

# AVOIDING LEADER BURNOUT

**You are very much appreciated, and the work you do is very critical. It is very important that you know how much you ARE appreciated, because “volunteer” work is often taken for granted, and that in itself leads to burnout. Here are a few tips to help you as a leader to avoid burnout.**

## 1. DELEGATE

Having a “co-leader” and “troop committee” is a really good idea. If you become ill, overextended or incapacitated for a period of time, you will have confidence that things can go on as usual. Knowing that you are the only glue that holds something together is very stressful. Everything falls on your shoulders. A co-leader can help you cope, two heads often work better than one, and if you can have a co-leader, or someone you’re grooming for the job, you can feel free to take some needed time off. There may come a time when you actually have to move from the area and your disappearance could lead to the folding of the troop if you don’t have an “understudy” ready to take on the responsibility.

### WHEN TO DELEGATE

- A lot of work has to be done in a limited amount of time
- You feel someone else has particular qualifications that would suite the task
- Someone expresses interest in the task
- You think that a particular person might benefit from the responsibility

### WHEN NOT TO DELEGATE

- Things that are usually your specified responsibilities, except in emergencies
- Something that you yourself would not be willing to do
- A task to someone who may not possess the capabilities necessary to complete the job

### METHODS FOR DELEGATING

- Ask for volunteers
- Match talents
- Spread the good tasks around
- Coordinate and keep communication open
- Ensure that the task has been clearly defined and has a set deadline
- Facilitate the accomplishment of getting those tasks done, but don’t take over
- Remember the importance of tact and concern

### OBSTACLES TO DELEGATION AND SOLUTIONS

- You are particularly interested in the work and want to do it yourself because you get satisfaction from this personal involvement. Satisfaction can also come from sharing success
- You feel you will lose control of the work and will not know what is happening... Have the group approve a plan of action
- You do not know which tasks to delegate Start with small tasks given to others and increase with each success

## 2. TRAINING

Training is a key component to avoid burn out. Without proper training many leaders tend to “spin their wheels” and feel overwhelmed. Take a few minutes (it is possible, we promise) to review the training you have and inquire about additional training that may be helpful in your capacity as a leader and mentor to girls. Remember they look to you as an example.

### 3. POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Keep a positive attitude. Nothing is insurmountable. If you're having trouble, you can always turn to other leaders, service unit manager or your membership manager for advice or help. Remember this: People Vary. Don't let personalities get in the way. Settle down, count to ten, relax, do some deep breathing, remember that people vary, and then move on. Perhaps you are overly stressed because you are not taking full advantage of suggestion #1 (Get help!).

Take advantage of outside help. If you are finding that your troop needs more than you are capable of providing to them, don't be afraid to refer them to an outside source. If you see that your girls are interested in science, ask a teacher, parent or even a college student to talk to the troop. Have the girls brought up a sensitive issue? Contact your school's guidance counselor for advice (don't forget to have parents sign a sensitive issues permission slip).

### 4. REMEMBER WHY YOU ARE HERE

Keep sight of the long term goal: YOU are building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Remember, you are changing the world. You are helping girls grow into responsible citizens and exposing them to new experiences. You are making the world a better place for future generations. You are helping girls (and even adults) to engage in activities which will magnify their bond with their community.

Take it one step at a time. Pace yourself. We can't change the world in a day. But, be certain, we ARE changing the world. One step at a time. Don't overload yourself trying to "do it all" right now. Keep telling yourself that you're doing the best you can. Take it easy. Just do what you can do. If you take on too much, and become overloaded, you will be subject to burnout, and then your girls wouldn't have you at ALL!

**When in doubt, contact us!**

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**Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee is here for you!**