

Support for Mental Health Challenges

Pacific Coast Council

Critical Shift: Increased access to mentorship, especially for new Scouters.

Our Story:

The Pacific Coast Council identified the challenge of significant capacity constraints across their Council, specifically in Colony & Pack, due to dedicated Scouter time being spent managing the youth with mental health challenges including neurodivergence in their programs. The Scouters didn't feel that they were equipped with the appropriate skills to work with these exceptional needs and turned to the Council for support.

The Problem:

The biggest barrier to increasing capacity and being able to welcome more youth to Scouting in the Pacific Coast Council is not having adequate help with supporting youth with mental health challenges including neurodivergence and other exceptional needs.

Our Solution:

Facilitating a Council-wide day of training for Scouters to be able to learn from a healthcare professional who can also provide useful tools, resources and best practices in working with youth with mental health challenges, neurodivergence and other exceptional needs.

How It Works:

Volunteers with access to tools, resources and professional mentorship of this sensitive topic will be better prepared to successfully support and be inclusive of all youth in their programs including those with mental health challenges, neurodivergence and other exceptional needs. Equipping Scouters with these valuable skills will allow for less overwhelm, burnout and time spent problem-solving, and create a safe space to increase Section capacity and welcome waitlisted youth making Scouting more accessible and manageable for Scouters, youth, and Scouting families.



What Success Looked Like:

- Scouters received new tools & resources to support their youth.
- Orderliness and consistency of Section programs increased.
- Scouters felt better equipped to include and work with all youth.
- Scouters felt more at ease increasing their Section capacity and welcoming new members to Scouting.

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Give it a Try!

Step-by-Step

1. Establish a budget and what it will include (venue, presenter, refreshments/lunch).
2. Book a professional speaker who works in the field. There may be Scouters in your area who also work in the field. Select a presentation date that works for them.
3. Book a venue in a central location.
4. Add a blurb in your Council newsletter and send a message to all Scouters to invite them to this day of facilitated training.
5. Put together a brief 5 question survey to hand out both before and after the workshop to learn about how effective the workshop was for the attending Scouters. [Click here](#) for an example.
6. Order refreshments (several days prior to the workshop event and arrange to pick them up the evening before/morning of the event).
7. Appoint a host for the event who will welcome everyone, share a land acknowledgement, go through safety, housekeeping, the itinerary and welcome the guest presenter.
8. Once the workshop is over. And all attendees have submitted their before and after surveys, review the event with the planning team.



Tips & Tricks

- When booking a professional presenter, there is always the option of having them attend virtually if in a different time zone.
- An invite to the workshop could be extended to parents as well which may ignite a sense of inspiration and belonging to join the learning as a Scouter.

What Do I Need?

- Subject matter expert presenter.
- Venue with tables, chairs and technical capabilities (if presenter is attending virtually or if they have a presentation/videos to show).
- Before/after survey (printed/QR code) and pens to write with.
- Refreshments (noting any food allergies/dietary restrictions).

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