

Session: Creating a Culture: Making Authentic Relationships



Duration: 50 minutes

Facilitator: Anyone, preferably someone who has 2+ years in a lodge/chapter.

Supplies: Slideshow Presentation, Flip Chart or Whiteboard, Pen and Paper for participants.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and apply the three steps of building authentic relationships.
- Create one strategy to strengthen lodge culture and belonging.
- Explain how relationships impact retention and choose one improvement to implement.

Introduction: 3 minutes

Say: "Hello my name is _____ and I will be your facilitator for today's training on "Creating a Culture: Making Authentic Relationships".

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Say: "Before we begin, let's first look at our learning objectives for the session!"

Learning Outcomes:

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Trainer Cue: Open with the following question to prepare the participants for the topic of discussion for this session...

1. "What makes someone feel they truly belong?"
2. Ask a few participants about their answers, not to exceed 3 minutes
3. Fill out a flip chart or white board with buzz words such as "safe", "friendly", "comfortable", as they are stated by participants, etc.

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Section 2 - Why Do Relationships Matter? : 7 minutes

Say: The Order of the Arrow and Scouting America are not all about camping, advancement, ceremonies, or service hours. It is about the people and how we build them up to form lifelong relationships by following the Scout Oath and Law. When there is a scout in camp at an ordeal weekend, it is not the patch or food that impacts them. By checking in with our lodge members and asking them, “How was your weekend?” or “Will I see you at our next chapter meeting?”, we can shape the experience that arrowmen new and old will positively remember.

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Connection = Retention

Say: It is not the events or patches that keep scouts in the program; it is the fellowship and relationships that make arrowmen excited to return to their next lodge event!

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Question: Allow participants to answer the following questions to themselves, and allow individuals to share with the group if they wish to do so.

“Think about your own OA and scouting experience—what’s one time a relationship made a difference in whether you stayed involved or felt connected?”

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Section 3 - 3 Effective Steps for Creating Authentic Relationships: 15 minutes

Say: Let us next explore what we consider the “3 Effective Steps for Creating Authentic Relationships”

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Listening Actively:

- Listening actively in one-on-one or group conversations with members of our lodge or section can make our program feel more welcoming. In all cases, one of the strongest qualities that a good citizen should have in their conduct with others is their ability to make others feel heard.
- **Question:** “Which of the following is an example of *intentional listening*?”
 - A. Waiting until they finish speaking so you can tell your story
 - **B. Making eye contact, nodding, and asking a follow-up question**
 - C. Looking around the room while they talk, then offering advice
 - D. Texting someone back while they explain a problem

■ **Correct Answer: B: Change Slide to Reveal**

- **Trainer Tip: Additional Recommended Activity:** In pairs, have one person share something exciting they've done recently while the other practices *active listening* (no interrupting, just reflecting and asking one follow-up question). Then switch.

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Benefits of Active Listening

1. Unique perspectives and positive growth/change in program areas and lodge operations
2. Diverse opportunities to ensure that all are encouraged and welcome to whatever program your chapter or lodge is offering.
3. Better relationships can be built by listening to those individuals with whom you work in a scouting setting. This allows you to recognize and utilize the strengths of the people around you.

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Be Aware of and Recognize the Small Things: The fundamentals of the fine details

1. Celebrate quiet leadership, not just spotlight moments
 - a. Creating a culture that supports the work of chapter and lodge volunteers, whether they have an elected or appointed position, can influence the work of both youth and adult participants.

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2. Acknowledge effort, even when it doesn't lead to success
 - a. When following up, utilize the small details of a larger project to provide positive and constructive feedback

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3. Use the tool of "Thank you."
 - a. Saying "Thank you" shares the idea of acknowledgement and reinforcement to develop positive workspaces.

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4. Small gestures can create large ripples.
 - a. It is the understanding that all actions among chapter and lodge operations seem month by month, but the small steps to help the lodge live its vision will help shape the culture and overall future of the local lodge experience.

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Ask: "Think of a small, kind action you noticed someone do this week." Then share a few examples.

Discuss: Why did that stand out?

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Follow up whenever applicable..

- **Say:** Whether there is an event to plan or a meeting to run, it is important to show that you follow up. Ensuring that those around you are asked the important questions after the fact will greatly improve the culture of making your team feel valued.
 - Keep track of what others share (use notes or memory triggers)
 - A simple “How did that go?” or “What are you excited to do next time?” can mean a lot
 - Helps others feel supported and remembered
 - Builds accountability and encourages future sharing

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Ask: “Can you recall a time when you told someone something small - like a goal or event? If so, how did it make you feel when they remembered this conversation or aspiration?”

Discuss this as a group (Popcorn, raise of hands, etc.)

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Section 4 - Tighten our Links and Share our Vision: 10 minutes

Say: Throughout Scouting and the world around us, a team can only grow by having shared experiences and visions.. By allowing those around us to understand the “why” for our order on the lodge level, we can strengthen the culture that we can create. Here are a few factors that greatly develop the culture of a chapter, lodge, and section.

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- Culture is not by mistake; it is by example
 - **Say:** Culture will not just appear; by exemplifying the values of our organization with brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service, we can start to build a welcoming and productive group.
- Invite others to share with you
 - **Say:** You cannot truly SHARE your vision by giving a speech, but rather by engaging in conversation on where people can get involved.
- Put it into perspective
 - **Say:** Do not talk about what your group does well or what you do; talk about why you do it.
 - **Example:** Lodge growth by doing more retention
 - “What would our lodge look like if we had more people who felt valued and involved?”

- Or “How would your experience be improved from knowing you are valued within the lodge?”

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Trainer Note: Read directions to the group and after the activity, facilitated a reflective discussion.

Vision Circle: Reinforce inviting more voices, sharing why our OA culture matters for more than ourselves, and helping share a vision for a better future.

1. Break into small groups (3–4 people per group).
2. Have each group form a small circle and answer this prompt together: “What would our chapter/lodge/section look and feel like if everyone felt welcomed, valued, and involved?”
3. Encourage everyone to share at least one thought. Offer these sentence starters if needed:
 - a. “It would feel more like...”
 - b. “I think more people would...”
 - c. “I’d personally feel more...”
4. After 3 minutes of group discussion, bring everyone back together.
5. ***Trainer Note:*** Ask for 1 or 2 quick examples from the room:
 - a. “Who heard an idea that stood out?”
 - b. “What would change if your vision became real?”

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Trainer Note: Use personal timer or provided slide timer for 3:00

Closing: 2 minutes

Say: “*Before we close let us review our learning objectives*”

REPEAT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Say: “Every voice is important in creating a culture. Have each participant write one action item that they will bring to their lodge to strengthen the culture that they are trying to create.”

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Quote: “Culture is not an initiative. Culture is the enabler of all initiatives.”— Larry Senn

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Say: This has been Creating a Culture: Making Authentic Relationships. I hope you took away some valuable resources and tools to bring back to your home lodges!