



It starts with Scouts.

Tout commence
avec les Scouts.

SCREENING INTERVIEW GUIDE

WELCOME ABOARD

APRIL 2012

INTRODUCTION

Only the Right Person Will Do

Community standards in Canada continue to climb with the growing number of reported incidents of child abuse. These standards dictate acceptable minimum measures groups should take when screening volunteers who wish to work with youth. Where once a person only had to volunteer for a task with few (or no) questions asked, the accepted norm now involves clean Police Record Checks, interviews and reference checks.

At a time when volunteers are scarce, it's tempting to accept anyone who is willing to help. But remember, as a recruiter you are looking for people who can perform specific roles that require certain attitudes, skills and knowledge. Only these people will be successful. Others who do not have these qualities, or a willingness and an ability to acquire them or who may have harmful qualities, will only hurt the program and our young people. This latter group is not acceptable under any circumstances, no matter how willing they might be to join.

Scouting doesn't expect members to become volunteer screening experts overnight, but as an organization, we need to continue to improve our diligence and screening practices.

According to Loraine Street of *Volunteer Ontario*,

“Screening is about striking a balance between vigilance and paranoia, between the right to privacy and the right to protection of clients, staff, and the community, and between legal and ethical or moral issues. The goal is safe programs, safe clients, safe staff and a safe community. Those responsible for the development and implementation of screening measures must keep that in the forefront of their minds.”

Interviewing and selection, the focus of this guide, is not only about getting the right person into the right role but it's also a time when the volunteer is interviewing and selecting Scouts Canada. We need to view this as an opportunity to leave a great impression and begin orientation – one of the first steps to engagement and ultimately retention. You will need to balance being realistic and not overselling the opportunity with enthusiasm about the Movement and the mission.

Scouting has an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure children and adults in our programs are protected and safe. We do this through the design of our programs, the application of current screening measures, attention to the development of adult volunteers, and through appropriate supervision. Our ability to continue to offer programs in communities across Canada depends on our effectiveness at carrying out these tasks in every group and council.

The primary goals of the applicant interview are:

- To identify if the applicant should move to the next stage of the enrolment process (i.e. reference checks and criminal record checks)
- To cultivate and prepare applicants to understand their role as a good and effective leader
- To assess the risk of the applicant's involvement including risk for sexual abuse
- Determine if the role will be a fit with the applicant's interest and skill set

TIPS:

The questions in this guide are questions designed primarily for interviewing leader candidates. Adapt them to fit the position a candidate is volunteering for and your knowledge of the person. **Don't drop important sections just because you know the person.** Their responses will give you experience when you're meeting with lesser known candidates. The shaded boxes summarize interviewer questions and link to the Interview Checklist.

1. ESTABLISH RAPPORT

Introduce yourself and your co-interviewer

The intention behind this is to break the ice. The more comfortable you make the person feel, the more open s/he will tend to be. Start with a casual, friendly conversation on a topic that will appeal to the candidate. (For example, the subject might concern their family camping trip or vacation.) In most cases this will not be your first contact with the person. You may have spoken to them at a parent's night or on the telephone to set up the interview.

Explain your position in Scouting, how long you've been a volunteer and why Scouting is important to you.

Script:

"Thank you for taking the time to consider a role in Scouting. Over the next half hour, I'll provide an overview of Scouting's Principles and explain the role of _____ . I'll ask a number of questions to confirm your understanding of the role and to ensure that we've matched your interests and skills well with the task. I'll be using this Interview Guide (show them it) to help me cover the important details, but please feel free to ask questions at any time."

Questions:

"How long have you lived here? Can you tell me about where you come from."

"Can you tell me a bit about your family?"

"What is it about volunteering with children that appeals to you?"

TIPS – How to probe

There are times when an individual's response requires probing for clarification or additional information. Probing questions tend to be open ended so it elicits more than a yes or no response. Use who, what, where, when, why and how. It's important not to leave anything open to interpretation since we all come with a different frame of reference. It is also important to remember, especially while we are building rapport, not to make judgments based on limited information. Rather, approach the candidate with genuine curiosity.

Clarification questions might be:

- When you say..... what do you mean by that specifically?
- Can you elaborate on that or give me an example?
- What happened next?
- Why is that important to you?
- Can you tell me about a time that (this happened or this didn't happen)

If you find the person evading answers, this may be a flag (or may simply be where the individual's train of thought took them) so you need to bring them back on topic to determine.

- Getting back to my original question (and repeat it)?
- How is this (example or story) related to (original topic)?

1. The Learner will commit to appropriate adult/youth interactions.

Assessment Concerns: frequent changes of residence/employment; prefers the company of children; lacks close connections with adults; believes children are more understanding than adults.

As you go through the interview, make note of any assessment concerns that you may have. This will help guide you in your decision as you determine the suitability of the candidate.

2. LIFE STORY AND BUILDING RAPPORT

Make a statement describing what you already know about the candidate. This will lead in to the subject and encourage the person to tell you more about themselves and their reasons for volunteering. If you approached them originally, then you need to tell them why you thought they would be suitable. Your first question should help them to relax.

Keep the conversation going in the direction of work (skills), personal interests, and how long they have lived in the community. Point out a couple of interests or experiences you may have in common.

Questions:

“What made you decide to apply for this position?”

“What do you hope to achieve in this role?”

“What are your personal goals for this position?”

“Do we have an extra 10 minutes to see a short video about Scouting?” This would be a good time to show the *Introduction to Scouting* video or the *Mission* video.

TIPS:

- Be enthusiastic.
- Show genuine interest.
- LISTEN actively.
- Ask occasional questions to encourage greater detail. (see How to probe – Section 1)

2. The Learner will commit to providing appropriately challenging programs for youth:

- a. Indicate awareness of the need to provide appropriately challenging programs to youth.
- b. State a willingness to provide a safe environment and challenging program to youth.

Assessment concerns: uncomfortable with eye contact (Caution: not all cultures are.); body language that does not match what they are saying; over involvement with youth; unrealistic expectations.

3. COMMITMENT TO MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

Let the candidate read Scouting's Mission statement.

Questions:

"Commitment to the Mission and Principles is a condition of membership in Scouting. What is it about the Mission that makes you want to volunteer?"

Script:

"Now we'll get into details with the Principles and Practices ..."

PRINCIPLES

Define and review the Principles with the candidate. Provide a copy for the person to read.

Ensure Understanding

Review the leader's Promise and section Promise and Law (if applicable).

Seek Agreement

Note the comfort level with the question, sincerity and ability to communicate to the age level.

Script:

"Scouting was founded, and continues to be based, on three Principles. These are:

***Duty to God:** This is defined as: "adherence to spiritual principles, loyalty to the religion that expresses them and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom."*

***Duty to Others:** This is defined as: "loyalty to one's country in harmony with the promotion of local, national, and international peace, understanding and co-operation," and "participation in the development of society, with recognition and respect for the dignity of one's fellow being and for the integrity of the natural world."*

***Duty to Self:** This is defined as: "responsibility for the development of oneself." This is in harmony with the educational purpose of the Scouting Movement which is to assist young people in the full development of their potentials."*

Questions:

“Are there any points here that you would like clarified?”

“Do your personal beliefs and convictions allow you to take this commitment?”

“If a ____ year old asked you to give examples of how you live according to these Principles as expressed by the Promise and Law, what might you tell them?”

OR

Script (Administration Position):

“The Principles, the Practices, the Promise and the Law are important elements of our programs. Members in administrative and support roles should be aware of these elements because they define our organization.

Questions:

“Would you be able to promote this organization and what it stands for?”

3. The Learner will commit to active expression of Mission, Principles, Method/Practices of Scouting:

- a. Restate Mission, Principles and Method/Practices of Scouts Canada (in own words).
- b. Explain how the Leader Promise and the Scout Law fit with personal values.
- c. Confirm willingness to sign the Applicant Agreement.

Assessment Concerns: questioning reference to God.

4. SELL THE ROLE

Describe typical activities of your section (group or council) and how these match up with the Mission and Principles.

Describe what exciting plans the section (group or council) has for the year.

Describe who else is involved.

Explain the time commitment. Be realistic.

Provide a copy of the volunteer position description and allow time to scan it. (see BP&P)

Emphasize getting outside help as much as possible.

Identify where help will come from if a need arises.

Show the resource material available. (ie. handbooks; NSWK)

Questions:

“What other volunteer work do you do in your leisure time?”

“Describe your experience in the outdoors that will help with the exciting plans we have for the year”.

(If no experience in outdoors, explain the expectation i.e. can't opt out, describe resources available to help.)

“What concerns do you have about this expectation?”

4. The Learner will commit to outdoor programming:

- a. Describe outdoor experiences.
- b. State willingness to provide outdoor experiences to youth.

Assessment Concerns: over commitment.

5. SKILLS, INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE

Explain how outdoor experiences are an important element in the success of all Scouting sections.

Explain to the candidate the personal development opportunities available, and the necessity of participating in these to improve their effectiveness. This is an opportunity to let the person know that s/he will be supported as well as an opportunity to introduce (but not hand over) the New Scouter Welcome Kit (NSWK) as an indication of some of the resources available. Explain the development available in your area. For non-leader roles, relate the development to the role and what you know about the candidate's abilities.

Questions:

“What skills, interests and experience do you have that might be helpful to you in the role of _____?”

“What activities or aspects of the role are you looking forward to the most? The least?”
(Pay close attention to what they answer for ‘the least’ as it may indicate whether the individual will be a ‘fit’ for the role or not. Don’t be afraid to probe it, if it plays a significant part of the role.)

“Do you have any other commitments that might conflict with this role?”

“How would you ensure that the outdoor aspect of Scouting gets its proper emphasis in the program?” (If this is a new area, the individual may need time to reflect – you can discuss ideas that have worked for others as well as ideas that haven’t worked so well.)

“We realize that you bring a variety of skills and experience to the role. Are you prepared to develop basic skills and knowledge for delivering the programs (or for managing the group, etc.?)” (Take the opportunity to highlight the resources available as well as the time requirement to complete WoodBadge I).

“Are you aware of Scout’s Canada’s Volunteer Support Strategy?”
Take this opportunity to elaborate on what this is – it’s a great selling feature.

5. The Learner will commit to Personal Development:

- a. Indicate awareness of VRAD strategy.
- b. State willingness to develop knowledge and skills necessary for the position within the first year.

Assessment Concerns: volunteering for credit or because they are lonely, going through a transition and seeing this as a diversion; have needs greater than the volunteer experience can/should fulfill and unrealistic expectations of their role or what they can accomplish. An inability to articulate their motivation to volunteer is also a concern.

6. SUITABLE ROLE MODEL

References

Scouting positions require a minimum of three references, one of whom may be related to the candidate.

Police Record Checks (PRCs)

If you haven't already, ask the candidate to fill out and sign the permission for a PRC, or ask him/her to provide a Canadian Police Record Check (dated not more than six months before). **This clean PRC must be provided before working with youth.** Advise the candidate about the process and that some regions are experiencing long delays (talk about your region specifically due to the Vulnerable Sector Check).

Questions:

“Leaders in Scouting are powerful role models for our young people. Do you remember who your role models were when you were growing up?”

“How did they help you?”

“How did they deal with discipline?”

“What type of a role model would you be to youth in our group?”

“What is it that you enjoy about being with children?”

“Tell me about a situation when your patience was being tested by a child and how you responded.”

“Have you ever had sexual contact with a child or children? Have any of your actions towards a child been perceived by anyone as sexual in nature?”

“Have you had any involvement with the police or any other authorities that would reflect on your suitability to hold this position?”

“Do you have any questions or concerns?”

6. The Learner will commit to be a positive role model:

- a. State a willingness to be a positive role model for youth consistent with Scouts Canada's values.

Assessment Concerns: justification of harsh discipline strategies; harsh or unrealistic attitudes about children; unable to identify positive childhood role models; feelings of bitterness/resentment; combative stance towards others, overdependence, inability to deal with strong emotions; prejudice towards certain groups.

You should have an understanding of the applicant's attitude toward children and youth and experiences related to children.

7. TEAM APPROACH

All leadership positions in Scouting rely on a team approach. Will the candidate:

- take an active role?
- support the group's decisions?
- work in isolation or as a team member?
- share the glory for success and responsibility for failure?

Following Procedures

Will the candidate:

- ignore procedures?
- try to understand them?
- work to improve them?
- use sound judgment when applying guidelines?

Questions:

“There are a variety of opportunities to work with other people in Scouting. Do you prefer to work alone, with two or three people, or in larger groups?”

“Please tell me about any experiences you may have had with disabled people/children/seniors.”

“Like every organization, Scouting has rules, procedures and guidelines. These sometimes require extra effort or care in providing the program or completing a project. Can you tell us about a time at work or in another situation where rules got in the way of getting things done? How did you handle it?”

“Have you read the organization's “Duty of Care” document?”

“Do you understand this document? How do you feel about it? Can you accept to be guided by it in this position?”

7. The Learner will commit to the Shared Leadership approach:

- a. Indicate an awareness of the Shared Leadership approach used by Scouts Canada.
- b. State willingness to support group decisions.

Assessment Concerns: inability to work on a team; lack of respect for procedure.

8. VISION FOR YOUTH

As the candidate speaks, listen for motivation and comments which match Scouting's Mission and its educational purpose.

Questions:

"Youth today are faced with many challenges as they grow up. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing young people in our community?"

"How do you think you can help them through Scouting?"

8. The Learner will commit to being open, honest and objective.

Assessment Concerns: distrust of conventional authorities; lack of optimism for future; wanting to provide children with something he/she never experienced.

QUESTIONS

Answer any questions the candidate asks. If you don't know the answers, tell the person that you don't know, but you'll find out and get back to them. Be honest about both the commitment and the rewards.

CONCLUSION

"That covers the major points for this interview. Do you have any other questions or things you would like more information on?"

"Thank you for taking the time for this interview, and for your desire to be a Scouting volunteer. Let me briefly tell you what happens from here:"

1. *"I am going to contact the references. This should only take me until _____."*
2. *"There may be a second interview; if there isn't, I'll give you a call back to confirm that I can recommend you for the position of _____."*
3. *"Once the PRC is done, we'll call you to discuss your first three months as a Scouter."*
4. *"You'll then begin an Orientation period where you may be active in your role. During this period you'll be working closely with _____, and receive a basic orientation to the role."*
5. *"Then we'll arrange for your investiture."*

"Do you have any further questions?"

"Thank you again!"

9. The Learner will commit to child protection and safe programming:

- a. Provide three (3) personal references.
- b. Agree to have a PRC conducted according to the local process.
- c. Provide acceptable answers to the questions in this *Volunteer Screening Handbook*.
- d. Agree to follow the direction provided in the *Duty of Care*.