



Understanding Needs and Characteristics of the Group

This Leadership Skill enables Leaders to:

- Understand the difference between a need and a want
- Understand the characteristics of group members and how it contributes to team building process
- Understand how the characteristics of group members help to form a team identity

As a leader, it is important to understand needs and characteristics. Not only is it important to understanding a group, but it is essential to understanding the individuals that make up the group.

It is necessary to understand the difference between needs and wants. A need is essential for survival: shelter, food, warmth for example. A want is something that we believe will make our life or situation easier or make us happier. It is the responsibility of a leader to insure that the needs of all group members are met.

Every member of a group brings different skills, talents and motives to the group; and can contribute to the successful formation of a team and the success of the team. As Scouts, we all have a common set of values as expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. This also establishes a common ground in which each member of the group should feel comfortable expressing their individual needs and values. Some Scouts may want to earn merit badges, while others may want to travel to high adventure bases. As a leader, it is your important to extend respect to each member of the group and allow for the open expression of their ideas without worrying about being 'laughed'-at or 'put-down'. Respect is a fundamental want of all people, especially your peers.

Understanding individual characteristics is important for every member of a group. As any group forms, the members' characteristics contribute to the overall development of the group characteristics and identity. The talents and skills of each individual member of the team contribute to the overall success of the team. Some members of the group may be more outgoing, while other members may be more quiet or shy. As a leader it is important to allow every member of the group to be heard equally, and to contribute to the team formation and efforts.