

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence



Before You Begin

Violence can be a sensitive and challenging topic, so it's important to carefully assess your group and your capacity prior to engaging with this topic. This may mean that you consider whether you need additional information on the many different forms of gender-based violence (GBV) to safely and accurately share that information with girls. It may also mean considering, through conversation with parents, what the Girl Scouts in your troop are ready to learn about. All activities must be delivered in spaces where girls feel supported and safe. You are encouraged to find local support services before beginning any of these activities. You should obtain parental permission prior to engaging in these activities or discussion. Samples of parental permission for sensitive issues forms can be found in the appendix.

Activities for All Program Grade Levels

Set group norms or agreement. Discuss with girls what would make them feel safe and welcome in discussing issues of violence. Some questions you may want to ask girls are:

- What would make this a safe and respectful place for us to be?
- What would be good ways to treat each other?
- What group rules do you have in other places like at school or in sports? Which ones work?

It is a good idea to consider your own boundaries within the context of this topic as well. Doing so will help you set expectations within the group, and keep girls and adults safe when discussing sensitive topics.

Daisy/Brownie/Junior Activities

What is a life free from violence? Share with girls the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹ Let girls know that they, and all children, have the right to be safe from violence. Ask girls to brainstorm what other rights they think children should have and compare them to the rights

NOVEMBER 25
to
DECEMBER 10

WHAT IT IS: The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign calling for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. It begins on November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and ends on December 10 (International Human Rights Day), to emphasize that violence against women is a violation of human rights.

WHY WE CELEBRATE: Violence impacts women and girls in every country, at every age, including our members. Girl Scouts builds leaders who are prepared with the courage and knowledge to take on issues like these, not just in the future but today.

1. UNICEF, "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language," poster, https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm.

listed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Book it. *Hands Are Not for Hitting* by Martine Agassi is a story about alternative actions and activities that children and adults can do with their hands instead of hitting. After reading the story, give girls scenarios and ask them to act out what they could do instead of hitting. Some possible scenarios are:

- Someone took the toy you were playing with. What could you do?
- Someone accidentally knocked you down on the playground. What could you do?
- You want to be the first in line. What could you do?
- Someone picked up your beads and they fell off the string. What could you do?
- You're mad at your mom. What could you do?

Examine types of violence. Very Violent, Very Peaceful,² an activity developed by the San Diego District Attorney's office and Project Concern International, helps girls begin to explore what violence is in some of its many forms. In your meeting space, put a sign saying "very violent" on one side of the room and a sign saying "very peaceful" on the other side. Connect the signs with a piece of string or tape. Tell girls that you will read statements and they should move to whichever side of the room they think goes with that statement. Let girls know there is not a right or wrong answer and that participants can choose to stand at any point on the tape between the two signs. Read five to ten of the statements below. Select statements based on the maturity and ability of your group. Not all topics will be appropriate for all girls or all groups.

- A boy hits a girl.
- A girl hits a boy.
- Your friend gives you a hug when you feel sad.
- Someone yells at you.
- Someone spreads a rumor about you.
- Someone calls you "stupid."
- Someone kisses you when you don't want them to.
- Someone helps you with your homework.
- Someone touches your hair after you asked them not to.
- A boy shows you his butt and it makes you uncomfortable.
- A person kills another person.
- A child hugs her mom.
- A friend shares their lunch with you.
- You get spanked.
- Someone you don't know follows you home every day.
- A group of girls gives you the silent treatment.
- Your sister breaks your favorite necklace.
- Your friend gives you a birthday present.
- Your brother or sister locks you in the closet.
- You lock the dog out of the house without dinner.
- Your teacher tells the whole class that you got an "F" on your test.
- You wish your friend good luck at their basketball game.

Discuss the statements you read with the girls. Prompt them with questions, such as Why did you think that was very violent (or very peaceful)? Why were you not sure? Does it depend on the situation? Why might someone act that way?

Explain that there are many kinds of violence. Physical violence is when someone uses their body or a weapon to hurt your body. Emotional violence is when someone uses words to hurt your feelings or scare you. Sexual violence is when someone makes you do some kind of sexual activity when you don't want to. All kinds of violence are wrong and can affect us in many ways.

2. San Diego County District Attorney's Office and Project Concern International, Girls Only Toolkit, <https://girlsonlytoolkit.org/safepactices/>.

Ask girls what they think some of the consequences of violence are. For example, teasing might result in hurt feelings. Pushing can result in someone falling down or getting physically hurt. Spreading rumors might hurt someone's feelings and might mean that the rumor spreader is no longer trusted.

Who can help? Have girls brainstorm a list of people that they can contact or tell if they experience or witness violence. This can be teachers, parents, other relatives, school officials, or other trusted adults. Let girls know that they have lots of options if they witness or experience violence and that it isn't their fault. Make a list that everyone can take home.

Reiterate for girls the difference between tattling and telling. *Tattling* is wanting to get someone in trouble or avoid blame. Tattling is when no one is hurt or in danger. It's not an important problem and can be solved without an adult. *Telling* means keeping yourself or others safe from a real problem—it's important and urgent. Someone may be hurt or in danger, and an adult is needed to help solve the problem. Ask girls to brainstorm situations when someone is tattling versus when someone is telling.

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Activities

Define gender-based violence. Ask girls if they have ever heard this term before and what they think it means. If girls aren't sure, help them define each word separately and then put together a definition. Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed at someone because of their gender or sex, resulting in physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological harm, and it is a violation of human rights. Ask girls to share examples of gender-based violence that they have witnessed or heard about by writing their examples on slips of paper, crumpling them up, and adding them to the middle of your meeting circle. You or the girls can then choose slips of paper from the pile to discuss. (Possible examples include online bullying and slut shaming, news reports of sexual harassment in the work place, domestic violence, or date rape.)

As an option, you can open this up into a conversation about forms of GBV that occur globally. Every ten minutes an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence.³ Other incidents, such as female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), child marriage, and acid attacks, are not as common in the United States as in some other countries, but human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault occur here as well as around the world. Reiterate that GBV is a global phenomenon, not something that only happens some place far away or among people in other countries.

Identify cool or not cool. Girls discuss and identify positive and negative signs in a relationship and can explain their reasoning. Lead the group of Girl Scouts through the coolnotcoolquiz.org slides and ask them to discuss whether a scenario is "cool" or "not cool" in a relationship before clicking to the next slide. After completing the quiz, pair girls up to create and present their own cool-not-cool scenarios—then quiz the rest of the group about the meaning of each girl-made scenario.

Plan a movie night. Choose a movie that addresses issues of gender-based violence such as *He Named Me Malala* or *Girl Rising*. Watch the movie together and then discuss how girls felt about what they saw.

Book it. Ask girls to read *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. Then host a book club at your troop meeting. The book is about the Mirabel sisters, whose assassinations led to the declaration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Some [discussion questions](#)⁴ to get you started are available from the Chicago Public Library.

Think globally, act locally. Discuss ways that Girl Scouts can create change on the issues they've learned about. Ask

3. UNICEF, A Statistical Snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls, (October 2014), https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_76212.html.

4. Chicago Public Library, "In the Time of Butterflies Discussion Questions," <https://www.chipublib.org/in-the-time-of-the-butterflies-discussion-questions/>.

girls what they think it means to “think globally and act locally.” How can they start to create change on the issues that they care about in their communities? Share with girls the appropriate [G.I.R.L. Agenda](#) guide for their grade level group, and use the guide to make a plan to advocate for change, whether that is petitioning the school board for increased funding for girls’ sports, writing a letter to a government official about violence against women and girls, educating their peers about online harassment and bullying, or any other issue the girls care about.

JOURNEY AND BADGE CONNECTIONS

Developing healthy relationships, navigating cliques, and moving beyond stereotypes are major themes in **aMAZE! The Twists and Turns of Getting Along**. Cadettes team up on projects with younger girls, senior citizens, or classmates to share their new friendship-building skills.

The **Be a Friend First (BFF)** program is designed to work with the **aMAZE!** Leadership Journey. In BFF, girls explore thorny issues like peer pressure, stereotyping, gossip, and cliques through role-playing, creative writing, games, and discussion exercises. Girls can also do projects in their schools and communities to tackle bullying issues on their own terms and turf.

Seniors explore the powerful benefits of strong, healthy relationships in **Mission: Sisterhood!** In this journey, girls may role-play scenarios, organize a film club at school, or host a mixer where girls can meet, share stories, and make lifelong connections.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Partner with a domestic violence support organization in your community. Ask a member of the organization to talk with the girls about what the organization does and what support or supplies they might need. Raise awareness in your community about the need.

RESOURCES

[G.I.R.L. Agenda toolkit](#)

WAGGGS Voices against Violence Leader Handbook [fact sheets](#)

That’s Not Cool: About [abuse](#) for teens

That’s Not Cool [quiz](#)

That’s Not Cool [home page](#)

[Futures Without Violence](#) (parent organization for That’s Not Cool)

The San Diego County District Attorney’s Girls Only [toolkit](#)