



BUILDING COMMUNITY



For Area Commissioners, District Commissioners, Administrative Community Leaders, and Community Guiders

Hosting and Leading

Best practices

- **Set the tone.** Emotions are contagious.
- **Empathise** but don't get stuck in the drama.
- **Use generous authority.** Lead with the team's best interests and goals in mind.
- **Arrive prepared** to gatherings with a clear plan and agenda.

Action

- Choose the tone to set for the year.
- Share the theme with your team.
- Refer to it throughout the year.

Questions to ask yourself

- What tone do I want to set?
- Who are we not hearing from?
 - Who looks lonely or alone in the room?
 - How can I bring them into the team?
- What are our team's goals?
- What is the purpose of a given meeting?

Tone inspiration

Fun	Bold	Daring
Welcoming	Connected	Curious
Empowered	Hopeful	Optimistic

Try one of these sample messages:

As we work together this Guiding year, let's focus on being _____. To me, this means _____. In our next team meeting, let's create group norms to make our theme come to life.

Our team's theme this year will be _____. In our next team meeting, we'll discuss ways that we can be _____ in everything we do – even the paperwork!

Getting to Know the Team

Best practices

- Consider whether your team members already know each other. It can take time for new members to feel comfortable opening up.
- Learn about their **values** to understand them better and help with conflict resolution.
- Learn about their **skills and passions** to help divide tasks and keep people engaged.
- Learn about their **goals** to help with personal development and long-term commitment.
- **Share about yourself.** Role model openness.

Action

- Pick the 3 people you know least well on your team and send them a "how's it going?" text or email.
- Really listen and don't be afraid to dig deeper when they reply.

Questions to ask your team

- Why did you join Guiding? Why are you still a member? Why did you choose this role?
- Are there any skills you're looking to gain this year? How can I help you develop them?
- What brings you joy in Guiding and how can I help you achieve more of it?
- What challenges are you encountering? Can we come up with some ideas to try together?

Try one of these sample messages:

Hey _____, I just wanted to check in as the Guiding year is gearing up. I'd love to hear what's going well and if there's anything I can support you with.

Hi _____, Welcome to the team! One of my goals this year is to learn more about the people I'm supporting. Would you be willing to share a bit about yourself? I'd love to know what brings you joy.

Hello _____, I know we've been Guiding together for a few years, but I'd love to get to know you better. Here's something you might not know about me. Would you be willing to share something I might not know about you?

Effective Communication

Best practices in emails

- **Subject:** Use “FYI” or “response requested by [date]”.
- **BCC:** Use when sending emails to multiple people.
- **Reply all:** Use sparingly.
- **Timely reply:** Let people know if you’re searching for an answer or not replying in a timely way for any reason.
- **Emotional content:** Wait 24 hours before responding.
- **Out of office message:** Set one when you’ll be away from your email for a significant amount of time.
- **Formatting:** Use colours, bold, italics, indents, and bullets for long messages.

Questions to ask your team

What is the best way to reach you?

- You may not always be able to use that method, but it’s helpful to know if you urgently need to contact someone.

Are there any accessibility roadblocks to communication I should be aware of?

- Is anyone colour blind? Does anyone need verbal communication rather than written? Does anyone have limited internet access?

Best practices in person

- Watch for and listen to non-verbal communication.
- Praise publicly, give constructive feedback privately.
- Be present and listen actively.

Action

Send out an email at the beginning of the year with:

- A bit about yourself.
- Relevant ways of work.
 - Your availability (e.g., I don’t respond to emails on weekends)
 - How often your team can expect to hear from you.
- The best way to reach you – normally and in an emergency.
- Any questions you have for them.

Ice Breakers

In-person

Hobby whodunnit

- Have everyone write out three of their favourite activities or hobbies on a paper.
- Put the papers in a hat.
- Draw the papers one at a time and read them aloud and have everyone guess who it could be.

Connectedness circle

- Instruct the group to form a circle where they each have something in common with the person on either side of them (it doesn’t have to be the same thing).

Virtual

Overlap

- Ask each person to list their five favourites of anything (e.g., camp songs, movies, tv shows, books, outdoor activities).
- Have everyone put them in the chat and press send at the same time.
- Compare to see where people overlap.

Commonalities

- Task the group to come up with at least 5-10 things everyone has in common, not related to being human or being in Guiding.

Six-word biography

- Invite everyone to think of their six-word biography. This can be a sentence (“best summed up as articulate chaos”) or simply a collection of words (“Leader, mom, knitter, trumpeter, rock-climber”).
- Ask people to write their six-word biography on a sticky note and hand them to one person.
- Post the sticky notes around the room.
- Have people match the biographies to their author.
- Ask people to share their six-word biography in the chat.
- Ask anyone if they would prefer to unmute and share their words out loud.

