

**A TRAINING PROGRAM TO IMPROVE UNIT LEADER AWARENESS OF  
RESOURCES PROVIDED BY THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA TO ASSIST IN  
MAKING APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SCOUTS' DIAGNOSED WITH  
IMPAIRMENTS OR "SPECIAL NEEDS"**

Brian Hissom  
District Commissioner  
Heartland District  
Piedmont Council  
Boy Scouts of America

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**Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science**

**Wofford College**

**Spartanburg, SC**

***Bob Wright, Advisor***

To the Doctoral Candidate Review Board:

I am submitting herewith a Dissertation written by Brian Hissom, entitled *A Training Program to Improve Unit Leader Awareness of Resources Provided by the Boy Scouts of America to Assist in Making Appropriate Accommodations for Scouts' Diagnosed with Impairments or "Special Needs"*. I have examined the final copy of this report for format and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.

Bob Wright  
Bob Wright

We have read this Dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

[Signature]  
Blue Ridge Council

[Signature]  
Coastal Carolina Council

Susan C. Persons  
Daniel Boone Council

Paul J. Kramko  
Georgia-Carolina Council

Walter L. Bates  
Great Smoky Mountain Council

[Signature]  
Palmetto Council

Bob Wright  
Piedmont Council

Anna H. Booker  
Sequoyah Council

Accepted for the Piedmont-Appalachian College of  
Commissioner Science:

James N. Blake  
Chairman  
Doctoral Candidate Review Board

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

When initially formulating this project, the assumption was that the Boy Scouts of America would have information on retention rates for Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities. Beginning with conversations with Kirk Setzer, Director of Field Services and COO and Connie Bowes, Scout Executive and CEO of Piedmont Council 420 it was quickly discovered that information on Scout status regarding any diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities is not collected, and their retention rates cannot be tracked. Examination of information collected on the BSA Youth Application (28) makes it evident that such data is not provided by Scouts or parents on completion of the Youth Application.

Having found that the initial goal of determining and impacting retention rates of Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities in Piedmont Council 420 through adult leader training would not easily be accomplished, the focus of this project shifted to attempting to determine the percentage of Scouts perceived by leaders to have diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities and to positively impact leaders' awareness of training and resources available to assist them in accommodating, retaining and better serving Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities.

I wish to thank those who have assisted and supported my efforts in developing, designing, modifying, and delivering this project:

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is hypothesized that retention rates of Scouts diagnosed with impairments is lower than that for Scouts with no diagnosed impairment. Investigation found that retention rates of Scouts with diagnosed impairments is not monitored by either Piedmont Council 420 or National Council BSA. Therefore, this project is to estimate the percentage of Scouts in local units that leaders perceive to have a diagnosed physical, developmental, or psychological impairment; survey leaders in Piedmont Council; and to provide training to increase adult leader awareness of accommodations, methods to provide assistance, methods to best serve Scouts with impairments, and to measure the effectiveness of this training. It is hypothesized that leader awareness of accommodations, methods to provide assistance, methods to best serve Scouts with impairments, and leader confidence in such knowledge can be positively impacted with brief training appropriate for delivery at Roundtable and other training venues.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Many Scout leaders may not feel well prepared and/or confident in their ability to provide effective assistance and accommodations to address Scouts' physical, emotional, behavioral and/or learning impairment. A lack of appropriate accommodations has the potential to allow a Scout with an impairment or disability to experience frustration, sense a lack of inclusion, have difficulty with advancement and not have fun in his or her Scouting experience, thereby negatively affecting retention of Scouts with diagnosed impairments.

The *Guide to Working with Special Needs and DisABILITIES* provides direction to leaders. According to clause 20 of article XI, section 3, of the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America: "Clause 20. Members who have disabilities. At the discretion of the Executive Board, and under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed upon consultation with appropriate medical or educational authorities, an individual with a mental or physical disability who meets BSA's standards of membership and is over age 11 (as a Cub Scout), over age 18 (as a Boy Scout or a Varsity Scout), or over age 21 (as a Venturer) is authorized to register and participate in the respective appropriate advancement and recognition program appropriate within that specific program." (13).

Adult Scout leaders may be unaware of available resources rather than unwilling to provide appropriate accommodations to assist Scouts in having the best experience possible, but the mission is clear, "Scouting is for all boys" (13) and girls. However, a lack of awareness of resources and guidance in most any challenge can lead to reduced confidence in the ability to meet the challenge and reduced likelihood of success. (11).



This project is an effort to estimate the number of Scouts and improve retention rates of those Scouts with identified physical, developmental and/or psychological impairment compared to retention rates of Scouts without identified impairments and to identify resources and training available to help Scout leaders increase their resources and confidence in providing appropriate accommodations to deliver the best Scouting program possible, regardless of any diagnosed impairment that a Scout may have.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Youth Trust**

Griffith, A. and Larson, R. (2015) sought to understand how trust influences youth's program experiences from the youth's perspective and the role of trust in the success of youth programs. They found that youth's trust in program leaders is a key to the positive impact of youth programs. They interviewed 108 ethnically diverse youth (ages 12–19) participating in 13 arts, leadership, and technology programs. The authors analyzed these accounts and identified five ways in which youth's trust in leaders improved program benefits. Trust increased youth's confidence in a number of areas including leaders' guidance in the program, their motivation in the program, willingness to approach leaders for mentoring, perception of leader examples of healthy relationships, and experience of program cohesiveness. Across all measures, high levels of trust allowed youth to draw on leaders' expertise, opened them to new experiences and helped improve the youth's experience in the program (12).

#### **Volunteer Satisfaction**

Oostlander, J., Guntert, S. T., Wehner, T. (2014) examined the development of volunteer satisfaction within the framework of potential for growth and meeting the volunteers' emotional experience. Leadership that supports volunteers' goals was studied as a factor preceding volunteer satisfaction. The assumption was that the link between leadership that is supportive of volunteer autonomy and volunteer satisfaction supported the volunteer feeling their needs are

met within, and that they are supported to develop within the organization. The study examined volunteer satisfaction of 113 adults who completed a paper-based questionnaire. General need satisfaction and autonomous motivation was found to precede the link between autonomy-supportive leadership and volunteer satisfaction (20). These findings can be seen as supportive of the Scouting EDGE Method of teaching as well.

### **Legal Basis for Accommodation**

In *The Boy Scouts of America as a Place of Public Accommodation: Developments in State Law (1999-2000)*, case law is described and suggests that the Boy Scouts of America is a “place” where public accommodation is required by law. It is acknowledged that the question of “whether the BSA is a place of public accommodation is one that has ‘vexed the courts for years.” The article reviews a number of cases that both find that BSA is and is not a place of public accommodation however it also provides no clear guidance on whether BSA is legally required to accommodate people otherwise protected by law (27). *Scouting With Special Needs and Disabilities* reminds that “since its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has had fully participating members with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities” and that “James E. West, the first Chief Scout Executive, was a person with a disability” (24).

### **The Boy Scouts of America’s Tradition of Inclusion**

Regardless of legal requirements, BSA has a long history of accommodating needs of Scouts with impairments including publishing a Braille edition of The Boy Scout Handbook for years, providing audio recordings of merit badge pamphlets for the blind; and closed-caption

training videos for those who are deaf. To accommodate Scouts with developmental delay, individuals who with intellectual function diagnoses have been able to remain registered as Scouts beyond the traditional for their program age since 1965.

BSA sources indicate that “approximately 100,000 Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers with special needs and disabilities have participated with the Boy Scouts of America in more than 4,000 units chartered to community organizations.” These figures are noted on at least one council website and in Baloo’s Bugle, volume 19, number 6, January-February 2013, however, no original source for these figures could be located, calling their validity into question (9).

Regardless of United States Case Law, BSA provides its own law to follow in the form of the Twelve Points of the Scout Law, particularly the points that “A Scout is... helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind.” Based on these values alone, providing necessary accommodations for those with appropriate diagnoses, would seem to be an internal requirement of The Boy Scouts of America.

## **Barriers**

Law, M., Petrenchik, T., King, G., and Hurley, P. (2007) sought to describe parent perceptions of environmental barriers in a variety of places and reported that barriers to participation in activities were encountered in school and work environments, physical and built environments, in institutional and government policies, services and assistance, as well as attitudes and social support. Factors impacting the experience of such barriers included age, socioeconomic status, level of physical functioning, and behavioral difficulties. The study

indicated that barriers are likely to be found across communities and likely to affect people differently depending on socioeconomic status and level of physical and behavioral difficulty (18).

### **Frequency of Impairment and/or Disability**

Although BSA does not specifically track the number of Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities, the Voyageurs Area Council, BSA (2006) surveyed adult leaders and found that leaders estimated that 33% of Scouts they served had identified disabilities (30).

### **Resources**

Adult Scout leaders may be unaware of available published resources, rather than unwilling to provide appropriate accommodations to assist Scouts in having the best experience possible but the mission is clear, “Scouting is for all boys” and girls. However, a lack of awareness of resources and guidance in most any challenge can lead to reduced confidence in the ability to meet the challenge and reduced likelihood of success.

BSA National Council provides many resources to assist leaders in delivering the program to Scouts with impairments and/or disabilities including the following publications:

- Recognition and rationale <https://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>
- Guides to working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf> and <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>
- Advancement flexibility <https://www.scouting.org/Home/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds/AdvancementFlexibilityAllowed.aspx>

- Advancement guidelines <https://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds.aspx>
- Summary page including training materials <https://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>
- Access to non-BSA resources <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/BKS-Scout.pdf>
- Bryan on Scouting <https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/01/29/bsa-alternative-requirements-benefit-scouts-venturers-disabilities/>
- Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge [https://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Disabilities\\_Awareness](https://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Disabilities_Awareness)
- Abilities Digest Archives [https://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/TheBuildingBlocksofScouting/Abilities\\_Digest\\_Archives.aspx](https://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/TheBuildingBlocksofScouting/Abilities_Digest_Archives.aspx)

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### **Determining the Need for Adult Leader Training Regarding Accommodations**

This project hypothesized that retention rates of Scouts diagnosed with impairments would be lower than that for Scouts without diagnosed impairment and that tracking and comparing retention rates would serve as a measure of the need for improvement in adult leader awareness of accommodations and methods to best serve Scouts with impairments and as a measure of the effectiveness of this training effort. However, in consultation with Kirk Setzer, Director of Field Services and COO of Piedmont Council 420, BSA and Michael “Mike” Johnson, Youth Protection Director, National Council, BSA, it was discovered that The Boy Scouts of America does not track retention rates of Scouts with diagnosed impairments. Careful examination of the BSA Youth Application reveals that such information is not asked of the prospective Scout and so such information is unavailable for tracking.

A survey of the need for improvement in adult leader awareness of resources to assist in developing accommodations and methods to best serve Scouts with impairments was developed to determine their estimate of perception of the number of Scouts with diagnosed impairments in their units that they serve. The survey was also designed to gauge their level of awareness of guidelines, resources to assist with accommodations and their confidence in doing so. The portion of the survey used to estimate the number of youth with diagnosed impairments served by Piedmont Council, BSA was developed based on the work of Hulke, L., Nelson N., Schenkey B. (2006) of Voyageurs Area Council (14). This survey was shared via email with Piedmont Council District Commissioners and District Executives for completion in conjunction with

awareness training at Roundtable meetings of adult leaders throughout the Council. The surveys and training were also presented at Piedmont Council Commissioner meetings and Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science (PACCS) in 2018.

**Estimates of Number of Scouts with Impairments and/or Disabilities**

In order to estimate the number of Scouts with diagnosed impairments or disability in Piedmont Council, a question was posed in the pre-training questionnaire that participants were asked to complete before viewing a 10-minute narrated slide presentation on the topic of accommodations (Table 1).

**Table 1. Pre-training Leader Survey**

<u><b>Pre-training Leader Survey</b></u> <u><b>Accommodating Scouts with Special Needs</b></u>					
<b>What percent of your Scouts do you estimate have a diagnosed physical, intellectual or emotional impairment?</b>					Write Percent Below
<b>Please complete the self-rating portion below by placing an X in the box under the answer that best describes your response.</b>					
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
I am adequately knowledgeable of resources necessary to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
I am adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					



I am adequately confident in my ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
I am adequately knowledgeable of local human resources to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
<b>Date Completed</b>					
<b>Please return your anonymous survey to the trainer</b>					

The response to the following question “What percentage of Scouts in your unit do you estimate have a diagnosed physical, intellectual or emotional impairment?” resulted in an overall average estimate of 19.34, or approximately 20% of Scouts from the 46 Roundtable training recipients over three participating districts (Foothills, Heartland and Two Rivers districts). The estimate provided by 13 participants in Piedmont Council’s Commissioner Retreat was 26.77% while the estimate provided by eight participants in the PACCS 2018 Doctoral Class was 22.00%. For purposes of this project the results of estimates by unit leaders provided in Roundtable meetings was considered the better estimate for Council purposes.

This survey and training will remain available to districts that did not participate prior to completion of this project and so additional data may be gathered and shared with the council. Given that adult leaders estimate that 20% of their participating Scouts have a diagnosed impairment and/or disability, this represents a portion of our Scouts with retention potential that may not be fully realized. It would be in the council’s interest to further study and educate adult

leaders in ways to best serve this large segment of our youth population with the goal of improving retention of this group via welcoming accommodations of specific Scouts' needs.

### **Measuring the Effectiveness of Training of Adult Leaders Regarding Accommodations**

Given the lack of retention rate data to use in measuring outcomes of this project, a measure of adult leader knowledge of resources to assist Leaders in accommodating Scouts with identified impairments was developed. This eight-question instrument is intended to be administered before and immediately after presentation of the training materials shared in Appendices B and C. Analysis of the pre- and post-presentation results indicated that adult leaders experienced notable improvement in knowledge of resources and confidence in their ability to provide appropriate accommodations for Scouts with identified impairments, discussed in detail below.

### **Identification and Description of Resources to Assist Leaders in Accommodating Scouts with Identified Impairments**

The narrated video training (Appendix C) includes information gathered from a variety of resources that are provided by the National Council, Boy Scouts of America on the website <https://www.scouting.org> and other sources. This information provides guidance to local councils on developing a Council Advisory Committee on accommodations and in working with Scouts with diagnosed impairments and special needs. A broad variety of national, regional and local community resources are often also available to leaders working with Scouts with impairments. Resources and methods included in the training are listed below.

## **Published Resources and Guidelines Available via the Boy Scouts of America**

Access to non-BSA resources <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/BKS-Scout.pdf>

Advancement committee policy and procedures. <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/regions/central/PDF/Advancement%20Committee%20Guide.pdf>

Advancement flexibility <https://www.scouting.org/Home/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds/AdvancementFlexibilityAllowed.aspx>

Advancement guidelines <https://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds.aspx>

Bryan on Scouting <https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/01/29/bsa-alternative-requirements-benefit-scouts-venturers-disabilities/>

Council Advisory Committee - Piedmont Council, 420, provides support via an Accommodations Advisory Subcommittee of the Council Advancement Committee. The current Chair of the Accommodations Advisory Subcommittee is Brian Hissom available at [brianhissom@gmail.com](mailto:brianhissom@gmail.com) and phone 980-241-0955

Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge Pamphlet: BSA Supply No. 35883

Guides to working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf> and <https://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>

Recognition and rationale <https://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>

Summary page including training materials <https://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>

## **Published National, Regional and Local Community Agency Resources Often Available**

American Psychological Associations: <http://www.apa.org>

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder:  
<http://www.chadd.org>

Easter Seals, North Carolina: <http://nc.eastersealsucp.com>

National Center for Learning Disabilities: <http://www.nclld.org>

National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nih.gov>

National Institutes of Mental health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services:  
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs/>

North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsb/>

North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing:  
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/>

### **Key Family, Professional and Scouting Resources in Developing an Individualized Scout Advancement Plan (ISAP)**

#### **Parents, Guardians, Advocates and Professionals Involved in the Scout's Care**

The *Guide to Working with Special Needs and DisABILITIES* indicates that “prior to joining a troop, parents and the Scout should meet with the Scout leader to explain the prospective Scout’s special needs. The Scout should be present at the pre-joining conference so that he clearly understands the expectations of him, his parents, and the troop. Allow him to speak for himself as much as possible. The following are some of the issues that should be discussed (13).”

The discussion prior to joining a Scout unit should assist leaders in learning about the prospective Scout’s strengths and challenges, diagnoses, capabilities and challenges, medications, therapies, behavioral issues, dietary needs, living skill accommodations, and transportation needs. The Scout leader should also share information about the unit’s operation, emergency procedures, and invite questions from the parents /guardians.

In addition to ongoing communication with the Scout's parents or guardians, openness to accept guidance from Scouts involved in care can be an asset. Professionals from whom leaders might seek guidance include the Scout's physician, psychologist, counselor, or social Worker, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and teacher(s) at school.

### **The Scout and His/Her Family**

It should be emphasized that communication *with* the Scout, and not only *about* the Scout is critical to success. The *Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual* provides leaders with “Key Points for Scouts to Think About as They Work With Scouts With Disabilities (23).

1. Talk directly to the disabled Scout. Don't talk to others about him or other Scouts in front of him or behind his back.
2. Assume the disabled Scout is capable of doing things.
3. Realize the disabled Scout has the same needs as others—to be accepted and to feel a part of the group—to have true friends.
4. Help the disabled Scout when help is wanted. Offer to help, but if turned down do not take it personally, and be glad he wants to do things himself.
5. When help is wanted, do not over help or try to do everything for him. Let him do as much as he can on his own.

## **Council Advancement Committee**

*Advancement Committee Policy and Procedures* defines duties of the Council Advancement Committee to include “guiding the district committees” and “to supervise the advancement program in all units and to guide the district advancement committees in their work with each unit” (4). Specific duties include:

- Establish procedures within the framework of national policy.
- Set council goals.
- Plan a yearly advancement calendar and committee budget.
- Review procedures for record keeping.
- Recruit and train council and district advancement committee members.
- Promote advancement in units by working with district advancement committees and through council publications and activities.
- Recommend candidates for national awards.
- Determine procedures for summer camp advancement.
- Approve merit badge counselors and publish council and/or district merit badge counselor lists.

The Advancement Committee Policy and Procedures also provides “guidelines for membership and advancement in Scouting for persons having disabilities or other special needs” including guidance on considering definitions and role of The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) in Scouting’s responsibilities to Scouts with impairments. Specific topics include:

- Membership
- Advancement for Boy Scouts with Disabilities

- Advancement for Cub Scouts with Disabilities
- Advancement for Venturers with Disabilities
- Alternate Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second and First Class Ranks
- Alternate Merit Badges for Eagle Scout Rank
- Woods Services Award
- Torch of Gold Certificate

### **District and Council Leadership**

The *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* states that “Commissioners are available to help units succeed. A unit is the basic structure operated by a chartered organization to deliver the program of the Boy Scouts of America to youth members. The BSA works with and through the chartered organization to serve youth. It is important that the chartered organization and its units be served effectively with the guidance of a Commissioner (29).

Unless Scouting units are strong and efficient, the program won’t retain the Scout. No matter how well organized the council and the district, the program delivery system stalls or fails with weak units.” It is the responsibility of District and Council leadership, with Unit Commissioners often providing the first point of contact, to guide unit leaders toward the various resources available to assist them in making necessary and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of all Scouts in their unit.

## **Communications Skills**

The *Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual* also reminds leaders of “Timeless Values” that apply when working with anybody (24):

- Use common sense—treat them with respect and dignity.
- Be understanding—people with disabilities have the same responsibilities and obligations that you have (only theirs might be harder to meet!).
- Be patient. Don’t hurry; try to match their pace.
- Be natural. Don’t worry about using words related to the disability (e.g., “see you later,” or “give me a hand”).
- Speak directly to the person, not to his companion.
- Don’t assume the person is sick. Most people with disabilities are healthy. Remember, you can’t “catch” a disability.
- Help make your community accessible. Are your meeting places easily accessible? Campsites? Do you have service opportunities?
- Keywords—tolerance, inclusion, acceptance, and mainstreaming.

## **Post-Training Survey**

A post-training survey of adult leader awareness of resources to assist in developing accommodations and methods to best serve Scouts with impairments was developed to determine their estimate of perception of the number of Scouts with diagnosed impairments in their units that they serve was also developed. The survey was also designed to gauge their estimate of change in awareness of guidelines, resources to assist with accommodations and their confidence in doing so (Table 2).



**Table 2. Post-training Leader Survey**

<b><u>Post-training Leader Survey</u></b> <b><u>Accommodating Scouts with Special Needs</u></b>					
<b>Please complete the self-rating portion below by placing an X in the box under the answer that best describes your response.</b>					
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
I am adequately knowledgeable of resources necessary to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
I am adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
I am adequately confident in my ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
I am adequately knowledgeable of local human resources to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting					
<b>Date Completed</b>					
<b>Please return your anonymous survey to the trainer</b>					

**Presentation of the training program, *Working with Scouts with Special Needs & Impairments***

To assist leaders in improving preparedness and confidence in their ability to appropriately address and accommodate impairments that Scouts may present in their unit, an

extended training (45 minutes in duration) presentation appropriate for presentation at Council events such as University of Scouting, Merit Badge University, and Resident Camp was developed (Appendix A). This training has been offered to Piedmont Council events but presentation has not been requested.

A brief version of this training was designed to be easily used by Council and District leaders and trainers, and leaders with an interest in sharing it while mentoring fellow leaders in accommodating Scouts with identified impairments. This 10-minute summary of the extended training, *Working with Scouts with Special Needs & Impairments; Roundtable Version*, was developed for presentation at Roundtables and other District meetings to improve Leaders' confidence and ability to accommodate Scouts with identified impairments.

Both trainings will be made available to Piedmont Council 420 for use in University of Scouting and all district Roundtables. It will also be offered for inclusion on the council webpage to make both training modules accessible and available at all times. Both trainings will also be made available to National Council, BSA for use as desired.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**

All districts in Piedmont Council have been provided the brief 10-minute Roundtable training and three districts have presented the training and returned the surveys as requested. The 45-minute training has been presented at three adult leader meetings, e.g. PACCS, Commissioner Retreat, Council Commissioner Committee to promote use of the training program in Piedmont and other Councils. A total of 46 surveys were collected from three Piedmont Council Districts for analysis with results as follows.

#### **Findings**

The findings of this project indicate that adult leaders in Piedmont Council, 420 BSA located in western North Carolina estimate that 19% of their Scouts have a diagnosed impairment and/or disability. Based on self-rating, the average level of awareness of available tools to help leaders serve Scouts with impairments improved by approximately 49%. The average level of sense of being adequately prepared to help Scouts with impairment improved by approximately 30%. Level of confidence in ability to help Scouts with impairments improved by approximately 15% while the level of knowledge of person(s) in Piedmont Council who can help guide the leader and Scout in developing appropriate accommodations improved by approximately 54% (Tables 3 and 4).

## **Summary of Responses to Each Survey Prompt**

First survey prompt: “I am aware of the tools that BSA provides to guide accommodations for Scouts with diagnosed impairments.”

Leaders generally (30%) did not feel well prepared to work with Scouts with impairment prior to this training (strongly disagreed or disagreed with prompt statement) and 48% reported they felt well prepared (agreed or strongly agreed with the prompt). Following the training only 4% did not feel well prepared while 98% felt well prepared to work with Scouts with impairments following the brief 10-minute Roundtable training.

Second survey prompt: “I am adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting.”

Prior to training, leaders generally (43%) did not feel adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting and after training 67% felt adequately prepared.

Third Survey Prompt: “I am adequately confident in my ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting”

Prior to training, 30% of leaders surveyed did not feel adequately confident in their ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting, while following training 67% felt adequately prepared.

Fourth Survey Prompt: “I know the name of the person(s) or committee(s) in my council who can help guide me and my Scout in developing appropriate accommodations for diagnosed impairments.”

Prior to training, 65% of leaders surveyed did not agree that they knew the name of person(s) or committee(s) in their council who can help guide them and their Scout in developing appropriate accommodations for diagnosed impairments. Following training 93% agreed that they knew the name of person(s) or committee(s) in their council who can help them in developing appropriate accommodations.

**Table 3. Pre-training Leader Survey Summary**

<b><u>Pre-training Leader Survey</u></b> <b><u>Accommodating Scouts with Special Needs</u></b>					
<b>What percentage of Scouts in your unit do you estimate have a diagnosed physical, intellectual or emotional impairment?</b>	<b>Write Percent Below</b>				
<b>46 Leaders Surveyed</b>	<b>19.34</b>				
<b>Please complete the self-rating portion below by placing an X in the box under the answer that best describes your response.</b>					
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
I am aware of the tools that BSA provides to guide accommodations for Scouts with diagnosed impairments.	4	10	18	19	3
I am adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting	1	19	15	14	3
I am adequately confident in my ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting	1	13	15	21	3

I know the name of the person(s) or committee(s) in my council who can help guide me and my Scout in developing appropriate accommodations for diagnosed impairments.	11	19	5	14	4
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**Table 4. Post-training Leader Survey Summary**

<b><u>Post-training Leader Survey</u></b> <b><u>Accommodating Scouts with Special Needs</u></b>					
<b>Please complete the self-rating portion below by placing an X in the box under the answer that best describes your response.</b>					
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
I am aware of the tools that BSA provides to guide accommodations for Scouts with diagnosed impairments.	0	2	3	32	13
I am adequately prepared to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting	0	3	16	23	8
I am adequately confident in my ability to help Scouts with diagnosed impairments succeed in Scouting	0	1	18	23	8
I know the name of the person(s) or committee(s) in my council who can help guide me and my Scout in developing appropriate accommodations for diagnosed impairments.	0	4	3	26	17

## **Discussion**

This project gathered an adult leader estimate of the number of Scouts diagnosed with impairments and/or disabilities to be nearly 20% of the Scouts in their units in Piedmont Council 420. This estimate represents a portion of our Scouts with potential challenges to success in the

program that Scouts without diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities generally do not present. It also represents a potential for focus on retention that may not be fully realized.

This project demonstrates that a relatively short amount of time is necessary to provide information to effectively increase adult leaders' preparedness to serve Scouts with impairments and/or disabilities. This training increased leaders' knowledge base, confidence level and awareness of local resources to assist them in serving all Scouts and can easily be presented at a variety of leader training events.

### **Recommendations**

Given the brevity and demonstrated effectiveness of the brief 10-minute Roundtable training and the estimate of 20% of Scouts having a diagnosed impairment and/or diagnosis, it is recommended that all Districts consider incorporating similar training into their Roundtable calendar. Similar training could also be incorporated into various adult and youth leader training such as Leader Specific Training, Wood Badge, National Youth Leadership Training, and Resident Camp Staff Development. By providing this training at these levels, BSA could significantly decrease leader anxiety, increase their confidence about working with Scouts with impairments and/or disabilities, and expand leader knowledge of resources and support available to them, their Scout and the Scout's family, with the goal of improving their success in Scouting.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY**

This project was initially conceived to develop training for local unit leaders to assist in retention of Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities however once it was learned that the Boy Scouts of America does not collect or track data of Scouts' status in this area the project goal was modified to include estimating the percentage of Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities and to improve preparedness of leaders to assist those Scouts succeed in the program.

Findings suggest that 20% of the Scouts currently served by Piedmont Council 420 may have diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities while Leaders do not feel fully prepared or confident in their ability to best serve those Scouts. A brief training module that can be presented at Roundtable and other training events could effectively begin improving leaders' knowledge and confidence in and ability to better serve a significant segment of our youth population. The results of this training include reducing leaders' frustration and anxiety, expanding their knowledge of useful resources in adapting Scout programming, increasing the success of Scouts with impairments and/or disabilities, and improving retention of this group of Scouts.

“Scouting is for all boys” and girls. The training described here to help leaders improve their level of awareness of and confidence in their ability to assist Scouts with diagnosed impairments and/or disabilities is likely to help the Boy Scouts of America to more fully deliver the promise of Scouting to all who youth who wish, as Kipling wrote, to smell wood-smoke at twilight, hear the birch-log burning, read the noises of the night... and succeed in Scouting (17).



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# APPENDIX A

## Scouts with Special Needs Slide Presentation in Handout Format

### WORKING WITH SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, IMPAIRMENTS AND DISABILITIES

BRIAN S. HISSOM, MA, LPCC, NCC, DCC  
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR - SUPERVISOR  
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
HEARTLAND DISTRICT  
PIEDMONT COUNCIL 420, BSA

1

### HISTORY

- Braille Boy Scout Handbook
- Merit badge pamphlets recorded on cassette tapes
- Closed captioned training videos
- 1965 began registration of overaged Scouts with intellectual or developmental disabilities, now extended to many Scouts with other impairments
- Some units are composed of members with similar impairments but experience has shown that "Scouting works best when all Scouts with disabilities are part of an inclusive unit/group." (3)

2

### HISTORY

- Councils with advisory committees on accommodation
- "An individual is considered to have a "disability" if she or he
  - has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities—seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working,
  - has a record of such an impairment, or
  - is regarded as having such an impairment." (3)

3

### SIGNIFICANT DATES (3)

- 1923. A special award is created for Scouts with disabilities who are unable to meet certain requirements without modifications or supports.
- 1962. Boys' Life begins printing in Braille. 1965. Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities age 18 and over are permitted to register in Scouting.
- 1971. A grant from Disabled American Veterans enables the BSA national office to establish a professional position of director, Scouting for the Handicapped.
- 1971. The Scouting for the Physically Handi- capped pamphlet (revised in 1994) is published.
- 1972. An improved Scouting program goes into effect with more flexible advancement requirements.
- 1973. Scouting for the Hearing Impaired (revised in 1990) is published.
- 1974. Scouting for the Blind and Visually Im- paired (revised in 1990) is published.
- 1975. Understanding Scouts With Handicaps, Understanding Cub Scouts With Handicaps, and Exploring for the Handicapped training manuals are published.
- 1977. The Signing for the Deaf interpreter strip is approved.
- 1978. The National Executive Committee approves the removal of age restrictions on advancement for all members with severe disabilities.

4

### SIGNIFICANT DATES (3)

- 1979. The National Executive Board approves the substitution of merit badges for the Eagle Scout rank by Scouts with disabilities.
- 1980. Scouting for the Handicapped (revised in 1984), a resource manual, is published.
- 1986. In-School Scouting Training Course for special education teachers is published.
- 1987. Scouting for the Learning Disabled manual is published.
- 1991. Scouting for Youth with Mental Retardation manual is published.
- 1992. Camp Director's Primer to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 manual is distributed to local councils.
- 1993. Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Exploring divisions each establish a national subcommittee on Scouts with disabilities.
- 1994. Explorers with Disabilities Program Helps, designed to involve all posts with Explorers with disabilities, is released.
- 1995. Scoutmaster's Guide to Working With Scouts with Disabilities is published.
- 2007. Scouting for Youth With Disabilities manual is revised and includes all previous editions of the manuals dealing with specific disabilities and includes program ideas for leaders to use in their programs.

5

### WISDOM

"The best guide to working with youth who have disabilities is to use respect and good common sense."

-Scouting For Youth With Disabilities Manual. <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>

6

## INDIVIDUAL SCOUT ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

Why an "Individualized Scouting Advancement Plan"? (ISAP)

Each Scout is different, and brings their individual gifts and challenges to the unit. Each will follow a different path in life. Regardless of their personal physical, mental, or emotional attributes each will give to and take something from Scouting. We can only hope to positively effect those contributions.

An ISAP can be a natural follow up to the all-important entry meeting with the youth and family where the leader has an opportunity to meet and learn about the future Scout and explain how Scouting can be part of the youth's life.

The Scouting handbooks and policies cannot address each individual. They merely set guidelines. So, it is often useful to reach an understanding as to how certain goals can be met. The ISAP forms a "contract" or roadmap, which the Scout, his parents and mentors, or other leaders can reference or, if necessary, update.

Particularly in the case of a Scout with impairments, an ISAP helps form the support for District and Council staff who do not know the particular Scout except by the record of accomplishments.

We hope that this form will be of use to you and we are interested in any comments or suggestions that you may have. (4)

7

## DISABILITY?

## IMPAIRMENT?

Oxford English Dictionary:

Impairment - The state or fact of being impaired, especially in a specified faculty.

Disability - A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

8

## EXAMPLES?

- Cerebral palsy
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Paraplegia
- Quadriplegia
- Limb functional abnormalities

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

9

## LESS VISIBLE EXAMPLES

- Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning impairments
  - Dyslexia
  - Dyspraxia
  - Dysgraphia
  - Auditory processing disorders
  - Dyscalcula
- Cognitive, intellectual and developmental disorders
- Autistic spectrum disorder
  - Autism
  - Aspergers syndrome
- Emotional & Behavioral impairments
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Panic Attack
  - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  - Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

10

## MOST LIKELY TO SEE...

- Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning impairments
  - Dyslexia
  - Dyspraxia
  - Dysgraphia
  - Auditory processing disorders
  - Dyscalcula
- Cognitive, intellectual and developmental disorders
- Autistic spectrum disorder
  - Autism
  - Aspergers syndrome
- Emotional & Behavioral impairments
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Panic Attack
  - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  - Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

11

## SUGGESTIONS...

- See your Scout first
  - Person-first language
  - Respect & offer assistance, do not assume
  - Let the Scout & his/her family guide you
- Make the parents your partners - meet with Scout and parents early
- Educate yourself
  - The diagnosis
  - BSA resources
  - ISAP - Individualized Scouting Achievement Plan
  - Accommodations for merit badges & rank advancement
  - Fact Sheets & Forms - p. 107 - 118 of Scouting for Youth Disabilities Manual, <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/3+059.pdf>
  - Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/910-071.pdf> pp. 7-11
- Find a mentor - use your resources
  - Scouter with experience
  - Professional - Counselor, Psychologist, Special Education Teacher

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

12

## EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

- Your experiences, ideas & suggestions
- 
- 
- 
- 

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allows an impairment to become a disability.

13

## RESOURCES

- American Psychological Associations: <http://www.apa.org>
- Application for alternative Eagle Scout rank merit badges. <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf>
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: <http://www.chadd.org>
- Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge: <http://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-DISA.aspx>
- Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge Pamphlet: BSA Supply No. 35883
- Easter Seals, North Carolina: <http://nc.eastersealsucp.com>
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: <http://www.nclld.org>
- National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nih.gov>
- National Institutes of Mental health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

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## RESOURCES

- North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs/>
- North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsb/>
- North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/>
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## THE CASE OF LOGAN BLYTHE

- Logan Blythe, Scout in Utah diagnosed with Down syndrome
- Various news reports in March 2018 indicated
  - He was awarded Eagle rank which was subsequently revoked because proper accommodations processes were not followed by his local Council
  - His merit badges were “revoked”
  - He was “demoted” to Cub Scout
  - Parent sued BSA for \$1 and damages due to perceived discrimination against Logan

(11)

16

## THE CASE OF LOGAN BLYTHE

- Other stories indicated
  - Logan is described to have the cognitive abilities of a four year-old due to Down syndrome
  - Despite limitations, local Scout leaders allowed him to earn merit badges by completing the requirements to the best of his abilities
  - Scout officials told him his Eagle Scout project of making kits for newborn babies in hospitals
  - The next day his family received an email indicating “I have been asked to suspend Logan’s Eagle Project approval... The young man MUST do the requirements as written, including leadership responsibilities... He also must be able to plan, develop and carry out his Eagle Project... I sincerely apologize and regret any false hope we have given... presumably from his Scout Master
  - Local leaders reportedly contacted the National Council and were told that there were no alternative requirements for the Eagle rank, meaning they would be unable to accommodate Logan. (12)

17

## THE CASE OF LOGAN BLYTHE

- Corrections to the news stories by BSA
  - “The option to earn the rank of Eagle Scout has been – and still is – available to Logan.”
  - Logan’s merit badges were not revoked
  - Logan was not demoted to a Cub Scout, but remains registered as Boy Scout
  - “The Boy Scouts of America is committed to making sure every Scout benefits from the program and has the opportunity to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The process of achieving the Eagle Scout rank is rigorous for any Scout, but it is designed so that accommodations can be made for Scouts with disabilities or special needs.”
  - “The National Disabilities Advancement Team wants to work directly with the Blythe family to review what Logan has accomplished based on his abilities and help determine a path for him to earn the Eagle Scout rank that is both appropriate and empowering for their situation.”

(13)

18

## HOW CAN WE PREVENT ANOTHER EXPERIENCE LIKE THAT OF LOGAN BLYTHE?

- Discussion

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## WORKING WITH SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, IMPAIRMENTS AND DISABILITIES

BRIAN S. HISSOM, MA, LPCS, NCC, DCC  
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR - SUPERVISOR  
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
HEARTLAND DISTRICT  
PIEDMONT COUNCIL 420, BSA

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## APPENDIX B

### Scouts with Special Needs Roundtable Slide Presentation in Handout Format

# WORKING WITH SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS & IMPAIRMENTS

**BRIAN S. HISSOM, MA, LPCS, NCC, DCC  
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR - SUPERVISOR  
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
HEARTLAND DISTRICT  
PIEDMONT COUNCIL, 420  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

1

## HISTORY

- Our Goal: "The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities is that every boy wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the troop."

(3) Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/210-071.pdf>

2

## HISTORY

- Braille Boy Scout Handbook
- Merit badge pamphlets recorded on cassette tapes
- Closed captioned training videos
- 1965 began registration of overaged Scouts with intellectual or developmental disabilities, now extended to many Scouts with other impairments
- Some units are composed of members with similar impairments but experience has shown that "Scouting works best when all Scouts with disabilities are part of an inclusive unit/group." (3)

3

## HISTORY

- Councils with advisory committees on accommodation
- "An individual is considered to have a "disability" if she or he
  - has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities—seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working,
  - has a record of such an impairment, or
  - is regarded as having such an impairment." (3)

4

## WISDOM

"The best guide to working with youth who have disabilities is to use respect and good common sense."

-Scouting For Youth With Disabilities Manual: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/21052.pdf>

5

## DISABILITY?                      IMPAIRMENT?

Oxford English Dictionary:

Impairment - The state or fact of being impaired, especially in a specified faculty.

Disability - A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

6



## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS?

- “A Scout with a permanent physical or mental disability or disability expected to last more than two years or beyond the 18th birthday for Eagle or Varsity Scout, or 21<sup>st</sup> for Venturer or Sea Scout.”
- “If ranks can be achieved under accommodations already provided in official literature, or with modifications as outlined...the disability probably does not rise to the level required.”

7

## WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS?

Does not meet accommodations criteria if...

- A Youth has moderate learning disabilities
- Disability can be prevented with simple adaptation
- Ranks can be earned, but it takes a somewhat longer time
- Activities can be taught creatively to allow full participation

8

## EXAMPLES?

- Cerebral palsy
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Paraplegia
- Quadriplegia
- Limb functional abnormalities

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

9

## LESS VISIBLE EXAMPLES

- Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Learning impairments
  - Dyslexia
  - Dyspraxia
  - Dysgraphia
  - Auditory processing disorders
  - Dyscalcula

- Cognitive, intellectual and developmental disorders

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

10

## ALSO MAY SEE...

- Autistic spectrum disorder
  - Autism
  - Aspergers syndrome
- Emotional & Behavioral impairments
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Panic Attack
  - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  - Oppositional-Defiant disorder

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

11

## HOW?

### INDIVIDUAL SCOUT ACHIEVEMENT PLAN (ISAP)

An ISAP can be a natural follow up to the all-important entry meeting with the youth and family where the leader has an opportunity to meet and learn about the future Scout and explain how Scouting can be part of the youth's life.

The ISAP must be approved by the Council Advancement Committee.

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## HOW? INDIVIDUAL SCOUT ACHIEVEMENT PLAN (ISAP)

The ISAP forms a “contract” or roadmap, which the Scout, his parents and mentors, or other leaders can reference or, if necessary, update.

An ISAP helps form the support for District and Council staff who do not know the particular Scout except by the record of accomplishments.

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## EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

- Extended registration by age
- Alternative rank advancement requirements (but not for merit badges)
- Alternate merit badges toward rank
- Extended time for completion
- Accessible literature and materials

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## SUGGESTIONS...

- See your Scout, not the impairment, first
  - Think and use person-first language
  - Respect & offer assistance, do not assume
  - Let the Scout & his/her family guide you
- Make the parents your partners
- Find a mentor
  - Scouter with experience
  - Professional - Counselor, Psychologist, Special Education Teacher
  - Council Accommodations Committee

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## SUGGESTIONS...

- Educate yourself about...
  - The diagnosis
  - BSA resources
  - ISAP - Individualized Scouting Achievement Plan
  - Accommodations for merit badges & rank advancement
  - Fact Sheets & Forms - p. 107 - 118 of Scouting for Youth Disabilities Manual, <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>
  - Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf> pp. 7-11

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## IDEALLY...

- Before or soon after a Scout with a disability joins the Unit, the Unit Leader should meet with the youth and his/her parents for a “listening session: to hear expectations and concerns
- Unit Leader should consult Council Advancement or Accommodations Committee and /or your District Commissioner / District Executive for guidance before the meeting
- Unit Leader should consult resources available at BSA website <https://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## IDEALLY...

- The Unit Leader should obtain permission from the parents to discuss the Scout's disability with other adult and youth leaders.
- Always respect your Scout's privacy.
- Adult and youth leaders should discuss proper ways to address expectations from the Scout, and unit membership and leaders
- Rely on your Accommodations and Advancement Committees to guide the process toward developing any necessary accommodations

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## USE YOUR RESOURCES...

- District Accommodations and Advancement Committees
- District Commissioner and District Executive
- BSA Guides and Materials
- Your Scout's Resources
  - Parents
  - Professionals treating the Scout
  - Teachers familiar with Scout's IEP (Individualized Education Program), if available
  - The Scout

Our challenge is to remove or reduce barriers that allow an impairment to become a disability.

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## OUR GOAL

“The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities is that every boy wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the troop.”

(3) Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>

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## RESOURCES

- American Psychological Associations: <http://www.apa.org>
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: <http://www.chadd.org>
- Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge: <http://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges/mb-DISA.aspx>
- Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge Pamphlet: BSA Supply No. 35883
- Easter Seals, North Carolina Chapter
- Guide to Advancement 2013: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>
- Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>

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## RESOURCES

- National Center for Learning Disabilities: <http://www.nclld.org>
- National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nih.gov>
- National Institutes of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>
- North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs/>
- North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsb/>
- North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

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## RESOURCES

- Scouting For Youth With Disabilities Manual: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34052.pdf>
- Scouts with Disabilities: Who, How and When. Jones, K. Heart of America Council, BSA, Kansas City MO. Accessed on January 20, 2019 from <https://www.hoac-bsa.org/scouts-with-disabilities>
- Scouts with Special Needs <http://www.scouting.org/specialneeds.aspx>
- Special-Needs Scouting Presentation for All scout Leaders: [http://www.bsacmc.org/pdfs/Special\\_Needs\\_Training\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.bsacmc.org/pdfs/Special_Needs_Training_Guide.pdf)
- Youth Members With Special Needs: [http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Youth\\_Members\\_With\\_Special\\_Needs](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Youth_Members_With_Special_Needs)
- Working with Scouts with Disabilities - Mecklenburg Council: <http://www.mccscouting.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yhKjDj-MV5+&>

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## REFERENCES

1. Disabilities Awareness Wiki: [http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Disabilities\\_Awareness](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Disabilities_Awareness)
2. Guide to Advancement 2013: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>
3. Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>
4. Oxford Dictionaries: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/>
5. Scouting For Youth With Disabilities Manual: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34052.pdf>
6. Scouts with Disabilities: Who, How and When. Jones, K. Heart of America Council, BSA, Kansas City MO. Accessed on January 20, 2019 from <https://www.hoac-bsa.org/scouts-with-disabilities>
7. Scouts with Special Needs <http://www.scouting.org/specialneeds.aspx>
8. Special-Needs Scouting Presentation for All scout Leaders: [http://www.bsacmc.org/pdfs/Special\\_Needs\\_Training\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.bsacmc.org/pdfs/Special_Needs_Training_Guide.pdf)
9. Youth Members With Special Needs: [http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Youth\\_Members\\_With\\_Special\\_Needs](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Youth_Members_With_Special_Needs)
10. Working with Scouts with Disabilities - Mecklenburg Council: <http://www.mccscouting.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yhKjDj-MV5+&>

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**WORKING WITH SCOUTS  
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS &  
IMPAIRMENTS**

**BRIAN S. HISSOM, MA, LPCS, NCC, DCC  
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR - SUPERVISOR  
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
HEARTLAND DISTRICT  
PIEDMONT COUNCIL, 420  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

**APPENDIX C**

**YouTube Link to Roundtable Training Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrzGrBNLokA>

**APPENDIX D**  
**Example of Individual Scout Advancement Plan.**

**Individual Scout Advancement Plan**

The approval of alternative requirements or merit badges should be discussed with the Scout, parent or guardian, and unit leader. An agreement is reached and forwarded to the council advancement committee for approval before starting to work on the specific task. The ISAP is the basic plan that can be used for all Scouts to document proposed and approved alternative advancement requirements. The ISAP is modified by addendum. Additional information can be found in the *Guide to Advancement*, section 10.

**Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:**

Member's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Unit No. \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Council \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of belief:** Though it is true every Scout must have the overall ability to fulfill BSA advancement requirements as written, members with a documented disability deserve the opportunity to utilize their remaining abilities to fulfill alternative requirements that represent the same challenge and essential outcome as those written. The only limitations for members with sufficient abilities to achieve approved alternative requirements should be their individual desire, focus, and perseverance.

**Objective:** Scouting literature provides the requirements, policies and procedures, and related supporting content. It cannot address each individual Scout's abilities, but it can help those involved to reach an understanding as to how certain goals can be met. The ISAP is a road map that Scouts, their parents or guardians, mentors, and other leaders can reference and update as necessary.

**Methodology:** Within reasonable guidelines, the ISAP will provide Scouts with the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and, through creative thinking and action, remove unnecessary barriers that may impede their advancement. This is done so as not to lessen the relative challenges of the Scouting experience and the primary goal of personal growth.

**Expectations of performance:** Scouts are expected to do their best to the limits of their abilities and resources.

---

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Scout's name), promise that on my honor, I will do my best in working toward my personal advancement goals.

I am a (check one):     Cub Scout     Scout     Venturer     Sea Scout

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (leader's name), \_\_\_\_\_ (title), promise to do my best to deliver upon the statement of belief, objective, and methodology expressed above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

## Addendum to Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:

Scout's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Unit No. \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Council \_\_\_\_\_

Addenda are required if it is determined that a Scout has specific behavioral, cognitive, or physical attributes that are of a permanent nature and, for reasons beyond the Scout's control, may create an impediment to individual advancement. Requirements, as written, may be redefined to maintain the challenge but provide an alternative path toward achievement. This addendum may be amended in the future by mutual consent.

### Instructions

1. Behavioral, cognitive, or physical disabilities of a permanent nature permit the approved substitution of alternative requirements for advancement.
2. Any limitations leading to alternative requirements should be supported by a qualified health professional's certification, based upon a severe or permanent condition.
3. The Scout shall attempt to complete, to the extent possible, the current requirements before modifications are sought, and any alternative requirements shall provide a similar challenge as those stated.
4. Modifications and alternative requirements must receive prior approval by the council advancement committee. The council committee should record and deliver its decision to the Scout, the Scout's parent or guardian, and the unit leader.
5. Alternative requirements involving physical activity shall have a physician's approval.
6. The unit leader and, if appropriate, any board of review must explain to the Scout that every Scout is expected to do their best up to the limit of their abilities and resources.

Further reference: *Guide to Advancement*, section 10.0.0.0

## Addendum to Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:

Scout's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

### The Standard Requirement (State the rank and the requirement number.)

### Modifications and Alternative Requirement

Describe in detail the modified alternative requirement. Print a separate copy of this sheet for each requirement to be modified.

### Narrative Summary

Explain why circumstances make this Scout unable to complete the requirement as written.

### Health Professional Statement

As a result of a thorough examination of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), I find that the member has a permanent behavioral, cognitive, or physical disability that is accurately described above, and that will inhibit the member from completing the requirement as it is written. However, I find that the member can safely complete the modified requirement as stated above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (licensed health professional)

Office address \_\_\_\_\_

Office telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Attach additional documents if applicable.**



# Annual BSA Health Medical Record Form, Parts A, B, and C

## Addendum to Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:

Scout's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

### Educational Statement (If needed)

As a result of a thorough educational assessment of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), I find that the member has a permanent behavioral, cognitive, or physical disability that is accurately described above, and that will inhibit the member from completing the requirement as it is written. However, I find that the member can safely complete the modified requirement as stated above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (certified educational administrator)

Office address \_\_\_\_\_

Office telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

### Attach additional supporting documents if applicable (e.g., Individualized Education Plan)

**Parental statement:** In view of my child's expressed desire to advance in Scouting and personal commitment to strive for the best possible outcome, and the leaders' commitment to provide encouragement, I agree to the requirements as modified above. If any further modification is warranted, I understand that such action can be negotiated.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Approval of the Council Advancement Committee

The council advancement committee approves the above modifications for advancement because of the Scout's permanent behavioral, cognitive, or physical disabilities.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notification sent to the youth member, parent or guardian, and Scout leader on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).



**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, Texas 75015-2079  
www.scouting.org

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## APPENDIX E

### Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges



A youth in Scouts BSA or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout who has a physical or mental disability may achieve the Eagle Scout rank by qualifying for alternative merit badges. This does not apply to individual requirements for merit badges. Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.2.2.3, for details.

The physical or mental disability must be of a permanent rather than of a temporary nature (or a disability expected to last more than two years or beyond the 18th birthday). This request must include a written statement from a qualified health-care professional related to the nature of the disability. This person may be a physician, neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc., or an educational administrator as appropriate.

Before applying, a Scout must earn as many of the Eagle-required merit badges as possible. However, if a permanent disability clearly precludes completing specific merit badges, a Scout who has earned at least First Class may apply for an alternative merit badge without waiting until all other Eagle-required merit badges are complete. Any alternatives must present the same challenge and learning level as those they replace. Unless the Scout has been approved for registration beyond the age of eligibility, all merit badges must be completed by the 18th birthday (reference *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.1.0.1–10.1.0.2).

1. Obtain a clear and concise statement related to the nature of the disability from a qualified health-care professional.
2. The unit leader meets with the candidate and the candidate's parent or guardian to determine the alternative merit badges to replace those the candidate is unable to complete.
3. The unit leader, parent or guardian, and the Scout (if possible) prepare supporting letters to accompany the application.
4. The district and council advancement committees, in turn, review the proposed alternative merit badges. They may choose to speak with the Scout, the Scout's parent or guardian, or the unit leader. If the council advancement committee approves, then the candidate may start work on the merit badges.

**Note:** In approving the application, the district and council advancement committees must utilize the expertise of a health-care professional involved with youth who have disabilities.

5. Upon completion of the Eagle Scout rank requirements, using the alternative merit badges, the candidate appears before a board of review. This approved application must be attached to the Eagle Scout Rank Application.
6. Following a successful board of review, the council processes both applications and forwards them to the National Advancement Program Team. Local council action on alternative merit badges does not require national approval.

#### The Purpose of the Eagle Scout Award

Recipients of the Eagle Scout Award are youth in Scouts BSA, or qualified Venturers or Sea Scouts, who apply the principles of the Scout Oath and Law in daily life. They have achieved the qualities below with determination and persistence.

- Capacity for leadership and a concern for others
- Ability to help others through skills they have learned
- Ability to live and work cooperatively with others by meeting their responsibilities to the unit
- Concern for self by improving their physical fitness to the limits of their resources

#### Possible alternatives for required merit badges\*

CAMPING	COMMUNICATIONS	EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OR LIFESAVING	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE OR SUSTAINABILITY	PERSONAL FITNESS	SWIMMING, HIKING, OR CYCLING
Backpacking	Digital Technology			Archery	
Canoing	Electronics			Athletics	
Kayaking	Graphic Arts	Fire Safety	Energy	Backpacking	Archery
Pioneering	Journalism	Motorboating	Fish and Wildlife	Canoing	Athletics
Rowing	Moviemaking	Public Health	Management	Climbing	Canoing
Search and Rescue	Photography	Radio	Forestry	Golf	Kayaking
Wilderness Survival	Programming	Rowing	Nature	Horsemanship	Motorboating
	Public Speaking	Safety	Oceanography	Rowing	Rowing
	Radio	Traffic Safety	Soil and Water	Skating	Small-Boat Sailing
	Salesmanship	Wilderness Survival	Conservation	Water Sports	Snow Sports
	Signs, Signals, and Codes		Weather		

\*These possible alternatives are merely suggestions that could provide similar learning experiences. The list is not considered all-inclusive. It is important for unit leaders to use reasonable accommodation and common sense in the application of the alternative merit badge program.

# APPLICATION FOR ALTERNATIVE EAGLE SCOUT RANK MERIT BADGES

## To: The District Advancement Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Council

We are submitting this application on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ of Unit No. \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
Name of candidate

chartered to \_\_\_\_\_ and located in \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Community State

Because of the disability (see the statement below from a qualified health-care professional), we believe that the candidate is physically or mentally unable to complete the requirements for the following merit badge or badges required for the Eagle Scout rank:

Following a personal conference with the candidate and the candidate's parent or guardian, we recommend the following alternative merit badge or badges be approved. **These must not be merit badges previously earned (Guide to Advancement 10.2.2.3).** Please see the attached documentation supporting this recommendation.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Unit leader Unit committee chair

## Parent or Guardian Statement

In view of the medical or administrative statement attached, and following a conference with our unit leader, I approve the alternative Eagle Scout rank merit badges. My/our letter supporting this recommendation is attached, and also one from our Scout (if possible).

An Individualized Education Plan or other documentation is attached (optional).

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or guardian

## Statement From a Qualified Health-Care Professional

As a result of a thorough examination or testing of the above-named Eagle Scout candidate on \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
Date

I have attached a statement describing the disability, the Scout's capabilities, limitations, and prognosis, and outlined why the merit badges to be replaced cannot be completed.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Title/credentials \_\_\_\_\_

## District Certification

We have reviewed this application for the above-named Eagle Scout candidate, and in review of the medical or administrative statement, we believe the Scout should follow the alternative Eagle Scout rank merit badge method. We recommend to the council advancement committee that the merit badge or badges indicated above be approved as alternatives.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
District advancement committee chair or designee

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
District executive

## Council Committee Action\*

We have reviewed the district's recommendations and provide our approval.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Council advancement committee chair or designee

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Scout executive

\*The local council action on the alternative merit badge(s) for the Eagle Scout rank does not require National Council approval.

