

Short & Snappy

Inclusion

What's a Short & Snappy?

- A short training/information segment provided at a Service Unit meeting or for leaders to use at troop meetings.
- Any interested volunteer may lead a Short and Snappy.
- Short & Snappies are usually 10-45 minutes in length.

Things to Remember

- Stay within the allotted time (you're taking up a piece of their agenda time).
- If you don't know the answer, seek the correct answer from the appropriate person.
- Bring the necessary supplies for your short & snappy.

What you'll need

- Blank mailing labels or blank name tags, cut in half (one per participant)
- Marker

Introduction

5 minutes

Being inclusive in Girl Scouts means welcoming each youth into your troop and creating a sense of belonging where everyone feels valued, seen, and supported.

Always focus on every individual as a person first, regardless of ability, background, race, ethnicity, culture, or anything else. Also focus on a Girl Scout's abilities and what they can do, rather than what they cannot.

Plan activities that explore the diversity and culture that exists in your own troop or community/area. Remember to plan flexible activities that consider various energy levels, interests, and skills. Consider the needs, resources, safety, required accommodations, and beliefs of all members and potential members.

Activity

10 minutes

Beforehand, write on the labels: "Smile at me," "Pat me on the back," "Shake my hand," "Give me five," and "Give me an 'OK' sign." On about 10% of the labels, write, "Turn away from me."

As people enter the room, place a sticker on their foreheads so that they can't see what it says. Distribute the labels randomly. Ask everyone to remain quiet and not reveal to each other what their labels say.

Begin the activity by asking the group if they think we sometimes label people because they act or look different. Tell them that the labels we put on people often limit their participation in groups. Ask them to remain silent, get up and mill around as if they were at a party. Remind them that they should not reveal what is on anyone else's label. Let the group mingle for 4 to 5 minutes, then ask them to return to their seats without looking at their labels.



Discussion

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions.

1. How were you feeling during the activity?
2. Without looking at your label, do you know what it says? How?
3. If you think you have the “Turn away from me” label, please come and stand together in front of the room. How did you feel? (Allow time for plenty of responses to this question. Then have the group look at their labels.)

Explain that all of us have experienced times when we felt like we were wearing a “turn away from me” label when we felt left out or targeted. However, some groups experience this more than others, even regularly.

What groups in society seem to have a “turn away from me” label on them? (Examples might include people with disabilities, people of a different religion or race than others in their community, people who speak with an accent, or people from under-resourced communities.)

What are some groups within our own Girl Scout family that might feel targeted or left out? (Examples might include volunteers who are new to the community/organization, volunteers without daughters in the troop, male volunteers, youth from low-income families, youth from single-parent families, or youth who look or act differently from their peers.)

Remind the group that during the activity, no one said anything negative. Everything was conveyed through nonverbal communication: our body language and expressions. Even without words, the “turn away from me” group got a negative message.

Point out that 94% of all communication is nonverbal. We need to pay close attention to our body language and expressions as well as our words.

End with the following questions:

- How can we change our nonverbal behavior to help everyone feel included?
- How might cliques fit into this discussion?
- What insights did you gain about how it can feel to be excluded or marginalized?
- How would you take this learning back to your Girl Scouts?



Helpful Resources and Tips

Creating Inclusive Meeting Spaces

- Be consistent (meeting flow, activities, expectations, etc.)
- Provide quiet zones or sensory breaks
- Adjust lighting and noise levels
- Encourage teamwork and peer support
- Give clear and simple instructions
- Celebrate different learning styles



How to Support a Girl Scout or Family Member with a Disability

When interacting with a Girl Scout (or family member) with a disability, consider these final tips:

1. When talking to a person with a disability, speak directly to them, not through a parent/ guardian.
2. It's okay to offer assistance to a person with a disability but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.
3. Leaning on a person's wheelchair is invading their space and is considered annoying and rude.
4. When speaking for more than a few moments to a person who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
5. When greeting a youth with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, "Hi, it's Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left."
6. When speaking to a youth who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to them, not to their interpreter.
7. Use people-first language when appropriate, placing the person before the disability (e.g., "person with a disability"). Also recognize that some individuals prefer identity-first language (e.g., "autistic person"), so follow their lead when possible.

Resources

[GSUSA Delivering Inclusive Program on gsLearn](#)

[GSGLA 611 Creating an Inclusive Safe Space on gsLearn](#)

[Ability and Your Troop- A Guide for Girl Scout Leaders](#)

