ball and write simple introductory questions on the ball with a Sharpie marker. Toss the ball around the group. The person who catches the ball answers the question closest to where their right thumb is place. The ball is then tossed to another member of the group. Repeat.
2. **Personal Trivia** –to learn interesting, little known facts about each other so group members can become more comfortable around one another.
 - Pass out index cards, pens and/or pencils.
 - Have each person must write down their name and three-five little-known facts about themselves. Collect all cards.
 - Choose one card and read aloud the facts found on that single card without stating whose card it is. Girls try to guess whose card was just read. Girls can record their answers and see just how much they know their sister Girl Scouts.
 - Re-read the cards and ask each person to acknowledge their own cards after they are read.
 - What did they find out about the group collectively? Similarities?
3. **ABC Counts 1-2-3** – to promote group interaction and work together as a group to complete a task. Works well in the out-of-doors.
Divide the group into teams. Give each team a bag. Instruct the group to find 26 items, one that starts with each letter of the alphabet, and place into the bag. Once all items are gathered, ask each person to select one item from the bag they feel represents who they are as a person and to share with their group. They may then choose to select several items that reflect who they are as a group and share with all other groups.
4. **What is Conflict?** – to define conflict and brainstorm related words.
Create a *Web Chart*
 - Begin the discussion with asking “*What is conflict?*” or use a similar question to engage girls in a conversation to identify what they feel conflict is. Have someone take notes to help when creating your web chart.
 - You can also ask “*What kinds of conflicts have you been it?*”
 - Use the collected words to create your web chart.
 - Write the word “Conflict” on the center of newsprint or board. Draw a ring around it.
 - Ask the girls to brainstorm words related to conflict (remind them they just did this). You can use your notes to help guide them.
 - As each suggestion is given, write it onto the newsprint or board and draw a line from the word “Conflict” to it.
 - Words similar to the one just recorded can be added and attached in a similar fashion as to the word “Conflict”.
 - Continue until you have completed the group’s *visual* definition of the word conflict. Review



5. **Volunteer Roundtable Discussions:** Prior to the meeting, print out the attached strategy cards and glue them onto index cards or print on cardstock and cut them apart. Distribute the strategy cards among the volunteers at the meeting. Working in groups, volunteers can develop strategies that will help girls work through the different situations

APOLOGIZING

Telling another that you are sorry. This is not necessarily saying that you were wrong but that you care about that other person.

SOLICITING INTERVENTION

Asking someone who is not involved to help sort out the problem and come to a solution.

POSTPONING

Taking a time out. Waiting until later to resolve the conflict.

DISTRACTING

Helping someone to forget about the conflict by focusing their attention on some other interesting activity.

"I" STATEMENTS

Diffusing negative emotions by making it about you, not the other person and your feelings are communicated.

CHANCE

Flip a coin or draw straws.

SHARING

Working together to meet the needs of both parties.