

Roundtable Hot Topic

Transitioning from Scout to Adult Leader: Tips for a Successful Shift

Transitioning from being a Scout to becoming an adult leader is a significant step. Often, Scouts complete their youth program and then do not renew their membership unless they return later as parents. By encouraging these young adults to transition into leadership roles we can promote positive membership retention and create valuable opportunities for personal growth. Here are some tips below:

Common Challenges for New Adult Leaders Who Were Former Scouts

- **Shifting Focus:** They must learn to move from doing tasks themselves to coaching and mentoring Scouts.
- **Leadership Skills:** They may need to refresh or develop new leadership skills and understand different leadership styles.
- **Policy Knowledge:** Many are unfamiliar with important guidelines such as the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *Guide to Advancement*.
- **Patience Levels:** They may lose patience more quickly, expecting Scouts to behave more “grown up” than they are.
- **Maintaining Boundaries:** It can be challenging to maintain appropriate boundaries and comply with Youth Protection policies, as they are used to being alongside Scouts rather than supervising them.
- **Establishing Authority:** Both older leaders and Scouts may struggle to recognize their expertise and authority initially.

Encouragement for New Adult Leaders

- **Leverage Experience:** Use recent experience as Scouts to serve as a bridge between current Scouts and parents.
- **Complete Training:** Pay close attention to position-specific training to fully understand their new responsibilities.
- **Build Support Networks:** Connect with other leaders in the unit and seek out support from the Commissioner team or other new leaders in the area.
- **Engage in Leadership:** Share fresh ideas with the unit committee and actively participate in discussions.
- **Ask for Help:** Don't hesitate to ask questions about the role and seek assistance when needed.
- **Find a Mentor:** Choose a more experienced leader to provide guidance and support.

The Importance of Attitude

The attitude the transitioning leader has can have a greater impact than that of many other leaders because they often have closer relationships with Scouts than older adult leaders do. By offering encouragement and guidance to these new leaders, the experienced adults can help foster strong, positive relationships between their new leaders and the Scouts they now lead.