

WELCOMING AND BELONGING IN SCOUTING



Trustworthy • Loyal • **Helpful** • **Friendly** • **Courteous** • **Kind** • Obedient • Cheerful • Thrifty • Brave • Clean • Reverent

Scouting can be a very positive experience for youth of all ages.

As Scout leaders, we can help youth recognize they have a support network around them. We need to recognize when help may be required and reach out for support when needed.

Areas of Concern :



Youth Mental Health covers a range of topics from anxiety and depression to suicide. Knowing how to spot the signs -- and how to support the youth -- is important for leaders.



Social media usage is linked to bullying and mental health issues. Technology use should be limited in Scouting, and adults should role model proper usage.



Bullying has no place in the world and especially not in Scouting. We help other people at all times. Build a culture of Scouts and adults helping and listening to each other.



Gender and sexuality are areas many youth have struggled with. Youth are dealing with complex questions about who they are and may benefit from additional help.

Behaviors to watch for:

1. Lack of eye contact
2. Poor hygiene/self-care
3. Eating changes
4. Sleeping changes

If you notice any of the above, talk to the Scout directly.

TIP: When talking to a youth, ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions such as "How are things?", "Is anything on your mind?", or "I noticed you (didn't eat/didn't shower/fell asleep). Is everything okay?".

Is this a crisis situation?

Mental Health Crisis Hotline: 988

If this is a medical emergency, call 911

How do I respond?

1. Support the Scouts - Calm & Clear

Calmly address the situation in the moment to support the Scout and address the behavior. Be clear about the expectation & steps going forward. Make sure all your Scouts are attended to.

2. Contact trained professionals

At camp - Contact Camp Director

Other - Call MCC Scout Executive,

Don Shepard at 1-517-940-4093 and/or the

Scouts First helpline at 1-844-SCOUTS1

3. Call the parents

Parents need to know about any concerns you may have. While the Scout may not want this, be clear with them that you are required to talk to their parents. While you are a caring adult that is there to listen, you cannot keep secrets.

For more resources, visit <https://michiganscouting.org/belonging/>



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Before any Scouting activity, set some Words to Live by:

- We will follow the Scout Oath and Law
- We will respect ourselves and others
- We are free to choose whether to participate in discussions or activities
- We will not gossip about anything shared in the group
- We will not post any photos or stories on social media that can be seen as cyberbullying or negative

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan:

- A** - Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- L** - Listen non-judgmentally
- G** - Give reassurance and information
- E** - Encourage appropriate professional help
- E** - Encourage self-help and other support

“ Your nervous system will always choose familiar chaos over unfamiliar peace until you learn to heal and choose differently. ” ~ Lauren Zoeller

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I try to avoid sending a Scout home?

Not necessarily. While we want Scouting to be a positive influence on everyone, Scout leaders are not trained professionals. You have to keep everyone’s experience in mind, including those that are simply bystanders. Talk to the Scout’s parents and express any concerns.

When do I have to contact the parents?

Always. If there is a mental health or other issue, follow the steps on the front of this sheet. We need to be supportive, but we need to make sure to reach out to the proper resources -- the camp director or Scout Executive/Scouts First Helpline. Once you have done that, you will be instructed to contact the parents for feedback and next steps. Parents must *always* know what is going on. The sooner correct resources are contacted, the sooner the youth will receive any necessary help.

Do I need to create an Incident Report?

If there is a membership infraction (youth or adult exhibits behavior against YPT or Scout Oath/Law), then an Incident Report needs to be created. When you talk to the Scout Executive or the Scouts First Helpline, they will instruct you on whether to submit an incident and how to do it. Make sure you keep notes of who, what, where, and when.

How do I support a non-binary or transgender youth?

Youth need to belong to a unit that matches their gender identity, registering with their preferred name. Follow the guidelines in the *Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse* for tenting and restrooms. Visit the site below for assistance.

To learn more about **Youth Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Bullying, Sexuality/ Gender identity**, and **Social Media** and how to be proactive and respond to situations that may occur, please visit the **MCC Welcoming & Belonging** page link below or the QR Code. Our youth deserve a program that supports their mental, physical, and emotional health.



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