



Motivating Youth: Role of the Adviser from the Youth Perspective

Session Length: 45 Minutes

Through this session, you will:

Explain the perspective of the youth looking at the program. What do they look for in adult leaders?

Demonstrate the ideal adviser/youth relationship, through stories and metaphors.

Guide a reflection upon mentors that impacted their lives, and how we can incorporate the positive qualities that made them meaningful.

Enable them to more deeply consider the perspective of youth in the program. Empathy is at the heart of leadership.

Learning Outcomes:

- Know the role of an adviser
- Understand the youth perspective
- Learn to deliver and receive effective feedback
- Know when and how to step in

Theme Connection:

The theme of NOAC 2018 is “Decide Your Destiny,” emphasizing the message that today’s decisions shape tomorrow’s reality. This session will relay this theme in the following ways:

- Even tiny decisions and actions can create long lasting relationships
- The youth are the leaders of tomorrow, today is when they get sculpted
- An effective mentor can set an example for a mentee to become an effective mentor of others

This session will help the Lodge (Applicable to Chapter and Section) with the Journey to Excellence Requirement(s) by establishing a strong adviser and youth leader relationship:

- #2: Membership Retention
- #3: Unit Elections
- #5: Lodge Event Participation
- #6: Brotherhood Completion
- #8: Section and National Event Attendance
- #16: Leadership Development

Required Materials:

- Whiteboard/flipchart
- Markers
- Computer and projector (presenter’s choice)

TRAINER PREPARATION

NOTE – This cell is designed to be taught by a youth member of the Order of the Arrow with a good deal of leadership experience. The cell works best if trainers speak specifically based upon adults they have worked with. The cell truly should be different based on who is presenting it. Personalization is important.

1. The presenter should come up with a story from their own experience that illustrates a time where an event almost failed, and they were assisted by an adult leader. Talk about the lessons that were learned.
2. Have prepared on either a slide or a page of a flipchart the Mission of the OA, as found on the organization’s website.
3. Come up with an example of a feedback sandwich you may provide to an adult adviser
4. Draw a fisherman with his pole out trying to catch fish, and next to him he has a tackle box and safety net. This will be used for the metaphor.

Session Narrative

Trainer Instructions: This session works best conversationally. As a general rule, pull information from the audience with questions about their experiences in Scouting and in the OA. Set the stage for this by asking why the guests are advisers in the OA to begin with.

Introduction

6 minutes

Although adviser is the term we use in the Order of the Arrow, it may not be the best description of what the ideal role of an adult in the OA is.

Trainer Instructions: Ask for other nouns the group can think of to describe their job. Keep a list on the white board.

Words on the list may include coach, teacher, and mentor. Mentor is an interesting word to focus on, because it implies a two-way relationship of learning, communicating, and understanding. This is the ideal relationship for growing leaders, which is the mission of the OA.

Role of the Adviser

5 minutes

Advisers are meant to do just that: advise. However that is the bare minimum. More than advising, their job is not to do the work, but to truly listen to the youth. Additionally, they “see to” the fulfillment of the program of the OA.

Trainer Instructions: Pull up the mission of the OA. Ask them to read and reflect upon it.

The Youth Perspective and “Stepping in”

8 minutes

Youth want to have fun, and learn best when they are having fun. Doing things and overriding youth takes the fun out of Scouting, as does too much scolding. Youth like to do as much as possible, so let them. Event success is secondary to leadership lessons. Never do anything a boy can do leadership-wise. Help alongside them, but do not direct. Only step in when learning is being impaired, health is on the line, or there is a “teachable moment”.

Feedback

10 minutes

Open communication is the key to a mentoring relationship. Just as important as encouraging them and letting them know how they’re doing is asking how **you** are doing. The sandwich method (something they did well, an improvement, another thing they did well) is a great way to package feedback. Asking what you could do better to help them allows you to improve and allows them to learn to think critically. All feedback should be constructive.

Trainer Instructions: Prepare an example of a feedback sandwich that you might give to an adviser. Show them and ask them to come up with one of their own. Ask for a couple examples.

Fishing Metaphor and Story

6 minutes

Trainer Instructions: Show the drawing of a fisherman and ask them to tell you which item represents them if the fisherman is the Scout. Have them explain their reasoning.

In the drawing, the boy is the fisher, the fish are their leadership lessons, the tackle box are the lessons they’ve already learned, and the net represents the adult leader. It makes learning the leadership lessons way easier, but they don’t actually get better at fishing for them.

Trainer Instructions: Tell a personal story about a time you failed as a leader and how the adult stepping in when they did taught you a lesson.

Mentor Reflection

5 minutes

Trainer Instructions: Invite the guests to spend time in small groups discussing mentors that they had and how they influenced them. Bring the group together after 3 minutes and ask them to give characteristics that made them good mentors. Write these down for the group to see.

Wrap-up

2 Minutes

- Respect the Basis of your interpersonal relationships
- You are the example
- Communication is key
- Prepare for your multiple roles
- You are not better than your youth, you are merely more experienced.
- Find your own “mentor”

Takeaway Challenge

3 minutes

Please take out your notebook and pen. For the final three minutes, make yourself a promise about the kind of adviser you will be going forward. Consider the traits on the list that was just made. Make sure to include at least one concrete thing you can do going forward, such as asking for feedback from the youth before and after every event you advise them through. And keep in mind: In order to be an effective adviser, you must understand the needs and perspective of those who you are advising. If you truly listen, you will grow and develop in your role.

Appendix: Resources and Source Material

- **Mission of the Order of the Arrow:** Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit, and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, and Scouting.