



standardized outline from National, but is tailored to allow local Councils to adapt it to their own neighborhood.

And in many Councils, the training is required as part of your registration with that Council. The idea is to insure that everyone dealing with youth have the same level and content of training concerning *youth protection*: issues surrounding abuse, neglect and hazing.

### Take Care of Yourself

Finally, much of the stress we place on ourselves as Scouters can be confronted by doing things outside of Scouting. Eat dinner with your family... even if that means being late for Opening Ceremonies. Drive a different way to and from work each day. Listen to a different radio station or bring a different tape or CD to work to relax by.

While you are at the unit meeting, try to be involved in what the adults, not the youth, are doing. You have a training role to coach your youth leaders, but don't let that overshadow their importance as THE leaders, nor overrun your time with your fellow adults.

My wife and I try to set aside one night in which no Scouting goes on, and she does the same with her circle of activities and programs she's involved with. We plan those evenings around the things we choose to do. This "set-aside night" has worked well for a number of Scouter families who see themselves constantly involved in Scouting activities.

The BSA and many local Councils encourage Scouters to become active in their communities outside of Scouting. Church, school and community-based groups and organizations provide additional outlets for Scouters to share their experiences and successes and failures within. This is a way that much of what has been "building up" can be released by singing, or talking or working with others.

Most importantly, Scouter Stress can be relieved by talking about Scouting and your problems with another Scouter, as many people have already learned by being a part of electronic forums. "Just reading the postings [on SCOUTS-L] from other Scouters," wrote a Scoutmaster to me, "gives me some real reasons to hope. Compared with what I've got to deal with, I'm doing great!! The list has given me a lot of great suggestions and ideas, and I'm printing them out as fast as I can get them done. I walk away from my computer each evening feeling that Scouting and my part in it is a great organization to be a part of. To me, this forum is worth the monthly cost of Internet access and email..."

You don't need email to get the same kind of benefit. Talk with your Commissioner, or with a fellow Scouter from a different unit. Attend Courts of Honor or Pack Meetings with other units, to see others in action and to be around youth other than your own.

Stop in your Council office and see your Executive if he or she is around or invite him or her to stop by your home or workplace. Spend a lunch each week with someone involved in Scouting. You'll find that the sharing and "chest releasing" can help with your own Scouting involvement. You'll also find new friends that share your enthusiasm for the programs of Scouting.

You cannot get away from stress. It's going to be there, whether or not you're a Scouter. However, you can balance work, play, rest and a wide variety of other activities with what you do within Scouting. Stress can help you do your role as a Scouter better, but it can also do some serious damage to your health, your relationships, and to the program.

Don't let Scouter Stress control your life... take control of it, and control the stressors in your life and your experiences as a Scouter.

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# They're Talking. Are You Listening?

by Michael Zwiers

I never train on a Wood Badge course without bringing along some youth members at least once. At a recent Wood Badge II, we invited two patrol leaders to join us to answer questions. The adults asked, and the Scouts fielded their queries. Here are the questions and the candid responses.

### What do the boys think about and enjoy doing?

Goofing around, and having fun with friends, comics, cards, Scouts, sports, homework, and other activities and groups. Sometimes I skip other things to be in Scouts.

### How do you get kids to join Scouts?

Have Scouts invite their friends. They can tell their friends. They can tell their friends what they do.

### What do you do?

We have fun, play games, learn things, try hard, cheer each other on, support each other, and win competitions!

### It sounds like you do a lot. Who plans everything?

We do it now but, before us, the older Scouts taught us everything. They're the best you can get. You are with them a lot. It rubs off from them.

### What advice would you give us leaders?

Let us Scouts do the planning. We were at a camp last year, and one group didn't like their leaders. They said the leaders planned the year but barely followed it. They didn't do things.

### So, How do you plan?

Well, at the first meeting, the leaders ask us what we want to do that year. Then everybody gives ideas, including things we can never do, like skydiving! The leaders make the calendar at the start. Then, at the Court of Honor (*Editor's note: a leadership group; not the ceremony*), we draw up our plans without the other Scouts. The younger guys come up with most of the ideas, and then we do the work.

### Who organizes camps?

Camps usually happen when the leaders can go. We plan at least two weeks ahead. Sometimes I let my assistant patrol leader plan. We have ideas of what we want to do a camp, and the leaders come out to supervise us. We have more camps in the summer and fall because of the weather. The new guys can't go in the winter because they don't have enough experience.

### Do you have problems with your Scouts?

Sometimes. The Patrol Leader and Assistant try to solve the problems first by talking. Then it goes to the Court of Honor. We work on it there. Sometimes we move Scouts between patrols. The leaders give us ways to solve problems. If we can't do it, then they help us out.

### You talked about Court of Honor meetings.

#### What do you do there?

Usually we plan events. We do big stuff first, like camps, then small stuff like games and things. At the end, we do little problems. The Senior Patrol Leader brings up topics, and we talk about them. The Scout leader is like a judge and the Senior Patrol Leader is the second judge. The Patrol Leaders and Assistants are like Lawyers. We

try to do things by the Scout Law. Our leaders don't tell us what to do. They let us do things. But they still sometimes organize activities for us.



### Why did you join Scouts in the first place?

My mom made me. I didn't really want to go to Scouting, but the camping and the outdoors got me into it. I got less shy and made friends better.

### What do you like about it now?

We get support to do things on our own. We have a patrol bank account for what we want to do. We play games and then we do some badge work. Sometimes the whole patrol works (on a badge) together. We all have fun and pass it together. If someone doesn't understand, we help them to understand.

### Do you have any final advice for leaders?

I suggest that they get a Court of Honor. Small troops can have everyone involved. We do the work. We don't make the rules; guys just listen when they have to. They want to listen and be involved. My assistant patrol leader phones me every week!

What can we learn by listening in on this session, besides the obvious information contained in the Scout's responses? Here are a few things worth thinking about.

Trainers: Invite some youth members to part of your training course. Perhaps they can teach adults to take part in a question and answer session during an understanding youth session, as the two Patrol Leaders from my Troop did. Older Scouts, Venturers, and Rovers are capable of presenting sessions related to youth involvement and development.

Scouters: Listen to what your Scouts say. Ask them questions and take action on the basis of their answers. Trust your Scouts. Young people of 13 and 14 years can express some pretty clear ideas about what Scouting gives them and what they want to do in Scouting. Are you providing the opportunity to be the best that they can be?

Happy Scouting!