



Girl Scout Conduct & Conflict: Volunteer Guidance 2024-2025

Conduct Guidelines

Troop Agreements

Standard Youth and Adult Conduct Agreements

Volunteer / Staff Policy

Managing Conflict

Strategies & Approaches to Youth and Adult Conflict

Additional Support and Resources

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
GSSNE’S Commitment to Pluralism	2
When people of different backgrounds, social classes, religions, races, etc., are together in a society but continue to have their different traditions and interests.	
Conduct Guidelines	3
Guidelines for staff, volunteer, youth, and adult behavior that align with the Girl Scout Promise & Law, including fostering respect, compassion, and inclusivity.	
Creating a Troop Agreement.....	3
Sample Troop Agreement	5
Code of Conduct Agreement (Youth, Caregiver, & Leader).....	6
Volunteer & Staff Policy	8
Managing Conflict.....	9
Strategies and approaches for resolving conflicts between youth, between adults, or in other Girl Scout settings.	
Adult Conflict Resolution.....	9
Youth Conflict Resolution	9
Additional Support and Resources	11
Tools and resources available to you to ensure that any conflicts are addressed quickly, fairly, and respectfully.	
gsLearn Videos.....	11
512 Conflict Management.....	11
GSUSA Navigating Conflict with Conflict	11
Good Communication	11
Live Help	11
Additional Resources.....	11
Tips for Managing Conflict.....	12
When and How to Use “I” Statements to Diffuse Conflict	13
A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening	14
Crisis Procedures.....	15

Introduction

At the heart of Girl Scouting are the principals of respect, integrity, and kindness. Adult volunteers and staff are responsible for modelling these values in our interactions with each other, youth, other adults, and the wider community. By maintaining high standards of conduct and providing clear pathways for addressing conflicts, we help ensure that Girl Scouts remains a positive and safe space for all.

This guide serves as a resource to help you more calmly navigate the challenges of conduct and more fairly manage conflicts in a way that fosters growth, understanding, and resolution for everyone involved. Thank you for your dedication to empowering the next generation of leaders.

Commitment to Pluralism

In its most simple term, “pluralism” is a situation in which people of different backgrounds, social classes, religions, races, etc., are together in a society but continue to have their different traditions and interests. GSSNE is committed to achieve pluralism through respect for and appreciation of the religious, racial, ethnic, social, and economic diversity of this Country by reflecting that diversity in its membership, leadership, and programming. We believe this commitment is an integral part of all that we do as an organization. Only individuals willing to accept the basic tenet that Girl Scouting is for all girls may serve in volunteer leadership.

Conduct Guidelines: Youth, Adults, Volunteers, Staff

Girl Scout volunteers should only address conduct and conflict issues that are exhibited in Girl Scouts. Unless it finds its way into a Girl Scout meeting/event/activity/trip/program/travel, the organization has no jurisdiction over conduct or conflict that occurs outside of Girl Scouts. Council will always support volunteers in upholding the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but Council may take no direct action to resolve conflict that occurs outside of Girl Scouts as that is the responsibility of caregivers, school leaders, leaders of other extra-curricular activities, or other adults overseeing the activity where the conflict began.

Volunteers can take action to avoid conduct and conflict issues BEFORE they even happen. At the beginning of the Girl Scout season, volunteers can utilize three specific resources to help set behavior expectations: **Troop Agreement**, **Code of Conduct Agreement**, and **Volunteer/Staff Policy**.

- **The Troop Agreement** is a document created by the Girl Scout youth members that outlines expected conduct and how issues will be addressed if someone breaks the Agreement. Having the Girl Scouts create the Agreement themselves ensures it represents the troop's desired culture, and that youth members are invested in it. The Agreement can address intentional versus unintentional infractions and how those are handled which teaches the youth to approach the task with empathy and understanding. Guidance on how to lead the troop in creating their own Troop Agreement is below and a sample Agreement can be found on page 5 or it can be downloaded from the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- **The Code of Conduct Agreement** is a standard outline of how the troop's youth and adults are expected to conduct themselves in Girl Scout and how issues will be addressed if someone breaks the Agreement. Leaders can find it on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org, print it, and give a copy to each troop family to review and sign. Once the document is signed, keep a copy with your troop records and provide the family with a copy. This document can be found on page 6 or it can be downloaded from the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- **Volunteer / Staff Policy**
As listed in the GSSNE Policies Procedures, & Standards Manual, this Volunteer / Staff Policy reinforces employees', volunteers', and members' responsibility as Girl Scout ambassadors at large and reasonable standards of conduct, unacceptable conduct, and GSSNE's approach to handling conduct issues. The full guidance can be found on page 8.

!! Incidents that are illegal or pose a physical threat should immediately be reported to local law enforcement then reported to GSSNE through the Crisis Line at 800. 476-0293. If someone breaks Girl Scout policy, they should be reported to GSSNE via CustomerCare@gssne.org or 401.331.4500. All reports to GSSNE can remain anonymous if requested. See the Crisis form on page 16 of this guide and keep a copy with you at all times when in Girl Scouts.

Creating a Troop Agreement

A Troop Agreement is a document created cooperatively by the youth members of the troop – best done at one of the first troop meetings. It includes clear guidelines for acceptable behavior that every troop member agrees to follow to ensure everyone in the troop can feel safe, welcome, and have fun at Girl Scouts. Youth who participate in the creation of a Troop Agreement are more invested in it and more likely to follow the Agreement. This is a valuable resource to help avoid conduct and conflict issues that may occur throughout the year. Use the steps below to help your troop create their own Troop Agreement and see the sample Agreement on the next page.

STEP 1 – Review the Girl Scout Promise & Law Together

Whether Daisies are learning it for the first time, or older Girl Scouts are reaffirming their commitment, this is a GREAT opportunity to review Promise & Law and how the tenants of each show up in daily life.

STEP 2 - Create a List of Agreement Ideas

Grab a big piece of paper and write down everyone's ideas (sharing, communicating, cell phones, being a sister to every Girl Scout, let go of mistakes, etc.) Next, turn those ideas into agreement statements, then decide which to include in the troop's "official" agreement.

STEP 3 – Decide What Happens if Someone Breaks the Agreement

Grab another piece of paper and write down everyone's ideas on what to do if someone breaks an agreement. Be sure to have the Girl Scouts consider an intentional versus unintentional action (mistake) and how each is addressed. Once the ideas are flushed out and agreed upon, they're ready to create their official Troop Agreement.

STEP 4 – Create the Official Agreement

Feel free to break out the art supplies for this! Once the agreements have been chosen and written on a clean poster board or paper, the Girl Scouts can decorate it any way they wish. They should work together to make it their own.

STEP 5 – Sign the Agreement

Girl Scouts finalize the agreement with their signature. Younger Daisies, who are still learning to write, can use their fingerprint to sign and the leader can write the child's initials or name next to it.

STEP 6 – Display the Troop Agreement

Make sure the agreement is on display at every Girl Scout meeting. That way, if someone is not following the agreements, it is easy to refer back to the list and determine how it's handled.

STEP 7 – Review the Agreement Annually

It's a good idea to revisit the agreement at the beginning of each Girl Scout year to ensure the language reflects the Girl Scouts' age, and any new Girl Scouts can share their ideas for updating.

(SAMPLE TROOP AGREEMENT)

Girl Scout Troop 12345's "Troop Agreement"

As a Girl Scout, I pledge to follow the Girl Scout Promise & Law to the best of my ability.

Girl Scout Promise

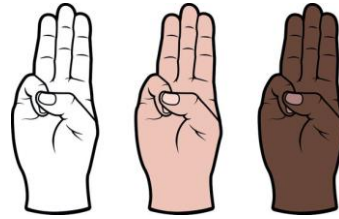
On My honor, I will try
to serve God * and my country,
to help people at all times,
and to live by the Girl Scout Law.



** Girl Scouts may substitute the word "God" in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to
Be honest and fair,
Friendly and helpful,
Considerate and caring,
Courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,
and to respect myself and others,
Respect authority,
Use resources wisely,
Make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.



As a member of Girl Scout Troop 12345, I will do my best to:

- Leave a place better than the way I found it. I'll clean up after myself and the troop because we are a TEAM!
- Use resources wisely. I won't waste food, drink, or supplies. I won't waste time by not paying attention to instructions.
- I'll listen to the adults in charge and will respond respectfully at all times and in all actions.
- I'll always use the buddy system and will notify the leader before we leave area (for example, going to the bathroom).
- I'll learn to think and act for the good of the troop, not only for myself. We work as a TEAM and we help each other!
- Every Girl Scout is a sister to every other Girl Scout. During meetings and events, we are all friends, and no one is to be excluded or treated disrespectfully.

Girl Scout signatures:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Code of Conduct Agreement: Youth and Caregivers

The Girl Scout mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. To support this work, we volunteers strive to create fulfilling and safe environments for everyone. Two tools used to achieve this are the Code of Conduct Agreement and Troop Agreement. Modeled after the Girl Scout Promise & Law, these two documents help everyone understand acceptable behavior and how conduct issues are addressed when they arise. Please review and sign this document, pledging that you'll help build a positive and encouraging environment for every Girl Scout.



Girl Scout Promise

On My honor, I will try
to serve God * and my country,
to help people at all times,
and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

** Girl Scouts may substitute the word "God" in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*

Girl Scout Law

I WILL DO MY BEST...

To be honest and fair
Friendly and helpful
Considerate and caring
Courageous and strong

and responsible for what I say & do

and to respect myself and others

Respect authority

Use resources wisely

Make the world a better place

and be a sister to every Girl Scout

WAYS I CAN DO THIS...

Always tell the truth
Be nice to others and help whenever you can
Be polite and kind with your words and actions
Don't let being afraid stop you from doing what you know is right;
deal with challenges
Apologize when you make a mistake, correct a mistake when you
can, do better next time
Recognize and accept your and other's feelings, wishes, rights,
and ways of doing things; forgive yourself for mistakes you make,
make healthy choices
Pay attention to and follow laws and rules at home, at school, and
in the community where you live and visit
Take what you need, don't use too much, when you can be sure to
share, reuse, and recycle
Spread cheer and kindness, protect the environment, use your
voice to make positive changes
Be a good friend, be patient, kind, welcoming and forgiving

(turn over to sign)

As a Girl Scout Youth, I Agree to:

I agree to:

- Show patience
- Stand up for what is right
- Follow my troop guidelines
- Help others whenever and however I am able to
- Do the right thing even when no one is watching (integrity)
- Do the things I say I will do when I'm supposed to do them
- Work with others to solve problems and fix disagreements

If a Girl Scout does not follow the Girl Scout Promise & Law, troop leadership may:

- Ask the Girl Scout to correct their behavior
- Ask the Girl Scout to step away from the activity to review the Promise & Law; briefly notify the caregiver
- Contact the caregiver to help resolve the trouble the Girl Scout is experiencing
- Request the caregiver stay at future meetings and activities
- Contact GSSNE for assistance resolving the issue which, in serious instances, might include transitioning to another participation option

As a Girl Scout Caregiver, I Agree to:

- Set a positive example for my Girl Scout
- Be cooperative, honest, and respectful
- Arrive on time to drop off and pick up my Girl Scout
- Provide current emergency contact information to troop leadership
- Find a solution for disagreements in a private and appropriate manner
- Inform leadership if my Girl Scout is unable to attend a Girl Scout meeting or event
- Respond to troop leader communications (email, texts, phone calls) in a timely manner
- Inform troop leadership of circumstances that may affect my Girl Scout's welfare (e.g., providing information and legal documentation about individuals allowed to pick her up)

I understand that if I don't follow the Girl Scout Promise & Law, it may affect whether I can join in the activities.

Girl Scout's Printed Name + Signature

Date

I will support my Girl Scout by helping her understand the Girl Scout Promise & Law and how to use them to honor this Agreement.

Girl Scout Caregiver's Printed Name + Signature

Date

I will support all Girl Scouts in this troop by helping them follow the Promise & Law to uphold this Agreement and I will hold each person accountable for their actions.

Girl Scout Leader's Printed Name + Signature

Date

Volunteer & Staff Policy

When volunteer/staff performance, behavior, attendance, and/or productivity does not meet the council's standards, it is the council's goal to provide the individual a reasonable opportunity, appropriate to the circumstances, to correct the problem and sustain performance.

From a volunteer perspective, nothing in this policy affects the “at-will” nature of the council-volunteer relationship and, in certain instances, immediate release of a volunteer may be determined to be appropriate. This is also true for other unpaid staff and support. In general, any act by a volunteer or staff which the council believes, in its sole discretion, may result in harm to or interference to the council, its ability to operate effectively and/or efficiently, its business interests or congressional charter, its federal status as a charitable organization, or its reputation, may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

Employees, volunteers, and members represent Girl Scouts at large. Everyone in that capacity must observe reasonable standards of conduct and may be disciplined when they do not. Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Any form of dishonesty
- Disruption of the “workplace”
- Failure to comply with a Council policy or practice
- Failure to properly safeguard confidential business or customer information
- Use of alcoholic beverages in the presence of or at Girl Scout events that include Girl Scout youth
- The use of illegal/intoxicating drugs at any Girl Scout event or on company property
- Taking company or personal property of others without expressed permission
- Refusal to follow Council instructions or direction
- Absence without communicating to Council
- Violation of the company's equal employment or harassment prevention policies
- Refusal to cooperate in an investigation conducted by the company
- Threats, acts of violence, or inciting violence in others
- Sleeping on the job
- Accessing and distributing confidential information (other than in the normal performance of one's job duties)
- Engaging in other actions that could be reasonably construed as fraudulent or misrepresentation

When infractions occur, the council may follow a system of **progressive discipline**. The volunteer and council staff person discuss the specific problem, possible solutions, and set a time frame by which goals must be met to consider improvement acceptable. Failure to maintain sustained improved performance after disciplinary action may result in termination. The same applies for staff infractions.

Examples of various forms of disciplinary action that may be used at the discretion of the council:

- Verbal warning
- Performance improvement plan (may include professional development/training)
- Written warning
- Termination/release

In some instances, leadership may choose a more appropriate hybrid model utilizing various components listed above in addition to:

- Suspension
- Probationary period
- Change in volunteer position or duties

GSSNE plans to be proactive and positive thinking in our self-improvement structures, and transparent in our decision-making process and timeline. If the volunteer member believes otherwise, the sitting Board Chair will provide the role of ombuds.

MANAGING CONFLICT

A key aspect of leadership is the ability to work with others and effectively use communication and teamwork to achieve desired goals and outcomes. Differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts are natural parts of life and inevitably happen in all relationships. Not all conflict is bad - it can lead to new ideas and approaches, it can bring important issues to light, and it can provide an opportunity for people to come together to create a solution. GSSNE has developed a procedure for resolving conflicts. If there is no clear breach of a Girl Scout policy or guideline, nor illegal or threatening action, the following conflict management essentials should be favored when resolving a conflict:

Adult Conflict

STEP 1: Attempt Self-Resolution

If there is no clear breach of a Girl Scout policy or guideline, the individuals involved in the conflict have a face-to-face conversation during which each party expresses their perspective of the conflict and how it impacted them. It is very important and beneficial to address conflict in person – many times, one party is unaware of the concern or how it has impacted the other person. See “Conflict Management Resources” on the [Volunteer Resources](#) page at GSSNE.org.

STEP 2: Invite an Unbiased Third Party to Join

Request insight from or invite a service unit manager, or other service unit team member, to join you at the face-to-face discussion. This person may lend new perspective or ask questions not previously explored that may help all parties reach a solution. If you are mediating between two parties, hear both parties out separately prior to the meeting then bring them together. If you're one of the parties involved, try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and work together to uncover solutions that could result in mutual gain and have the best possible outcome for all.

STEP 3: Decide on a Solution

Explore a mutually agreeable solution to the issue(s) contributing to the conflict. It will be up to the individuals to determine if and how they continue working together.

STEP 4: If GSSNE Needs to Be Involved

If all previous steps above have been taken to resolve the situation informally, but the matter is still not resolved, the member or volunteer may contact CustomerCare@gssne.org to escalate the conflict for Council intervention. Please note that a conflict may be escalated to GSSNE at any point in the process if necessary.

Youth Conflict

If, during a Girl Scout event or activity, a behavior occurs that goes against the Troop Agreement and/or Girl Scout Code of Conduct, and it cannot be successfully resolved by the Girl Scouts themselves, troop leaders should utilize the guidance below to help reach a resolution. Volunteers should always do their best to allow the youth to work as much of it out on their own so they can learn how to resolve problems.

Remember, leaders should only address what is exhibited in Girl Scouts. Unless it finds its way into a Girl Scout meeting/event/activity/trip/program/travel, the organization has no jurisdiction over conflict that occurs outside of Girl Scouts.

!! Extreme Incidents / Conflict !!

If there is ever an incident caused by Girl Scouts or within Girl Scouts that causes harm or damage to another person or property, 1) find safety for you and the others present, 2) contact 911 for medical and/or safety assistance, and 3) call the GSSNE Crisis Line at 800.476.0293 when it is safe to do so.

First Incident – Correct the behavior / Identify the conflict

- Praise in public, correct in private (never in a room by yourself). This prevents the youth from being embarrassed when you point out any mistakes in front of others.
- Talk with the youth, not at them. Share what troop agreement or expectation was not being followed.
- Document the date, behavior issue, and correction for your own records.
- If it's a conflict between two or more youths, ask each to explain why they believe the other person is upset. Give each the chance to respond to the other person's statement and whether it is accurate, somewhat accurate, or not accurate. Then, give each youth the chance to explain their side and how they are feeling. Ask them to come up with a list of possible solutions they could commit to so each person will feel better about the situation. Evaluate the solutions and decide on one or a combination. Each person might not get their way entirely, but the goal is to come to a compromise or understanding so each feels more satisfied. Ask them to commit to the solution. Document the date, involved parties, conflict, and steps taken to remedy.

Second Incident – Take a break

- Ask the youth to step aside and take a break away from the group – make sure they are still in a safe space within sight of both troop volunteers/registered adult volunteers.
- Share what troop agreement or expectation was not being followed. This may be done before or after the break, but make sure the individual understands the reason for the discipline.
- Briefly inform the caregiver what happened.
- Document the date, behavior issue, correction, and length of the break for your own records.
- You may repeat this step as needed – as long as it continues to be effective, and the individual is learning/growing.
- If it's conflict between two or more youths, ask them to take a break from the group and ask each of them to explain the conflict from their perspective. If it's a new conflict, follow the guidance noted in "First Incident". If it is the same conflict, give each youth the opportunity to speak about why they believe the conflict is coming up again. Ask them to recognize how the other person may be feeling because of the conflict. Ask them if they can compromise or if they should agree to disagree. If they decide to disagree, tell them it's ok to have different perspectives but they must be respectful even when disagreeing (revisit the Girl Scout Law). Document the date, parties involved, conflict, and steps taken to remedy. Notify caregivers of each Girl Scout.

Third Incident – Meet with the Girl Scout's caregiver(s)

- If the behavior does not improve, set up a time to meet privately with the individual's caregiver(s).
- Remind the family of the Girl Code of Conduct and the troop agreement.
- Describe all incidents that have occurred in sequence.
- Keep the conversation open, calm, honest, and respectful.
- Discuss how you will work together to ensure their child has a positive experience in Girl Scouts:
 - Ask for help from the family – is a caregiver or other trusted adult able to attend meetings with their child until the behavior improves?
 - Ask how the family may help their child recognize the expectations in the Girl Code of Conduct and the troop agreement.
 - Assure the family you look forward to working with their Girl Scout.
 - Assure the family you will keep in touch with them about their child's behavior.
- Document the meeting date, talking points, the family's response to the discussion, and next steps for your records.
- If it's continued or escalated conflict, set up a group meeting with the caregiver(s) of all Girl Scouts involved in the conflict. Describe the incident(s) in their sequence of occurrence. Keep the conversation open, calm, honest, and respectful. Describe actions and facts, not your feelings about what happened. Discuss how you will work together to ensure their children rebound from the incident(s) and enjoy a positive Girl Scout experience:
 - Ask for help from the family – is a caregiver or other trusted adult able to attend meetings with their child until the situation improves?
 - Ask how the family may help their child recognize the expectations of the Girl Scout Law, troop agreement, and code of conduct when dealing with others.
 - Assure the family you look forward to working with their Girl Scout.
 - Assure the family you will keep in touch with them about their children's behavior.
 - Document the meeting date, participants, discussion points, and next steps. Email caregivers the recap.

Fourth Incident / Continued or further escalated conflict – Request support

- Repeat actions for second incident.
- Contact your service unit manager and if appropriate, GSSNE for assistance as needed: CustomerCare@gssne.org or 401.331.4500.
- Contact the parent/guardian(s) to decide the next step of action.

* *If the caregiver(s) is unwilling to meet or address the concerns, contact your Service Unit Manager or GSSNE as needed.*

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT & RESOURCES

The more you deal with conflict, the easier it becomes to navigate it calmly and productively. Check out these resources if you would like to expand your conflict resolution knowledge and skills:

gsLearn Video Courses

To access gsLearn, log in to your MYGS account (mygs.girlscouts.org) and select “gsLearn” from the menu. Look for these course titles or enter them into the search bar:

“512 Conflict Management”

5 Modules build on each other to lead you through the escalation of a conflict and deescalating conflict ending with an in-depth learning of restorative practices. There is a Knowledge Check after you've finished all 5 Modules that must be passed with an 80% or higher.

“GSUSA Navigating Conflict with Confidence”

In this interactive session, participants will gain the skills to navigate challenging conversations in order to reach common ground with others (colleagues, volunteers, families, etc.) where emotions run high and positive outcomes are critical. The curriculum includes strategies to encourage a healthy mindset, recognize differences, and problem solve. Participants will leverage skills to confront and resolve conflict with confidence. This course consists of six modules varying in length from 10 to 30 minutes. In total, it should take about 2 hours to complete, but you don't have to do it all in one sitting. Feel free to take your time and absorb the material. You can come back into the course at any time to pick up where you left off or jump into the middle to refresh on a specific topic to use it for future reference

“Good Communication”

Communication is more than just talking; it involves listening and speaking skillfully as you interact with people who may be fearful, angry, or frustrated. Miscommunication, which when we fail to communicate clearly, can cause very serious consequences. It may actually be the cause of the conflict in the first place. Good communications skills are critical to your success in business. You have to be able to communicate your ideas as well as respond to ideas from others. You have to be able to respond to questions, handle conflict, and listen to your employees. At the conclusion of this course you should know:

- Guidelines for properly communicating feedback
- Techniques for being a good listener
- Different elements of nonverbal communication

Live Help

Contact Your Service Unit Manager

(contact GSSNE at CustomerCare@gssne.org or 401.331.4500 if you need contact information)

Contact GSSNE

Email CustomerCare@gssne.org or call 401.331.4500 to speak with a Council staff person.

Additional Resources

“Tips for Managing Conflict”

“How & When to Use ‘I’ Statements to Diffuse Conflict”

“A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening”

Tips For Managing Conflict

Read Non-Verbal Cues

When people are in the midst of conflict, the words they use rarely convey the issues at the heart of the problem. But, by paying close attention to the other person's non-verbal signals or "body language", such as facial expressions, posture, gestures, and tone of voice, you can better understand what the person is trying to say. This will allow you to respond in a way that builds trust and gets to the root of the problem.

Be Mindful of Your Own Non-Verbal Cues

Your ability to accurately read another person depends on your own emotional awareness. The more aware you are of your own emotions the easier it will be for you to pick up on the clues that reveal what others are feeling. Think about what you are transmitting to others during conflict, and if what you say matches your body language. If you say, "I'm fine," but you clench your teeth and look away, then your body is clearly signaling you are anything but "fine." A calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or an interested facial expression can go a long way toward relaxing a tense exchange.

Listen For What Is Felt as Well as What Is Said

When you listen, you connect more deeply to your own and other people's needs and emotions. Listening strengthens, informs, and makes it easier for others to hear you when you speak.

Make Resolution the Priority

Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your priority. Be respectful of the other person and their viewpoint.

Focus On the Present

Holding on to grudges from past conflicts impairs your ability to see the reality of the current situation. Instead of looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do now to resolve the problem.

Pick Your Battles

Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is worth your time and energy. Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space if you've been circling for 15 minutes, but if there are dozens of empty spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.

Be Willing to Forgive

Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling to forgive others. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can serve only to deplete and drain your life.

Know When to Let Something Go

If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

Be Polite

Maintaining common courtesy is a good way of keeping conflict at bay in all situations because it helps prevent misunderstandings and keeps the setting professional.

Use Humor to Lighten the Situation (If and When Appropriate)

You might avoid confrontations and resolve disagreements by communicating in a humorous way. Humor can help you say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without offending someone. However, it's important that you laugh with the other person and not at them. When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can become an opportunity for greater connection.

Own Your Mistakes

Made a mistake? Admit it, apologize, and move on. People don't like it when they can see you were obviously wrong and you're unable to say it. It looks dishonest and it breeds mistrust. Trust is fundamental in resolving conflict so do what you can to keep trust levels high. Being honest in other areas helps conflict too. If you can talk openly about what you want to happen, you'll reduce misunderstandings and better manage expectations. Clarity and good communication can stop some of the smaller disagreements before they even start.

Spot Potential Conflict Early

Be alert for signs of imminent conflict. When you spot it, try to draw it out. Conflicts tend to fester and if you can address it early you can work to resolve the problem before it turns into something larger. Have a quick chat: talk about what's bothering the person and how you can work together to resolve the situation satisfactorily. A quick intervention early may prevent a longer, drawn-out resolution.

Show Empathy

Even though we might think we do, we don't know what's going on in the head of someone else. Assumptions are often the start of conflict situations, especially if you assume someone will or should act in a certain way and then are disappointed when they don't. It's a cliché but try to put yourself in the position of the other person. What are they going to want to get out of this interaction? How is it making them feel? And if you don't know, it's OK to ask.

When & How to Use "I" Statements to Diffuse Conflict

Using "I" statements is a helpful tool when you're trying to avoid conflict or resolve it in early stages, but can be used in any stage of conflict resolution. It's a super simple formula used to let the other person know you're feeling a certain way about an issue without making the situation seem better or worse than it is. Others often underestimate how hurt, angry, or frustrated you are, so "I" statements say what's going on for you and start a positive conversation to resolve the issue without putting others on the defensive. Sometimes, after using an "I" statement, the situation may not look any different, but it often feels different, and that on its own can change things.

The "I" Statement Formula:

STATEMENT	PERSONALIZE	EXAMPLE
I feel...	Insert the right feeling word	Upset, frustrated, let down, sad...
When...	Explain the situation and avoid using "you"	Emails are regularly sent without me knowing ...
Because...	State how it affects you	I don't have a chance to add important content...
I'd Like...	Insert what you'd like to happen	The chance to contribute to the email draft...
Would You Consider...	State ideas/solutions to fix the conflict. Be specific. Both people must be ok with the suggestion.	Working together to create an email calendar/ schedule so I can provide info to you ahead of time and the recipients get all they need in one communication...

More About "I" Statements

- While it MAY fix the problem right away, but don't expect it to. It's a conversation opener, not the resolution. It's the starting point to improving relationships.
- Your "I" statement isn't about being "soft" or "nice", nor is it about being aggressive or rude. It's about being **clear**.
- An appropriate "I" statement made with good intent:
 - Is highly unlikely to do any harm
 - Is a step in the right direction
 - Is sure to change the current situation in some way
 - Can/will open up to possibilities you may not yet see
- When to Use:
 - When we need to confront others about their behavior
 - When we feel others are not treating us the way we want or deserve to be treated
 - When we feel defensive or angry
 - When others are angry with us

A.C.T.I.V.E LISTENING: A Conflict Resolution Resource

A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening is a tool that promotes clear communication. It should be used in all communications to help reduce or prevent conflict from happening. It can be especially helpful when practiced during conflict resolution meetings.

A - Acknowledge the speaker with positive non-verbal communication such as with good body language, eye contact, head nods. If speaking by the phone, verbal acknowledgement can be used, included sounds like “mmhm.”

C - Concentrate on the content by trying to strip out the emotion you may hear. You want to fully understand the issue in order to resolve it.

T - Track the sequence by determining what series of events happened in what order. Understanding the chain of events is often useful in finding a resolution.

I - Inquiring minds; what do you really want to know? Ask questions to uncover specific details such as sequencing of events, what was said and done, who was present. Understanding facts prevents us from making assumptions.

V - Vocal and Visual cues; although you are stripping away emotion, you need to understand the level of anger or frustration by paying attention to the vocal tone and body language of the other person.

E - Emotional Control; a main component of listening is staying neutral and controlling your own emotions.

You can demonstrate A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening when you speak in a conversation by using these tactics:

1. **Repeating:** using the exact same words used by the speaker.
2. **Paraphrasing:** using similar words and similar phrase arrangement to the ones used by the speaker.
3. **Reflecting/Mirroring:** using your own words and sentence structure. Reflecting is the highest form of listening because as the listener, you have processed the information and summarized it in your own words.



!!! CRISIS PROCEDURES !!!

Keep this with you at all times when at any Girl Scout activity

FOR AN IMMEDIATE HEALTH OR SAFETY ISSUE

(injury, safety/health crisis, or when fire, police or rescue are needed)

1. Dial 911 to report the situation
Do not hang up – wait for the operator to end your connection.
2. Immediately call the Girl Scout Crisis Line at **1-800-476-0293** to report incident. You will be asked to:
 - Notify parents
 - Give all facts
 - Provide return phone number(s)
 - Wait for further instructions

FOR A GSSNE FACILITIES EMERGENCY

(an alarm sounding, broken exterior door, flooding)

1. Immediately call the Girl Scout Crisis Line at **1-800-476-0293** to report incident.

FOR NON-EMERGENCY NEEDS

(technology issues, password requests, contaminated Girl Scout cookies, or other incidents that do not require emergency response)

1. Contact GSSNE during business hours at (401) 331-4500 or email CustomerCare@gssne.org.