

Guidelines for Implementation of Sensitive Issues

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council

The following guidelines have been developed for the successful implementation of contemporary issues. The purpose of these guidelines is to gain community support, to assure that Girl Scouts are addressing the needs and wishes of the parents and community, and to help in gathering a collection of resource people who have the skill to assist with the implementation.

A. Working Toward Community Support

1. Local communities, Service Units or groups of Service Units should form task groups of educators, ministers, community leaders, and/or social workers to review materials for their appropriateness in that community and to link with existing resources. This creates community backing for the program and supports the Leaders if controversy should arise.
2. Consultants will work with Leaders that request assistance with technical or sensitive subjects. Leaders who feel comfortable with the suggested activities may proceed without a consultant.
3. Criteria for selecting consultants will include:
 - ★ Ability to present information in a clear, interesting manner to girls and/or adults.
 - ★ Ability to be sensitive to emotions and attitudes related to contemporary issues.
 - ★ Demonstration of personal emotional stability.
 - ★ Ability to be supportive and non-judgmental to all participants.
 - ★ Possession of or willingness to get technical training related to the issues.
 - ★ Willingness to work with other community organizations.
 - ★ Willingness to follow Council and GSUSA policies and standards.
 - ★ Ability to give volunteer time as determined by appointment.
 - ★ Willingness to travel reasonable distances to work with other consultants and Girl Scout groups.
 - ★ Willingness to be supervised by Council personnel.

B. Working Toward Parent Support, Approval, and Involvement

1. The Leader working with the Troop Committee and/or parents is responsible for determining the specific subject matter (from the contemporary issue booklet) based on the maturity of the girls and the appropriateness for the community.
2. An outline of subjects to be covered will be presented to the parents in advance. The subject matter will follow the material provided in the contemporary issue booklet.

3. Each parent has the right and responsibility to know what programs are being done. Parents should be informed through a variety of means and should be encouraged to attend informative meetings. The parent's Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues Form is an excellent way to inform the parents and also to get their permission, or disapproval, which is imperative.
4. Sensitive issues are often brought up by girls in an informal setting. The need for permission from parents for planned programs should not discourage the Leader from answering the girls' questions/comments as they arise. Such interest on the part of the girls may lead into more formal programs. Remember to keep it appropriate for the age level and the community.

C. Working Toward Continuing to Improve Our Program for Meeting the Needs of Girls

1. Be aware of current Girl Scout programs. Read newsletters from the Council, participate in trainings being offered, and watch for new *Issues for Girls*.
2. To stay contemporary, read the newspapers and watch the news, be involved in youth issues, look for what other agencies in your community are doing for youth.
3. Stay current on the legal implications of the issues and where and how to get help or report problems, such as child abuse.
4. Most of all, listen to what kids are saying.

D. Follow up

1. Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council would like to know what programs are being done with Troops. Please share with us what you have done, new ideas of what could help you in your carrying out the program, and lists of those who helped. Send information to your Membership Specialist. Through this, we can improve our services to girls.
2. Patches are available for purchase through the Boise Service Center.

Special Note: There may be some contemporary issue activities which do not have the potential for being controversial, such as talking about nutrition or diet in *Girls Are Great*, or activities in *Math, Science, and Technology*. These activities, since they are also mentioned in the handbook, do not need special parent permission. Parent permission is necessary when you are doing something the parent would not normally expect from the Girl Scout program. The permission slip is to inform the parent, to give them a choice as to whether or not their daughter participates, and to protect the Leader.