

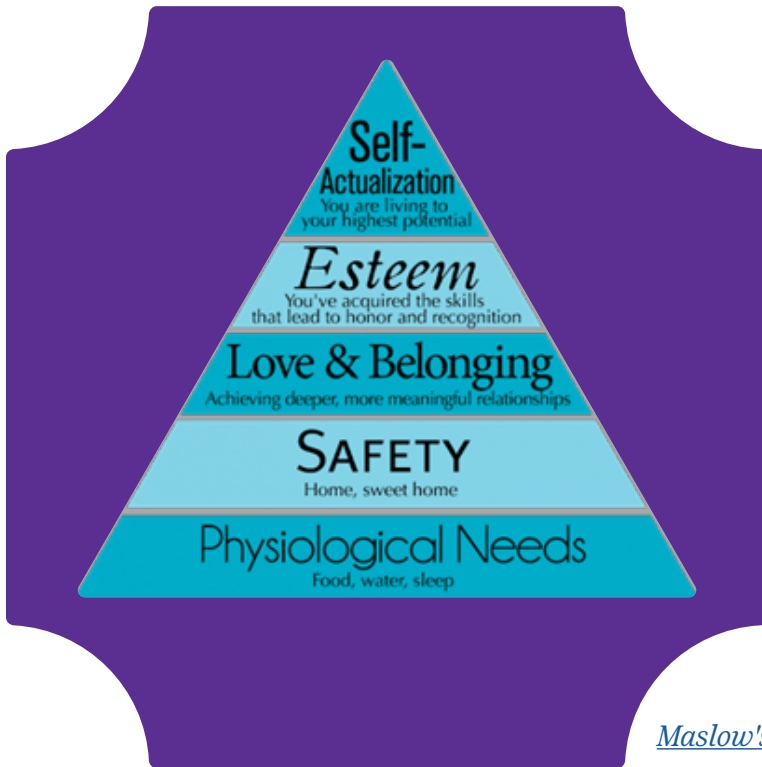


Girl Scouts of Maine Taking Care

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Self-Care



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

No one can fill a cup from an empty pitcher, so it is important for all of us—girls and adults—to do some self-care to be able to feel good and to offer our best selves to those we care about.

**Please read through the exercises ahead of time and picture them in your mind's eye before you do each with the troop.*

What is self-care?

Talk with the girls about this. You might say:

Self-care includes nutrition, hygiene, and good sleep. It also includes feeling mentally and physically safe. When we don't understand things that are happening around us or when those things confuse or frighten us, we need to take time to take care of ourselves.

Even when things aren't super heavy, it's important for us to pause and be sure that we have what we need to be our best selves.

One of the first things we can do to take care of ourselves is pretty simple because you don't need any special tools, just a place where you can be still for a few minutes. Let's try it now!

Note: The words and questions in the colored boxes are scripting you might use. When asking questions, please remember to ask just one at a time, and let the girls at least think about it (and ideally answer) before asking the next. #YoureAwesome!



Mindful Breathing

To introduce Mindful Breathing to the girls, you might go right into the exercise or you might ask them how they breathe, like:

- When you breathe, what happens? Right, air goes in and out.
- Do you think about it very much?
- Do you have to think about it? No, it's controlled by muscles that are called "involuntary" which means they do their job whether you're thinking about it or not, which helps when you're sleeping, huh?
- Are you able to control those muscles? Sure! You can hold your breath, right?
- Let's see—how long can you hold your breath?

While the girls are holding their breath, count aloud by "Potatoes": One Potato, Two Potato, Three Potato, and so on. If you prefer Mississippi or Crocodiles or Blueberry Muffins to Potatoes, that's totally fine—use a word that takes about a second to say, and please be consistent. You'll use it later, too.

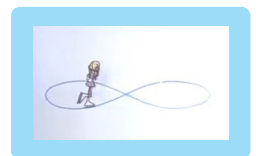
When they finish holding their breath, ask:

- What was that like when you were holding your breath?
- How did it feel?
- Was it hard? Or did it get hard after a bit?
- Do you think you could do other stuff while you were holding your breath?
- Do you ever catch yourself holding your breath when you are doing things?

Maybe your girls will talk about swimming or maybe you or another adult will have noticed that you personally do hold your breath when you're nervous or worried about something. If you're comfortable sharing that with them, do.

As the girls or other adults share their experiences throughout this, try to "accept" what they're saying without judgment or obvious reaction beyond a confirming nod or smile so the girls feel safe sharing. Some girls might be comfortable with your laughing at their responses or being startled, but if others are not comfortable, they may feel self-conscious about sharing when they see you react that way to others in the group. It's normal for grown-ups to have to practice this skill set.

Then, have the girls hold up a hand to trace a figure 8—not like a snowman with one circle on top of the other, but one like in this picture, where a single connected line loops and crosses over itself. Some of the girls may know that when the figure eight is on its side it represents infinity—and we could get into a wonderful philosophical breathing metaphor here—totally fine if your older girls are up for that—but you may want to refer to the sideways eight as a Lazy Eight. Decide what is best for your troop.



Ask the girls to start in the center with a finger, and as they trace or follow the line up and around to the left they can breathe in, pause when they get back to the center and then breathe out when they trace the loop on the right.

They might zip around to see how fast they can trace it—that's fine if they do that at first, but after a couple of those, slow your talking down a bit and ask them to go more slowly and gently so that each loop takes at least 1-2 seconds (or potatoes). You could even do it with progression by having them do one second per loop and pause, and then 2 seconds per loop with the one second pause, then three seconds per loop, so they get a sense of how they can control the speed of their breathe. Have them try tracing the figure eight with their eyes (their gaze, not their eyeballs—ouch!). This is practice for what they will do in their mindful breathing exercise in a few minutes.

When they seem to have the hang of it, you can move into the next phase of this exercise.

Find a place to sit or lie down. Right now, it would be best if it is a quiet place. When you all practice this a bit, you'll be able to do it almost anywhere, but to start, find a safe and quiet place to do it. Decide if you want all of the girls to sit or lie down or if you are OK with their making the choice. For younger girls or girls in giggle-mode, choice will be hard, so better for you to decide this time.

Giggles happen. When it feels out of context, it can be upsetting, but to draw charged attention to it rarely helps. If it bugs you, take a deep cleansing breath and say something like, “sometimes when I try something new and feel awkward, I get the giggles, too. As we practice this more, it'll feel more relaxing” and then just go on as if you don't notice anything out of place. You might give general praise to the group as they settle in. Remember, we're accepting.

For sitting, each person needs to sit up straight in a chair with legs uncrossed and feet on the floor.

For lying down, they need to lie flat on the back, with legs extended and uncrossed.

When all are in place say something like:

Put one hand flat over your belly button and breathe through your nose so that your belly moves your hand. Hold it while you think “One Potato,” and then through your mouth, blow out all the air. We'll call that “Belly Breathing.” Let's practice that again for three breaths.

Then,
after those
three belly
breaths,
ask them:

- What do you notice?
- What does it feel like to breathe so you fill your abdomen?
- How does it feel in other parts of your body?
- Does anyone feel a little dizzy? If so, that's OK, it'll stop as you get used to taking deeper breaths.



Lazy Eight Breathing. Now that the girls have practiced tracing a figure eight with their finger and practiced taking belly-filling breaths, we're going to put those together to help them bring their full attention to their breath for just 8 breaths. Guide them with words like this—remember to edit these instructions if you are not giving them a choice of sitting or lying down:

Now that you have practiced belly breathing, we're going to stretch it out a little bit to let your whole body benefit!

Return to your place either sitting up straight in a chair with your legs uncrossed and feet on the floor or lying down flat on your back, legs parallel and uncrossed.

Place your hand over your belly button to remind you to breathe so deeply that your abdomen expands.

Then picture an eight lying on its side and focus on its middle. With your mind's eye, go up and around to the left and trace the left part of the eight while you **breathe in through your nose**. When you get back to the middle hold for just "One Potato" and then **breathe out through your mouth** like you're blowing out a candle as you trace the right side of the eight. When you get back to the middle, hold for "One Potato" and start again. As you exhale, make sure to blow out all of the air slowly and completely.

Breathe like this, tracing your Lazy Eight, for eight breaths, long, slow, steady, and complete.

You might want to help them count the breaths, so everyone is doing it together, even saying the words "inhale," then "one potato," then exhale all the way out" and "one potato." You'll see if they are getting the hang of it. After the eight breaths, invite them to rest for a moment and just let their bodies breathe "normally." Give them a moment of peace before you say:

Let your body breathe at its own pace while you quietly notice how you feel:

- How do your feet and toes feel?
- How do your legs feel?
- How do your hands and fingers feel?
- How do your arms feel?
- How does your torso feel?
- How does your head feel?
- How does your face feel?

Take your time with the questions so they can consider each and mentally work their way up their bodies.

As they've been doing this breathing, their awareness and attention have probably (hopefully!) gone inward. Gently, let them bring their awareness back to the group. Ask them to quietly come back together to talk about what that was like.



Some may not have liked it. Ask what it was about it that they didn't like.

Some may have fallen asleep. Ask how that felt.

Some may have felt like their mind was racing around other things and it was hard to focus. Ask them what that was like.

Some may just want to think about it. Ask them to share their thoughts when they are ready.

Some may have really liked it. Ask what they liked about it.

When someone mentions that they feel calm or quiet or alert after it, ask something like:

So, do you think you could do something like this if you were feeling anxious or angry or scared?

How would it help you?



Walk them through what they did with their breath to remind them of the tracing one loop of the figure eight as they inhale through the nose, holding in the center for a potato, then exhaling slowly through the mouth on the other loop, and holding at the center for a potato.

Do the Lazy Eight Breathing again at the next meeting or two to help them come to own the practice. Invite them to teach their parent or sibling how to do it before your next meeting. You might share with them that people use mindful breathing when they're worked up about something, but many people also do it for a few minutes every morning and every evening just like taking a vitamin or getting daily exercise.

Additional Mindful Breathing Resources:

[Children's Rainbow Meditation](#) recorded by Laura Genese, who happens to be the GSME Director of Marketing & Communication and a certified Yoga and Yogic breathing instructor.

Good Job, You!



Asking for a Time Out

Sometimes we Give “Time Out” as a punishment or penalty, like when a hockey player gets in trouble during a game and has to go to the penalty box, right? However, as adults, we know that sometimes that Time Out we Give our kids is actually Taking Time Out for ourselves so we can get ourselves back together without saying or doing something we will regret.

Think of it like in basketball or football when Time Out is Taken to think through next steps or to make the other team wait for us. Have you ever Taken a Time Out for yourself?

When do you Take a Time Out? Or When do you wish you could Take a Time Out?

What do you do when you Take a Time Out? A long soak with a good book? Five minutes in the bathroom with the door closed? Shopping for an hour alone without the kids? Something else? How does it help you?

Your girls may not realize that they can Take a Time Out, that they can ask for time. Let’s give them this gift.

Start with a question like:

What do you do when you’re mad or upset and other people seem to need too much from you? Do you ever have that problem?

If you have an example, you’re comfortable sharing with them, do that to lead you to offering them the idea of asking for time. Discuss it with them, defining it as above: a chance to just be with yourself.

Ask them what they do when they have time just to themselves. Ask about things they do NOT do on electronic devices, because even though those things feel fun and relaxing, they are actually very stimulating and tax similar parts of our brains as people who are asking a lot of us. Weird, huh?

Time Is on My Side

Start by brainstorming things they could do alone without electronics if they had 5, 10, 30, or 60 minutes.

Before this meeting, you and your coleaders might want to brainstorm things they could do for each of the lengths of time just in case they need a prompting question during the brainstorming. After a loooooong silence, you could say something like, “what about scooping the cat box? Or doing 20 jumping jacks?” BTW—they will hate those ideas and may not like yours, either, but sometimes having something to push off from gets their minds going.

What could you do if you have 5 minutes all to yourself (and no electronics)?



Write down on a sheet of paper they can all see, or if it is virtual, on the white board or an open Word or Google doc, all of the (screen free) ideas they come up with. Maybe they'll say things like:

- ✓ Lie still with my eyes closed
- ✓ Run around the outside of the house three times
- ✓ Read a book/a chapter of a book
- ✓ Write a postcard to my friend or gram.
- ✓ Write down all of the things I want to do this summer
- ✓ Pick up clothes and stuff in my bedroom
- ✓ Draw a picture of my pet
- ✓ Paint a picture
- ✓ Color in a coloring book
- ✓ Lazy Eight Breathing

Cool! What could you do if you have 10 minutes all to yourself?

Continue to write down their ideas for 10, 15, 30, and an hour. As a group look at the lists. Ask the girls:

Does everyone see something on each of the lists you'd like to do if you have that much time to yourself?

Does anyone not see something you would do if you had that much time?



If you're in person, you might give the girls pieces of paper. Virtually, you could send the girls a pdf or in kits have a pre-printed page. You are welcome to use the **Time Is on My Side sheet** that is attached or to have the girls create a list with their own decorations. Ask the girls to write down two ideas in each time section.

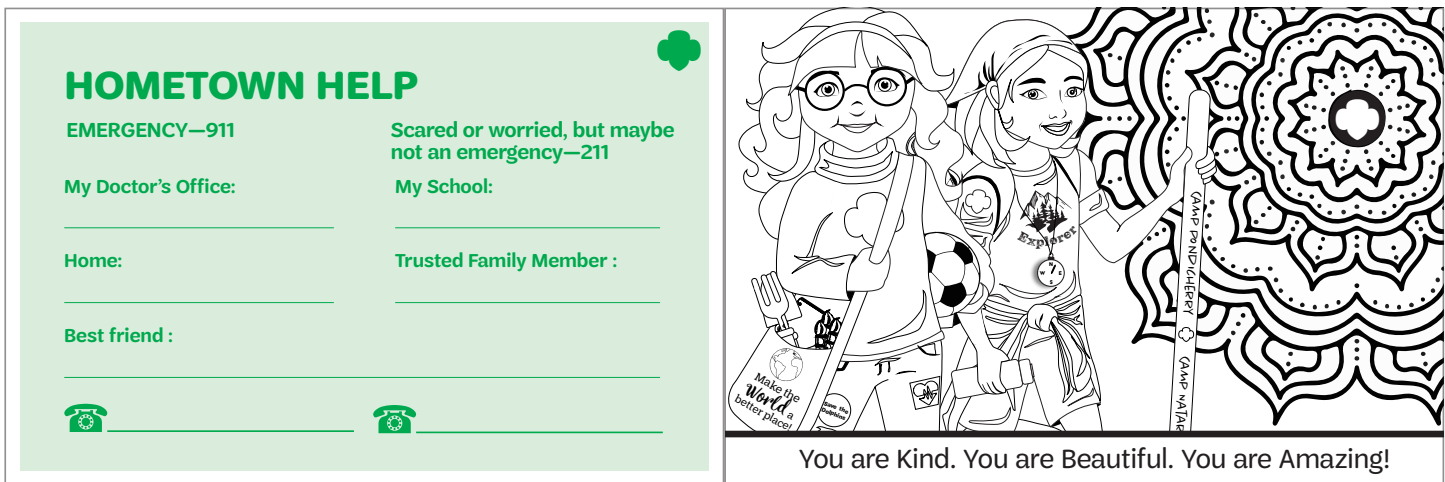
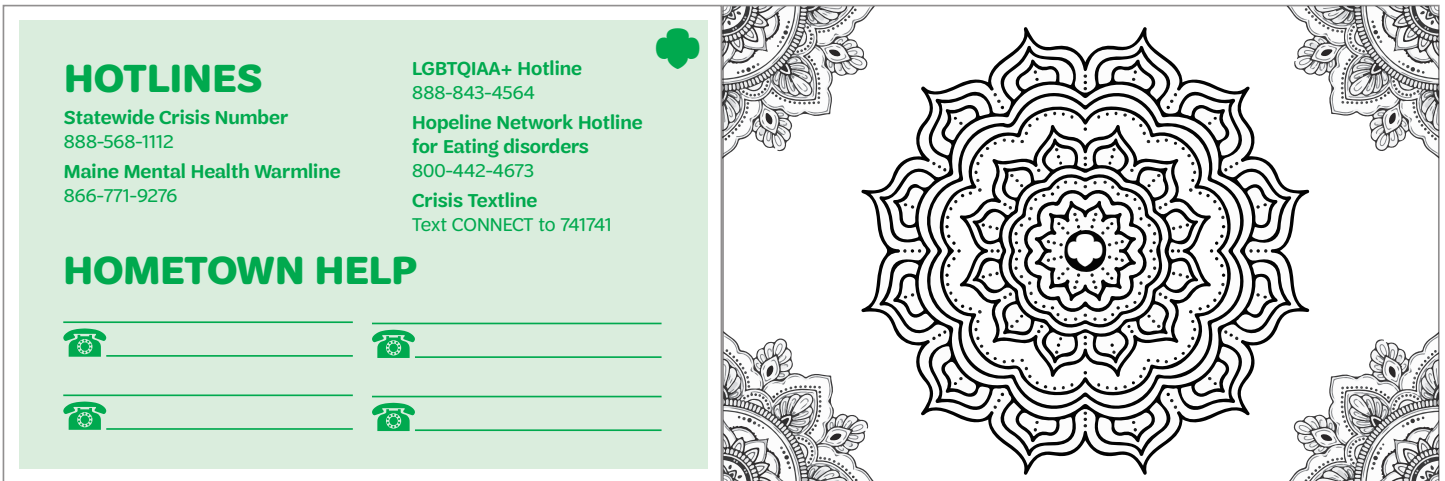
Finally, discuss with the girls where they might post or keep their sheet of time ideas so when they find themselves with some time or when they need to Take some Time, they can easily see those ideas of things to help them re-center.



Having A Hotline Card

This is an activity you might want to do after the girls have done some of the interpersonal care and the community care activities that come later in this packet. The Hotline Cards are resource cards for each girl to have to use as she needs. She might put it in her locker or a binder. She might keep it on her nightstand or on a bulletin board. One side is for phone numbers and the other side is intended to be colored by the girl, so she likes it.

We have pre-printed some in postcard size you can use, and the pdf is attached so you can print them out in a different size, if you prefer. The idea behind them is that a girl would fill in numbers of people she could call if she were having a rough time or felt in danger. We've created different versions of these for younger girls—Daisy to Junior—and for older girls—Junior to Ambassador—to recognize the maturity and challenges associated with girls of different ages. Please take time with your leadership team to think about how your girls might use them as a helpful resource. With guidance from counselors and mental health professionals, we selected existing hotlines for each. The cards look like this:



Again, it might make sense to introduce these after you've done some of the interpersonal care and community care activities as a group.

To introduce them, start a discussion by asking a question like:

- Who do you call in an emergency?
- Does anyone know what number to call if you need help, but it isn't necessarily an emergency right now? (211)

Maybe this follows a discussion about First Aid or Safety where you've discussed calling 911 and 211, so the girls are already thinking about asking for help.

Who else do you call if you need something?

Let this conversation go on for a bit to hear who the girls call and what they call about. They may bring up some of the topics already addressed on the cards or you could ask for Daisies and Brownies:

- Is there a time when you might need to call your doctor's office or your school?
- When might you call your best friend?
- If you're feeling worried or upset, who else might you call?

For older girls, the conversation will be different if only because they are older. In fact, it'll be different between **Juniors and Cadettes and Seniors and Ambassadors** because of their progression in life, so this is an exercise worth revisiting over time. With older girls, especially Middle School and up, you might ask them

- Do you ever wish you had someone to talk to?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to call someone, but you weren't sure who?

Think about this conversation before you get into it. Think about your role and what you're willing to offer. Some of us are comfortable offering ourselves as an emergency contact and others of us are not, and both options are OK. Only do what you are comfortable doing and what you will follow through on. In other words, don't tell the girls they can call you anytime of the day or night if you know you will not answer your phone after 8 pm. You could tell them, "you can call me any time between 8 am and 8 pm, but after that the phone is off." It is important for you to know and share your boundaries just like you want your girls to know and share their boundaries.

The girls don't need to fill out the cards right now in front of the whole troop. In fact, they might take some time to think about who the best people for them would be to call and then reach out to those people individually to ask if it is OK to have them as an emergency contact. Perhaps you can role play how they would ask someone about that:



Girls, let's practice how we would ask someone to be an emergency contact! Pressley, you mentioned that Leah's mom would be a great person to talk to if you were worried. Would you be willing to practice asking her if she could be an emergency contact for you?

One of the grown-ups can pretend to be Leah's mom when Pressley asks. The first time she goes through it, it would be nice if Leah's mom says "Yes," but, please be sure to practice a "No," too.

Great! Good job!

- Pressley, what was something you liked about how you asked her?
- What do you think you might do differently if you do this in real life?
- How did it feel when she said "Yes"?
- What if she had said "No"?
- Would that be OK?
- It's kind of like when we're selling cookies and someone says, "No thank you," right?
- That might be disappointing, but it's okay, right? Why don't we practice that possibility, too?

Be sure to help her (and the whole troop) process the "No" experience, too.

- OK, Pressley, what was something you did this time that you liked?
- What was it like getting a "No"?

Ask the grown up who role played about her/his experience, too

- What was it like telling Pressley "No"?
- What circumstances might lead you to say "No" in real life?

There is great value in the girls (and adults) discussing and hearing different perspectives on this, and in their taking time to think about their fast reactions as opposed to their coming to understand why people have certain boundaries over time.

This is an activity you could have the girls break into threes to practice each of the roles. If you need to mix in some adults to have groups of threes, do. (sometimes groups of two cheat by not doing the activity in role plays when they feel nervous about it, but usually in threes, someone holds the others accountable by being a witness—yeah, it's weird.) Ask each to play the role of the asker at least once.



Interpersonal Care

Interpersonal care here is referring to how we interact with others, especially on a one-to-one basis: our personal impact on another human. Sometimes that is easier to understand from the perspective of someone else's impact on us. We have a couple of activities here to help the girls think about how each of us can affect another.

Crumpled Paper: The Lasting Impact of Unkindness

The girls may have seen or done this activity before, but it is such a powerful one, it's worth doing with them again. On the linked website above, it calls it a bullying-awareness activity, but even off-hand comments or unintended rudeness can have a significant impact, so broadening the category to unkindness is valuable.

1. Give each girl a piece of fresh paper and ask her to write her name on it, then put it face down in the center.
2. Mix up the papers and then randomly pass them out face down, telling the girls not to look at the name, but just to crumple it up in a ball. They can squish it or stomp on it.
3. After some vigorous crumpling, ask them to stop and open up the paper to see whose name is inside. Can they smooth the paper?
4. Ask them to look at the person whose paper it was and apologize for crumpling it. Did that fix it? Is the paper back to the way it was before? Ask the girls what they can do to make the paper back to what it was before?
5. Without browbeating or getting into long stories, ask if they have ever done that to a person with their words or actions or if anyone has ever done that to them? We've all done it and had it done to us.

- How does it feel when someone crumples us up?
- How do we feel when we realize we've crumpled up someone else?
- How can we avoid crumpling up others?
- How can we [make amends](#) if we do crumple someone?

This is a simple exercise to remind us of our impact on other people and how our words and actions toward others can have a lasting impact. For older girls, especially, this conversation could expand into looking at unconscious biases, emotional intelligence, and opportunities for learning about acceptance, belonging, diversity, inclusion, and equity.



Ms. Sticky

Ms. Sticky is a variation of the Crumpled Paper activity.

1. Take a post-it note or a piece of paper and draw a person on it. Introduce the person as Ms. Sticky (or whatever name you like)
2. Ask the girls to say things to Ms. Sticky. For every kind word, smile and nod; for any mean word, tear off a part of Ms. Sticky.
3. That may be shocking to the girls who may try saying something nice or even apologize. Try to reapply the part you've torn off. You could even use tape.
4. After a few bits have been torn, whether or not they are repaired, ask the girls about Ms. Sticky's condition. Can Ms. Sticky get back to exactly how he was before their words? What do you think Ms. Sticky would say to you if she could talk right now? You might ask the girls:

Has anyone ever torn
off a part of you?
What was that like?
Do you remember
how it felt?

Have you ever torn off
part of someone else?
Did you mean to hurt
them? Were you able
to fix it?



You or one of your coleaders may have a story to share—the super Reader's Digest version, please. This can get delicate because of exactly what we're talking about: words hurt, and the scar (and sometimes the pain) remains.



Our goal is for the girls to connect with the feelings of being on each side of this interpersonal damage to recognize their power to choose how they treat others, and how they speak up for themselves, when they've been hurt. We don't want to take them on a guilt trip or make them feel bad right now because when people feel bad, they often try to protect themselves by fighting back or digging in their heels.

We want to create awareness and get them thinking about how they can make powerful interpersonal care choices going forward.

Warm Fuzzies

Give each person a stack of small post-it-type sticky notes and continue the discussion about how words and inconsiderate actions can affect each of us. You might even look at the word "inconsiderate" itself—not considerate → not considering → not thinking about how these words or actions will affect others.

In the group you might say something like:

We can only change our own behaviors, but sometimes it's easier to see others' effects on us. We know what hurts us, right? Let's write some of those things on these post-it notes, one thing on each note.

What have people said or done to hurt you?

After each person has a few notes, give each a cut out of a girl to cover with the post-it notes. If you have a wall where you can hang up the covered cut-outs, do, or if you're in a virtual meeting, have all of the girls hold up their covered cut outs.

You might say something like:

- Sometimes we use people's comments and actions to see ourselves. Do you ever feel that way?
- When you look at these comments or actions, how do you feel?

Let the girls discuss their feelings and acknowledge them. This is a time when some of us would be tempted to deny the intention of the one who said or did it, to say "Oh, I'm sure she didn't mean it" or "he probably said that because he likes you."

Please do not do that. Just listen to each person, maybe ask **"How did that make you feel?"** or **"Do you still feel that way?"** and then nod to accept their answer.

If someone else says something like that, without correcting them, you might say "Whether they meant it or not, how did it feel for you?" If you have an example and you are comfortable doing so, you might share a time when your feelings were hurt and someone told you to get over it, and how that made you feel.



Then ask:

● **Do you think you deserve these comments or actions? Are they right?**

Most of the time people say and do things because of what is happening inside of them.

Hurt people hurt people. Sometimes they have a little hurt and sometimes they have a lot of hurt, but while we can care about and encourage them, we can't change others. We can only really change ourselves, right? Let's look at ourselves.

We all have difficult experiences and have feelings about them, but what will we do with those feelings? Do you **want** to hurt people? No, me either. So, let's take some time to heal.

Ask the girls to get into groups of three again. In their small groups, have them take time to think about each of the comments or actions on their own cut-out to come up with a reason they know that thing isn't true. For example, a comment might be "You're so dumb!" but she just got an A in math and she led her GS troop in an activity for a recent badge, so she knows she's smart and not dumb. They will kind of be working on these on their own so they come up with things they really believe, but they are in the small groups just in case they can't come up with a reason on their own and need an assist from a buddy.

This may take girls some time. If you need to give them until the next meeting to finish, that's okay.

After they have their [refuting](#) statements (75 cent word!), have them share in their small groups, in part to be sure each girl really has come up with reasons why the mean statements or actions are not right.

Then bring everyone back to the larger group.

Let's take some time to let go of some of our hurt so we can be more considerate of others.

Each of us will take one of the statements from our cut out, read it to the group and say I forgive them for saying that because I know [something that is true and opposes the note].

Maybe one of the adults can start with one of theirs. For example: "I forgive Mike L. for saying I'm not pretty enough for Martin to like me because I know people like me because of me, and my friends think I am pretty." Or maybe "I forgive Kelly for hurting my feelings when she said I was being a know it all. It felt mean at the time, but I was kind of bragging, so I can hear the feedback and need to think about my own behavior in situations like that."

You could have people go around the circle to each share one or you could do popcorn style.



What you're doing is giving them each the opportunity to look at the hurt for what it really is—you know how things you can't see are often scarier than the things you can?—and then giving them the power to see past someone's words or inconsiderate moment and to take back their own power. To give themselves a warm fuzzy—a comforting recognition of their value and strength.

The act of forgiving similarly gives them the power in the situation. Forgiving isn't something we do for other people. We forgive to release ourselves from the pain of being hurt and angry. It doesn't mean we forget what happened. It doesn't mean we put ourselves back into negative situations. It means we understand that life is difficult, and we all have stuff. We've acknowledged our own pain, and we are working to move past it. Praise the girls for their being able to forgive.

After everyone has had a chance to do this, ask the group:

- What was this activity like for you?
- Have you done this kind of thing before?
- How might you do it in the future?
- Thinking about some of those post-it notes you may have “put on someone else” (mean things they've said or done to others), how does this activity make you feel or think about them?
- Can you think of any you may have created in the last couple of weeks? Have you said or done anything kind of mean in the last couple of weeks?
- What could you do about that?
- What can you do in the future to keep from making post-it notes for others?

After you process this activity, you might want to talk about how you can help each other remember how to create warm fuzzies for yourselves and for each other.



Community Care

Community care refers to an expanded interpersonal care—care for the larger group, whether it is the troop, the family, the town, the country, the world.

In her book *Braving the Wilderness*, Brené Brown says “People are hard to hate close up.” What she’s talking about there is the value of getting to know people, to understand them, and to care about them. In our troops, much like in our families, towns, and beyond, we take time to do things together to get to know each other better because when we know each other as humans, we invest more in understanding and appreciating our differences as well as our similarities. This helps us feel like “All of Us” instead of “us/them.”

What does community care look like in your troop? Right! Team building activities, field trips, ceremonies, regular meetings with shared activities, identifying expectations, making agreements, and taking time to talk about our shared experiences whether it’s a trip we’ve just taken or an argument between two members of the troop that happened during the meeting. Community is created by shared experiences.

What is the benefit of looking at Community Care with the girls after you’ve looked at Self Care and Interpersonal Care? Everyone will have answers to this question, and all of them are probably right! Yay! And many of those answers will come down to the fact that everything is personal. Each of us and all of us experience things personally, and our impact on others is felt personally. Further, each of us can only really control the self, which makes each of us have a personal responsibility in the relationships we have, not to fix others—can’t do that no matter how much we wish—but to show up and do what we say we will in our agreements.

Expectations and Agreements

If it has been a while since your troop talked about expectations and agreements for the troop, you might pull out some chart paper to do that now. Or if you have a trip or event coming up, you could do it for that.

Start with Expectations:

- First, what is our why? (discuss this for a couple of minutes)
- Let’s take a couple of minutes for everyone to write down some ideas.
- OK, now, let’s set a timer for three minutes.
- What are your expectations for our troop this year? (or this trip, etc.)



Make sure everyone contributes. Notice who speaks up. If anyone doesn't share an idea, ask her:

- Molly, you haven't mentioned anything. What are you hoping we do this year?

When the timer goes off, ask:

- Anything else? Does anyone have anything that isn't already up here?

If it seems like there are a lot of ideas still, reset the timer for another two or three minutes.

When the troop feels like their expectations are all captured—which may take much less time than this, too; roll with your troop—read through the list. If any of the ideas are really outlandish or unattainable, you can tell them you aren't sure that's doable and here's why, or you could ask them if it is something that can be done later. Remember we don't want to squish anyone's brainstorming ideas, and sometimes group members expect things that the rest of the group aren't ready for. You might also combine ideas that are similar. Be sure to ask the group if it is okay to do that. When you have the final list of expectations, ask the troop:

- OK, what do we need to do to meet these expectations?
- Let's set our timer for three minutes, again.
- What do we need to agree to do so that we can meet these expectations?

Ask the questions and then be quiet until they give some ideas.

When all of the ideas are up, ask:

- Can everyone agree to all of these?
- Let's read through together so you can really think about it.
- Are there any that you will have a hard time with?

Again, ask the questions and then be quiet for at least 30 whole seconds (count your potatoes if you have to).

If anyone indicates she won't be able to do something on the list, ask if it's something she might be able to do with some help from others in the group or if it's really impossible. Then invite the rest of the troop in on that conversation. At least in your planning mind, allow fifteen minutes for this conversation. It might not take that long, but you don't want to rush it if the girls are working through the process of figuring it out.



Once the group has truly agreed to their list of agreements to reach their expectations, ask them:

- OK, what do we do if someone breaks any of the agreements?
- Or what if we don't reach some of our expectations?
- Should we check in on these at intervals or just wait until the end of the year (or trip, etc.)?

When they have some strategies for managing their agreements and expectations, ask them:

- What did we just do? (basically: talked about our plan for our troop and our boundaries for making the plan work)
- Who came up with this plan? (The girls!! The Troop!!)
- How did we do it?
- When else could you do this? What other groups are you in where you could do this? When else could our troop do this?

Team Building Activities

We've got a million of them! You probably do to.

So, do them.

Well, not all of them right this second, but with your leadership team, identify some team building activities you could do at each meeting or while carpooling or around a campfire. You could make a list of them to keep in the Notes app on your phone!

Remember that the purpose of these Team Building activities is for the whole troop to get to know each other better, to find what they have in common, and to celebrate their differences. Be sure to go into the activities with those goals in mind for yourself, at least.

Here are some favorites with links:

- [Ungame Questions](#)—you'll need a deck of playing cards.
- [Two Truths and a Lie](#)
- [Birthday Line Up \(#5\)](#)
- [Trust Walk \(#6\)](#)
- [Fingertip Hula Hoop \(#13\)](#)
- [No hands cup stacking \(#17\)](#)
- [Scavenger Hunt \(#2\)](#)—do this as a team
- [Someone Like Me](#)
- [Just Like Me](#) (one way)
- [Just Like Me](#) (another way)
- [See What I mean? \(#5\)](#)
- Also, [these](#).
- And [these virtual ones](#)

*For any of the links above, be sure to go through the activity before introducing it to the troop. We've included some lists, not all of which will be right for your age girls.



As you discover other Team Building activities, add them to your list. When the girls indicate they don't like one, either because they say "we hate this" or because they just don't do it, take it off of your list—or move it way to the bottom. You'll find more games in courses on [gsLearn](#), at [Troop Camp Training, part 2: Overnight](#), at your local Leaders' Meetings, and from the girls!

Also, remember that all of the things you do together are team building activities. If your girls work on a badge together, they learn about each other. If they take a field trip together, they learn about each other.

Here's the Secret Sauce to Team Building Activities: Ask a question or two!! Like:

- What was that like for you?
- What is something you discovered about this group?
- What connections did you make?
- So what?

Mostly, ask the questions for popcorn-style answers. Remember to ask **one question at a time**, and then be quiet. (Some of us literally roll our lips in or put a hand over our own mouths to keep from speaking for 30 seconds or so!) Once you get used to the silence, it doesn't feel so awkward, and the girls will start answering sooner because they'll discover you won't cave—unless you do and then you're doomed!

Well, maybe not "doomed," but they will pick up on your pattern. So if you really want them to answer, **wait for them** to answer.

Be A Sister: [Conflict Transformation](#)

All groups go through phases. Maybe you've heard of Forming- Storming-Norming- Performing, [Tuckman's Theory of Group Development](#). No pressure to read about it as long as you understand that all groups—as in All Groups.—go through phases of coming together and being kind of excited. Then, if they work through the conflicts, they find group norms and are able to perform.



It happens.

And it cycles over again if new people join the group, or if members' interests or perspectives change, (← definition of humans, especially kids!)

This means that conflict will happen. The idea of conflict is uncomfortable or scary for some people, especially around Girl Scouts where we're all supposed to Be a Sister to Every Girl Scout, right?



If you are a sister to anyone, you know that being a sister does not mean always getting along.

What Being A Sister DOES mean is committing to working through the conflict, not so someone wins and someone loses, but so **the relationship grows stronger.**

Like all things worth doing, this will be challenging.

And You Can Do It. More importantly, you can help your girls do it.

When you think about transforming the conflict, you ask the question

How do we take this destructive situation and use it to build something we want?

You focus on the relationships with the goal of promoting constructive change processes, including but not limited to immediate solutions. To develop these solutions, those in conflict will look at the symptoms of the problem and consider the systems where the relationship exists. You'll think of the conflict as a normal part of the relationships with an ebb and flow like the cycles of the moon or the tide along the beach.

If this isn't how you already handle conflict, A. You are not alone, and B. That's what practice is for. How cool that you can practice learning the process right alongside your girls!! Here are a couple of role-play scenarios you could use with your troop to practice the process so when a real conflict comes up in your troop—as it will—you all will have some skills to use and some experience to give it context.

- Rachel only comes to the fun things the troop does not the money-earning activities and not all of the meetings which makes others resentful.
- Emily stares at Sabrina during meetings which makes Sabrina feel uncomfortable.
- Charlotte always wants to be the cook, so others who want to cook can't and get mad.

Maybe you just thought, "I'm going to tell Rachel's mom that if she doesn't attend money-earners and more meetings, she's out, Emily needs to stop staring at Sabrina because it is creepy, and Charlotte can take her turn and be done, or she won't get to cook at all!" Yep, same. But. What would those resolutions do to the relationships in our troop? Especially to the relationship between you and each of the girls involved?



How can you transform these conflicts as a group?

Step 1	What is the current situation? What is the desired situation?
Step 2	We are sister Girl Scouts who want to solve this together. (Say it)
Step 3	What are each of our perspectives? Or How do each of us see the situation? (Use “I” statements)
Step 4	Restate others’ perspective to clarify for understanding
Step 5	Since you understand the others’ perspective, does that change how you feel about the situation?
Step 6	If yes , how will that change your behavior with the others? (This is for all parties in the conflict, not just the “wrong” one because conflict doesn’t happen in isolation) Will this change help everyone to feel respected? If no , what new system can we put in place, so everyone is considerate of others and everyone feels respected?
Step 7	How can we help each other with this new system?
Step 8	What did we discover about our group through this process? How has it strengthened our relationships?

Using this table of steps, practice transforming the sample conflicts or other examples of conflicts your girls come up with for practice.

After each practice, ask:

- How would you feel if that were a real conflict transformation session for you?
- What worked well in that practice?
- What could be better?
- What can we do differently when we practice the next one?

Write down notes from the girls’ debrief after each practice so the whole troop can learn the process.



Finally

You may have noticed that these concepts benefit from building on each other. It goes back to the idea that none of us can pour from an empty pitcher. Similarly, it is easier to trust in a group or community if you've learned to trust other individuals. So, it will help to start with Self Care, move into Interpersonal Care, and then Community Care.

Take your time going through them. This isn't a race. The process isn't a straight line.

Strategies for you.

Things will come up in your troop as you do some of these activities, so it is important for you to have some strategies. First, please remember that if a girl discloses something that would be protected by HIPAA rules, please treat it with the same complete privacy as you would information on the girls' health history forms. It is not to be discussed. Also please remember that if a girl discloses something that makes you suspect abuse or neglect in the household, you need to call the Maine Office of Child and Family Services at 1-800-452-1999. You can file your report anonymously, but as a Girl Scout Volunteer, you are considered a [mandated reporter](#).

Most likely what will come up will be elevated emotions. A girl (or group) might be angry or sad or express some other emotion that surprises you and is a lot. This is a good time to follow the **Rule of 7**.

Just like in the earlier activities when you didn't react to the girls' comments, you'll sit and be present with the girl (or group) for seven seconds (7 potatoes!), without reacting. This allows for the emotion while modeling a different way of experiencing the moment, and it gives the girl's emotions [time to lessen or dissipate](#).

This practice is very effective in empowering the girl around her emotions because you are recognizing it and respecting her experience. **And** it can be very difficult if you feel embarrassed or angry yourself, if you're concerned about others in the group, or if that's just not how you usually respond. **Give yourself time to practice it.** Ask your coleaders or family to practice with you. Remember: no one can fix anyone's emotions or make anyone feel a certain way, but we can be present with them when their emotions are a lot.

The activities in this packet will help your girls build their emotional intelligence, their personal strength, and their interpersonal skills. You'll be helping your girls learn skills that will help them right now and will help them throughout their lives as you do these activities with them. Those included here just scratch the surface of activities your girls and your troop will benefit from in these areas. They are not one and done activities.

As you do them, think progression for yourself, your troop, and your girls.



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NOTE: Please remember to communicate with parents about the activities in this packet. Some of the activities, especially in the interpersonal and community sections, may feel like sensitive issues for some parents, so please use our Parent Permission for Sensitive Issues form.



Resources

Younger Girl Mental Health Card



HOMETOWN HELP 

EMERGENCY—911 **Scared or worried, but maybe not an emergency—211**

My Doctor's Office: **My School:**

Home: **Trusted Family Member :**

Best friend :

 _____  _____



You are Kind. You are Beautiful. You are Amazing!

Older Girl Mental Health Card

HOTLINES

Statewide Crisis Number

888-568-1112

Maine Mental Health Warmline

866-771-9276

LGBTQIAA+ Hotline

888-843-4564



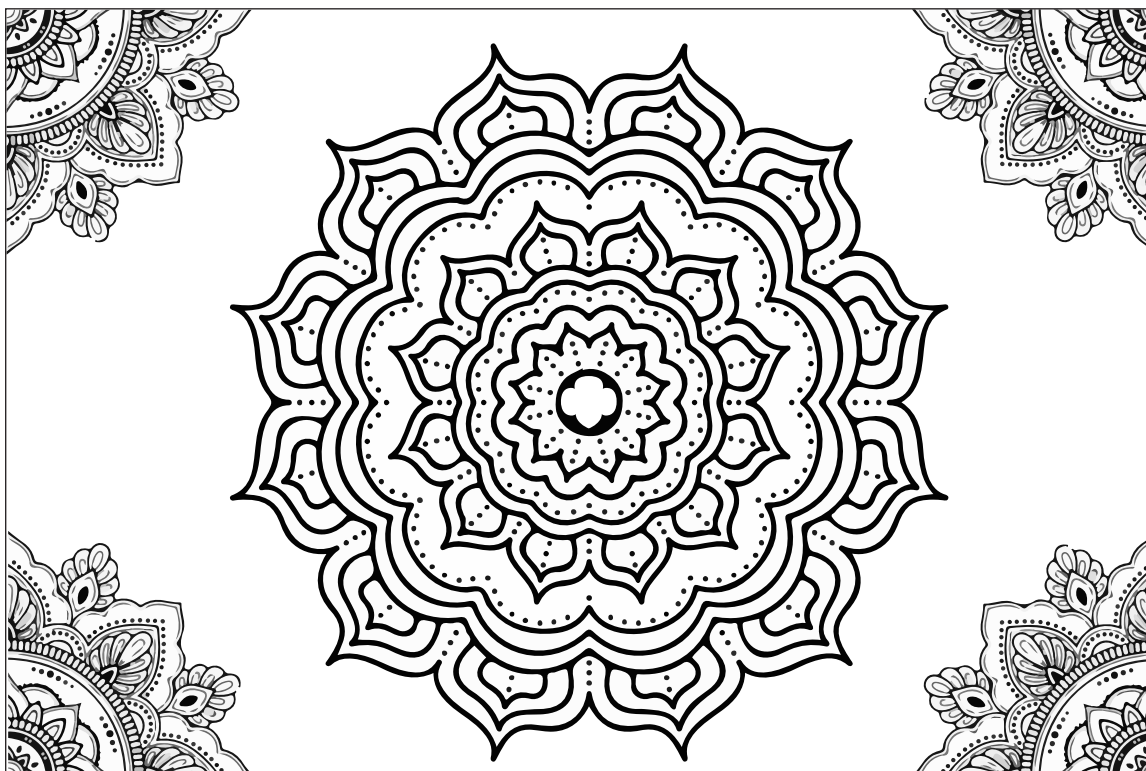
Hopeline Network Hotline
for Eating disorders

800-442-4673

Crisis Textline

Text CONNECT to 741741

HOMETOWN HELP



Time Is on My Side

How much time do I have?	Here's one thing I could do with that time!	Here's another idea of what I can do with that time!
5 minutes		
10 minutes		
15 minutes		
30 minutes		
1 hour		

Warm Fuzzies Exercise

