

# Mental Health



# First Aid

**\*\*It is important to remember that all Barriers to Abuse and Youth Protection policies are to be followed when having conversations with those under the age of 18.\*\***

Scouting provides a place for youth to learn valuable skills, understand teams, work with people from different backgrounds, and learn about themselves. Baden-Powell created a very interesting approach to teaching self-reliance and development. When a Scout goes camping as a youth they assume it's nothing more than time in the outdoors with friends, but as leaders we understand it is so much more than just that. As a Scout you do not realize until years later that you learned SO MUCH MORE...and your personhood was greatly expanded.

As Advisers, the work we do with youth is vital. We take the role of Train 'em, Trust 'em, and Let 'em Lead. That is the beauty, and essence, of a *youth-run organization*. It is so important that we understand how to help our youth who may be in crisis. Through our attentiveness, and perspective to notice changes in the youth we advise, we have a unique position to be that caring adult that may mean the difference between life and death situations. And it can all come down to the ABCC's of Mental Health First Aid.



**Awareness**  
**Behavior**  
**Coping**  
**Courage**

**AWARENESS** – notice the little things. Ask them about their mood. Notice that they are not presenting as they usually do. Are they not following through? Do they miss things that seem odd. Your AWARENESS and that “gut feeling” is something to listen to...almost every time.

**BEHAVIOR** – notice their behaviors. How are they acting? How are they NOT acting. Meal time behavior can be a sign of something going on as well. How is their appetite or meal time behavior? How do they react to things with other youth?, with adults?, with the group? The saying *actions speak louder than words* is generally true.

**COPING** – how can we help them with coping skills? How can we suggest little things that can make some things work for them a little easier? Helping them to see their options and using questions to guide them in a way they feel empowered to “make the decisions.” This is definitely a power that ADULTS need to understand and use responsibly. Helping them slow down and understand the situation and the pros and cons can help them see the big picture versus “what seems like the only way to go.”

**COURAGE** – it takes courage to help someone. It is a vulnerable space for the helper. It is also vulnerable for the youth to admit they may need help. They may reach out in other ways, actions, behaviors, or words that seem counterproductive. COURAGE is vital. NEVER promise you will “not tell anyone,” or “keep their secret.” You can promise you will only share with appropriate people who can help them with their circumstances. Then follow through on your promise. Key point, most people appreciate being cared for and for others showing concern/support for them.