



gscb

Conflict Management and Resolution Handbook



girl scouts 
of the chesapeake bay

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Thank You

We thank you in advance for your interest in improving the Girl Scout experience, for expressing your concerns, and for handling conflicts consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

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 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.



How to Use This Guide

This handbook is designed to support you in navigating conflict with confidence, care, and clarity. Conflict is a natural part of working with others, and when handled thoughtfully, it can strengthen relationships and create a more positive Girl Scout experience.

You don't need to read this guide all at once. Instead, use it as a resource to return to when needed. The opening sections provide a foundation for understanding conflict and approaching it in a respectful, solution-focused way. When you are working through a concern, the strategies, tip sheet, and reflection tools can help you prepare for conversations and respond with confidence.

If a situation cannot be resolved through direct communication, this guide also outlines the steps for seeking additional support. You are always encouraged to reach out to your Service Unit Manager or Volunteer Engagement Specialist for guidance along the way.

At every stage, let the Girl Scout Promise and Law guide your words and actions as you work toward respectful, positive resolutions that keep the focus on the girls.

Understanding Conflict in Girl Scouts

Conflict is a natural part of working with people. In Girl Scouts, conflict can happen between:

- Co-leaders
- Volunteers and caregivers
- Girls in the troop
- Service unit teams

Different perspectives, communication styles, and expectations can sometimes lead to tension, and that's okay. Avoiding conflict doesn't make it go away. In fact, it can often grow into frustration or misunderstandings. As a Girl Scout volunteer, you play an important role in creating a positive, respectful environment. Learning how to navigate conflict helps:

- Strengthen relationships
- Model healthy communication for girls
- Build a supportive troop community

Remember: Conflict isn't the problem; how we respond to it is what matters.

7 Ways to Handle Conflict with Confidence

Simple strategies to help Girl Scout volunteers navigate challenges and build strong, supportive relationships.

1. Take Initiative with Courage

Girl Scout volunteers don't avoid challenges; they approach them with care and confidence.

What this looks like:

- Addressing concerns early/Not letting frustration build.
- Starting respectful conversations.

2. Lead with Purpose

Keep the focus on what matters most: creating a positive experience for girls and volunteers.

Ask yourself:

- What outcome supports a positive environment?
- How can we move forward respectfully?

3. Focus on What Truly Matters

Not every issue needs to become a conflict. Strong volunteers know what's worth addressing.

Pause and consider:

- Does this impact the overall experience?
- Will this matter in the long run?

4. Build Win-Win Solutions

Girl Scout volunteers work together to find solutions where everyone feels heard and respected.

What this looks like:

- Considering multiple perspectives.
- Looking for common ground.
- Strengthening relationships.

5. Listen to Understand

Taking time to truly listen helps build trust and clarity.

Try:

- Asking thoughtful questions.
- Listening without interrupting.
- Staying open to different perspectives.

6. Work Together to Find Solutions

Collaboration is at the heart of Girl Scouting.

What this looks like:

- Problem-solving as a team/Working toward shared goals.
- Valuing different ideas and experiences.

7. Keep Growing as a Volunteer

Every experience is an opportunity to learn and improve.

Try:

- Reflecting on challenging situations.
- Asking for support when needed/Continuing to build your skills.

GSCB Conflict Resolution Support Process

Whenever possible, Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay (GSCB) encourages members to work through concerns informally using open communication, the Conflict Resolution Tip Sheet, and guidance from the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

If additional support is needed, GSCB staff are available to help guide conversations and work toward a positive resolution.

Start with Informal Resolution

When a concern arises, volunteers are encouraged to:

- Seek support from their Service Unit Manager.
- Communicate directly with those involved.
- Use respectful, open dialogue.
- Refer to the Conflict Resolution Tip Sheet.
- Keep the Girl Scout Promise and Law at the center of all interactions.

You may also reach out to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist for guidance at any time.

When Additional Support Is Needed

If a concern cannot be resolved through informal communication, a volunteer may request additional support from GSCB by submitting a [GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support](#). This process is designed to support all parties involved and maintain a positive experience for Girl Scouts.

Step 1: Request for Support

The concern is shared with GSCB

The individual will be encouraged to continue working toward resolution using:

- The Conflict Resolution Tip Sheet
- The Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Guidance from a Volunteer Engagement Specialist

If the issue remains unresolved, the GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support form may be submitted. Once submitted, the case is assigned to a Volunteer Engagement Specialist.

Step 2: Volunteer Engagement Specialist Involvement

The Volunteer Engagement Specialist will:

- Connect with all involved parties (typically by phone)
- Encourage open and respectful discussion
- Review all relevant details and documentation
- Use GSCB policies, procedures, and the Girl Scout Promise and Law to guide the conversation
- In some cases, a meeting may be scheduled to support resolution.

Please note:

GSCB must follow established policies and guidelines, which may influence the final outcome.

Step 3: Resolution

After reviewing all information and speaking with those involved, GSCB will:

- Consider the situation carefully.
- Focus on the impact on the girls and the overall experience.
- Work toward a fair and respectful resolution.
- The decision made by GSCB will be final.

Our Shared Goal

This process is most successful when all parties are open to working toward a resolution.

At all times, volunteers are expected to:

- Model the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Communicate respectfully.
- Keep the focus on creating a positive experience for girls.

Before You Submit a GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support form

Consider trying these first:

- Write out your concerns clearly (focus on facts).
- Take time to reflect before responding.
- Use “I” statements when communicating.
- Avoid discussing the situation with Girl Scouts or on social media.
- Seek guidance from your Service Unit Manager and Volunteer Engagement Specialist.

Conflict Resolution Tip Sheet

When navigating conflict, taking a thoughtful and respectful approach can help strengthen relationships and lead to a more positive outcome. Whenever possible, GSCB encourages members to work through concerns through open communication, using the Girl Scout Promise and Law as a guide. Additional support is available if needed. The following tips and exercises are designed to help guide you through the process.

1. Remember that everyone involved is volunteering their time.

Each person is giving their time and energy to support Girl Scouts. Approach the situation with respect, patience, and understanding.

2. Please complete the attached Conflict Resolution Assessment.

This assessment is intended to help you identify your typical response to disagreements with the goal that when you encounter these situations, you will be aware of not only your instinctive

reaction, but also the pros and cons of that reaction for a specific situation and how you may deal with the others involved. Furthermore, you will also be aware of the other styles of disagreement management that you could draw on to resolve the situation, if one of the other styles is more appropriate for the current situation.

3. Take the time to write out the specific issues that you have a complaint about.

- Allow yourself the time to write the issues in draft form.
- Focus on facts, not hearsay.
- Walk away from the issue for a day or two; then return to review what you've written.

4. Approach the situation in a calm, patient demeanor.

Remember that the issue, process, and outcome will ultimately affect the troop and all involved.

5. Look for a collaborative situation where:

There is a win/win or a compromise where there is give and take by both sides; avoid taking a stand where you are just looking to "defeat" the other person(s).

6. When approaching a situation of concern:

- Keep the Girl Scout Promise and Law in mind regarding your words and actions. Everything you say and do reflects on the Girl Scout movement.
- Look for a way to preserve and hopefully strengthen the relationship.
- Set it up so that any interaction will reduce tension and minimize future conflict.
- Encourage dialogue and increased understanding.
- Keep in mind how you would feel if your Girl Scout was involved in either side of the situation and what your reaction would be.
- DO NOT involve your Girl Scout in the situation or discuss any of the related matters with them. This will seriously affect your standing and be detrimental to your daughter and her Girl Scout experience.
- While a situation is being addressed and afterwards, DO NOT turn to social media, but be civil, polite, and show confidentiality in having the matter remain between the parties involved. All communication about or between the parties involved should be in a manner consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

7. Decide how to best contact those involved to inform them of your concerns.

- Be willing to offer your assistance, not only your opinion, to make things happen or to effect change.
- Use a tone that you would like to be addressed with. Put yourself in the other person's position.
- Go into the conversation with the attitude of, "We agree that we will look for a new alternative," which sometimes means entirely letting go of your position to make room for the creative conception of a third way.

- Just as is asked of any Girl Scout, use “I” statements clearly stating your concerns.
- In-Person Conversations (preferred):
 - If the situation involves a Troop Leader, all Troop Leaders or at least one other, should be present.
 - Have a non-involved, third-party present to witness the conversation or to moderate.
 - In-person conversations should be held away from the girls.
 - Make sure you are a good listener. Restate the other party’s position (not necessarily accept but restate). Comprehension seeds a sense of empathy and defuses confrontation.
- Emails and Text Messages:
 - Written statements should state facts and minimize emotion.
 - Emails can be drafted and then walked away from for a time, then revisited to allow a “calming down” period.
 - There are three types of messages: 1) the message you intended to send; 2) the message you sent; and 3) the message the other party received.
 - Remember that even though you are expressing your thoughts and opinions in writing, you should still consider the other person’s feelings and reactions. Put yourself in their shoes. Read what you wrote from their viewpoint to see how the context will be received, even though it is not necessarily the intent.
 - Don’t state things in the written word that you would be hesitant to say in a face-to-face conversation.
 - If there is an extended “dialogue”, it may be better to switch to an in-person conversation or a phone call.
- Phone Conversation:
 - Write down what you are going to say ahead of time, stating the facts, not hearsay.
 - Phone conversations should be undertaken away from the girls.
 - Make sure you are a good listener. Restate the other party’s position (not necessarily accept but restate). Comprehension seeds a sense of empathy and defuses confrontation.
 - If you are feeling frustrated or the conversation is escalating, don’t hesitate to stop talking, take a breath, and tell the other party that you don’t feel comfortable continuing this phone call but would like to step away from it.
 - Be polite.

8. If you are unsure of how to approach a situation or express your concerns, consult with your Volunteer Engagement Specialist at GSCB.

Conflict Resolution Assessment

Please CIRCLE ONE response that best describes you. Be honest.

This survey is designed to help you learn about your conflict resolution style.

There are no right or wrong answers.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I discuss issues with others to try to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to negotiate and use a give-and-take approach to problem situations.	1	2	3	4
3. I try to meet the expectations of others.	1	2	3	4
4. I would argue my case and insist on the advantages of my point of view.	1	2	3	4
5. When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open.	1	2	3	4
6. When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible.	1	2	3	4
7. I try to see disagreements from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?	1	2	3	4
8. I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on.	1	2	3	4
9. I find disagreements exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits and that may follow.	1	2	3	4
10. Being in a disagreement with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.	1	2	3	4
11. I try to meet the wishes of my friends and family.	1	2	3	4
12. I can figure out what needs to be done, and I am usually right.	1	2	3	4
13. To break deadlocks, I try to meet people halfway.	1	2	3	4
14. I may not get what I want, but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace.	1	2	3	4
15. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.	1	2	3	4

Scoring the Conflict Resolution Assessment

The 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points for each style. The style with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy. However, all styles have pros and cons, so it's important that you can use the most appropriate style for each conflict situation.

Style Corresponding Statements Totals:

Accommodating (questions 3, 11, and 14): _____

Avoiding (questions 6, 10, and 15): _____

Collaborating (questions 1, 5, and 7): _____

Competing (questions 4, 9, and 12): _____

Compromising (questions 2, 8, and 13): _____

My preferred grievance resolution style is: _____

Accommodating (Teddy Bears) Teddy Bears typically value relationships over their own goals; if forced to choose, Teddy Bears will often sacrifice their goals in order to maintain relationships. Teddy Bears generally want to be liked by others and prefer to avoid conflict because they believe addressing it will damage relationships. Teddy Bears try to smooth over the conflict to prevent damage to the relationship.

Avoiding (Turtle) Turtles tend to value avoiding confrontation more than either their goals or relationships. They often find it easier to withdraw from a conflict than to face it. This might even include completely giving up relationships or goals that are associated with the conflict.

Collaborating (Owls) Owls highly value both their goals and their relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem and strive to resolve tensions and maintain the relationship by seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and others.

Competing (Sharks) Sharks typically value their goals over relationships, meaning that if forced to choose, they would seek to achieve their goals even at the cost of the relationship involved. Sharks are typically more concerned with accomplishing their goals than with being liked by others or compromising. They might try to force opponents to accept their solution to the conflict by overpowering them.

Compromising (Foxes) Foxes are moderately concerned with both their goals and their relationships with others. Foxes typically seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something, the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals in order to find agreement for the common good.

Preparing to Submit the GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support

When all other attempts at resolution have failed, a member may choose a formal method such as initiating the member grievance procedure by submitting a GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support.

For the member grievance procedure to work, all parties must want it to work; its success is beneficial to all parties involved and ultimately the overall Girl Scout experience of the girls.

Prior to submitting the [GSCB Conflict Resolution Request for Support form](#), prepare the following information:

- Initiating Member's Name
- Your Role (Volunteer, Caregiver, staff, other)
- Your Email
- Phone Number
- Names and Contact Information of Those Involved
- Does everyone involved know there is an issue?
- What form of contact has happened between the involved parties (emails, texts, phone calls, face-to-face)?
- What attempts have been made to resolve the issue?
- Describe the conflict in detail (you will be able to attach any additional documentation below):
- Describe what actions you are seeking to resolve this complaint:
- Prepare any additional documentation that you would like to share, as you will have the opportunity to upload files

After submission of this form, please allow 2-3 business days for the Volunteer Engagement Specialist to contact you.

Additional Resources

[University of Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resources](#)

[Center for Creative Leadership – Active Listening Techniques](#)

[Harvard Business Review – The Art of Active Listening](#)

[OCDR Problem Solving Toolkit](#)