



Whole Health Programme Resources



Scouter Manual



Preface

The Whole Health concept should be seen as an encompassing idea that centres round the whole or complete health idea; this includes body, mind, diet and fitness. A young person will go through many changes in life and these changes are not easy to handle. Feelings and anxieties can be heightened and the changes in their bodies can also be a worry or concern. Developing appropriate relationships, friendships and moving from childhood to teenage friends can be interesting and also difficult for young people. In the background, of course, all the external troubles and temptations are ever present - alcohol, drugs and other substances and the threat of bullying and conflict.

An Adult Scouter can become a solid constant in the life of a Youth Member. There will be many opportunities for you to help and guide these young people in a gentle and caring way. Not in the role of a counsellor but with a view to enabling them, supporting them and directing them to resources and external support / agencies as and if required.

This handbook presents some of the considerations that Adult Scouters should be aware of. It provides guidance, support and some programme ideas. The idea is to use this handbook as a background aid and reference, every situation

will be different and if we keep young people in our focus, and your desire to help and support them on their personal journey you can do some worthwhile work in assisting them in their development.

While this subject matter is not per se part of the prescribed Personal Progression Scheme, it is still a vital part of our programme objectives contained within the SPICES. I would ask you to always try and use opportunities within the programme to address the issues explored in this handbook - involve everyone, let them talk, discuss and discover in a safe environment among friends (remembering to work as a complete Scouter team within the Programme Section).

Through this handbook and your continued involvement with young people you can help them along the journey to adulthood.

I wish you every success with your Programme Section and your continued leadership of young people

Ian Davy

Chief Commissioner – Youth Programme

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Helping young people become 'active citizens' who contribute to society

We all need help at some point in our lives to build relationships, explore and understand issues, to make choices, to decide on action and live with the consequences. Children are given a circle of people who can help; parents, teachers, relatives. Adults choose their circle of close friends and use it except when they need specialist help, for example, a doctor. Adolescents are in between the two stages. They may be rejecting the helpers given to them but they have not yet chosen their own. Young people may seek help from their fellow adolescents or they may choose an adult, for example, a Scouter. The adult chosen is usually someone who has been genuinely interested in them as people, friendly and available, a good listener and helpful when dealing with life's challenges.

Some adults think they have a responsibility to direct and give advice, for example, 'What you ought to do is...' They believe that from their experience of life or their ability to see issues clearly they are in a good position to make judgments and pass them on, for example, 'If I were you I would...' There may be situations when there is little alternative to this approach, for example, in an emergency situation while hiking. However, in other situations adopting such an approach has difficulties. The adult must remember they are not in the young person's shoes. There may be hidden personal factors the adult does not know about. The adult cannot be sure of all the feelings and issues involved. Advice is always second-hand and as a result may be unsatisfactory or indeed wrong.

An alternative way is to avoid imposing solutions or giving ready-made answers, but instead to help the other person to look at the situation from every point of view, to understand their own feelings, to weigh up alternatives, and to make their own



judgment about the action to be taken. This helping of a person to look at situations fully and honestly, to think them through and to make his own decisions can be described as coaching

The word coaching is used in a variety of senses, but the principles involved are generally the same. The ideas which follow are an introduction to the topic and an outline of some of these principles. We are not thinking here of helping people who may have severe problems or personality disorders but rather a kind of personal first aid.

Most young people do not need long term help. They do need, and sometimes desperately as they journey through adolescence, the comfort of a good listener and a chance to sort out their ideas in the presence of an experienced and emotionally uninvolved adult. For some young people a Scouter may be that person.

The Scouter may be asked directly for help or the Scouter may feel it is necessary. Generally, it is better to be on the look out for 'invitations' to assist than burst in on the young person because you feel it is necessary. Such invitations may be a sudden change in mood or behavior, for example. There are typically two main types of situation where coaching may be required. Firstly a young person may be confused and does not know what to do about a particular issue. They worried, undecided and uncertain about what to do. Secondly, they may have made a snap decision about an issue in anger, worry or confusion. These hasty decisions are made without thought of the consequences, which need to be dealt with.

The kind of personal first aid being described here is not about sitting in a room or lying on a couch. It is just a likely to occur on the side of a hill without announcement. Many Scouters will already typically respond intuitively and counsel successfully without fully appreciating what they are doing.

If the topic discussed is an individual, private matter you should talk in a place where there will be few interruptions. Try to make the young person feel calm and relaxed. Each person is different; some people will be quick to talk about their problems; some will be straightforward and come right to the point; others may wander around the issue. Each problem and each Scouter will be different also. This makes the idea of coaching difficult. It cannot be done according to a list of questions. There are only general guidelines and principles which must be adapted to the person, the situation and the Scouter.



Principles of Coaching

1. Listen

This sounds easy but it is often hard to put into practice. Think of your own experience. You have probably talked to someone and had the feeling that you were listened to and were understood. On the other hand, you have probably talked to someone who gave you the feeling that they did not care to listen or understand. To avoid such a situation simply listen attentively. Give an individual your undivided attention when they are talking to you. This will let them know you are willing to give time and care about what is being said. If you do not understand fully what is being said, keep listening.

2. Avoid Giving Advice

The person in question will probably ask for advice and you might be tempted to supply it. The only thing is the advice you give is quite likely to be wrong and unsatisfactory for the person, no matter how good it sounds to you. In the long term young people will be helped best to mature and to be able to make realistic decisions for themselves, by being encouraged to think things through rather than have answers pushed at them.

3. Summarise The Problem

You may want to do this several times while the individual is talking. You will be most effective if you summarise in your own words to make sure you understand. This also helps the person check on what they are telling you.

4. Give Information

Sometimes the young person cannot reach a decision because he does not have all the facts. For example, they may not know the resources that could be used such as family or career guidance in school. Find out if the young person needs or wants information and give it if you can. Make sure that it is balanced and accurate and that it is information and not advice.

5. Encourage Thinking of Different Approaches

Ask the young person if they can think of anything else that could be done in the particular situation. Most of us when we are faced with some kind of issue that is important to us have trouble thinking. We become confused. We settle on one approach and cannot come up with others. Encourage thought: if the young person is unable to think of other approaches you may be able to suggest some, bearing in mind that they must decide which to use. Looking at the problem in a variety of ways may help the individual feel less trapped.

Guidelines for responding in coaching

These are only guidelines for responding. You will have to use them in your own way. You cannot memorize words to say which will fit any situation. Each situation is different. There is no magic formula. Coaching depends on the relationship between two individuals.

1. **Restate** – Restate briefly the person's words in your own way. 'If I understand you correctly you propose doing this activity but the rest of the Patrol does not agree...'
2. **Mention and Accept Feelings** – When someone comes with a problem or complaint he is likely to have some strong feelings about the matter. It does not do any good to tell him he should not feel in a certain way. He does, and you cannot do

away with feelings by pretend they are not there. Being able to express one's feelings is of itself a great help, even if a solution to the problem is not found. Accept the person's feelings – you can often help greatly if you let him know that you understand what he feels the way he does. You can show acceptance of the person without agreeing with or condoning their actions.

3. Show You Are Listening – This is what coaching is all about. Nobody likes to talk to a blank wall. We all need to know the other person is paying attention. Indicating you are listening and understanding is the key. This can be as simple as saying 'yes', a nod or a hand gesture. It is ok to be silent too as you let the young person talk.

4. Encourage – What you say depends on you, the other person and the situation, but it might include phrases like 'Tell me about it', 'Go ahead' and so on.

5. Ask Open-ended Questions – Coaching is not an interrogation, so avoid too many questions but you might want to ask things like 'and then what happened?', 'How did you feel?', and 'What was the difficulty tonight?' Questions like this help the individual to talk without giving the idea that you are cross-examining.

Notes of Caution

Despite your best efforts there will be times when the person in question will remain confused, discouraged and so on. No matter how skilled you are you cannot solve all problems.

1. Do not overreach yourself – When you find you are at a loss, see the person gets other help. Admit when you are out of your depth and offer to help find someone else who could be of assistance.

2. Coaching carries responsibility – Try to understand your own feelings about situations. These might include, sometimes, the pain of knowing and not being able to tell, or the frustration of believing that, in spite of all your endeavours, someone is embarking on a course of action without realizing the full implications.

3. Coaching involves commitment to people – Coaching can be difficult even if rewarding. Control your own emotional involvement as best you can.



Preparing to Coach

As a Scouter your main tasks in this field are:

- Provide immediate personal support.
- Help the individual to clarify the issues
- Make way for further help if necessary.

Each of these tasks can be helped by previous thought so that when you find yourself having to think in your feet you are prepared. Think through your own views and feelings on various topics which are of concern to young people: personal relationships, drugs, jobs and careers, sexual matters and family life for example. How might you respond?

Coaching is no different to the genuine desire to help young people that all Scouters have. It can be useful skill to develop through training and learning from experience. Used appropriately this skill can be a significant aid in helping young people to mature, to build satisfactory relationships, to make their own decisions and accept responsibility.

Not all situations can be (or should be) handled by the Scouter alone. Here are places to get help when situations common when working with young people arise:

Where to Get Help

Childline 1800 66 66 66 - listening service for young people.

Samaritans 1850 60 90 90 – confidential emotional support for those who are despairing or suicidal, 24 hours a day by telephone, email, letter or face-to-face.

AWARE 1890 303 202 – 24 hour helpline for those suffering from depression

www.SpunOut.ie – covers all aspects of health, lifestyle and culture in Ireland today. It is an online youth information centre, a magazine, a health clinic, a contact directory, a youth media forum, a take action initiative, a community building place and much more.

www.youth.ie – focuses on all things youth in Ireland today

www.reachout.com.au – aims to help young people through tough times.

www.youthinformation.ie – provides information and links to a variety of services for young people.

www.gayswitchboard.ie – non-judgmental information and support.

www.mentalhealthireland.ie – information about mental health illness, services, and lots more, with a section devoted to young people.

www.lifebytes.gov.uk – information on health issues.

Websites on bullying: **www.scre.ac.uk/bully** **www.dres.gov.uk/bullying**

Rainbows 01 473 4175 – dealing with bereavement and suicide.

Your local HSE provides suicide awareness and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

www.yieldireland.com – information for young people about sexual, reproductive health and relationship issues.

www.sexualhealthireland.com – information on sexual health, drugs and alcohol and lots of features specially designed for young people.

www.contactyouth.org 0808 808 8000 – free and confidential counselling to young people in Northern Ireland.

Bodywhys 1890 200 44 **www.bodywhys.ie** – offers support, information and understanding for young people with eating disorders, their families and friends.

www.mindingyourhead.org – looking after your mental health

Console 1800 201 890 **www.console.ie** – supports people through bereavement by suicide.

www.winstonswish.org – support for children and young people following bereavement.

www.childbereavement.org.uk – useful information and guides for parents and carers.

Crisis Pregnancy Agency 01 814 6292 **www.crisispregnancy.ie**

Irish Family Planning Association 1850 49 5051 **www.ifpa.ie** – information and counselling designed to promote sexual health for women.

Schizophrenia Ireland 1890 621 631 – impartial information on a range of issues related to schizophrenia.

CARI Foundation 1890 924 567 **www.cari.ie** – counselling and support for up to 18 years following the disclosure or discovery of sexual abuse.

Drugs/HIV Helpline 1800 459 459

Gambler Anonymous 01 8721133 **www.gamblersanonymous.ie**

Narcotics Anonymous 01 672 8000 **www.na.ireland.org**

Alcoholic Anonymous 01 8732699 **www.al-anon-ireland.org**

Smoking Quitline 1850 201 203

Irish Cancer Society 1800 200 700

Teen Between 01 6785256 – support services for teenagers of separated parents.

Gingerbread – National Association of One Parent Families 046 9023241 **www.gingerbread.ie**

Rape Crisis Centre 1800 77 88 88 **www.drcc.ie**

Taking Care of Life

Our expectations and beliefs about young people determine how we act towards them, the opportunities we offer and the behaviours we encourage – we get what we expect. Young people are often told when they do something wrong but rarely are they supported or encouraged when they behave well or do something properly. This leaves many young people dispirited, untrusting and resentful of adults and authority.

As adults we should understand that the messages and expectations young people receive growing up are complex and often contradictory as they try to make sense of themselves and the world around them. Scouting is a perfect place of young people to be able to make sense of these things as it provides a safe environment to learn, grow, develop and have fun. This section contains some activities to help with this.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how we feel about our lives and ourselves and the extent to which we feel in control of our world. Self-esteem is not a fixed state; the level of an individual's self-esteem can vary throughout life and from situation to situation. Young people deserve a safe environment where they can develop positive levels of self-esteem such as Scouting.



Campaign Craze

When politicians run a campaign they sell themselves by telling everyone about all their successes, strong points, values and positive traits. Creating your own campaign takes guts, and it isn't easy to stand up in front of a bunch of people and brag about yourself; but it can be fun if you get creative, a bit outrageous, and most of all a bit bold.

Objective: For people to recognize and to verbalize positive traits that they possess.

Materials

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Colored markers
- Tape
- Scissors
- Optional: paints, glitter, ribbons, glue, etc.

Description

Inform everyone that they each will be running for an office of their choice. Each person will need to run an extensive campaign in their attempt to become elected (it's all pretend of course). Each person must then create the following campaign items: a poster, campaign buttons, an original speech, a slogan and anything else they can think of. Encourage everyone to base their campaign on all of their positive attributes and traits.

Once everyone is finished, ask each person to present his/her campaign to the rest of the group. After each presentation there is usually a round of applause from the rest of the group. During the campaign encourage people to put their posters up on the wall and to wear their buttons (they may even wish to hand out buttons for others to wear).

Discussion Prompts

1. How did you feel when you were presenting your campaign?
2. Was it difficult or easy for you to think of positive things about yourself for the campaign?
3. Would you ever consider running for a school or political office? Why or why not?
4. What did you learn about others in the group when doing this activity?



Dealing with Conflict

Everywhere you turn, the potential for conflict exists. Conflict with ourselves (Should I get up and exercise, or sleep in? Should I have this piece of dessert?); conflict with others (I was waiting for that parking place. That flight attendant was rude.); conflict at work (Why is the project over-budget and late? That's not my job!); conflict at home (Eat your vegetables! Why can't I go to the dance tonight?) Conflict is neither good nor bad—it just is.

Conflict generally results from poor communications, disruptions in routines, unclear goals or expectations, the quest for power, ego massage, differences in value systems, or hidden agendas. It finds its expression in rude, discourteous and sometimes hostile behavior; selfishness; strident and defensive language; lack of respect; and increased stress.

Conflict is unavoidable. It will occur at some point in the Patrol and Group. The best thing to do is to tackle it right away rather than letting it fester over a period of time. If someone has annoyed you or you appear to have made someone angry the best thing you can do is tell them in a calm manner that you are annoyed and explain why or ask them why they appeared annoyed with you. You must be willing to compromise, admit your failings and apologize for your part in the conflict. If you make the first move, the other person will move with you. People do not like being in conflict with each other. The best thing is to talk it out. It is that simple!

Red Flag

The words we use often inflame others. We may not clearly say what we mean or say it in a harsh way. This game helps Scouts think about the words they use and the impact of them at times of conflict. The Scouts must make a number of flags (using red and green cloth, black paint to paint statement and bamboo perhaps) with a number of statements on them. The Scout must decide whether the statement



deserves a red flag or a green flag (red represents not ok, green is ok). If the statement gets a red flag decide what the person really means to say and think of other more appropriate ways to communicate what they are feeling.

Examples of statements:

They are a bunch of idiots.

You are thick

She is a slob

I hate him, he looks like a geek.

Examples of more appropriate ways of saying statements:

They are a bunch of idiots – I am really angry with them.

You are thick – I am angry with you and I wish you would listen to what I say.

She is a slob – It annoys me that you are so messy. I wish you would look after your clothes/wear cooler clothes/wash your hair more often.

I hate him, he looks like a geek – We don't get along/he's not my type

A simple strategy for dealing better with conflict is 'Stop-Think-Respond'. This means stopping to recognize the problem, thinking about what is being said, how you are feeling etc and responding in a clear, controlled way that allows you to get your point across in a mature way.

Possible points to conclude on:

We all feel better about ourselves if we have responded to conflict or confrontation in a positive way, getting our point across clearly. However this is not always easy to do. Sometimes tempers flare and responses are not connected to the original issue. Saying what you want to say in a reasonable, assertive way helps us all to feel good afterwards.

Unsupervised Games

Case study from Medellin, Colombia from Tearfund, a Christian charity and development organisation.

Medellin, in Colombia, is a city in desperate need of conflict resolution. It has suffered from two decades of armed conflict between criminal gangs, socialist guerrillas and paramilitary groups. Murders are common. This conflict has directly impacted on the lives of a generation of children and young people who have been born and have grown up in this context of violence. Many of the armed groups are formed of young people of both sexes, between 14 and 25 years old.

Club Deportivo works with young people caught up in the violence. We have observed the skills and abilities that local communities develop in order to survive and

resolve conflicts within this context of long-term violence. We set ourselves the task of identifying these strengths and building upon them. We did this through a combination of games, research, and training in conflict resolution.



Using football to train peace negotiators

The game of football is very popular with young people. It offers an atmosphere of tension similar to that of an armed conflict. We organised a football tournament called the 'Peace Negotiators' Cup' which had the following special characteristics:

Mixed teams The teams had to include both male and female players. At least five female players had to be present for each game to start. Young women were keen to participate because they saw the experience as an opportunity to improve their sporting skills. At first, the boys were reluctant to play with girls, but as the tournament progressed, they noticed that the girls were good competitors and they began to accept them as equals. We also found that the girls respected the rules more and put pressure on the boys to follow them!

No referee The players themselves (of both sexes) had to resolve any situations of conflict in the game.

No set rules The players had to suggest and agree on the rules for each game.

Observer We assigned an observer for each game to record what happened on the pitch. This person did not interfere with negotiations to resolve conflicts. However, if violence broke out the observer had the power to immediately send off any players who had resorted to violence. These adaptations meant that during the game each player was repeatedly faced by situations of conflict where they had to draw on their abilities to negotiate and to find reconciliation. The tournament was held monthly, and the desire to win the competition motivated people to participate.

Resolving conflict

The children and young people in the tournament had grown up surrounded by violence. However, during games they showed the ability to manage conflicts using alternative, peaceful methods, although they did occasionally resort to violence. Some of the methods they used were:

Protest even in the heat of the game, players were able to cause the opposing team to acknowledge their fouls by stopping the game in peaceful protest. They did this by:

- holding on to the ball so that the game had to stop
- remaining completely quiet and still (as though paralysed).

Mediation - The players practised mediation skills by:

- bringing together the people who were playing unfairly and making them choose to play fair or leave the game

- working together with players in other teams to ensure fair play, or to strengthen the participation of girls
- intervening to prevent physical aggression when some of the players became violent.

Reconciliation - When confusing situations arose, the teams entered into discussion, without resorting to violence, until they reached an agreement. Reconciliation was possible because:

- they agreed at the start on rules for the games, and ensured they were kept through discussion and other non-violent means
- they would ask the opinion of third parties to help resolve complex conflicts such as contested goals.

Sometimes, both teams would be unaware of a foul. It might seem that it affected just one player. But we were able to show them how this could grow to become an unmanageable conflict. It should not be ignored, it should be resolved immediately.



It has been interesting to observe the children and young people putting their abilities and skills into practice during the conflicts that arose in each game. It gave us insight into people's potential for managing conflict. Local communities can often be seen as simply the weak victims of violence. But people who live through prolonged armed conflict, like the people of Medellín, learn how to survive, to make the best of things and even how to make a difference to the conflict. There has been much bloodshed, but conflict can also provide an opportunity to learn. In Medellín we have learned that the local community is not helpless, it has the potential to bring change for the good.

In this project we also noted the ability of the young women to have their rights respected in the company of men. When the boys would not pass them the ball, the girls joined together and refused to take part in the game. They also often took the initiative in resolving conflicts. In some cases, girls were team captains.

The project has had an impact on the wider society as the participants applied what they have learned on the pitch in their communities. We have noticed that there is more respect for women. This is evident when women are now using public facilities such as football grounds. There is also less resorting to violence as a way of resolving conflicts.

This project provided an environment in which to develop skills in conflict resolution. A project like this could be run anywhere in the world where there is prolonged urban armed conflict and where team sports are practiced (it does not need to be football). The sport needs to involve a struggle for something difficult to achieve, where each team competes to be champion. The project can then combine the sport with research and conflict resolution training.

Do you think you can try something like this with Scouts? Allow them run their own games and let them work through the inevitable conflict that arise. Are you brave enough to try?!

Anger management

Many people want to control every aspect of their lives and when things feel out of control or someone else is setting the rules that they must live by, they become frustrated and angry. Some people have difficulty controlling this anger and need to learn how to accept the things in their lives that seem out of control. This game will help Scouts to realize that they cannot control everything in their lives and that they must learn how to deal with things that seem out of control, rather than giving in to anger and frustration.



Out of Control

Materials

- Several small prizes (any items the group members would like) wrapped in wrapping paper
- One pair of dice

Prior to the activity gather together some small prize items and wrap them. There should be at least one prize for each participant plus a few extra. Place all of the prizes on a table and gather the group around.

Instruct the group that the game will be played in two different parts (do not explain the second part until the first part is completed). In the first round of the game one person starts with a pair of dice and rolls them once. If s/he rolls a double, s/he may select a prize from the pile, unwrap it and set it on the table in front of him/her for the rest of the group to see. If a double is not rolled, the dice are passed to the next person who attempts to roll a double in order to get a prize. Everyone in the group continues to roll and pass the dice (collecting prizes for a double) until all of the prizes in the middle are gone. In the end one person may end up with two or three prizes while others may end up with nothing.

Introduce the second part of the game at this point. This half is timed (for a smaller group use about five minutes and about ten minutes for a larger group). The game is played in the same manner as it was for the first part only now instead of selecting a prize from the middle when a double is rolled, a prize may be selected from anyone else in the group. This continues until the allotted time is up. Again, some people may end up with more prizes in front of them than others.

Discussion Prompts

1. What do you do when “the luck of the roll” does not always go your way?
2. Do you feel like you have control over your life?
3. How do you handle things when life feels out of control or unfair?

4. Does anyone feel angry about this game? If so, how have you handled this feeling?
5. What can you do when life feels unfair and things do not go your way?

Coping skills

Many things cause stress in daily life, but there are lots of ways you can help yourself to cope. Scouting again provides a method of assisting young people to learn to cope, how to cope with freezing cold and rain on the side of a mountain for example. The ability to cope with such a situation is the same ability that is needed to cope with the other stresses life throws at us all.

100

By asking people how they feel physically and emotionally prior to an activity and then again after exercising, we can help them recognize the positive effects physical activity can have on their lives. Exercise is a great way of coping with the challenges life can throw at us.

This game is a fun way for people to experience exercise and learn about the positive effects it can have on them at the same time.

Objective: to encourage people to engage in exercise to improve their own mental and physical health and to promote fitness as a coping skill.

Materials

- Basketball
- Basketball hoop
- Jump rope

Description

Challenge the group to work together to earn one hundred points by completing various fitness activities. Emphasize that this is not a competition but a challenge

and everyone should do their best to support the group. Points can be earned by completing the following activities (or create your own).

- 1 point for each lap run in one minute
- 1 point for each basket made (everyone gets 10 shots)
- 1 point for each foot jumped in a standing long jump
- 1 point for every five jumps made when jump roping without making a mistake (give each person 3 tries)
- 1 point for each push up
- 1 point for every 10 jumping jacks

Keep track of the points on paper and continually challenge the group to make it all the way to one hundred points. For smaller groups you may increase the point value of each activity.

Discussion Prompts

1. How do you feel after exercising?
2. Do you feel different emotionally?
3. How can exercise help you?
4. What do you do to exercise in your life right now?
5. What type of exercise could you do?
6. Was it easier to exercise with the challenge of the points?
7. What could you use for incentive to get you exercising now?

Talk – the best coping skill

Talking to someone you trust and confide in is also a great way of easing the burden you are feeling, be it family problems, exam pressure or financial strain. Every person has found they needed to talk to a friend and everyone has experience of providing a caring listening ear. Organizations such as Samaritans can come and talk to your Group about the importance of talking and listening. The communication games in the friendship section can help to develop listening, talking and communication skills.



Coping through Scouting

Scouts can help prepare you to cope with all you face in your life. Here are a number of challenges which will put you and your fellow Scouts under pressure in a safe, simulated situation. You will all have to practice your ability to work under pressure and use your communication skills meet the challenge. This is exactly what you will need when you are faced with stress at exam time, if you are under financial strain or having a disagreement with another person.

1. Precision Activities

This will test your Patrol Leaders. Send the Patrols into different corners of the room. Call up the Patrol Leaders and tell them that you are about to issue a series of precise instructions which must be carried out to the letter by the Patrols. Here are some suggestions:

'In exactly one minute the room will be plunged into darkness for 60 seconds. You have one minute to organize the Patrol so that when the lights go out, not before, you can build a human pyramid three Scouts high which will be intact when the lights go up again'.

'Without using knots, bends or hitches, join six knotting ropes together to make the longest possible line which will hold together when held by its ends clear of the ground'.

'You have exactly 3 minutes to organize a relay race in which every Scout in the Patrol carries every other Scout from one end of the room to the other. Be ready to go when the signal is given'.





2. Hammocks and Ladders

Projects such as making hammocks and rope ladders within a time limit are good ways of getting the Patrol working as a team and learn about coping with pressure..

3. Incident Circuit

Patrols follow a circuit of incidents and do their best to deal with them in a calm, efficient manner.

Smoked-filled room: Rescue a person from a smoke-filled room. Use real smoke – smoke can pellets can be obtained from joke shops etc.

Electric Shock: A parent of one of the Scouts has been doing maintenance at the Den. The parent was using an electric drill which turned out to be faulty. An electric shock has made the parent fall of the ladder they were on while fixing the lights.

Ice Breaking Incident: Mark off an area with rope to represent a frozen lake. A person has fallen through the ice in the middle of the lake...

Car Accident: Have a bicycle mangled under a car. The engine is still running and the driver is slumped over the steering wheel.

The suggested activities in the Staying Safe section will allow you develop an ability to cope with emergencies situations. Survival training and taking part in events such as the Phoenix and Explorer Belt will all give you a feel for coping with pressure, which can then be applied to any situation in your own life.



Relaxation techniques

1. Sleep

Sleep is the most important relaxation we get. Without it we would not be able to function properly. A newborn needs up to 18 hours sleep. From 1 to 12 months we need 14-18 hours sleep. From 1-3 we need 12-15 hours. From 3-5 years we need 11-13 hours. Beavers and Cubs need 9-11 hours. Scouts and Ventures need 9-10. Adults need 7-9 hours with 8 hours often seen as the optimal amount. Do you and the Scouts meet the standard?



2. Tai Chi

Originating in ancient China, Tai Chi is a graceful form of martial arts that today is practiced primarily for its health benefits, which include relief from stress and anxiety. Emphasising total relaxation, Tai Chi can be perceived as a type of meditation, and in fact it has been referred to as “meditation in motion”. Movements, which are gentle, flowing and slow, draw on internal force rather than brute strength. Through repeating these specific motions, the individual aims to harmonise mind, body and spirit. Tai Chi can help alleviate a wide range of conditions including stress, arthritis, rheumatism, poor posture and lower back pain. It also enhances strength and muscle tone, improves co-ordination and balance, and increases both flexibility and range of motion. Research has shown that the daily practice of Tai Chi can reduce blood pressure as much as ordinary aerobic exercise without increasing the heart rate. Although many books and videos are available on Tai Chi, it is better to learn from a

skilled instructor who can ensure that postures and movements are correct during a class. At present there is no representational body for Tai Chi instructors in Ireland, which means there is no organisation specifically dedicated to Tai Chi that can provide a list of qualified teachers. By logging onto either www.nightcourses.com or www.taichifinder.co.uk, individuals can find the courses on offer nearest them.

3. Yoga

The yoga most Westerners know is a movement technique -- a series of poses (called asanas) that emphasise stretching, attentive breathing, and relaxation. These comprehensive poses are part of a 5,000-year-old spiritual discipline and belief system (also called yoga) from India. The exercises alone promote physical and mental well-being; some improve flexibility and strength. Studies have shown that the attentive, controlled breathing cultivated in yoga can help short-circuit your body's fight-or-flight response, the keyed-up feeling you get during times of danger or stress. Regular yoga practice may also lower blood pressure, help ease headache and arthritis pain, reduce anxiety, and combat insomnia and other stress-related ills. What's more, because all styles of yoga make you more flexible, you're more likely to avoid injury -- and you'll be able to keep up a wider range of activities. Check with local yoga studios, the guide to evening courses, or the Golden pages. Most offer classes for all levels, from beginner on up. Yoga teachers aren't certified, so make sure you go to a reputable studio.

4. Take Time

Sit upright in a chair with the soles of your feet firmly on the ground. Close your eyes. Take 3-5 deep breaths. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Relax for a few seconds between each deep breath. Remaining quiet with eyes closed and feet on the ground be aware of all the everyday sounds going on around you, e.g. the car passing by, the telephone ringing, the birds singing. Hear what is going on around you without putting effort into it. Simply, breathe and take notice.

5. Time Out

Sit well back in a seat with back supported and both feet on the ground. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Become aware of your breathing – is it shallow/deep, fast or slow? Breathe in as deeply as you can, hold it for 5 seconds and then breathe out slowly. Repeat 3 times. Become aware once again of the motion of your breathing. Stay like this for 2-3 minutes. Now count backwards from 5 to 1 and then slowly open your eyes.

6. 40 Ways to Relax

- Listen to classical music
- Talk a walk on the beach
- Watch a river run over pebbles
- Play with a pet
- Cuddle a baby
- Smile at a child
- Get lost in the great outdoors
- Collect shells at the beach
- Invite friends for dinner
- Play games
- Meditate
- Take a power nap
- Do yoga
- Do any sport that helps you to relax
- Read a good book
- Go sailing
- Go hiking
- Listen to your iPod
- Watch a funny movie
- Watch a kids movie



- Sleep
- Pray
- Gaze into the landscape
- Gaze into candlelight
- Read by candlelight
- Do some scrapbooking
- Paint
- Get a massage
- Sing
- Dance
- Daydream
- Walk barefoot



- Lie down in the grass and gaze up into the sky
- Reflect on your life
- Take a long shower
- Hibernate with a cup of
- Take a vacation
- Find a new hobby
- Take a relaxing bath
- Go for a weekend getaway

Bullying

- taken from Scouting Ireland's Code of Good Practice.

Bullying has no place in Scouting. Scouters should promote a positive anti-bullying ethos in their Programme Section and raise awareness, amongst other Scouters and youth members, that bullying should not be tolerated. By emphasizing the Scout Law and Promise, Scouters should create an environment in which youth members are valued as individuals with rights and are encouraged and affirmed. The effects of bullying can last for some time and can significantly effect an individual's wellbeing, causing poor social development and depression. The outcomes of bullying can include:

- Physical injury, headaches, stomach aches.
- Stress symptoms such as sleep or eating disorders and panic attacks.
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem.
- Lowered academic achievement.
- Exclusion and isolation.
- Consideration of suicide.

"Given the atmosphere of fear and secrecy which surrounds bullying, and the fact that adult intervention is almost always necessary to stop it, it is crucial that the confidence placed in a [Scouter] by a [Scout] is reciprocated by an unequivocal response". (NEHB, 2002)

It is important for Scouters to take a pro-active role in investigating whether bullying is occurring because many Scouts will not tell. However, a Scout may confide in anyone so everyone should be aware of how to handle such a confidence.

What can you do if a Scout tells you she/he is being bullied?

1. Listen ...

Calmly and accept what is said. If possible there should be two Scouters present (but this should be determined by the needs of the child), if not leave the door open so passers-by can see the Scouter but not the Scout.

2. Take notes following the conversation...

Keep on file as this forms the basis of the bullying report. Notes should include nature of incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and Scouter's response.

3. Reassure...

That help is available, action will be taken, the Scout was right to tell, it is not his or her fault and it could happen to anyone.

4. Negotiate confidentiality ...

Be clear you'll only tell people who need to know.

5. Ensure the Scout's safety ...

The Scouter should be aware that the safety of the youth member is paramount and this can be maintained through appropriate supervision. Liaise with the parents / guardians in relation to a solution and possible actions.

6. Tell the Scout that you'll keep her/him informed ...

And how you intend to proceed.

7. Make an intervention ...

All actions should be guided by the needs of the child:

- Inform the Section Leadership team of your concerns.
- Decide who to consult with: Patrol Leader, Group Leader, County Officers, Child Protection Officer, parents, guardians.
- Decide who to interview: witnesses, alleged bullies, and uninvolved scouts.
- Find out: what, where, when, who, how, why? Act in a non-confrontational manner.
- Resolve the problem: Make bullying the responsibility of the Group – follow the 'No Blame' group approach (details may be obtained from National office by contacting the Child Protection Officer). Alternatively, approach the victim and the bully (explain why the bully's behaviour is wrong, how it makes the victim feel and request an apology); parents and bully (if sanctions linked to the behaviour are to be employed, request the parents to reinforce these).
- Keep the Group Leader informed and updated.
- Refer on in difficult cases: if it remains unresolved at the Group level it should be referred to the County level.

8. Make a record ...

Of facts rather than opinions. Include details from the bullying report (i.e. nature of incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and Scouter's response), details recounted by others involved, any agreements made, an account of action taken and suggestions for follow up and monitoring.

It is advised that local Scout Groups develop their own anti-bullying procedure with age appropriate input from youth members and endeavour to ensure that youth members and parents/guardians are aware of the policy.

Some helpful tips:

- Agree and implement a procedure to counteract bullying and be approachable to receive reports of bullying.
- Involve the Court of Honour, Patrol Leaders' Council, Watch Leaders' Council or Venturer Executive in developing, implementing and monitoring the anti-bullying procedure.
- Reinforce the principles of fair play.
- Develop positive leadership skills among youth members e.g. Sixers, Patrol Leaders, Watch Leaders, Venture Executive Officers.
- Ensure that roles and responsibilities are shared among as many youth members as possible.
- Allocate roles and responsibilities to match the physical and intellectual capabilities of the youth members.

In the Court

The Scouter should divide the Scouts into two groups. The Scouter should then pick three unbiased students to sit as judges for the discussion. One group will be for bullying and the other will be against bullying. Give students some time to work on ideas and concepts to share their information with the class. It may be difficult for the group that is for bullying to come up with a good argument (they could argue from a

young person's point of view that bullying is good because I then do not have to put up with people that annoy me). Each group should pick one member from its group to share its conclusions. Following discussion the judges should make their ruling.

Fitting the Bill

This activity helps participants understand how and why stereotyping happens. Stereotyping and then making fun of people who do not fit the 'bill' or 'type' is usually a reason for bullying these people.

Introduce the activity by explaining to the group that they will be looking at stereotyping. Make sure that everyone understands that stereotyping is when we expect someone in certain circumstances to behave in a predictable fashion or look a predictable way. Split the participants into same gender groups. Give each group a sheet of paper and pens/markers. Ask the participants to write a list of characteristics that they think are appropriate for a boy and girl. These should include how they expect the person to look and behave. Everybody's view should be listened to. Back in the larger group ask each small group to describe their ideal person. They should start with looks and go on to their characteristics and personality. What do the males think of the list the girls came up with and vice versa? Is this form of stereotyping helpful or unhelpful? Should everyone aim for this? What would it be like to be the complete opposite of everything described?

Possible points to conclude on:

It is important to try to respect everyone you come into contact with as an individual. Clumping people together as certain types often makes harder for friendships/relationships to work because people are always trying to meet unrealistic expectations rather than being valued for their own characteristics.

Friendship & Relationships

For most young people relationships play a significant part in their emotional, social and behavioural development. Through school, work, home, friendships and activity groups, such as Scouts, they have an opportunity to acquire knowledge, develop skills and develop a level of confidence that has the potential to enable young people to feel good about themselves while respecting others. Other young people however can feel very alone as a result of their relationships with others. Young people need to learn how to compromise, be honest, listen, negotiate, share a range of feelings and so on so they can benefit from their friendships and relationships.

This section contains activities allowing Scouts to explore friendships and relationships. These activities will help young people to understand the relationships in their lives and prevent negative experiences such as bullying.

Communication Skills

Much of what is contained in this section is aimed at the senior Scout sections. For the younger sections you can help develop their communication skills

Suggestions to develop younger Scouts' communication skills:

- Writing skills: Penpals with Scout Groups from other part of country, or from a Scout Group in another country.
- Mime: Charades
- Listening and passing information: Chinese Whispers

- Similar simple games are good to work on verbal and non-verbal communications skills. For example, there could be a hobby night when each Scout tells the Group about their next favourite thing after Scouts!

Communication Games for Senior Scout Sections

Crazy Sentence

Listening to details can be very important when trying to solve a problem or when attempting to follow complicated directions. Sometimes the details are not essential but at other times these details are the most important part of the information being conveyed.

Being able to listen carefully to what is said and to all the words that a person is saying isn't an easy task. Sometimes we must listen with our eyes and observe body



language, facial expressions, and eye movement in order to get all the information needed. The better you “listen” to the details, the more you will hear and the better you will understand what is being said.

This is a game for the Patrol. You need good listening skills to win the game. You will need chairs, pens and paper.

Prior to this activity make up a dozen or so sentences that are complete and correct but make them crazy and random; then write each sentence on a small piece of paper. Some examples of crazy sentences are:

“My mother had a large tattoo.”

“Big Bird is my idol.”

“The blue cow swam over the moon.”

“It is good to eat spiders and caterpillars for breakfast.”

“Rubber bands stick to the ceiling on Christmas day.”

Be creative and come up with many more. Also, prior to the game set up two chairs in the front of the room.

For the activity select two people from the group and ask them to sit in the chairs that you have set up in the front of the room. Give each person a piece of paper with one of the crazy sentences on it. The two players must read the sentence to themselves and then engage in conversation. Each player attempts to state his/her sentence in the course of conversation. The object is to slip in the sentence without the other person guessing what it is. You may wish to give them a topic to start with such as fishing, country music, bowling, buying shoes, or anything else that has nothing to do with the sentences. Also give them a one or two minute time limit to slip their sentences in during the conversation. After the time limit, allow the people in the audience to guess what the crazy sentence is and whoever guesses correctly is given the opportunity to play the game for the next round.

Non-verbal Introduction

In this game the participants are sitting in a circle. The participants are made to pair up with the person sitting next to them. They are then asked to introduce themselves to each other and give their partner some information about themselves that they believe is interesting/uncommon/unknown. After everybody has done that, they are asked to introduce their partner to the group. There is a catch however. The participant cannot use words or props to introduce her partner. She can use only actions to do so. There will be some very funny moments as well as shouts of triumph as participants guess correctly the interesting facts about the members of their group.



Catch the Chicken

Ask for four volunteers from the group. While three of the volunteers step out of the room, ask the rest of the group to sit in a circle. Ask the remaining volunteer to step into the circle and ask her to imitate the action of catching a chicken in a barn. Remember this is a communication game to understand non-verbal communication. Hence the volunteer has to use only actions to do this and neither she nor the rest of the participants can speak through the game. They are not to reveal the game that is going on in any way to the volunteers coming into the room. You will also tell them that the volunteers will come into the room and help her in her task of 'catching the chicken'. Now step out of the room and send the other volunteers into the room at intervals of around one minute. When you send them in ask each of them to join their colleague in whatever they find her doing and help her out. You'll see some hilarious scenes in the room. After all three volunteers have come into the room and the game has continued for another minute or so, have the participants stop this communication game. Ask the three volunteers what they thought they were doing. Ask the first volunteer what she was doing and the volunteer will reveal s/he was 'catching the chicken'.

Following the game draw them Group attention to how it is normal for people to interpret the behavior (non-verbal communication) of a person and respond to it rather than clarifying the communication. Remind them that while the people inside were told not to speak or reveal in any way the game that was going on, the volunteers outside were not restricted in any way. Yet they chose not to ask anybody about what was going on, rather they jumped in right away and started imitating the leader. This happens a lot when a person who is leading is communicating with a Group but there is no questioning or analysis of whether what the leader is saying is sensible or not.

Random Acts of Kindness

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation inspires people to practice kindness and to pass it on to others. As people tap into their own generous human spirit and share kindness with one another, they discover for themselves the power of kindness to effect positive change. When kindness is expressed, healthy relationships are created, community connections are nourished, and people are inspired to pass kindness on. See www.actsofkindness.org

Here are some ideas for your Scout Group:

- Collect food, books and clothing for those in need.
- Collect toys for children in developing countries at Christmas time.



- Collect pet food, blankets, towels, toys and other supplies for an animal shelter.
- Clean up litter around the place you hold your meetings.
- Collect items such as toiletries, new underwear and socks for a homeless shelter.
- Collect books from a homeless shelter.
- Pick up litter in the local park
- Do something for the elderly people in the neighbourhood
- Mentor younger Scouts, helping them plan and implement a project, participating in the project yourself so they learn from your actions.
- Help organise a community parade or celebration, e.g. St. Patrick's Day.
- Make minor repairs needed to your meeting place
- Participate in a walk/run or other event for a worthwhile cause.

Team Building Games

The core unit of the Scout Group is the Patrol. The Patrol is a small, permanent group, under the charge of a Patrol Leader. Here are a few activities to help build a team atmosphere within the Patrol and Group as a whole.

Mug Tree

Two buckets are connected via a single pulley. The bucket on the ground is full of water; the bucket up the tree is empty. Attached to branches so that they just reach the branch below are mugs. The top mug will reach the top bucket, and the bottom mug will reach the bucket on the ground. The problem for the Patrol is to get the two buckets to balance exactly (meeting halfway) by transferring water up the tree from mug to mug. The Scouts should strategically position themselves up the tree so that it is possible to collect water from the bottom bucket and pass it up the tree to the empty bucket.

Vital Encounter

This requires a Scouter who can act without speaking! This is a good game to practice non-verbal communication skills and for team building.

The Patrol is stranded on one side of a river bank. The river is deep and fast flowing. On the opposite bank is a tree, and leaning against it is a friendly native who does not speak English. You have with you a long rope, and you notice that there is a convenient tree in your side of the river. What you have to do is persuade the native to tie the end of your rope around his tree with a round turn and two half hitches at a height that will allow you to safely cross the river. You will have to mime what you want the native to do and get him to do it. If he misunderstands, you could drown!



Blindfold String Trail

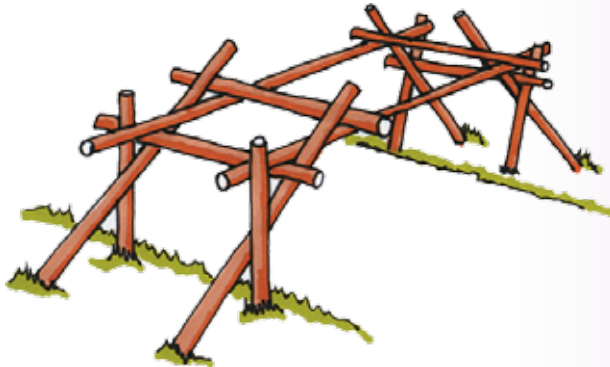
This is basically a blindfold obstacle course. It mixes team building and trust building so will be of benefit to the Patrol. All the Patrol should be blindfolded except the Patrol Leader who directs the Patrol around the course. Make sure the obstacles are difficult but not a safety hazard.

Stretchers

The making and construction of stretchers provide the opportunity to develop a number of team building scenarios. A good stretcher is hard to make so it may be necessary to give some preliminary instructions to your Patrols. The carrying of an injured person over difficult ground or an obstacle course will provide the Patrol with a teambuilding exercise in itself, as will the building of a stretcher and the care of the injured person.

Human Pyramid

In exactly one minute the room will be plunged into darkness for one minute. You have one minute to organise yourselves so that, when the lights go out you can build a human pyramid three Scouts high which will still be intact when the lights go on again.



Locking Bridge

This bridge is built without lashings. The bridge is held together only by the locking of the poles and the friction created by this locking. It requires Patrol co-ordination and organisation to construct the bridge correctly.

Trust Games

Trust is about relying on another person or other people. Trusting a person or people is believing they can be relied upon in any situation from pitching a tent together to talking to them in confidence about anything under the sun. It is important for members of the Patrol in Scouting to trust each other. Trust is also a vital life skill for every person as they journey through life.

Wall Crash

Have the whole group form a line facing a wall, a few meters away.

The leader names two people to act as safety nets. They stand near the wall opposite the line. The person at the front of the line walks, eyes closed, toward the wall. The "Safety nets" catch each person before he or she hits the wall.

After each person has had a turn at a walking pace, the pace is speeded up on each turn, until group members are running at full speed.

Conveyor Belt

Set up two lines of people facing each other (about two feet apart). Try to have people of similar height opposite one another. The first couple detaches and one person lies down on his or her back between first six/eight people in both lines. The person is lifted to head height and is then slowly passed down the whole length of the chain and is carefully lowered to the ground at the end. Better results are obtained if the person relaxes and closes his or her eyes.

Control Tower

This is another simulated blindness trust game, but with pairs, which is slightly more challenging in terms of testing and building trust, which is why the roles are reversed half-way. It is therefore important to explain that this is to be played with care: some people find the experience rather hair-raising if played on rough grass or ground, so it is best played in a previewed environment. The review helps group members gain an

awareness of their trust. Set up an obstacle course of rows of chairs and tables in the room and have group members choose a partner. One member of the pair is asked to put on a blindfold. The blindfolded partner goes through an obstacle course, with the sighted person acting as the guide. When half the group has been through the course, the sighted person puts on the blindfold and a new course is created. Review the experience and feelings of participants when blindfold first and guiding first; compare with the feelings of those who played the game the other way around.

Backward Fall and Catch

This standard trust game is remarkably challenging, which is why the group must be ready for it (choosing partners of their choice) and the leader needs to keep a close eye on reactions of participants. Once again, this is a one-to-one experience, but it does test and build greater trust in a crystallizing group. Have group members find a partner and the group forms an inner circle and an outer circle, so that partners stand at about one meter distance, as if one person were behind the other. Both circles should be facing inwards. The person in the inner circle allows himself or herself to fall back and be caught by their partner. The front person must be relaxed. Distance can be varied within a safe limit. Reverse the roles.

Trust Walk

This is a longer trust game, an extension of the ideas and factors in Control Tower. It is based on multiple elements to test and build trust: blindness simulation, silence, unknown terrain. For this reason, participants take a partner of their choice and roles are reversed mid-way.

Preparation:

Blindfolds (optional), outdoor area preferred (reasonable surface required).

Emphasize that this is a non-verbal, non-visual experience, using one's other senses.

Ask group members to choose a partner that they would like to know better.

In each pair, A closes his/her eyes (or is blindfolded). They can communicate with each other only through touch.

B leads and helps him/her to experience the world around through the other senses.

B is to protect the partner, show him or her how gentle he/she can be, and try to give the partner a truly beautiful experience.

After 15-20 minutes, have them switch roles. After an equal time, A leads B back to the starting point.

Each pair discusses their experience by themselves, and then joins the group.

Lead a round of "I discovered..."



Friendship Dilemmas

Being friends is not always easy. If a member of a Patrol turns up late the other members of that Patrol may feel their trust in that person decreases even if there is a good reason for being late, for example. Friendships and relationships have ups and downs and it is not always easy to know what to do...

Being a Good Friend

This activity helps illustrate that it is not always easy to know what to do as a friend. Sometimes knowing what to do can be quite a dilemma and decisions are hard to make. For this activity you need a photocopied set of dilemma cards (see below).

Introduce the activity by explaining that you will be looking at some friendships dilemmas and how it is not always obvious what the best thing to do is. Split the participants into groups and give each group a dilemma card. Allow 20 minutes to read the cards and discuss the questions asked. Back in the large group give each group a chance to read out their dilemma and their answers to the questions. It may be then helpful to have a wider group discussion about these kinds of friendship dilemmas.

Possible points to end on:

Some things are too serious for anyone to carry for a friend. They have to make sure that their friend gets the help they need somehow. It is important to recognise when someone needs urgent help and when we need to break a confidence in order to get that help.

Dilemma 1: Out on the hills you and your Patrol Leader have become separated from

the larger group during a sudden blizzard. Your PL slipped and fell during the blizzard. She is bleeding, shocked and disorientating and you think she may have broken her arm. However, she insists you do not try to get help but rather keep walking. She wants you to stop the bleeding using your first aid kit and not tell anyone what happened when you get back down the mountain.

Dilemma 2: You are sleeping in a tent with your best friend on camp. You notice tablets and a lot of money in their sleeping bag...

Dilemma 3: For the past month your Group has been running cookery nights featuring dishes from around the world. You notice that one of your friends has never eaten anything on these nights.

Dilemma 4: You have invited on of your school friends to Scouts. He says he has to stay at home to look after his wheelchair-bound mother. He always appears sad in school and never takes part in after-school activities such as Scouts.

Questions for groups to think about:

What is the actual problem?

Who really needs to know about the problem?

Who could help your friend?

Why might you not tell someone?

What could happen if nobody does anything?

Making Friendships Work

This activity will help Scouts become more aware of the factors that help and hinder people in their relationships.

Introduce the session by explaining to the group that they will be looking at some things that can affect friendships. Ask the group to sit in a large circle on the floor. Explain the rules of the game: you will whisper a sentence to one of the group. All the participants then sit in a circle. The person then whispers it once to the person on their right. The whisper is continued around until it comes to the last person in the circle. This person then says it aloud. Is this the phrase the same one that was started with? Has the phrase been distorted? Is this what happens when people gossip about each other?

After this split the participants into small groups and give them each a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write 'Things that make a friendship work' at the top of the page and make two columns with the following headings: 'Work' and 'Not Work'. Examples of things that make friendships work: talking together, being together, being apart, telling the truth, sharing one's feelings openly, being supportive. Examples of things that make friendships not work: lies, being together all the time, secrets, saying things behind a friend's back. After 10 minutes bring the larger group back together to share what each smaller group has come up with.

Possible points to end on:

Everyone is an individual and the things that might harm one friendship might harm another. It is therefore important to understand whether your actions towards others are helpful or hurtful ones.

Keeping the machine working

Physical health – how well your body is – is typically what people think of when looking at health. Physical health is not the sole aspect of health but it is the basis of feeling good!

Being physically healthy means your body is in good working order. In other words, your body feels good. You feel ready for anything. The body has a number of needs:

Exercise

One of the most important needs of your body is exercise. Regular exercise helps the body in three ways: how well the muscles work (strength), the ability to keep going (stamina) and how flexible the body is (supple). Everyone undertakes exercise that is part of their everyday life and helps them maintain fitness and health, for example, climbing the stairs.

Food

The body needs food to help it grow, repair itself and provide energy to keep going. The food pyramid illustrates the kind of food and how many times they should be eaten for good health and well-being. Food pyramid illustration

Hygiene

Keeping clean is an important part of staying healthy. It prevents the growth and spread of germs. It also helps prevent unpleasant things like tooth decay and skin disorders. Learning how to wash oneself and clean teeth is an important part of growing up and learning how to care for oneself.



Posture

Your posture; how you hold yourself when you stand, sit and move, can affect your digestion and feelings of energy and tension. Good posture also helps prevent painful backache.

Sleep and Relaxation

Sleep is vital for us all. It gives the body time to grow, repair and refresh itself. Relaxation is also important for keeping healthy. It gets rid of tension and allows the body to unwind. 11 hours recommended for under 12s. 10 hours is recommended for teenagers. 7-9 hours is recommended for adults.

Avoiding Dangerous Habits

Some people deal with stress by drinking too much alcohol, smoking cigarettes or taking drugs. Even eating too many sweets or fatty foods can be described as a dangerous habit which will affect the body's well-being as they all damage the body, some more severely and rapidly than others.

Here are some activity suggestions to look at physical health:

Health Plan

We know what we need to feel healthy so how about making a plan for a week with all the members of the Scout Group to try to get the healthy balance right. If it does not work the plan can be adjusted until you get it right to fit into one's lifestyle. Here are some pointers:

Sleep: 11 hours recommended for under 12s. 10 hours is recommended for teenagers. 7-9 hours is recommended for adults.

Exercise: At least 1 hour a day for young people. 3-5 hours per week for adults (it is only beneficial if it makes you sweat!).

Diet: The food pyramid illustrates what food is good and the recommend quantities to eat all food types.

Relaxation: Work/study and other things that must be done will take up a lot of the day but try your best to pencil in some relaxation time.

Do your best to work out a balanced plan for the week! Younger Scouts may need help with theirs.



Stretch Yourself

To challenge ourselves physically is good for our well-being, not to mention the buzz if we succeed. This does not mean attempting to scale Mount Everest or rowing across the Atlantic. It may mean running or walking a bit longer or faster, talking the stairs instead of the lift, scaling a climbing wall, swimming extra lengths or a challenging wide game. We all physically challenge ourselves everyday, for example, lifting a box up the stairs. Have the Patrols set a series of challenges over a period of weeks which they all agree will challenge them. Watch physical abilities and well-being take off in your Scout Group.

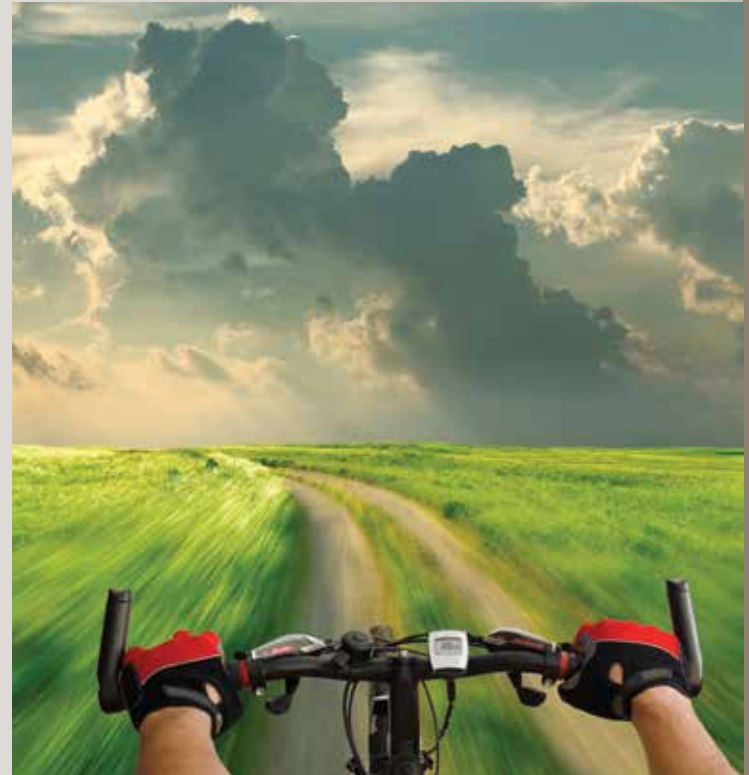
A New Sport? A New Hobby?

How about trying a new sport or hobby? If you have never taken part in water sports why not contact the local Sea Scout Group. Maybe you could try something a bit different like fencing or netball. If you have never tried hurling, rugby or horse riding... now is your chance! It can make for a great day out with the Patrol or Group. Another option is to invite a coach to a meeting so you can learn the skills of a particular sport.

In the United Kingdom, the Value of Sport Monitor has found sport can have a positive impact on society in relation to:

- Crime reduction and community safety
- Economic success and regeneration of local communities
- Education and lifelong learning
- Participation
- Physical fitness and health
- Psychological health and well-being
- Social capacity and cohesion

Similarly it is possible to find new interests by inviting a guest speaker to come and talk enthusiastically about his/her own hobby. Ask around – many people have an unusual hobby and may be willing to introduce it to the Scouts in a short session.



Keeping fit

Whether you are tall, short, wide or thin is strongly determined by genetics. Your height, bone and muscle structure come in large part from your biological ancestors. So do many of the ways in which your body responds to food, to exercise, to stress and to environmental influences.

Whatever your physical type, you can consider yourself fit when you have the strength and endurance to accomplish all you aspire to do. That means getting plenty of exercise, enough sleep, regularly cleaning teeth and the body, regular medical check-ups and eating a balance of nourishing food.

There are many ways to exercise. Among them, you can find fitness activities that keep you interested and challenged so that you will want to do them regularly. You might already take part in sports with friends, in organised athletics and in physically demanding personal endeavours. To prepare for most Scouting activities and to increase overall fitness, include a mix of aerobic activities to improve endurance and stamina and strengthening exercises to increase your body's power.

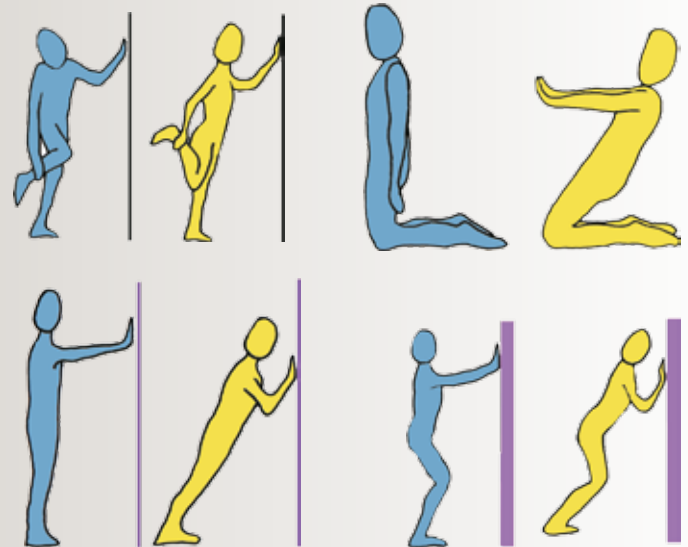
Aerobic activities mean 'activities with air'. Aerobic exercises are continuous, rhythmic activities that require your body to increase its use of oxygen. Brick walking, jogging, running, skipping, swimming, cycling and skiing can be aerobic exercises if you do them for a prolonged period. 20 minutes at a level where you find it difficult to have a typical conversation is usually sufficient. The effort made causes the lungs and heart to work harder. By gradually increasing the intensity and length of exercise the cardiovascular system can become stronger and more efficient.

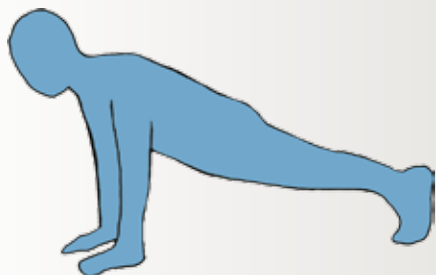
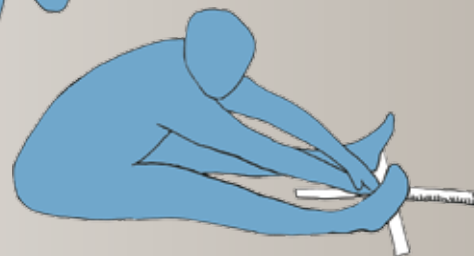
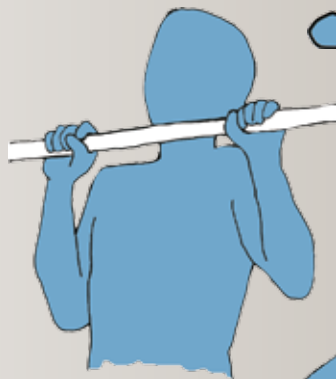
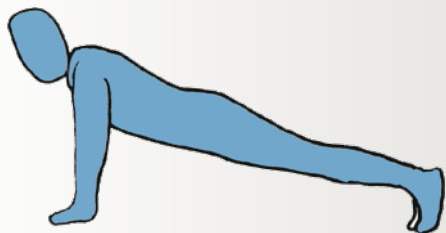
Strength exercises are physical activities designed to increase muscular strength. They tend to be intense but brief. Well-planned strengthening routines cause the muscles to perform beyond normal and over time the muscles become more powerful.

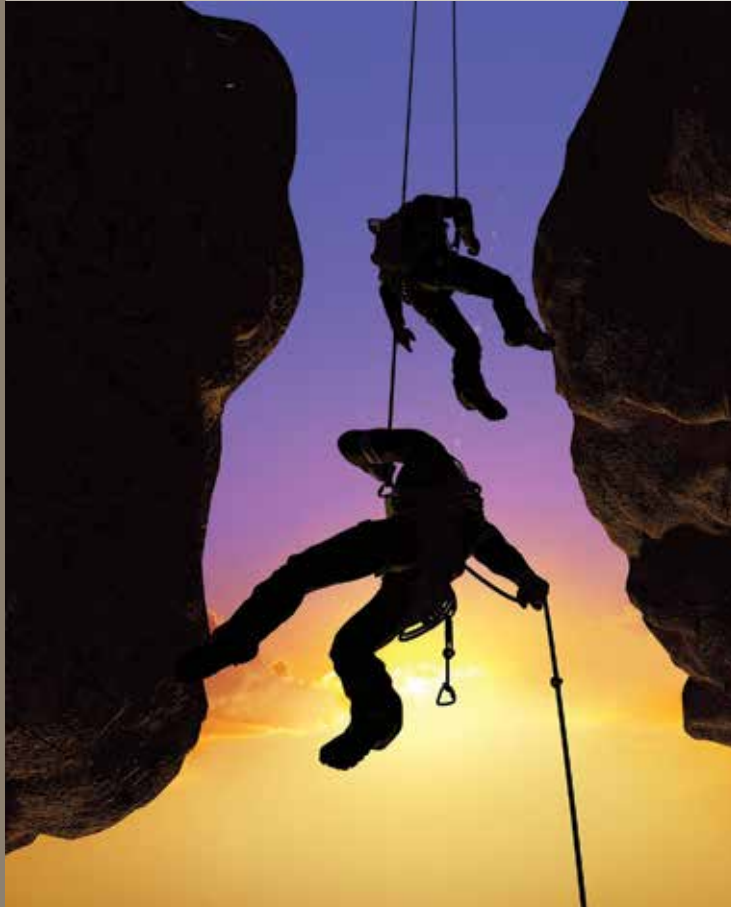
Keep Fit Night

Getting Started

Warming up before playing sports or beginning an exercise session loosens the muscles and makes the joints more flexible. Jogging and a series of stretches all can serve to get you ready for more strenuous activity. Using similar easy activities to cool down allows your heart rate, body temperature, muscles and joints to return to normal. Here are some stretches to try (remember half the fun when you are beginning with Scouts is looking foolish trying all this out. Being able to laugh at oneself is important...and healthy!):







Training for stamina

Many activities lend themselves to stamina training. Playing basketball or soccer, for example is an ideal way to have fun and get plenty of exercise. The key is to keep moving so you are continually exerting your body. If you are tuning up for a particular Scout activity you can use specific forms of stamina training.

For example, to prepare for backpacking, climb up and down stairs, walk briskly up and down hills and jog on the treadmill machine set at an incline in the gym. To prepare for mountain biking, mimic mountain conditions on a stationary cycle by alternating periods of intense and easy peddling. To prepare for water sports, swim to increase your endurance and strength of your upper body and use the rowing machine in the gym.

Coordination

We all begin as new-borns and gradually we learn simple skills and develop our senses, such as sight and smell. We also gradually learn to coordinate our movements using our eyes, hands and bodies. Some people, athletes and sports people for example, develop very advanced coordination skills needed to excel at their chosen pursuits. Most of us do not need very advanced coordination skills. However, good eye/hand/body coordination is necessary for all of us in our daily lives. Walking to school, working on the computer and catching a football are impossible without good coordination. Here are a few fun exercises to improve coordination.

Juggling

These instructions will teach you exercises so you can juggle 3 balls. The first few exercises are not complete juggling patterns, but are exercises that will teach you to juggle.



One Ball Exercise: Start with one ball. Throw the ball in an arc from hand to hand about eye level. The pattern will be an arc, not a circle.

Two Ball Exercise: Start with one ball in each hand. First toss the ball in your right hand (1) in the arc to about eye level to your left hand. When this ball (1) reaches the highest point in its arc . . .
throw ball (2) in an arc from your left hand to your right. Catch (1) in your left hand, and then catch (2) in your right hand. Stop.

Do this same exercise, except start with your left hand instead of your right. Practice until you can do this smoothly.

Common mistakes include throwing two balls in a circle, or throwing both balls at the same time.

Juggling 3 Balls: Start with 2 balls in one hand (1&3) (in this case the right hand, but if you are left-handed, use your left hand) and one ball (2) in the other. Start by throwing the ball in the front of your right hand in an arc to your left hand.

When ball (1) reaches its highest point, throw the ball in your left hand (2) in an arc to your right hand. Catch (1) in your left hand. This is like the two ball exercise. When the ball thrown to your right hand reaches its height . . .

Throw the ball from your right hand (3) in an arc to your left hand. Catch (2) in your right hand. This move can be difficult. It is often helpful to roll the ball (3) in your right hand to the front of your hand with a slight downward motion of the hand before you throw it.

When that ball (3) reaches its highest point, throw the ball in your left hand (1) in an arc to your right hand. Catch (3) in your left hand. And so on . . .

Problems and Solutions:

I move forward as I juggle.

This is a common problem. Stand in front of a wall, or a bed to keep you from moving forward.

I can't throw ball number (3), I just catch ball number (2).

Concentrate on throwing ball number (3). Do not even try to catch ball (2).

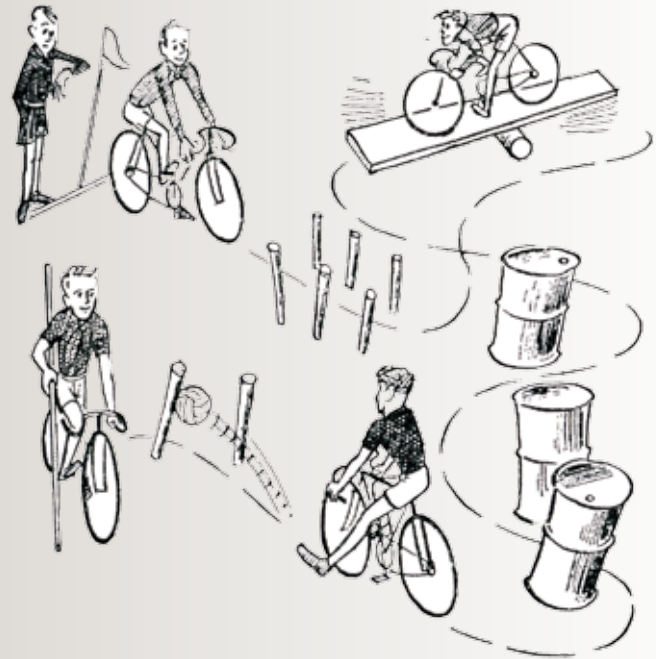
The balls keep hitting/there isn't time for to make the throws.

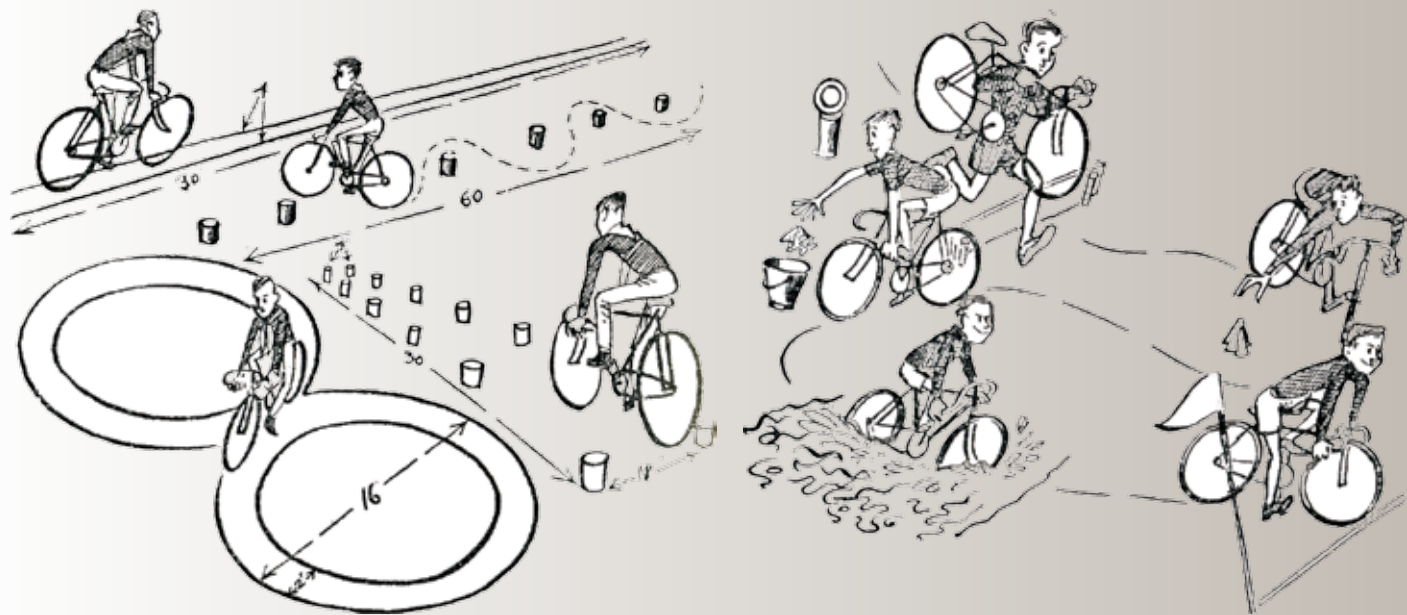
Concentrate on making your throws an even height at eye level.

The Half shower: Instead of having the balls cross in the standard 3 ball pattern, throw a ball from the right hand over the rest of the pattern. When it comes down, continue juggling. Do this for a throw or every throw; from either hand, or both hands. Traditional games such as hopscotch, potato race, egg and spoon race and sack race are great games to improve coordination.

Cyclecross & Obstacle Course

Riding a bike or just racing a fellow Scout around an obstacle course can help improve your coordination. The indoor obstacle course can be used in your Den. For the cyclecross and outdoor obstacle course you need some open ground. Obtain the permission of whoever owns the land if required. The activities should not be run on the roads and streets where the hard ground is unsuitable. The courses should be adventurous but with obstacles which are unsafe or dangerous. Check that all the obstacles are secure and will remain secure during the activities. There should be an accident plan in place.





The following pages present the same text that appears on the Food - Getting the mix right leaflet for Scouts.

This is presented for reference. In today's age it is important that Scouters are aware of our commitment to the Physical SPICE in this regard and how the subject of Nutrition is important in compiling menus for hikes, camps and activities.

The leaflet presents the subject in general as a quick reference but of course there are many opportunities in our programme to put all this into practice.

The subject of menus, food mix and suggested recipes are covered extensively in the Scouting Trail - Dining out chapter



Nutrition



Nutrition is an essential part of our well being. A diet consisting of a wide variety of nourishing food and drink will provide all the vitamins, fats, carbohydrates and proteins we need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.



The Food Plate

The Food Plate is an easy way to introduce the idea of healthy eating and the concept of different food groups. The Plate consists of 5 food groups. Choosing a variety of foods from each segment ensures a balanced and healthy diet. The size of each segment represents the portions so vegetables group is the biggest, next grain and equal amounts of fruit and protein. dairy is similar.

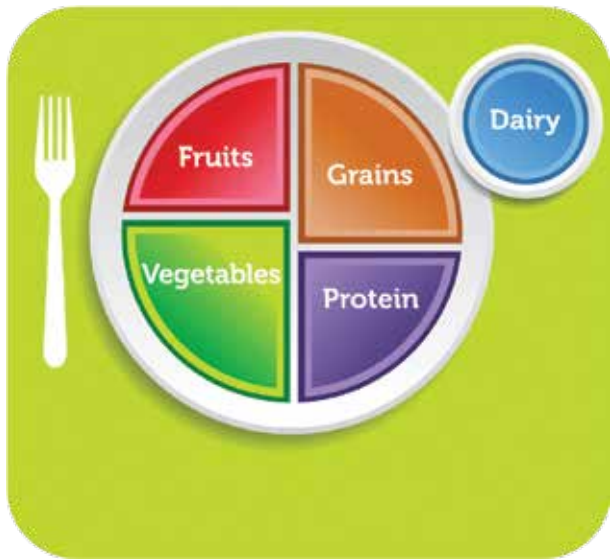
Keep an eye on quantities

Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

Make half your grains whole grains

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating wholewheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.



Foods to eat less often

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, biscuits, ice cream, sweets, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like sausages, bacon, burgers, chips and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

Read the Nutrition Facts label on food packing

Drink water instead of sugary drinks

many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.

Avoid oversized portions

Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

Foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

Make half your plate Fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals

Balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Being physically active also helps you balance calories. enjoy your food, but eat less

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it.

Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.

Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats

Food is fuel for your body. The harder your body works, the more calories it burns and the more you need to eat. These calories come from three primary sources; carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

We get most of our energy from carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates are found in foods such as bread, cereals, rice and pasta. Fruits and vegetables are also sources of carbohydrates.

Proteins are necessary

for building and repairing muscle and bone as well as being a source of calories. Much of the meat group protein-rich; beef, chicken, fish, nuts and eggs. Fats contain twice the calories per ounce as do carbohydrates and proteins. Therefore we only need smaller amounts. Cheese, milk, vegetable oil are sources of fats which can keep you going for hours. Remember to eat fats sparingly and some varieties of fats are better for us than others.



Water, Fibre, Vitamins and Minerals

In addition to carbohydrates, proteins and fats, the body needs water, fibre and an adequate supply of vitamins and minerals.

The human body is made up of 70 per cent water. Drinking plenty of water will help food digestion, keep energy levels up and help to better cope with the heat and cold while on scouting activity. There are no definite guidelines for how much water to drink each day. We are all unique so we have different hydration requirements. Most people need to drink 2 to 3 litres of water so this can be used as a guideline amount.



Fibre is necessary for the proper digestion of food. Many of the bread group in the food pyramid and most fruit and vegetables are high in fibre. Vitamins and minerals are needed to keep healthy. For example our skin and teeth degenerate without adequate vitamins and minerals. A diet composed of a variety of foods that includes fruit and vegetables is likely to provide the vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain good health.

Camp/Expedition Diet

Cooking on camp or on an expedition should not be complicated. Simple cooking should be the norm. Most camp cooking is done on open fires while stove cooking is more common on expeditions. It is a good idea to practice cooking skills before heading off on camp/expedition. The preparation of menus and listing of quantities required should be completed before camp/ expedition.



As we saw with the food pyramid a balanced diet is important while on camp/ expedition so everyone remains strong and healthy. When preparing menus and food lists for an expedition remember to balance them within the basic food divisions – You will need all of these, to ensure your well-being on camp/ expedition.

Food on the Move

Food to snack on throughout the day plays an important role in outdoor nutrition. It is important to maintain energy while on strenuous activity. Fruit, cheese, cereal bars, flapjacks and chocolate are ideal. A mix of these will see you through. In the United States GORP stands for 'Good Old Raisins and Peanuts', the perfect food on the move. Fruit and nut mixes are easy to buy in any food store in Ireland. You can also make up your own mix.



Favourite Food Night

Why not have a favourite food night at your Scout meeting? This is not a favourite snack food or favourite junk food night! If Scouts have the same and similar favourite foods they can form teams to present the food to the Group. For example, the potato can be presented in its many different forms – boiled, baked, roast, mashed or chipped. The favourite food night should involve the preparing and cooking of the food, identifying its nutritional value and if edible in many different forms, like the potato, which form is the most nutritious.

Nutrition

Here are some activities to help you look at nutrition with your Group:

Survival Diet

Our early ancestors all survived on the resources around them as hunter-gatherers. These days the only chance we can get to experience what life was like for our ancestors is if we go on a survival camp or try a survival diet while on camp. The golden rule of food gathering is only eat those things you have positively identified as edible.

Few, if any people live in the true hunter-gatherer fashion today. To try a survival diet requires a good deal of self-confidence and an adaptable palate. However given a few ingredients from home, most wild foods become a pleasant culinary adventure. What food you find in nature depends on the season. Late spring and summer and early autumn is the most plentiful time.

Here are some edible plants found in Ireland:

Nettles make an excellent cooked green. Select the fresh and tender tops and cook them in just enough water to cover them. Drain and serve hot with butter. Cooking destroy the stinging properties. Nettles leaves can be left to dry and used as tea. The young leaves can be cooked into a soup which is good when thickened with a few modern ingredients.

Beech Leaves are edible. The earliest soft leaves are an excellent sandwich filler and can be lightly cooked in butter or by steaming to make a fine dish.

Sheep sorrel can be boiled for a few minutes and served with butter. Better still, make it into a puree and serve with fish. Don't eat sheep sorrel in large quantities as it contains oxalic acid.

Hawthorn's tender young leaves leave a distinct yet subtle flavour. It is an invaluable ingredient for salads.

Burdock is a sweet root that is delicious and of a size worth gathering. As the burdock root emerges for its second year of growth it is packed full of energy. Peel away the rind before cooking. Cut into short segments and include in stews or boil the burdock similarly to the potato – it is an excellent alternative. It makes a perfect side dish cut into thin sticks and fried in olive oil with black pepper.

Arrowhead is an aquatic plant. The tubers can be used like the potato. The arrowhead is tasty, filling and energy rich.

Pine needles, especially young, light-green needles chopped finely and steeped in hot water make an excellent tea. It is rich in vitamins A and C and the traditional Native American remedy for scurvy.

Wood sorrel leaves are good steeped in hot water, sweetened with honey and left to cool. This mixture produce a lemonade-like drink, best served chilled.

Acorns off the oak tree are edible once the kernels are removed and they are then washed thoroughly to remove the bitter tannin.

Chestnuts are a real delicacy. Remove them from their shell, pierce with a knife point and roast on the open fire.

Hazelnuts are usually the first nuts of the season and are delicious.

Wild walnuts are now rare but a real forager's delicacy.

Rowanberries are unpleasant raw but make an excellent jelly when mixed with crab apples, which remove the bitter taste.

Other edible berries include the blackberry, strawberry, elderberry and raspberry.

Crab apples are often neglected but they are good in pies, especially with blackberries.

In winter, rose-hips are full of vitamin C and eaten raw. The hairy pits must be scraped clean by cutting each berry in half and using a knife to clean.

Spruce can be an emergency food in winter. The youngest branch tips if needles can be stripped and boiled as a vegetable.

Not only plants are edible in nature. It is still possible to fish and eat by primitive means.

Fishing

Fishing is an excellent activity for introducing some fun with the eating experience.

First catch your fish then cook it right there where you caught it either 'planked' using reflective heat, or in a cardboard over.

Ready Steady Cook

Ready Steady Cook and cooking challenges are also good ways to introduce both the development of a menu and cooking skills.

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food, identifying its nutritional value and if edible in many different forms, like the potato, which form is the most nutritious.

Healthy Buzz Foods

In recent times healthy foods like smoothies and cereal bars have become more common. They can add much needed nutrition to the diet while on Scout activity. Here are some smoothie recipes:

Banana, oat & honey smoothie

Blend one medium chopped banana with 1 tablespoon of oats, 1 teaspoon of honey and 200ml skimmed milk. Serve cold.

Pink & passion fruit smoothie

Chop 2 large rings of fresh or tinned (in own juice) pineapple. Blend together with the juice of half a pink grapefruit and the seeds of one passion fruit (reserving some seeds for garnishing). Serve chilled, garnished with some passion fruit seeds.

Tropical fruit smoothie

Chop 2 large rings of fresh or tinned (in own juice) pineapple. Chop half a fresh mango and blend with the pineapple. Add 1 pot of low fat tropical fruit probiotic yoghurt and blend until smooth. Serve immediately.

Berry good smoothie

Blend together one teacupful of frozen raspberries and one teacupful of fresh blueberries with 1 tsp honey and 5 or 6 ice-cubes until smooth. Serve immediately.

Peaches 'n cream smoothie

Chop 1 large fresh peach or 2 tinned peach halves (tinned in own juice). Blend together with one pot of low fat peach probiotic yoghurt or natural yoghurt and 1 tablespoon of oats. Serve garnished with a sprinkle of oats and a slice of peach.

Ready, Steady, Cook Adventure



The Challenge

An inter Patrol challenge. Patrols are then issued with a selection of food. The patrol have to then devise a menu and cook the meal in a set time limit. Points are awarded for presentation, taste, and creativity.

Healthy Mind

When we think of being healthy we think of things like illnesses and diseases. We think that if we don't have any of these then we are healthy. Sometimes we may go a little bit farther and think how fit we are and how do we react to exercise like running and swimming. It is easy then to make a jump to think that being healthy also means to staying fit and exercise regularly. We don't always think of mental health as being part of being healthy. When our minds are not healthy the symptoms are there but not as obvious. For instance we don't always think of what our body language says about us, our ability to make friends, what thought processes we have, our judgement processes and our moods all of these elements tell a story about our mental health.

The healthy Ingredients for mental health that we want to promote, develop and nurture in Scouting are:

An environment to be free to be yourself

This is achieved by actually following the Promise and Law and respecting others and by not accepting things that challenge those values. The environment can only be created when everyone agrees to a set of conduct that everyone follows. The Promise and Law should be at the heart of this.



Good relationships with friends

There are plenty of opportunities to make new friends and to develop the existing friendship. We can do this by sharing experiences that can challenge us with others. Your team members are best placed to do this but that doesn't mean it has to stop there.

Everybody needs friends. Good friends play an important lifelong role in our lives.

A good friend is someone you can talk with honestly and who will listen without judging you. A person you can trust and rely on, share interests with and have a good laugh with. When you are with a good friend you feel good about yourself. They allow you to be yourself and stick around when times are tough and difficult.

This does not mean that you will always agree with each other or won't have arguments. But underneath you know that they are kind and want the best for you. There are no rules about who can or can't be your friends. They can be boys or girls, they can be older or younger than you.

Friendship is a two – way street. Your friends will also expect the same relationship with you. In Scouting you will have many friends particularly the members of your Six or Patrol. Here you work, eat, sleep and live together. You will be challenged by the wide variety of activities you will undertake and at times this friendship will be put under stress, particularly in bad weather conditions. So, friends stick together, they rely on each other and support each other and as a result can overcome almost anything.



Having a laugh and enjoying each other's company, being mad and crazy – for the fun of it. These are the times we will remember, all of our lives, and laughing is a good tonic for everyone. Try and get the balance right, yes at times we need to be serious, to talk things out, to argue but fun, laughter and enjoyment are key qualities of a friendship that should always be present.

Learning self-acceptance of what it is to 'do your best' and to accept it

Happiness is knowing to accept the things you cannot change about yourself, it takes courage to change the things you can change but it takes wisdom to know the difference. This is a well recited mantra of many people facing challenges. For a Scout the challenge is simple; always try to do your best at things and when you walk away from something you'll know you gave it your all.

Stress is a normal part of life. Stress is like a plastic band. A little stress makes the band go tighter. More stress and the elastic band is pushed to its limit. The key, really, is to know the limit or when the plastic band will lose its elasticity. Learning to de-stress by walking, talking and relaxing is the key to maintaining a normal level of stress.

We can all have times where we have negative and positive feelings about ourselves. Perhaps we tried to do something and failed or the opposite, we feel great because we have achieved something.



Capture that feeling of 'feeling great' and achievement, it can be that way every day with a positive and constructive attitude to life. Of course there will be times when everything gets on top of us but the secret here is to reach out to friends and family to seek their help and support.

Learn from our failures, it is all part of growing up and turn it on its head by creating challenges and objectives that you seek to achieve and overcome...everything is possible.

Physical activity to create a healthy body that leads to a healthy mind

Getting outdoors into nature is the Scouts home. To fully appreciate this place you have to be able to explore it and to respect it. Keeping fit and healthy will help you to explore this place fully. We learn by doing and not by pondering, so it is only natural that the physical activity should go hand in hand with what we do. When we keep active we will help our minds to be healthy by giving it a bit of positive reinforcement through positive experiences

Learning new skills to expand our minds

Scouting is for everyone but everyone is not for Scouting. What that means is that there is a whole host of things that you can do in Scouting and it should be promoted to try something new. The Adventure Skills will teach you techniques to keep active and the other skills will expand our mind through new experiences.

A sense of belonging

Everyone should be made feel that they belong in Scouting. It is only natural that we should offer this because it is a natural sense to search for. We also belong to groups like our families and our communities. When we know that we belong we should also know that there is a responsibility to promote that sensation so that others can also feel that sense of belonging and friendship.

Being creative through the arts

There are plenty of opportunities to be artistic in Scouting. Whether

this is through music and dance, painting, sculpturing, writing or drama we have the potential to be truly creative and express ourselves to the best of our ability and do it so in an environment of acceptance and encouragement. It is also encouraged to promote others to share in those creative arts.



Practical

The power of letting go – spending some time trying to focus on “nothing”. You will find that it’s not that easy to do. There are lots of ways to do this though. Check out some meditation tips that can help, like closing your eyes and use your mind to picture flying through space with nothing around.

This helps you to stop overthinking on things and to realise that when you give your brain a little time and space to put the problems of the world into context for you.

Be an inventor – Try to come up with a new gadget to use when you are in the outdoors. This can be for any scouting activity but the challenge is to try and come up with something that no one has thought of before. Think of all the mad ideas Leonardo da Vinci came up with but did you know that a lot of them would be used at all.

This exercise the creative side of your mind to help you be innovative. This in turn helps you with problem solving and dealing with challenges

Fireside Chat – Every Scouts has a happy memory of sitting around a fire and chatting with your friends. Sitting around a fire watching the flames dance while you chat about the small things in life but sharing your ideas of things. If the environment is comfortable share some small problems you have- like how to keep your marshmallow on the stick without burning your hand

Sharing your ideas and asking for help on the little things in life is a powerful way to feel as if you belong to a group. Everyone needs to feel that way so don’t be afraid to test the water a little.

Puzzles – Scouting has plenty of puzzles to throw at you. This can be from how to untie an awkward knot to finding our way through a team challenge like a spider’s web. Look up some puzzles that you can try to do both on your own and with other people.

Puzzles are great for helping you learn new things and to learn how to problem solve by looking at things from different angles. This in turn will help you to step back and assess the challenges that may be going on in your own mind and how other people can bring in a fresh and different view on things.



Memory and creativity – Kim’s games have always been a key feature of our programme since the start of Scouting. Memory games are no different. Try playing memory games like what’s missing, my granny went to Paris and brought me back..., skills games like a knot relay, things you can do with a paperclip. Developing your memory and being creative is a useful way of keeping your brain agile and flexible. It is useful to develop your memory so that you can keep an eye on the bigger picture rather than just the things that drain your memory

Switching sides of your brain – Every person has a dominant side of the brain. This can be easily seen through the dominant hand we use for writing and other tasks. If you are right handed try writing with your left or vice versa. If you kick a ball with your left foot try kicking with your right foot instead.

Your brain is divided into a creative and a logical side. When we challenge the instinctive tasks like writing we challenge our brain to using both sides instead of the normal routine.

CREATIVE THINKING - adapted from ‘Living on the Edge: programme resource for Venture Scout Units’.

We will all come up against challenges which require more than normal effort. However, nothing truly is impossible if we think. New ways, new approaches, new ideas can be generated to solve a problem.

Thinking creatively is best done with others. The Patrol or Group provides this opportunity. The most common group thinking technique is brainstorming. Brain-

storming is allowing all ideas, no matter how outlandish. Each idea is then assessed until the most feasible solution is agreed upon. There are a host of activities such as brainstorming which can contribute to creative thinking.

Coming up with the idea is sometimes the easy part. Making the solution to the problem, the idea or the plan work can be difficult. Edward de Bono established the concept of six thinking hats. Each hat is a different colour. When you are wearing this hat you only think a certain way. This allows the solution/idea/plan to be analyzed thoroughly and create new ideas in the process. The technique is controlled by a leader who suggests the use of each thinking hat in turn, takes notes is required and monitors proceedings. This process can take time but, like everything, it gets easier the more you practice.

White Hat – facts, figures, information we have and need, gaps in our knowledge. This allows us to assess what we know, what we do not know and what we need to know to make something work.

Red Hat – feeling, emotions. The object is to find out ‘gut feelings’ on an idea; will it work, is it good etc.

Black Hat – directs thinking in judgement and caution. It won’t work because...if we do this we will be in danger...etc.

Yellow Hat – thinking positive. Explore all the positive benefits and results that an idea might have.

Green Hat – creativity. The object is to change, add to, and expand in order to make the original idea better.

Blue Hat – controls the overall process. Has everything being explored? Does anything need to be revisited?



You can use this method in Scouting to end up with a usable idea. In your personal life learning how to think creatively allows your mind to expand and increase your capacity to learn and explore.

LATERAL THINKING - adapted from 'Living on the Edge: programme resource for Venture Scout units'.

Edward de Bono coined the phrase 'lateral thinking'. This is thinking differently from normal trends of thought. Lateral thinking is less about logic and more about thinking creatively by removing inhibitions that can be present in logical thinking. See some of the samples presented below. It sometimes takes leaps of the imagination to find the solution. You will find many similar problems through a Google search of 'lateral thinking problems'.

It is possible to set up a game around lateral thinking in a quiz format with the quizmaster presenting the problems and having them written on a card for each team. Allow 15 minutes for each problem, with a clue after 5 and 10 minutes. The quizmaster should only answer questions with yes or no answers. Points can be awarded to a team who comes up with a logical solution even though it may not be the answer suggested.

Sample Problems:

1. The man in the lift

A man lives on the tenth floor of a building. Every day, he takes the lift to the ground floor to go to work or to go shopping. When he returns, he always takes the lift to the seventh floor and then walks the remaining flight of stairs to his apartment from the tenth floor. Why does he do this?

Clues: Is there anything that he does between the seventh and tenth floors other than climb stairs? If he had someone else with him, would they both get out at the seventh floor and walk up to the tenth floor?

Answer: The man is a dwarf. He can reach the button in the lift for the ground floor, but he cannot reach the button for the tenth floor. The seventh floor button is the highest he can reach.

2. Bombs away

One night during World War II, an allied bomber was on a mission over Germany. The plane was in perfect condition and everything was in working order. When it had reached its target, the pilot ordered the bomb doors opened. They opened. He then ordered the bombs released. They were released but the bombs did not fall from the plane. Why would this be so?

Clues: Would the fact that the bombs did not drop surprise any of the crew? Was the manner in which the plane was flying cause the bombs not to drop?

Answer: The bomber was flying upside down.

3. The coal, carrot and scarf

Five pieces of coal, a carrot and a scarf are lying on the lawn. Nobody put them on the lawn but there is a perfectly logical reason for them being there. What is it?

Clues: Does the time of year matter? Were the items brought out to the garden by human beings?

Answer: They were used by children who made a snowman. The snow has now melted

The AD Factors

We are first and foremost a Scouting organization. Our focus is on having fun and learning through outdoor activities. At the same time we are a youth organization. It is our duty to respond to young people's needs. Our aim underlines this; to develop young people in six different ways (physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and character) so they become contributory citizens in society. We must acknowledge young people have needs around the AD (alcohol, drugs) factors and work with young people around these. The Scouts and Scouters must agree together if they will run activities around these. There is no compulsion to run these activities but if young people in the Group ask for or require it these can be done, and it is part of fulfilling our aim. These activities are aimed at the senior Scout sections. It may be useful to use the Trust Games and/or Team Building Games in the Friendships and Relationships section of this resource as warm-up and warm-down activities as examining alcohol and drugs with young people requires an atmosphere to trust and togetherness to be effective. If you feel unable to facilitate the Scouts looking at alcohol and drugs you can look at the Where to Get Help section-many of these organizations have excellent information on their websites and you can also contact them to ask them to come to speak to the Scouts.



When running a session around any of the AD factors bear these in mind:

- Be clear on what you aim to achieve when running the meeting.
- Ensure the session is accessible and consider any special needs.
- Consider beginning with a Group agreement to reassure participants that it is a safe environment to examine AD factors. Confidentiality may be important, for example.
- Allow that these issues are difficult for people to talk about and a variety of feelings may have to be dealt with.
- Always ensure at least 2 Scouters are running the meeting.
- Offer information on experts services in particular areas and where information can be accessed. See the 'Where to Get Help' section of this resource.
- Ensure you have support for yourself before and after the meeting.
- Provide clear, accurate, up to date information in attractive and accessible forms and language. Offer it in non-judgmental, respectful and sensitive way. Information for young people is available at www.spunout.ie, www.lifebytes.gov.uk and www.al-anon-ireland.org and www.drugs.ie.

Alcohol

There is much media attention surrounding young people and alcohol. Ireland has one of the highest incidences of underage drinking in Europe.

The main concerns are:

- Young people drinking at a younger age.
- Young people not just drinking but getting drunk.
- The inappropriate behaviour that results from drinking.
- Negative effect drinking has on health, lifestyle and school/college.
- Drinking without adult supervision.
- Young people experiment with alcohol for a number of reasons:
- Curiosity
- To feel good, reduce stress and relax
- To feel older
- Advertising messages showing alcohol to be cool and harmless
- Many social activities and events in Ireland revolve around alcohol
- Parents, other adults and role models use alcohol regularly
- Here are some activities to help look at alcohol with Scouts. It is best to run one activity each week over a series of weeks.
-

Name Game

A simple activity to introduce the topic which will help the Group feel more at ease.

The alcohol knowledge of the Group will also become evident. Have the Group stand/sit in a circle. Explain that they have to think of a drink or something associated with alcohol which starts with the same letter as the first letter of their names.

Budweiser (Barry), Malibu (Maeve) for example. Alternatively you can try naming an alcohol product for every letter of the alphabet. This will show you how well known and prevalent alcohol products are in Irish society. For example, A-Amstel or Archers, B-Bulmers or Budweiser, C-Coors Light and so on.



Alcohol Awareness Moving Debate

This activity will help ascertain the alcohol awareness of the Scouts. Clear the room of any chairs, tables etc. One side of the room represents 'True' and the other represents 'False'. The Scouts move to the either side of the room in accordance with whether they think each statement if true or false. If they are unsure they can stay in the middle. To start, make sure everyone is in the middle. Here are the statements:

- Alcohol is a mood altering stimulant.
- Drinking coffee or taking a cold shower will sober you up.
- The affects that alcohol has on the body vary according to the individual.
- The most serious consequence of consuming alcohol is a hangover in the morning.
- If an intoxicated person is semiconscious, you should encourage vomiting.
- Women respond to alcohol differently than men do.
- Alcohol increases your sexual drive and ability.
- It is okay to put your drunk, passed out friend to bed and go back to the party.
- In Ireland the current legal limit for alcohol while driving is 80 mgs of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

Answers:

False: alcohol is a mood altering drug that depresses bodily functions.

False: nothing but time will sober a drunk.

True: the effect that alcohol has on you is dependant on gender, weight, metabolism, the situation, your mood and the presence of food in the stomach.

False: consumption of enough alcohol will cause death. This level is dependant on the individual.

False: encouraging a semiconscious person to vomit could cause choking.

True: women respond more quickly to alcohol due to their smaller body size and body fat distribution and a lesser ability to metabolise alcohol quickly.

True and False: alcohol decreases your inhibitions, which factor into an increased sex drive. However alcohol decreases sexual functioning and is linked to the reduction of the male hormone testosterone.

False: never leave an intoxicated person alone. Stay with the person and frequently assess their condition.

True: this limit equals roughly 2 alcoholic drinks but each person is different.

Hike Crawl

The purpose of this activity is to look at the realities of young people's drinking patterns. The idea is to hike around the local area to identify the places where people drink – both formal places like pubs and hotels and informal places like fields and parks. A discussion should take place at each place. The discussion can look at where adults and young people drink. Are they in the same place and if not why not? Which places are safer than others? What are the pros and cons of drinking outdoors?

Trick of the Trade

This activity will make young people aware of the power of the media and how images of drinking in the media contrast with the facts about alcohol. Have each young person make a film of the ads they see on television or take a look at them on YouTube.

Here are some things to consider:

- What images are used in the ads?
- What words are used?



- What does the advertiser want you to think about regarding alcohol?
- Who do the advertisers want to buy the drink?
- How do the images portrayed contrast with the experiences the young people have had with alcohol?
- If the young people were to make their own reality alcohol ad, what images would it contain and why? Make the ad!
- Alcohol advertising and sponsorship of events is a controversial topic. Divide the Scouts into 2 teams to debate for and against alcohol advertising and sponsorship.

One for the Road

The purpose of the activity is to make young people aware of the effects of alcohol and to take a closer look at their experience and knowledge of these effects. You will need plastic cups, soft drinks, paper and markers. Pour the soft drink into a couple of plastic cups. Ask the young people to take a sip and pretend its alcohol. Have them act out the effect alcohol can have. Do not lead the young people – let them draw on their own experiences. Take note of the effect on flipchart. Once everyone has participated go through the effects that have been written down and draw a smiley face against the good effects and a sad face against the bad ones. In general bad effects will be in the majority...so why would young people want to drink?!

Drugs

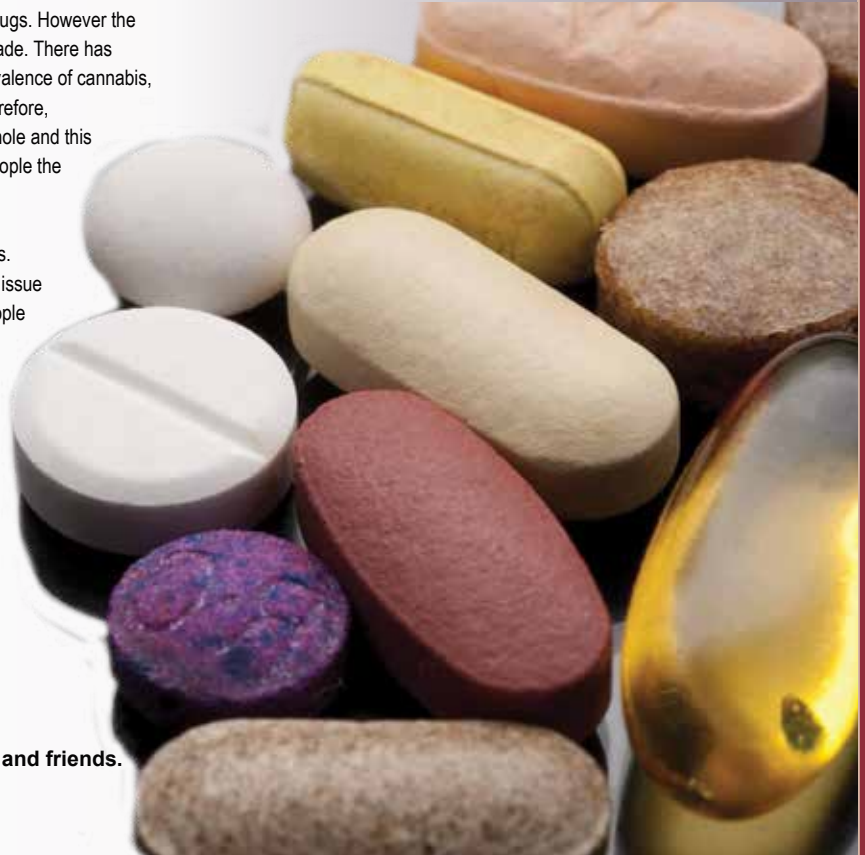
Many young people do not use drugs. Many young people will never use drugs. However the level of drug misuse among young people has increased over the past decade. There has been a change in attitude towards the danger of drugs. There is a high prevalence of cannabis, ecstasy, LSD and amphetamines socially and inhalant use is common. Therefore, as a youth organization we must address the drugs issue. Scouting as a whole and this resource, providing a holistic health promotion programme, offers young people the chance to enhance their lives through fun, adventure and challenge. Through fun, adventure and challenge the young people gain life skills which can assist them in making choices around drugs. At the same time it is remiss of us as a youth organization not to tackle this issue head-on. This quick programme of activities provides a way help young people become more informed about drugs and make better choices in their lives. It is best to run one activity each week over a series of weeks.

Moving Debate

Each side of the room represents either agree or disagree with the middle meaning 'I am not sure' or 'I do not know'. Read out the list of statements (below) and ask the group to place themselves in the room in relation to whether they agree, disagree or are some where in the middle. Allow discussion after everyone is positioned. Ask why people are where they are. People are allowed move if they change their minds.

Statements:

- **Ecstasy is a safe drug**
- **The only way to have fun is to drink**
- **Alcohol can be responsible for problems with family and friends.**
- **Drug addicts are all tramps**
- **Not everyone who uses drugs is a drug addict**
- **Cannabis has no side effects**
- **Cocaine is a clean drug and not addictive**



Why & Why Not

This activity is a relay race with the winners being the group who can write down the most reasons on their respective pieces of paper at the head of the room. Leave plenty of paper and pens for the Scouts to write down their reasons. After the game display the lists to the whole group. Invite additions to the list. Were there any reasons that are surprising? What can be done to stop people using drugs?

Behind the Act

You will need 5 volunteers. They have to act out the effects of each of the 5 most common drugs consumed in Ireland. Hand out one of each of these cards to each of the volunteers. The Scouts have to guess which drug is responsible for the act before them.

Cannabis:

- Most commonly used illegal drug.
- Usually mixed with tobacco and smoked in a spliff or joint
- Called draw, weed, hash, grass, skunk
- Effects to be acted out:
- User becomes relaxed and often talks a lot
- Can leave user tired with low energy level

Alcohol:

Comes in different strengths known as alcohol by volume percentage

Most commonly used drug of choice

Effects to be acted out:

Very difficult to predict effect: actor should be unpredictable.

Can give users a huge energy buzz

Solvents:

- Can be sniffed or sprayed into the mouth
- Can be breathed up the nose
- Called butane gas, glue, aerosols
- Effects to be acted out:
- Make user feel warm and drowsy
- Can drift people away from the real world

Ecstasy:

- Comes usually as a white tablet
- You never know what is in the tablet – usually a mixture of drugs
- Called doves, E, hug drug, XTC
- Effects to be acted out:
- Can become giggly and dizzy
- Feeling can be similar to being drunk
- Some users see things that are not there

Heroin:

- Pure heroin is a white powder, street heroin is a brownish white
- Injected, snorted or smoked
- Effects to be acted out:
- Small amounts can help people to feel relaxed
- With larger amounts speech can become slurred

What to Do?

Someday the young people in your group may find themselves in the midst of a difficult situation relating to drugs. Perhaps you can help them to be prepared for this possibility by looking at the following situations in small groups and answering the key questions for the situation in question.

Situations:

My best friend has started smoking hash and they want me to try it.

I have started sniffing glue after school.

I started going out at the weekends and started dropping Es and really like the buzz.

My best mate has started to using cocaine at the weekends but says it is only for recreation.

All my friends are taking drugs and I feel I have to start if I am to fit in with them anymore.

Key Questions For Each Situation:

Why is it a problem?

What might I do about it?

Who can I talk to about it?

Who else can help me?

What do I want to happen about this?



The following pages present the same text that appears on the 'Making Choices' leaflet for Scouts.

This is presented for reference. Rather than present information on substance abuse it presents to young people the ideal of making positive personal choices in their life.

Making Choices

- being strong and saying no to substance abuse

As a young person growing up you will face many challenges. School can be difficult at times and as you grow older your body and mental attitude also changes. You are no longer a child and you will seek to develop your own personality, value system and pathways in life. In Scouting, through the ONE programme, we call this your Personal Journey.

The SPICES (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Character, Emotional, Spiritual) are the way you discover your pathways. There are many opportunities within your Scouting programme of adventures to review your thinking on all sorts of issues and you should take time to think about how they affect your life and how you lead it from time to time.

Some things that you might consider

- How to deal with pressure – peer pressure and life pressure
- How to deal with risk
- How to deal with friendship
- How to have a well-balanced life that is happy and safe



Self-Esteem or Self-Image

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves and self-image is the way we see ourselves. It is not how we see ourselves physically, but how we view ourselves mentally. You will form this image from the experiences that you have from birth onwards, both positive and negative, and also from the way others treat or talk to you.

People who have a good self-image are positive and take on the challenges of life enthusiastically.

How can you improve our self-image? Try to look at yourself realistically by identifying all the positive aspects of yourself and also have a look at your weak areas. Applaud yourself for all the positive qualities and strengths that you have and devise a plan to correct or improve the weak ones.

Stress is part of life and is unavoidable - the secret is learning how to manage it. Most people are not continuously anxious, but certain situations will cause them to feel stressed, worried, or nervous. Our natural reaction is to avoid these situations, if we can! A healthier approach is to develop the skills needed to cope with these situations effectively. The more you practice and do it, the easier it will become. Scouting presents many

situations and challenges where you can learn to deal with difficult situations. Working in Patrols allows you to discover your positive aspects and of course, acting in a leadership role, from time to time or as a Patrol Leader places you in stressful situations where you can learn to manage.

Assertiveness

The ability to assert yourself means that you are able to state your feelings or opinion clearly and confidently. It means that you are able to stand up for yourself when you need to. This is not always easy to do, especially when everyone else in the group feels differently to you, or when the person asking you to do something is in a more powerful position that you are. Sometimes people give in to the pressure of a group or another person because they are afraid of a confrontation or of being different.

People who are assertive gain positive self-esteem, feel in control, do not allow themselves to be taken advantage of, are less involved in conflict situations, and are generally shown greater respect by others.

There is one aspect of being a young person that is difficult to deal with and it is peer group pressure. Peer pressure is universal. It can mean pressure to conform to a certain group norm, or it can be the pressure to do something.

The need for acceptance, approval, and belonging, is a very real and strong need and feeling. It is therefore very important to develop a healthy and positive self-image, and the skills needed to be able to say “No” to risky and negative behavior. Boys are more likely than girls to give in to peer pressure, especially when dares or risk situations are involved.

Being assertive and confident of your beliefs and aims in life will help you to maintain your own identity and build your character in a very positive way.

Friendship

As you get older you begin to spend more and more time with friends, and less time with your family. Your friends become the most important things in our lives and because of the need for recognition and acceptance from our friends you become more susceptible to their influence. Not all peer group pressure is negative however our friends can also have a positive influence on us. It is therefore very important to choose our friends carefully.

Try to make friends with others who do well, show respect for others, are welcoming and kind to others and whom you like. A good way to “measure” if your friend is good for you or not, is to check in on how you feel after you have spent time with them. Ask yourself if you feel a better person for having been with them. Do you feel positive, motivated, and inspired? Do you feel like you are a nicer person?

Getting the balance right

The 'SPICES' are a good framework to use to get the balance right in your life. There will be many challenges to maintaining this balance. Peer pressure will be a major influence in your life, thus the need for real friends, people who think and act like you. You will be presented with many real challenges that require some assertive behavior. Consider a situation where you are presented with the opportunity to abuse your body – what would you do? Stand firm to your convictions or cave in just to be one of the gang. Smoking, alcohol and drugs will be available to you – what will be your response? No thanks or yes I will try one ..just to be part of the gang!!

The choices you make determine the type of person you will become. Taking positive choices is not easy and it will be difficult to stand up to a lot of peer pressure. Going out with friends will present many situations where the possibility to be offered alcohol and drugs will be ever present. People 'cave in' for many reasons but having a positive self-image, a plan for your life and being able to enjoy and have fun without the need for stimulants.

Substances and drugs that affect our mental state are constantly present in the life of a young person and if you are unhappy and feel that a 'buzz' will help you to enjoy something more – you are wrong!! Unfortunately, you may not see the link between your actions today and the consequences tomorrow. Look at life's big picture, and have priorities and the character to say no.

It will be hard at times and you may need to think of a strategy to overcome the problem. Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age has negative health effects. While some young people will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally, without significant problems. Others will develop a dependency, moving on to more dangerous drugs and causing significant harm to themselves and possibly others. It is difficult to know which young people will experiment and stop and which will develop serious problems.



If saying no to alcohol makes you feel uncomfortable in front of people you know, blame your parents or another adult for your refusal. Saying, “My parents are coming to pick me up soon,” “I already got in major trouble for drinking once, I can’t do it again,” or “my coach would kill me,” can make saying no a bit easier for some.

Many young people use drugs because they’re depressed or think drugs will help them escape their problems. The truth is, drugs don’t solve problems — they simply hide feelings and problems. When a drug wears off, the feelings and problems remain, or become worse. Drugs can ruin every aspect of a person’s life.

Life is all about making choices.

For further information on any aspect of life’s choices

www.spunout.ie

'Being You': Sexual Identity, Coming Out and Homophobia

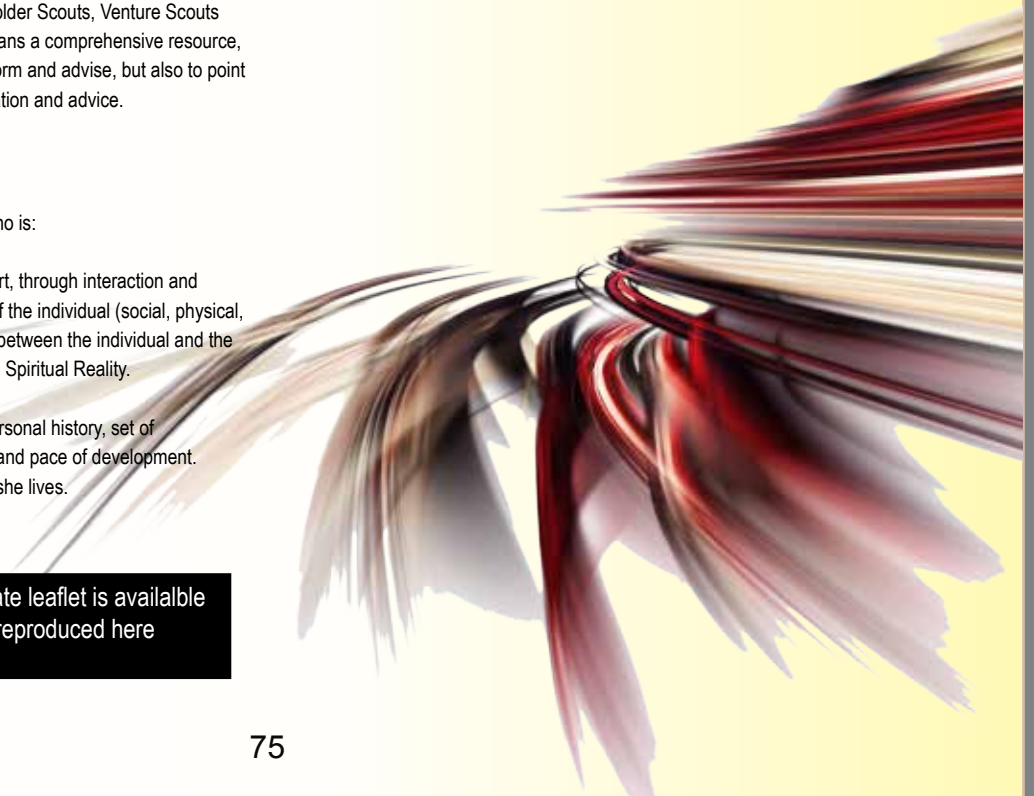
This resource is for use by the members of Scouting Ireland. Given the nature of the subject it is primarily aimed at older Youth Members (older Scouts, Venture Scouts and Rover Scouts) and Adult Members. It is by no means a comprehensive resource, but is a concise tool which can be used to remind, inform and advise, but also to point the reader in the direction of useful sources of information and advice.

Scouting and the Individual:

Scouting sees each young person as an individual, who is:

- a complex being whose identity is formed, in part, through interaction and relationships between the various dimensions of the individual (social, physical, intellectual, emotional, character and spiritual), between the individual and the external world and between the individual and a Spiritual Reality.
- a unique individual, each with his or her own personal history, set of characteristics, variations in needs, capacities, and pace of development. and an integral part of the world in which he or she lives.

The text here is for reference. A separate leaflet is available that contains the same text as is reproduced here



Scouting is about progressive self-education. The Scout Movement is based on the concept of self-education. This implies that each youth member is considered as a unique individual who, from the outset, has the potential to develop in all dimensions and to take responsibility for his or her own development. The Scout Method intends to ensure personal progression, by helping each young person to use and develop his or her capacities, interests and experiences.

Youth/Adult Members Searching and Supporting

This is a simple tool which is designed to inform and support members. It is for everyone. It can be a tool to help those who are unsure of their sexual identity or who are merely searching, a tool to assist Adult Scouters become aware of issues affecting a youth member or another Adult Scouter, and a tool for youth members to appreciate and understand what a fellow scout may be going through.

Please be aware that this is only a simple introduction to a complex issues, included in the resource are suggested websites where more comprehensive and specific information and advice is offered.

Scouting, with its principles of fraternity, integrity and doing ones best, needs to ensure that it is a place that is welcoming and accepting of individuals, that promotes equality, human rights and social justice, and challenges discrimination.

What is sexuality?

Sexuality is about how you think, act and feel. Part of your sexuality is your sexual orientation. This is decided by who you are generally attracted to (boys or girls) or if you are attracted to both. During puberty and our teen years, we start to explore our sexuality and to figure out what we like.

You might feel unsure about your sexuality, or who you find attractive might change during your life. Your sexual identity is something you should take time to think about: what you like and feel comfortable with is different for everyone. Working out whether you are gay, lesbian, bi or straight can be confusing. You don't have to tell your friends anything about your sexuality or who you fancy unless you want to, but remember it does help to talk.

A simple guide to some of the words used here:

Sexual orientation:

Who we feel attracted to, whether it's people of the same sex, another sex, or both.

Sexual identity:

It refers to the feelings we have towards our own sexual orientation, gender and gender roles.

Gender is made of the biological, legal, social and cultural attributes and the opportunities associated with the fact of being a man or a woman.

Bisexual:

Someone who is emotionally and sexually attracted to both males and females.

Gay:

Someone who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same gender. Gay is usually used to refer to males, lesbian to refer to females.

Lesbian:

A female who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other girls/women.

Heterosexual/Straight:

A person who is attracted to someone of another gender.

Transgender, or Trans:

means someone whose gender differs from the one they were given when they were born. Transgender people may identify as male or female, or they may feel that neither label fits them.

Note: Being gay, lesbian or bisexual is different from being transgender (see our section on Transgender). Being gay, lesbian or bisexual is about who we're attracted to – being transgender is about how we feel about our own gender (being male or female).

Am I Gay?

Being gay or lesbian or bisexual is just as normal – and wonderful – as being straight.

Are you wondering if you're gay? Maybe you're a guy who's noticing how gorgeous some male celebrities are – you're not interested in the female celebrities your friends are always going on about. Maybe you're a girl who's got a huge crush on one of your female teachers. Or, are you a guy or a girl who's feeling attracted to both your male and your female friends? Maybe you're always felt different from your friends, and you've just realised that the word 'gay' might fit how you feel. Maybe you've always known you were gay – and you've been feeling alone - now you're looking to meet other young people who are like you.

What is coming out?

Coming out is when a person accepts their sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) and decides to tell someone else about it. Most young people tell friends first and many don't feel they can tell their parents at first.

Deciding to tell someone that you're gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) can be a difficult and very personal decision. However, coming out as LGBT can be a hugely positive experience – a liberating time, when you embrace your sexuality.

You should think about whether you're ready to talk about it and who you want to tell. When deciding to talk about your sexuality, you might feel frightened, nervous, stressed, relieved or excited to get it over with. Remember, it's okay to feel any or all of those emotions!

Deciding when to come out

Deciding to come out is a very personal choice, the best time is whenever feels best to you.

Although 'coming out' can occur in a variety of ways and settings, even when you least expect it we have compiled the following tips which might be useful for you if you are considering taking the plunge!

Ask yourself why you are coming out to a particular person or persons. When you begin to come out to people, or when you have made some gay/bi/trans friends, you may experience excitement and elation – the 'scream it from the roof tops' feeling. Cherish this – you have everything to be proud of, but maybe not everyone needs to know your sexuality.

Think about who you are planning or want to come out to. Is it a family member, a friend or an acquaintance? Do you need to come out to that person at this moment? When you're ready to come out, start by telling someone you trust and that you think will be supportive. This will give you confidence to tell other people.

Timing

Although for many people there is no 'right' or 'wrong' time to come out, planning exactly when you are going to tell someone is well worth thinking about. Are you going to have adequate time afterwards to discuss it further or to answer any questions the person may have? Will you have the full attention of the person or are they pre-occupied with something else?

Where to tell?

Location can be important too. To allow for conversation afterwards pick somewhere that will give you privacy with minimal risk of any interruptions. If it's someone that you think may react favourably to your disclosure the location is probably less important. However, if you in any way expect negativity you are probably best sticking to a location where you feel safest.

Time To Digest

Remember that you have had time to think about what you want to say. The person you are telling has not. Depending on your relationship with them they may have suspected already, but even if this is the case it may still take time for it to sink in with them. Don't automatically expect an extreme reaction either, the person you are telling may be slow to react. This could be because they fear offending or embarrassing you as much as anything else.

Expect stupid questions, ignorance and nasty comments and jokes. People might be shocked and say things that are hurtful.

Telling family can be explosive. If you're worried about them reacting badly, threatening you or kicking you out ask a friend to let you stay with them if it's needed.

Resources

Having resources to hand is also useful. Have a look at the links down below for info or booklets to help you.

Talk to others

Talk to other LGBT young people about the fears, expectations and reactions they experienced when coming out. There are youth groups and people to talk to, again, just check the links below.

You shouldn't feel pressurised into coming out. This can happen if you've a partner or friends who've already told people about their sexuality and think you should do the same. Wait until you feel comfortable and ready to tell others.

Coming out is different for everyone, you might choose to tell friends but not your parents or to tell everyone you know. If you tell some people and not others, remember that secrets have a habit of escaping.

Get more information if you think you're being discriminated against or harassed because of your sexuality.

Being You

What's it like to be Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual?

In recent years, Ireland has changed a lot. There's now a lot more people who are openly gay, lesbian and bisexual (LGB) who are living happy and fulfilled lives all around Ireland. Some live in long-term relationships with their partners. Some are bringing up children in families that are very like the majority of Irish families. Irish human rights laws mean that lesbian, gay and bisexual people now have the right to equality and cannot be discriminated against. There are more and more services and groups created by and for gay people – everything from sports groups to religious groups. Each year, on different weekend during the summer, parades and parties are held all around Ireland to celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride.

Being Young and Gay

For young people who are, or think they might be gay, there are fantastic youth groups in different parts of Ireland where you can meet other people of your own age. You can make friends, have fun, and hear how other young people are doing.

How to Support an LGBT Friend

Be conscious of the fact that many LGBT people live in environments which are homophobic and in which they constantly hear negative messages about LGBT people. This can make people quite fearful of how people may react to them coming out and fearful of potential rejection by friends and family.

You could make it easier for friends to come out to you by making it clear to all your friends that you are positive and respectful about LGBT people. If a friend comes out to you, remember that the person has not changed. They are still the same person



you knew before; you just have more information about them than you did before. They are still the same friend they have always been. The fact that they have come out to you shows that you are important to them and that they trust you. Thank them for their trust and reassure them of your continued friendship and support. This is important as they may have been afraid that you might have rejected them and that they would lose you as a friend. Be the friend you have always been.

Try not to react badly, even if you have strong feelings about LGBT issues. If you judge your friend, or express disapproval, you will do nothing to change your friend's identity but you will hurt them and make them feel rejected and uncared for. It is also important to remember the potential impact rejection by friends and family can have on the mental health and well being of LGBT people.

Advice:

Offer your friend a hug – it would mean a lot to them.

You might feel hurt that they haven't told you before, but try to remember the challenges and fears LGBT people often face in being able to be open about their identity. Respect your friend's privacy – it is up to them to decide if, when and how they tell other people.

Just because a friend has told you that they are LGBT or T, don't assume that this means that they fancy you.

Just because your friend is LGBT doesn't mean that everyone will think you are. You may be curious but be sensitive when asking questions. Don't ask questions that would have been considered rude or inappropriate within your friendship before they came out to you. Your friend may not want you to do anything. They may just need someone to listen

and be positive.

Offer to support your friend in whatever way they need, for example support them in coming out to others or to their families. Help them to find information on local LGBT groups and offer to accompany them if they want to have a friend with them. Learn more about LGBT issues and the LGBT community. This will help you to better understand and support your friend. But remember that everyone's experience is different.

Continue to do what you have always done together. LGBT people often fear that coming out will change everything in their lives and this can be frightening. If you have always played football or gone out with your friend on Saturday, continue to do this.

Be a LGBT Ally. Challenge homophobic comments and attitudes and help to create LGBT friendly environments.

It's never too late. If someone has come out to you before and you reacted badly, you can always contact them and try again.

Homophobia

In 2008, President Mary McAleese addressed BeLonG To Youth Services' National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Young People's Forum with the following words: "Homophobic bullying continues to be a society-wide issue ... and the link between it and suicide sends a clear message that this trend must be reversed." The President continued: "By working together ... we can overcome the bias and hostility experienced by many young gay people throughout the country. No one should have to suffer on account of their sexual orientation."

What is Homophobia?

In Ireland, many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people lead fulfilled lives where they are proud to celebrate their identity. However, other LGBT young people experience serious levels of prejudice and discrimination. Homophobia is prejudice or discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people, or people believed to be LGBT. Homophobia can happen in a range of ways, for example, through bullying, or through a failure to address the needs of LGBT young people, or a failure to address the risks to young people's safety from bullying. A common type of homophobia that many people do not notice is the use of the word 'gay' in negative way, such as when young people say a mobile phone is 'so gay.'

What is Homophobic Bullying?

Homophobic bullying can take a variety of forms. It includes verbal abuse, insulting mimicry, anti-gay graffiti, threatened or actual physical or sexual assault, spreading rumours that someone is gay, and cyber and other forms of bullying. Lesbophobic bullying is the term to describe bullying that is specifically targeted at lesbian people. Transphobic bullying describes bullying targeted at transgender people and biphobic bullying describes bullying targeted at bisexual people.

Dealing with Homophobic Language

Challenging everyday homophobic language can be a daunting task. It may seem that anti-gay language is so pervasive and entrenched in the vocabulary of young people that it is impossible to tackle. There is probably not one person who has not heard the catchphrase, 'That's so gay'. The word 'gay' has become common slang for 'bad' or 'rubbish'. Suggesting something or someone is 'gay' is commonplace as a put-down. It may also appear that some use of homophobic language is not actually intended to be directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, and perhaps does not need addressing. Some people may feel that they do not have the time to challenge this phrase, given how many times they hear it. There are serious implications when people and organisations take a passive approach and appear to allow anti-gay language.

Strategies for Addressing Homophobic Language

Let people know that using anti-gay language is not okay;

Encourage them to think about how hurtful their words can be, even if that was not their intention;

Encourage them to reflect on why they are making a link between negative things and LGBT people.

Ask them where they think those negative messages came from;

Ask them how they would feel about this language if someone they cared about was LGBT;

Remind young people that scouting is committed to safety and equality and that everyone is welcome.

The Scout Programme

Scouting's moral framework and mission is rooted in the concepts of equality, respect and diversity. The Scout Programme, in an age appropriate manner, should actively engage with such issues. Scout Group's programmes such include some of the following elements:

Understanding that everyone is different and the importance of diversity to our lives.

Understand why respect for everybody is important.

Recognise why it is important to challenge discrimination, negative myths and stereotypes.

Respecting, celebrating and recognising the normality of diversity in all parts of human life (including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, culture, creed, family status/class, sexual orientation and physical and intellectual abilities).

Addressing Homophobia: Guidelines for the Youth Sector in Ireland

- The welcoming inclusion of all people
- Specify homophobic bullying in anti-bullying codes of behaviour.
- Address prevention of homophobic bullying by educating young people.
- Don't allow negative use of words like 'gay'.
- Ensure programme encompasses the areas of diversity and inclusion.
- Respond positively when a young person comes out.
- Respect an LGBT young person's right to privacy and dignity – do not disclose their identity to others.
- Build knowledge & skills in addressing homophobia and meeting the needs of LGBT young people

Find more information and support:

BeLonG To:

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people.
www.Belongto.org Phone: 01-8734184 Online support:
<https://belongto.org/support.aspx>

The Equality Authority:

It seeks to achieve positive change in the situation and experience of those groups and individuals experiencing inequality by stimulating and supporting a commitment to equality. www.equality.ie

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland:

It advances equality, promotes equality of opportunity, encourages good relations and challenges discrimination through promotion, advice and enforcement.
www.equalityni.org

Spun Out

SpunOut.ie is an independent, youth powered national charity working to empower young people to create personal and social change.

www.spunout.ie

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