

Adviser Forum: Making Better Decisions

2015 National Order of the Arrow Conference

Session Length: 55 Minutes

**Through this session, you will:**

**Explain** You will learn to define a situation as a detached observer before formulating a solution.

**Demonstrate** You will experience better ways to communicate with your youth and learn why it is important.

**Guide** You will be faced with difficult situations and will work through their resolution.

**Enable** You will make decisions which uphold BSA standards and make the best use of available resources.

This session will help the Lodge/Section with the Journey to Excellence Requirement(s) Lodge: 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 14; Section: 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10

The theme of NOAC 2015 is “It Starts With Us”. This session will relay this theme in the following ways:

* Although OA advisers are placed in a position of authority, they must defer many decisions to the youth officer that they mentor. Occasionally, however, advisers find themselves confronted by situations in which their role as an adult must supervene.
* You will discuss various scenarios where advisers and youth experience conflict and conflict resolution.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Adviser Group Break-out 10 Minutes**

The role of the Adviser is to ensure the smooth operation of the lodge and that OA officers maintain BSA standards of conduct. Paramount is maintaining the dignity and respect for all Arrowmen so that youth are encouraged to demonstrate servant leadership within the bounds of the Scout Oath and Law. Ultimately it is the Adviser who is responsible to ensure that a balance exists providing youth leadership development without micromanagement and within those guidelines.

**Trainer Instructions:** Introduce trainers and core plan for discussion and presentation of the scenarios.Divide guests into 5 or 6 groups and provide each group with one scenario (plasticized 8 ½ X 11 sheet) and note pad. Explain that after 10 minutes they will return to their seats and a spokesperson from the group will present the group’s deliberations.

**TRAINER PREPARATION**

Trainer (youth/adult) should have OA Lodge or Section officer experience or (adult) be an adviser

**Required Materials:**

* Computer and projector for PowerPoint presentations
* 6 Laminated scenarios
* 6 Note pads

**Useful Materials:**

* OA Field Operations Guide
* OA Guide for Officers and Advisers
* Scout Oath and Law
* OA Obligation

**Trainer Instructions: Guests will return to their seats. Explain that due to time constraints only 3 or 4 scenarios will be presented. PPT session will commence with first slide.**

Slide **1** Title: Making Better Decisions

Slide **2** Session Objectives 1

Slide **3** Decision Making Steps

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**Un-Scout-like Behavior 7 Minutes**

1. Slide **4** [Scenario #1] Un-Scout-Like behavior

Slide **5** [Scenario #1 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **6** **Answer:** Cyberbullying

Definitions: Defamation & False Light

**Defamation**: Defamation is the general term for a legal claim involving injury to one's reputation caused by false statements of fact. This includes both libel and slander which are **false** statements. Truthful statements that harm another's reputation will not create liability for defamation (although they may open you up to other forms of liability if the information you publish is of a personal or highly private nature).

[**False Light**](http://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/false-light): False light is similar to defamation. Claims for false light generally involve **untrue or misleading implications** rather than directly false statements. For instance, an article about sex offenders illustrated with a photograph of an individual who is not, in fact, a sex offender could give rise to a false light claim, even if the article and photo caption never make the explicit false statement (i.e., identifying the person in the photo as a sex offender) that would support a defamation claim.

Slide **7** Surveys have reported that from 21% to 43% of teens have been **cyberbullied** and about 15% admitted to **cyberbullying others** at some point in their lifetimes. Taken as a whole, it seems safe to conclude that about one out of every three teens has experienced cyberbullying, and about one out of every six teens has done it to others.

Slide **8** Should it have been reported to local police? Since it involves the internet, report to FBI?

By leaving for another state is that illegal flight to avoid prosecution? Could YOU be at risk of being charged with aiding and abetting illegal flight?

What does BSA require in ALL cases of abuse?  **Report to Scout Executive.**

What should be done with the lodge chief?

Counseling?

Removal from OA officer position?

Take back his Eagle award?

Kicked out of Scouting?

What should be done with the victim(s)?

Counseling?

Speak directly with parents? Have SE speak to parents?

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**Foot-In-The-Door 7 Minutes**

**2.** Slide **9** [Scenario #2] Foot-in-the-door

Slide **10** [Scenario #2 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **11** Answer: Hazing and injury

This is a case of hazing, prohibited in Scouting. Scouting is a safe haven. For a young Arrowman to be treated this way by a person of respect, the lodge chief, is inexcusable and immature behavior. The lodge chief should be counseled. He should apologize publicly to the younger Arrowman. One mistake might be forgiven, but if this is a pattern of behavior, and occurs again, perhaps a new lodge chief election should be in the offing.

Don’t pay the $200. You may recall from first-aid training that the treatment for a broken toe is to tape it to its neighbor toe. If it’s not broken, taping it won’t hurt anything. When he gets home, let his family deal with it.

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**Bungled Election 7 Minutes**

1. Slide **12** [Scenario #3]: Bungled Election

Slide **13** [Scenario #3 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **14** Answer: Lodge Chief and Adviser dropped the ball

First of all, the lodge chief should have been running the election instead of letting someone else take over. He could, of course, delegate the responsibility to someone else.

When the election was discovered invalid, the lodge chief should have immediately declared it so. If a quorum of Arrowmen are no longer present, another meeting should have been scheduled to hold the election.

The lodge adviser certainly has the right to notify the newly elected chief. He should also have the integrity to make another phone call and admit the error.

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This is a situation where Josh was clearly wronged. This situation resulted in Josh, a strong force in the lodge and a chapter chief, quit attending OA events and quit paying dues. His father, a Vigil Honor member and Chapter Adviser, quit lending his support to the lodge. Arbitrary decisions without discussion often can lead to bitterness and disillusionment.

**Not Following the OA Selection/Election Rules 7 Minutes**

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

1. Slide **15** [Scenario #4] Not following OA selection/election rules

Slide **16** [Scenario #4 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **17** [Quick quiz]

Slide **18** Answer: Illegal OA elections

Slide **19** Cont’d discussion

The elections of Troop 4 ordeal candidates were done illegally.

This is not a fight the Sanquen lodge Adviser should be taking on. He should instead discuss the situation with the council Scout Executive (“Supreme Chief of the Fire”), who should then contact the Scout Executive of the council where the illegal elections and Ordeals are taking place.

Should the Scouts be penalized for the error? I think that would be unfair. It was the scoutmaster and other adults who didn’t know or ignored the rules. Instead, they should be allowed to join the lodge in their home council.

**Unwanted Guests 7 Minutes**

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

1. Slides **20** & **21** [Scenario #5] Unwanted guests

Slide **22** [Scenario #5 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **23** Answer: Poor planning ahead of time.

This is an unfortunate situation which actually happened. There is no problem with Venturers who are registered by the BSA to attend NOAC as guests. The housing situation is probably the main thing that must be dealt with. Their medical data and physicals are already processed.

As the one who committed to picking them up at the airport, it becomes your job to find a place for them to stay. The VAO president should not be a problem: he is an Arrowman, and his Scout Executive endorses his attendance at NOAC.

For the 3 females, the 19 year old is still a youth in Venturing. Venturing does not differentiate between 18-20, or under 18 for sleeping quarters.

You probably have two options:

1: purchase a nearby hotel room for the females out of your own pocket, or

2: perhaps contact the local service lodge and ask if there are any registered local female Venturing advisors who would be willing to house the trio for a few days.

After they had paid their air fare to attend it seems inhospitable to send them packing. Perhaps you could see if any Arrowmen would be willing to help the Venturers “man” their booth exhibit?

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**Quelling an Uprising 7 Minutes**

1. Slides **24** & **25** [Scenario #6] Quelling an Uprising

Slide **26** [Scenario #6 summary]

**Trainer Instructions: Ask Scenario spokesman to present group’s deliberations. When done, ask class for comments. Then present the “answer” slide**

Slide **27** Answer: Let the Lodge Chief take charge

One gets the idea that a father and a son cooked up this idea. None of those youth members had attended a Council of Chiefs. The lodge chief and the lodge adviser were well aware of the time and talent required to make a conclave happen. It takes months of planning, securing a venue, having a council based bank account, rounding up activities resources, lining up medical and food service support, etc.

One could suggest that the task was impossible to accomplish in one month or even 5 months, but the lodge chief came up with a better solution.

He took a written “roll call” of the voters. Once he had all the names, he started assigning each of the affirmative voters to committees to accomplish the task. There was a gasp from the lodge members, as if to say, “You mean that everything isn’t just going to be provided for us?”

A second vote to “validate the count on the motion” was taken. Not one member was in favor of the “lodge conclave” any longer.

**CONCLUSION**

The scenarios discussed were based on actual events. There are several ways in which to resolve each one, and the answers provided may not always have been the best resolution. You should have learned how to first define the problem, weigh your options, then make the best use of your resources to reach a fair and comprehensive conclusion in accordance with BSA principles.

**End Section**

**Appendix:**

**Below are the scenarios from the PowerPoint slides for quick reference.**

**Scenario 1**

It is the final night of NOAC. You are the lodge Adviser attending with your staff adviser. Eagle Scout lodge chief, Jim, and 7 other Arrowmen are the youth. It is 86 degrees in the dormitory rooms, with no air conditioning. Three of your youth contingent carry blankets to the air-conditioned commons room down the hall to sleep on the sofas.

Unbeknownst to you, lodge chief Jim and two Arrowmen are up to “playing a prank” on the three soundly sleeping contingent members in the commons room. They carefully stage the same photo for each one. It consists of a view of the face, head and shoulders of each sleeping individual with several items strewn about: a pornographic magazine opened to a nude photo of a woman is placed near the sleeping scout’s head. Also in the photograph on the floor near the sofa are scattered such items as an open condom and wrapper, two empty beer bottles, an open pack of cigarettes, and a woman’s brassiere.

As you are heading from NOAC to the airport the next morning, one of the victims, a 13 year old Eagle Scout, approaches you with tears in his eyes. He shows you on his cell phone the illicitly taken photograph of himself on **Facebook** just as described above. He has already called his father, a Mormon Bishop and council executive board member who incidentally is frantically trying to reach you! You make inquiries of the other contingent members, and find out that the lodge chief was the instigator. When you confront Jim, he sheepishly admits to the actions. What should you do?

**Scenario 2**

It is the last night of NOAC. You are the contingent leader. Your lodge chief thought it might be funny to trap one of the younger Arrowmen in a revolving door. He tries to do this by inserting his foot between the door and the frame, only to receive intense sudden pain in his toes. You are summoned to the scene, and after postponing to scold the lodge chief privately for his stupid mischievous activity, you take him to the infirmary. The doctor says he suspects a broken toe, but would need x-rays for a definitive diagnosis. X-rays are NOT covered on the NOAC insurance, and he would need a payment of **$200** **in** **cash**.

What do you do?

What if anything should be done or said to the lodge chief for his intended prank?

**Scenario 3**

It is the weekend of the fall ordeal and lodge elections. Two arrowmen, Josh and Adam, have been nominated for Lodge Chief. After the ordeal ceremony, the lodge gathers in the camp dining hall to hear from the two candidates. The lodge By-Laws state that no votes may be by proxy, and all voters must be physically present. However, Adam has a school band engagement at a high school football game. Even though he cannot cast a ballot, he has submitted a video of himself stating his qualifications for lodge chief for the voters to see.

Josh goes next, and does a good job, taking questions. At this point, one of the former lodge officers asks Josh to go outside while the lodge arrowmen discuss the pros and cons of each candidate. A secret ballot is then distributed and Adam wins 23 to 22. The Lodge Adviser notifies the winner by telephone that he has been elected. Many of the arrowmen now leave for home, while a few stay behind to clean up.

Then it is discovered that Josh is still outside, and didn’t get a chance to cast his vote, which would have likely resulted in a tie election, 23 to 23, and would have required everyone to cast a second ballot. The current lodge chief doesn’t know what to do. The lodge adviser says to declare the balloting over, and to let Adam be the new lodge chief.

Discuss what went wrong and what should have been done.

**Scenario 4**

Ever since anyone could remember, Troop 4 has never permitted anyone from the Sanquen lodge to perform an OA election. Troop 4 never attends the home council camp, and always goes to a summer camp in an adjacent council. Sanquen Lodge could certainly use more members and dues, and Troop 4 has over 75 Scouts, year after year.

The new Sanquen lodge adviser hears complaints from his lodge’s election team, but quietly states that the scoutmaster has final say on whether to allow OA elections in Troop 4. One summer, the Sanquen lodge adviser is serving on the Area Visitation Team, and is visiting the summer camp of the adjacent council. To his dismay, he discovers Troop 4 is there and many members are undergoing an Ordeal ceremony and some troop members are wearing the lodge flap of that council’s lodge.

What should the Sanquen lodge adviser do?

**Scenario 5**

Congratulations! You have just been named the OA Region Adviser to the OA Region Chief! You are making plans to attend NOAC. Your Chief asks you a favor. His best friend, Erik, is the Region Venturing Officer Association [youth] President and an Arrowman. Erik would like to come to NOAC to set up an information booth on Venturing along with his VOA cabinet. You mention that it should be no problem, and after contacting the proper individuals on the NOAC planning team, a letter to Erik is quickly drafted inviting him and his cabinet to NOAC, and the Scout Executives give their approvals.

Your Region Chief thanks you for your efforts. The letter and instructions are sent out to have the cabinet members submit physicals for processing. Your Chief didn’t bother to mention that the 3 Regional Venturing Vice-Presidents are female youth, and he is currently dating one of them.

When the physical exams are screened, the screener realizes that one female is 19, the other two are 17. The dormitory rooms set aside for the group will not work. There are barely enough shower facilities for adult men, adult women, 18-20 year-old men, and boys 17 and under. When you become aware of this, you make a frantic call to the NOAC planning team, who drafts another letter rescinding the invitation to the Venturers. Too late. The day that letter was to arrive, the Venturing cabinet members were already boarding their aircraft heading for NOAC. You and your Region Chief had previously committed to picking them up at the airport.

How do you handle this now?

**Scenario 6**

XYZ lodge only holds two lodge meeting per year: one at the summer encampment, and the other at the council camporee.

The council camporee has just hosted a Brotherhood ceremony last evening. On Saturday, 15 youth and 8 adults gather for the lodge meeting. After preliminaries, one of the Arrowmen who attended Conclave the previous year, asks why the lodge can’t put on its own “mini” conclave. Other youth chime in that this is what they want the lodge to do. Several adults start making suggestions about what kinds of activities can be held. There is talk of bringing in plastic sumo wrestling outfits and Velcro suits which allow the wearer to throw himself up on the Velcro wall and stick there. There will be axe throwing, and classes on patch collecting. Perhaps the lodge will make a new pocket flap patch to mark the event. And the food will be superb. Pizza, hamburgers, scrambled eggs and bacon, waffles, and bottomless refills of soft drinks.

Your associate lodge adviser is not present, nor is your staff adviser. Your lodge chief seems a bit perplexed as to what he should do, but he does ask the superfluous adults to move elsewhere to talk away from the lodge youth members. He turns to you and wants to know if this is a good idea. The members would like to do the mini conclave next month. A vote is called for. 14 youth vote in the affirmative, with the Lodge Chief abstaining.

How would you advise the Chief?