



ADULT TRAINING

It equips. It energizes. It excites. It stimulates. It prepares!

To be good in any role we need to be prepared and feel confident. Being good at something is OK, but in Scouting we aim to be 'better', 'the best' and 'great'. A key factor to being at our best in any role is training and development. While training focuses on the current job, development focuses on future jobs and responsibilities for adults who have been identified to take up a new role with greater responsibilities as part of the succession planning process or reassignment to a higher level or position.

Training in Scouting is an important element of being prepared. Our ability and capacity to facilitate a quality youth programme as a Unit Leader will be improved by training. This is also true for someone working with adults as a team lead, or in a management role at any level.

Why Do We Train?

Essentially for Scouting, our adults, regardless of their role, need to be equipped and prepared to do their best in their current roles and responsibilities. Training has significant benefits in assisting adults to be more productive and providing uniformity in practice. Training is vital for understanding how Scouting works. The systematic development of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes assists individual growth and development, as well as giving the feeling of learning new things for a greater purpose. Think about it as the development of things you didn't know but need to know for more effective performance.

All of our training should use the Scout Method with a focus on learning by doing and leading by example.

Initial Training

Whether you have been signed-up as a Unit Leader or a leader of other Adults (Commissioner, or adult support role), what happens after the necessary checks and appointment procedures (Interview, Mutual Agreement, Appointment)?

A good introduction to what Scouting is, and some of the things you need to know, should take place initially. A proper and appropriate introduction to what is expected of you is the right of every adult in Scouting who commits to serve and support young people (or support adults for that matter). We know this as induction training or onboarding. This includes awareness and training in Scouting's fundamentals, relevant competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes and some essential policies such as Safe from Harm.

Some specific skills training is also necessary, related to particular roles. If you are the Unit Leader, for example, this ensures you can go to the Unit meeting equipped to run a game, teach a few relevant skills like basic knotting and simple pioneering, know something about the Unit programme, and understand something about the



administration required for the Unit. This specific training makes sure you can undertake your role with a degree of confidence and level of certainty and capability.

For a leader of Adults (Commissioners or other adult support roles), the process is the same, but it is aligned to the specific role and appointment, with content and skill set to match.

Ongoing Training

In any role, while we gain sufficient knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes through that initial burst of preparation for our role, things change over time. As adults we can become less enthusiastic and lose motivation. This can affect our role and our performance to the point that we are no longer doing our best. It is necessary to undertake planned ongoing and follow-up training experiences that not only provide new skills and knowledge and new ways of doing things, but also have the additional benefits of re-energizing, re-enthusiasing, and re-focussing us. It may even motivate us to consider another role at a higher level because of the additional ongoing training and the additional confidence gained through it. Ongoing training is part of life-long learning and that adults benefit from the progressive self-education that Scouting provides.

Ongoing training does not always entail face-to-face training. There are plenty of additional support programmes available online, and new ways to gain new skills and knowledge through e-learning courses, as well as bite-size short courses in a particular area of interest that can provide support. Selected reading in the area of interest at a time when suits can assist also. Coaching and mentoring other adults can also provide ongoing training opportunities and help to sharpen our knowledge, skills, and behaviours as we train others or facilitate their learning. You are probably required to upskill in your own area of professional expertise due to new methods and changes occurring in process and practice. It is really no different in Scouting. You cannot be the best adult in a role unless you make sure that you are well equipped with the knowledge and skills to do it well. Let's be clear, our Founder, Lord Baden-Powell, was the first to agree that even though an adult may gain the Wood Badge, they still needed ongoing training in their role to be more effective and efficient. We should aim to be life-long learners, and this assists greatly in our individual growth and development.

Regardless of adult appointments, the key influence in performing well in a role is the support we receive. The Adults in Scouting life cycle is very clear about this. Every adult has the right to feel supported. Adults also need to be supported along the training and learning path to the Wood Badge, or other training or self-development opportunities. We work better when we know we have that support at the beginning of our journey, and along the way to help us succeed. In time, we can support others in their progression, just as we have been supported.

Everyone comes to Scouting with their own life experiences, and with certain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours already formed. Your NSO should recognize and value individual prior learning in its training scheme.



This is where a **Training Needs Analysis (TNA)** can be used to good advantage. A TNA is a Training Needs Analysis (from the work of Malcolm Knowles, *Andragogy in Action*, 1984). Although almost 40 years old, its theoretical basis has not changed greatly in practice and has been refined to be more useful to the present day. Donovan and Townsend, 2015 suggest that Learning Needs Analysis is more appropriate to today's learning environment and has replaced the Training Needs Analysis in its traditional form (Donovan, P & Townsend, J, 2015).

The TNA process helps determine the training needed by individuals (and teams) to undertake their role effectively. It identifies the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that adults need to have, and considers how to develop these effectively. To deliver appropriate and effective training that meets the needs of the individual and the NSO, a TNA should be conducted to ensure the competencies remain relevant given the changing circumstances in the internal and external environment of the NSO/NSA.

Scouting already has clear organisational goals and objectives based on its Mission. Usually, each NSO has clearly defined training policies and procedures that can be used to identify training gaps when recognizing the prior learning of individual adults. Doing TNA is important from an organisational and an individual perspective and avoids training for training's sake; it allows training to be more cost effective and it assists in targeting areas of greatest need, especially for the individual adult. TNA also helps identify whether the non-performance is due to lack of skills and knowledge or due to motivational factors.

To ensure your training scheme is fit for purpose, it is important to measure the impact of the training. This allows you to adapt your training to suit any changes in your organisation's youth programme and identify whether you need to update your training methods or approach.

Training Design

In its simplest form, designing any training has a number of key principles. Here is one way of looking at it:

1. **Identify the Need for Training (the Learning Needs).** These can be established through TNA. Think about the need to know, self-concept, prior experience, readiness to learn, learning orientation and the motivation to learn.
2. **Define Training Objectives.** This ensures that what is required is covered in a process that is logical, purposeful, meaningful, and focused.
3. **Design the Training.** Use different methods and techniques that clearly recognize adult learner needs and characteristics.
4. **Develop and Deliver the Training.** Pay close attention not only to the learning needs, varying methods, and techniques, but address other areas such as appropriate time, place, environment, theory versus practical, styles of presentation and adapt to change on the go.



5. **Evaluate the Training.** This is key! What went well and what could have gone better should be the base evaluators, but the impact, relevance, review, and updating of the training after a period of time are also critical factors.

Training for adults embraces much more than just doing the training. As you explore the topics involved, you will see that there are good reasons to undertake a TNA. Through experience and personal development, you will gain insights into designing training schemes and courses, and importantly understand why it is necessary to evaluate training, and to be able to measure its impact.

According to Malcolm Knowles, adults:

- want to know the why of learning something
- are able to direct and monitor their own learning
- bring about their real life work experience into the learning process
- are motivated to learn by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors

Hence, bear this mind when designing training by applying the adult learning principles which are listed below for easy reference. Adults:

- learn throughout their lifetime.
- learn best when they can immediately test/apply the new information and ideas in practice.
- enter learning with immediate needs, which are problem centred or task focused.
- make meaning based on their experiences as they reflect on them.
- learn best when the environment is non-threatening, supportive and safe.
- learn best when they have the autonomy to plan and control their learning.
- learn best when they have the opportunity to evaluate the effect of their actions.
- learn best when there is an opportunity for sharing experiences, ideas, etc. with others.
- learning is enhanced when there is an opportunity to observe and ask questions.

There is a whole training world to explore! Don't just settle for doing what is necessary in equipping yourself for a role; challenge yourself to do more. Undertake more complex and stimulating training and personal development opportunities. This is what makes the difference between a good adult in Scouting and being the best at what we do. Ultimately, everything we do is for young people. Being well equipped to do what we do will mean we are doing our part to create a better world.

Visit also:

- [Training 101 Overview](#)
- [Further External Reading](#)
- [Wood Badge Framework](#)
- [Training System Review](#)