

Encouraging shared decision-making

The girl-driven approach to Guiding helps girls learn to make decisions, cooperate and work as a team. The following strategies can be used in unit meetings when making decisions about activities and other unit projects:

- **Brainstorming:** This is a fun and exciting way to generate new ideas from a group and encourages us to build on someone else's idea.

Tips for effective brainstorming:

- Use an open-ended, clear question to start the brainstorm
 - Have the girls call out their ideas as fast as they can
 - Do individual brainstorming before the group brainstorm
 - Have someone write the ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart; have two writers if necessary to keep up with all the ideas
 - Put ALL judgments on hold – both negative and positive comments have an impact on people's willingness to share
 - Place no restrictions on ideas during the brainstorm – record everything!
 - Encourage the girls to expand on the ideas of others
 - Group similar ideas together
 - Prioritize by placing the most popular ideas at the top of the list
 - Examine all ideas
- **Voting:** For younger girls, give each girl a "Yes" and "No" card. You could also use 'thumbs up' and 'thumbs down' or another fun prop. For older girls, you can use a secret ballot or ranking method for multiple activity choices. Discuss the importance of voting and democracy.
- **Dot-mocracies:** Work well when there are multiple ideas to choose from. For example, following a brainstorming session, dot-mocracy can be used to determine the most popular ideas. Each girl is given a set number of dot stickers (two or more depending how many choices the girl is to make). Post the ideas on separate sheets around the room. Each girl then places her dot on the ideas she likes the most. She can place more than one dot on an idea if she feels strongly that it should be the chosen one. After everyone finishes, count the dots for each idea to determine a list of the top choices. (Or you can use a marker and girls can place a set number of ticks – tick-mocracy).
- **Talking chips:** This is a good activity especially if there is unequal participation as it encourages participation by all members. Each girl is given a set number of talking chips (these can be paper clips, poker chips, or anything you have handy). For each chip, she can share one idea and once the chip is used, she must toss it into the centre. If she speaks out of turn, she also loses a chip. All chips must be tossed in before the discussion ends.
- **Consensus:** Give each Circle/Patrol or group a task requiring a decision. Let them work through the problem until they can come up with a final decision for their group.
- **Fish bowl:** After a decision has been made within small groups, the whole group comes together in a circle. The group leader reports back on behalf of her group; no one else can speak. As each group leader gives her report, the members of her small group may stand up if they think that the leader has not represented the group correctly. This helps ensure that group leaders report the opinions of her group and not her own.



Evaluation Techniques

Engaging girls in evaluating their Guiding experiences supports the development of their self-awareness and critical-thinking skills. Here are some simple techniques you can use periodically throughout the year:

- **Two Stars and a Wish:** This tool can be used as a - pencil and paper evaluation or can be done verbally. Each girl shares two things that she enjoyed about the activity or outing (two stars) and one thing that she thinks could have been done better or differently (a wish).
- **Grab bag evaluations:** Bring in an assortment of little items – stickers, buttons, etc. Put them into a bag that's been decorated to make it special! For each new idea a girl comes up with which was either something she liked or something to improve upon, she gets to choose one item from the grab bag.
- **Talking stick:** This is a favorite end of a meeting or activity. Use a stick that the girls have chosen and decorated. At the end of the meeting or activity, girls sit in a circle and the stick is passed around from one girl to the next as they answer a single question like —what was your favorite activity at camp? —what was something new you learned? or —was there an activity/meal/snack you want to try again? Only the girl holding the stick can speak, the others must remain quiet and listen to each person in the group. You can go around the circle more than once asking a different question each time (great activity to do while waiting for the next activity).
- **Favourite things:** This is a fun end of year activity. Each girl is asked to draw her favourite things from the past year's Guiding activities. The pictures are then displayed on the wall for everyone to see. The girls will have fun remembering the fun things they did throughout the year. You may be surprised to see what stands out the most for the girls!
- **Fuzzies and pricklies:** Have one soft object (stuffed toy, fuzzy mitten, etc.) and one prickly object (pin cushion, mesh washing sponge, etc.) in the centre of the circle. The girls get turns picking up the fuzzy or prickly object and stating something they liked (fuzzy) or didn't like (prickly) about the activity or outing.



Behaviour Management

Using the Bump Technique: A technique to manage progressively unwanted behaviour.

1. Low-key response (deals with the problem not the girl)

Guider responds to the girl using one of the following low-key, neutral responses:

- proximity, a touch (light, quick)
- girl's name (quick, quiet)
- gesture (finger on the mouth)
- a look (eye contact, quick)
- a pause (look around the room, wait for compliance)
- ignore (turns it back on the girl)
- a signal (something to get attention like a cough)

2. Look directly at the girl (more assertive than a low-key response, it requires the girl to behave)

Guider responds to the girl using the following four steps:

- 1) Pause (stop talking)
- 2) Turn toward the girl (looking directly at the girl, sometimes the length, intensity of the look will stop the behaviour without saying anything. Do not use the look too long as it may work against you and initiate a power struggle)
- 3) Give a verbal request to stop
- 4) Give a polite thank you and continue with the activity

3. The options (a way to present choices to the girl, giving her responsibility)

Guider responds to the girl using the following four steps:

- 1) Stop activity, pause, and turn to girl (or approach privately). It is often better to take the girl to the side to have a little chat than to do it in front of the group. The girl then has opportunity to save face.
- 2) Offer an appropriate choice (i.e. —Work as part of the group, or you are choosing to go and work by yourself —) The choice is related to the behaviour and not framed as punishment. The choice is given as immediately as possible with a positive/neutral tone of voice.
- 3) Wait for an answer (could be verbal or non-verbal)
- 4) Finish with a thank you

4. Following through on the girl's choice

Since the girl's inappropriate behaviour is continuing, the Guider tells her that she has made her choice and gives her an instruction on what she should do next.

5. Neutralizing the power struggle (to show that you mean what you say)

After a choice has been given without effect, the Guider (standing as close to the girl as possible) responds to the girl using the following five steps:

- 1) Stop activity and look directly at the girl
- 2) Make eye contact, take your time (one or more deep breathes)
- 3) Do or say something that shifts the focus of control to the girl
- 4) Pause and allow the girl to save face
- 5) Bring closure with an appropriate statement (Thank you. I appreciate that)

*Source: Bennett, B, Smilanich P, *Classroom Management: A Thinking & Caring Approach*, Toronto: Bookation, 1994, Chapters 10 – 15. This information is copyright protected. It is used here with the kind permission of the authors for the purposes of training new leaders.



What to do Instead of Screaming by Myra Nagel

Group discipline problem symptoms:

- Girls are running around before the meeting begins
- Some girls finish an activity early and leave the activity area and begin running around
- Girls do not listen and do not stop when they are asked to.
- Girls are very noisy, etc.

Solutions to try:

- Develop a set of unit norms or rules and post it at every unit meeting
- Be sure and have an activity ready for early arrivals like art materials or games
- Divide the tasks among the Guiders: one Guider welcomes the girls, one leader looks after the arrival activity, etc.
- Plan the evening program in detail and ensure every leader knows her role
- Co-Guiders should support the Guider who is leading the activity. They can watch for girls that are finishing early, bored or struggling in some way.
- Be prepared to change activities if something is not working!
- Keep a few spare activities in your back pocket in case you need them – a game, a song, a story, etc.

Individual discipline problem symptoms:

- Could be one girl or two girls
- Girl refuses to participate in any activity
- Girl does not listen and ignores the leaders
- Girls is rude and talks back

Solutions to try:

- Take the girl aside and talk to her and try to find out why she is misbehaving.
- Give her some options: to sit quietly and finish the task or leave the task unfinished and go onto something else.
- Ask her not to interrupt and not to talk while you are talking.
- Have one leader sit down in the circle beside her to remind her when she starts acting up.
- Split up girls who talk with each other. A fellow Guider could help here by simply sitting between the girls.
- If nothing works, ask her parent/caregiver to help you by explaining the causes of her behaviour and what you could do about it. Maybe she is having trouble at school as well. Maybe she needs more activities to keep her busy or less activities because she cannot handle the work load.
- If necessary, ask the parent/caregiver to accompany her daughter and stay for the meeting to help manage the child.

Five strategies for behaviour management:

1. Stop things before they go too far
2. Move towards a girl to stop them from distracting others while continuing to present topic
3. Make activities developmentally appropriate
4. Have a variety of instructional skills and strategies that meet a variety of needs
5. Establish routines, rules, planning, directions and give instructions in short segments

