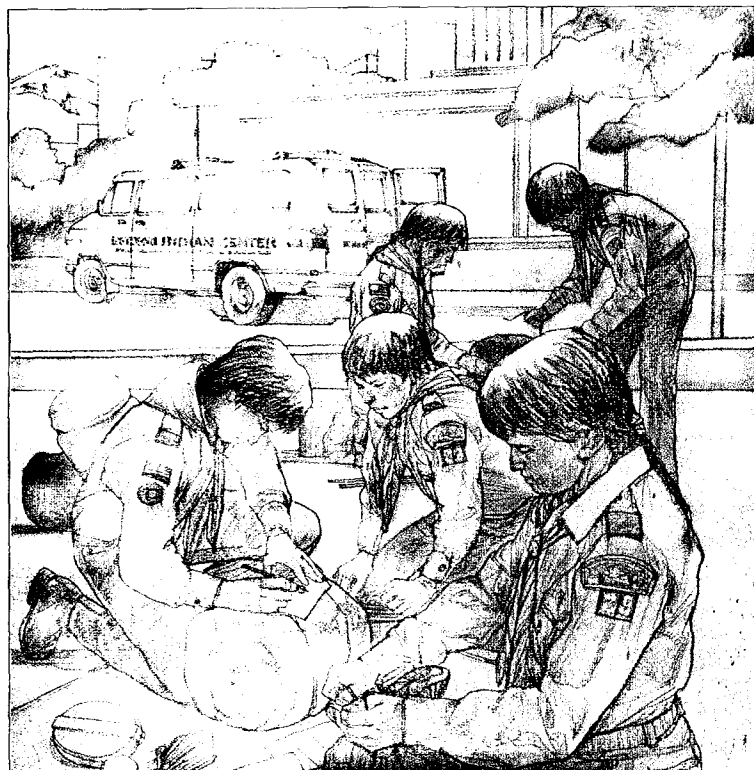


CUB SCOUTING, BOY SCOUTING, AND VENTURING IN AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

GUIDELINES FOR COUNCIL AND DISTRICT SCOUTING LEADERS AND AMERICAN INDIAN LEADERS



4 SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR NON-INDIANS▲▲▲▲

The problem of American Indian Scouts and Venturers are either eased or made worse by the attitudes of their unit leaders. The participation of American Indian adults in Scouting is also undoubtedly aided or inhibited by the understandings of non-Indian Scouters. So, while this entire book is for Indians and non-Indians alike, this chapter is principally for non-Indians.

American Indian Subject Matter as Part of Unit and Council Program

Indian lore and Indian subject matter has been a popular theme in Scouting programs since 1910. Indian themes and program topics are also an area in which non-Indians sometimes act unwisely. Thus, the following guidelines are presented:

1. Don't project the impression that American Indians and their culture are an oddity of the past.

Indians live today in towns and cities and in the countryside and did not disappear with the buffalo and the coming of the interstate highway system. American Indians have a profound history and heritage on the North American continent, but our program and literature should help today's young people learn that Indians are a significant part of America today. We should portray contemporary Indians and their lives.

2. Don't use derogatory words and phrases such as:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ❖ "Injun" or "honest injun" | ❖ "Papoose" |
| ❖ "Indian giver" | ❖ "Half-breed" |
| ❖ "Too many chiefs and not enough Indians" | ❖ "Squaw" |
| ❖ "How!" | ❖ "Redskin" |
| ❖ "As wild as a bunch of Indians" | |

Don't use "Indians" in alphabet and counting songs/books. (Where Indians are the only human beings mixed with animals or objects: "nine foolish hens; ten little Indians" or "I is for ice cream, ink, and Indians.")

We believe, as some of our American Indian friends have told us, that Scouting can help create a greater respect for and pride in today's American Indian populations.

3. Don't "play Indian."

One of the most common criticisms heard is that some of our activities related to American Indians comes across as "playing Indian." This is sometimes hard to control out at the end of our pipeline in a remote Cub Scout den or Order of the Arrow ceremony. It is deeply imbedded through American culture, but it is often seen as mockery, can be offensive, and dehumanizes American Indians. Encouraging non-Indian children

to “play Indian” allows children to think that feathers and tomahawks symbolize “Indianhood.” This encourages more stereotyping and dehumanizing of Native Americans.

We have come a long way in portraying African Americans—we would never think of suggesting a blackface skit or a group of African Americans sitting around eating watermelon. We should also avoid such things as Indian Halloween costumes and kids whooping it up with a couple of feathers in a headband. No characterizations. No stereotypes.

4. Don't lump all American Indians together.

There were no “Indians” until Europeans called them that. They were separate nations of native groups with different names, cultures, and languages.

When we portray or discuss American Indian life and culture, we should keep this tribal diversity in mind. An appreciation of the diversity of American Indian tribes and their contributions to American life can positively enrich the Scouting program. But do your homework; think Cherokee or Pima or Choctaw or Navajo or whatever the appropriate affiliation might be. Refer to the Hopi, the Sioux, or the Menominee, not just to “the Indians.”

5. Don't use any American Indian content that could have a religious connotation.

Do not perform any religious dances or religious ceremonies. Sweat lodges are for religious purposes and should be conducted only by a tribal member (if at all), not just anyone. Get help from the nearest tribe before performing dances or making American Indian clothing. Use the nearest tribe's music and culture. Don't try to create “generic” dances or ceremonies.

6. Do be authentic.

When portraying Indian culture and when local Scouting groups want to use Indian programming, a sincere attempt should be made to be sure that authentic American Indian culture, history, and contemporary life are used. Don't let totally different cultures, lifestyles, clothing, and homes become jumbled into one “Indian” stereotype of feathered headdresses, tepees, and peace pipes. Check out the history, culture, dances, etc., of local American Indian groups near your area.

7. Do use American Indian consultants.

American Indian consultants can help Scouting be authentic and to avoid that which is offensive. Form a small panel of American Indian consultants/reviewers. BSA local councils and OA lodges can use local tribal consultants or knowledgeable persons from Indian study centers on college campuses or at urban Indian centers.

8. Don't use an OA representative as the final authority on what is correct when it comes to camps, dances, history of a tribe, authentic dress, etc.

Only an official representative of the closest tribe or nation should decide what is authentic. Just because “that's how we have done it for years” does not make it correct. Ask for help from the nearest tribe. Be authentic, don't guess.

9. Do run an authentic “Indian camp.”

Not all American Indians counted coup, lived in tepees, etc. They may have lived in long houses, hogans, chiques, etc. Get help from the nearest tribe to find what local native

peoples lived in and use that at your camp. Be sure that at the end of camp participants understand that American Indians today live just as the participants live their daily lives.

More Guidelines

Remember that every American Indian is different. Many of the thoughts that follow might not apply to all American Indians, particularly those who have almost totally accommodated to non-Indian ways. However, these guidelines can help avoid pitfalls to good relationships with many Indians.

1. Those who work successfully with American Indians try to become more aware of their cultures and ways of thinking. For example, non-Indian time measure and time identity might have little relevancy to some American Indians. Meetings might begin and end without regard to schedule or plans. The concept of Indian time means doing things when everyone is ready. People take precedence over schedules. A Cherokee district Scout leader once remarked, "When meeting with a traditionally oriented Indian. I take my watch off so I'm not tempted to look at it."

Many Indians don't look you squarely in the eye. It might be counter to their culture. To look into far-out spaces is not a lack of interest. You have probably been heard and heard very well. American Indian children of some tribes are taught that lowered eyes and head show respect.

See chapter 7 for more examples.

2. Avoid Indian stereotypes. Don't expect American Indians to look like most "movie Indians." Understand that American Indians were historically no more "savage" than others who have fought to defend their land.

Avoid other stereotypes:

Male Stereotypes

- ♣ wise old chief
- ♣ evil medicine man
- ♣ horse thief
- ♣ drunken comic
- ♣ tracker/hunter
- ♣ unemployed loafer
- ♣ lazy Indian

Female Stereotypes

- ♣ heavysset
- ♣ workhorse "squaw"
- ♣ "Indian princess" (depicted with European features and often in love with a white man for whom she is willing to sacrifice her life)

3. You might have heard the comment, "But he doesn't look Indian." Yet, American Indians will have many different looks. A Native American leader stated, "An Indian looks like an Indian not from the outside but from the inside, where it really counts. It makes no difference what we look like, as long as our hearts and our feelings 'look' Indian."
4. One of the worst things that could happen to an Indian person is to appear foolish or to become embarrassed in front of others. American Indians will wait until they understand the expectations involved in a situation or until they feel comfortable in that situation before they will act. Interest and enthusiasm is communicated differently in different cultures. An Indian's lack of smiles and lack of "rah-rah-rah" exuberance does not necessarily mean opposition to what you have said.

5. Harmony with others is also a prized value Indian peoples share. Traditionally, in order to maintain social harmony within the tribe, American Indians respond to conflict situations by withdrawing. Today, the frequent response to conflict or "interference" is to withdraw from that situation. Achievement is important to American Indians, but don't push competition in a "win-lose" way.

More of the "Do's"

1. Be generous with praise and recognition. (Public praise, however, might cause some American Indians to withdraw from activity.)
2. Be sincere.
3. Be patient, don't be overly demanding.
4. Be a friend, a real friend. A Blackfeet Scout once said, "You must have an accepting feeling in your heart."
5. Keep promises. Avoid making promises you might be unable to fulfill. It's okay to say, "I don't know."
6. Accept invitations to Indian courtesies. For example, when invited to eat—eat; when invited to dance—dance. This will usually be seen as an honor.
7. When in the presence of an Indian and a non-Indian, always address your remarks directly to the Indian. It communicates your interest and attentiveness, and that's essential.
8. When visiting an Indian community, dress in an acceptable manner. A fancy necktie or pinstriped suit in the middle of Sioux country would not be very appropriate. Jeans, boots, and a western shirt might be more acceptable. Even better, you might wear the field uniform with long pants.
9. Relax, be laid back, enjoy the moment. Your attitude and body language must communicate that you care and that you consider the people you are meeting with to be important.
10. If you have created a problem, apologize, even if you think you might have been right.
11. If you invite an American Indian to eat a meal with you, always offer to pay the bill yourself.

More of the "Don'ts"

1. Don't attempt to identify by saying, "I'm part Indian." If you truly are of American Indian heritage, this will become apparent as you get acquainted.
2. Don't ask an American Indian about his family or ancestry (until you really know them and they trust you). Don't ask questions such as, "How much Indian are you?"
3. Don't ever interrupt an American Indian while he or she is speaking.
4. Don't initiate a vigorous handshake upon meeting an American Indian. Instead, grasp full hand, hold momentarily, and release.
5. Don't look for small talk of a personal nature. For example, don't compliment American Indians you don't know well on the jewelry, etc., that they wear. Some might consider it an insult.
6. Don't call an American Indian by only his last name; usually use first names.

- 7. Don't ever criticize an American Indian to another Indian.
- 8. Don't reveal information gained in private conversation in a public manner.
- 9. Don't expect an Indian to talk about himself before you have talked about yourself.

Words and Concepts: "Turn-Ons" and "Turn-Offs"

Test yourself. Do you know why an expression of the following concepts and works might help or hinder your relationship with American Indians?

"Turn-Ons"

- ♣ respect
- ♣ consistency
- ♣ friend of a friend
- ♣ persistence
- ♣ recognition
- ♣ follow through
- ♣ protocol
- ♣ trust
- ♣ patience
- ♣ together/us
- ♣ love
- ♣ understanding
- ♣ bicultural
- ♣ generosity
- ♣ sincerity

"Turn-Offs"

- ♣ hurry
- ♣ competition
- ♣ bureaucracy
- ♣ melting pot
- ♣ quick sell
- ♣ quick promise
- ♣ play Indian
- ♣ injun
- ♣ right away
- ♣ get ahead
- ♣ eye-to-eye
- ♣ control nature
- ♣ aggressiveness



Playing Indian
Philip Deloria