

NOVA Counselor Training



Self Study Guide



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INTRODUCTION

This course is intended to provide Nova counselors with the basic information they need to conduct successful Nova counseling sessions and activities.

This manual is designed to be used by a Nova counselor when there is no training course available.

It is designed to be used with the Nova Counselor Training slide deck.

We recommend that after completing this guide that you visit with an experienced counselor or STEM/NOVA trainer to review and be sure all of your questions are answered.

When the training is complete, the training code D83 can be entered into the leader's training record. Counselors who complete this training and Youth Protection training are considered "trained" as Nova counselors by the BSA.

Participants should be given a Certificate of Training (BSA SKU #615012) upon completion of the course after review by a member of the training team.

NOVA Counselor Training – Self Study

Materials Necessary

- Computer with an Internet connection
 - Nova Counselor Training slide deck (www.scouting.org/training/adult)
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Welcome

Welcome to NOVA Counselor training! (Slide 1)

Let's review the objective of this course. (Slide 2)

The Aims and Methods of Scouting

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the 'Aims of Scouting.'(Slide 3) They are character development, citizenship training, and personal (or mental and physical) fitness.

The Methods that Boy Scouting uses to achieve these Aims are: (Slide 4)

- The Ideals of Scouting (Oath, Law, Mottos, etc.)
- The Patrol Method
- Outdoor Program
- Advancement
- Association with Adults
- Personal Growth
- Leadership Development
- The Uniform

Three of these Methods are used in the Nova program: (Slide 5)

- Advancement
- Association with Adults
- Personal Growth

The Advancement Method in Scouting

Advancement is the process by which a Scout progresses through awards in the Scouting program (Slide 6)

- Advancement is a means to an end and not an end in itself
- Advancement activities are designed to help the Scout have an exciting and meaningful experience

Nova awards are related to the advancement of Scouts and are available to Cub Scouts, Webelos, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers. (Slide 7) While Venturing Crews generally have a less formal advancement program, the benefits of advancement are equally exciting and beneficial to the young women and men in Venturing.

The Advancement Method is designed to encourage young men and women to accomplish a progressive series of fun and educational tasks. (Slide 8)

Earning Nova awards allows Scouts to explore the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). It helps them round out their skills, and perhaps introduces them to subjects that will become lifelong interests or rewarding careers.

What are the NOVA Awards?

Nova Awards encourage future exploration in STEM fields. (Slide 9) They build confidence and communicate that career opportunities in STEM fields are attainable, fulfilling, and interesting.

Nova activities are fairly basic and designed to spark interest in one or all of the categories of awards.

Nova requirements build on advancement from existing Cub Scout and Boy Scout requirements that are STEM-related, such as belt loops, pins, activity badges, and merit badges.

Nova awards in each category can be accomplished fairly easily in a few weeks – similar to activity badges or merit badges.

Like merit badges, new awards will be developed in the future.

There are also SuperNova awards that recognize superior achievement by a Scout in STEM fields. See www.scouting.org/stem for more information, including more on the role of SuperNova mentor.

Let's briefly take look at an example of one of the Cub Scout award's – *1-2-3 Go!* - requirements. (Slide 10) Be sure to see the Nova Awards Guidebook for the exact requirements.

Familiarization

- Watch or read about something involving math or physics
- Make a list of questions about what you watched and discuss them with your counselor

Exploration (Slide 11)

- Complete the Mathematics or Computers pin
- Do two of the following:
 - Calculate how much you would weigh on the sun or the moon, Jupiter or Pluto, any planet you choose
 - Calculate the height of a tree, your house, or a building
 - Calculate the volume of your room
- Look us an explain cryptography, how secret codes are made, how codes relate to mathematics
- Design a secret code. Write a message in your code. Explain it to your counselor.

Relevance (Slide 12)

Discuss with your counselor how math affects your everyday life.

As you can see, fairly simple, but will give a young Scout some good information and skills.

NOVA Counselors

Why Does the BSA use counselors? (Slide 13) Because it meets one of the Methods of Scouting: **Association with Quality Adults**.

Counselors provide a new contact with different adults and professionals in a field of interest for a Scout.

Counselors:

- Are interested in, and create interest in, STEM topics.
- They inspire, challenge, and motivate the Scout to learn an unfamiliar or “hard” topic.
- They assist and encourage learning, and enhance Scout’s growth and self-confidence.
- They pique the interest of youth in STEM disciplines.
- **They are Cornerstones of the Nova Program!**

The Nova counselor is a Teacher and Coach. (Slide 14)

They need not be expert in the STEM topic but must be able to facilitate exploration and learning.

- They tailor their support to a youth’s age and experience.
- They expand on concepts found in the book and explore related topics.
- They verify the requirements for the awards are met.

And they verify safety and youth protection practices are met.

The Counselor Supports the Scout! (Slide 15)

They help Scouts plan and do projects, while ensuring that the deeper aspects of STEM topics are understood. They provide ideas for research, help discuss questions, and support the research.

They have supplies and equipment ready. They facilitate selecting and working on the projects. They support discussions of how the subject matter affects the Scouts and connection to other things and people.

During a Nova activity the counselor:

- Helps participants develop questions and interest.
- Helps participants research ideas and answers.
- Guides participants in project setup and execution, safety and resource management, data collection and analysis, reporting results, and extracting meaning of results.
- Stimulates discussion of the activity project and extracts the more general meaning of the conclusions.
- Encourages completion of activities.
- And, ensures compliance with requirements.

(Slide 16) Nova Award Counselors and SuperNova Award Mentors must register annually with the BSA. There is no fee to register. Counselors use position code 58, Mentors use position code 52.

They both must be at least 21 years of age, of good character, and have current Youth Protection Training. They both must be able to work well with Scout-age youth. SuperNova Mentors must be knowledgeable in the award subject by their vocation, hobby, or education. Nova Counselors must be familiar with the subject and be able to research and discuss unfamiliar topics to help the Scout.

Mentors must submit an application and be approved by the district or council advancement committee. Counselors' applications can be approved by the unit.

Counseling Process (Slide 17)

The Nova counseling process is similar to the Merit Badge counseling process.

It begins with *Preparation by Scout*.

The Scout reviews award requirements, obtains counselor contact information from the unit leader, and contacts the counselor to arrange a first meeting.

At the *first meeting* they review requirements, acquire a workbook, set a tentative schedule for award completion, and schedule future meetings.

At *subsequent meetings* the counselor verifies learning or explores topics of interest; Tests completion of requirements and maintains a record of completion; and schedules further meetings if necessary.

It is important that the counselor remembers to tailor the approach to the level of knowledge and effective learning styles; and to follow the requirements – no changes, no more, and no less – for each Scout.

The counselor needs to remember that a young person's characteristics and needs (Slide 18) change as they age, so expectations and teaching methods should adapt.

Let's take a look at Scouting's age groups. (Slide 19)

Cub Scouts are 7-10 year-old boys. They are in grades 1-5 so they have had little math or science.

They are grouped in dens of 4-8 boys with an adult den leader.

Their preferred learning styles are see and do, tactile, and visual. They like structured learning. They are open to everything and have no preconceived notions.

Boy Scouts (Slide 20) are 11-17 year old boys and in grades 6-12. They have had some math and science in school.

They are organized in small groups called patrols. Patrols have 2-8 Scouts and are led by a youth patrol leader. Troops are made up of several patrols and have an adult leader called a Scoutmaster and a youth leader called a Senior Patrol Leader.

They also like see and do and tactile and visual learning. They are familiar with the EDGE (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable) teaching method used in Scouting. They are eager to explore new "worlds." Science may be seen as "too hard" to them.

Varsity Scouts and Venturers (Slide 21) are high school-age young men, and in Venturing young women. They are also organized into small groups with youth leadership, and these small groups are organized into larger units with adult advisors.

Their preferred learning styles are see and do, reflection, research, and brainstorming. They like to self directed with the counselor as a team leader. They emulate adult behavior. Science and math may be seen as “uncool” by some youth of this age.

Since characteristics and needs of different age youth are different, (Slide 22) we need to tailor our teaching method to those differences.

With younger Scouts our style may be coaching. We share knowledge, lead experience, provide advice, and teach the Scouts.

With older Scouts we may be more of a mentor. We will share experiences, support explorations, guide activities, listen, and help Scouts learn on their own.

Using the EDGE method we will Explain and Demonstrate more with younger Scouts and Guide and Enable more with older Scouts.

Remember - Age-Appropriate Learning (Slide 23)

We have a wide age range in Scouting – wide range of abilities and attitudes.

Don't make it too hard – or too easy.

Encourage your Scouts to stretch, explore, and grow.

The Expected Outcomes of counseling Nova:

- Scouts gain interest in STEM topics
- Improved confidence and excitement
- They have fun!

The award is complete (Slide 24) when the Scout completes the requirements – no more and no less – to your satisfaction.

You then report completion to the unit leader who will turn in a BSA Advancement Report to the council so that the award may be ordered and presented to the Scout.

Risk Mitigation

(Slide 25) As with all things, it is important that we manage the risks involved in this activity.

For example, we may want a Scout to research a topic on the Internet. (Slide 26)

The risks of course are contact with inappropriate content and susceptibility to Cyber Bullying.

Ask your Scout to visit www.scouting.org/youthprotection and review the CyberCHIP information first.

Another risk is Scouts coming into contact with adults not known to them. (Slide 27)

The risk is inappropriate contact or allegations of inappropriate contact.

The mitigation is to follow BSA Youth Protection policies and for youth to always follow the Buddy System.

A third risk is that among the Scouts there may be different levels of education or understanding of material. (Slide 28)

This can lead to missed program opportunities, disrespect from/to peers, and bullying.

Be sure to adjust teaching techniques to abilities and preparation level of Scouts, maintain group discipline, and have a “No Cheap Shots” policy.

STEM activities themselves any contain hazards such as injury and/or property damage. (Slide 29)

Be sure to use safety gear and practices and maintain control of activities.

Review

Okay, let's review. (Slide 30) Choose the best answer for these questions about the Nova Counselor.

Select the answer on the slide that you believe is correct. When you are ready, click on your choice and see if it was correct or incorrect. Follow the instructions on the slide to return to the question or move on to the next question.)

#1 (Slide 31) – The Aims of Scouting are:

- A. Outdoor Skills, Advancement, Adult Association
- B. Character Development, Citizenship Training, and Personal Fitness

#2 (Slide 32) – The Methods of Scouting that Nova uses are:

- A. Advancement, Association with Adults, and Personal Growth
- B. Patrol Method, Personal Growth, and Leadership Development

#3 (Slide 33) – True or false: Since all Scouts are the same it is best to have a template for counseling so that every Scout has the same experience.

#4 (Slide 34) – True or False: Counselors must be registered members of the Boy Scouts of America.

#5 (Slide 35) – The steps in the Nova counseling process are:

- A. Meet with the Scout, Test the Scout, Present the award
- B. Preparation by Scout, First meeting, Subsequent meetings
- C. Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable

#6 (Slide 36) – True or False: One-on-one counseling sessions with Scouts are not allowed by the Boy Scouts of America.

Resources

(Slide 37) Here are some of the most common available web resources for counselors. Take a look.

- Youth Protection Training: www.MyScouting.org
- *Fundamentals of Training* and *Trainer's EDGE*: Offered by your local council
- Requirements: www.Scouting.org/STEM
- Nova Award Guidebooks: www.ScoutStuff.org

Thank You!

Congratulations, and thank you for taking this course! (Slide 38)

Let the leaders of your unit, or your district training team, know you completed the course. They will be able to enter the completion code into your record.

Have fun!