

Addressing Contemporary Issues in Girl Scouts

To help girls deal with today's important issues, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. has developed a group of special leader guides called Contemporary Issues. This program addresses topics of current interest and is designed for Girl Scouts of all age levels.

Tune In to Well Being: Say No to Drugs emphasizes preventive drug awareness activities that create a support structure so that drug use is seen as an unattractive and unacceptable way to deal with problems. Tobacco and alcohol use are included in an extended definition of substance abuse.

Staying Safe: Preventing Child Abuse defines the four major types of child abuse: physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment. It provides effective activities that help girls develop needed personal safety awareness skills.

Earth Matters: A Challenge for Environmental Action is designed to empower girls and adults to take action as individuals and as groups to protect our environment.

Reaching Out: Preventing Youth Suicide helps girls and adults deal with this emotional issue calmly and factually by providing tips and activities that develop feelings of strong self-worth and the critical skills needed to face the stresses and pressures of modern life. It also examples reasons for suicide, preventive measures, recognizing an individual in danger of committing suicide, and the effects of suicide on friends and family.

Caring and Coping: Facing Family Crises focuses on three of the most common problems confronting today's families: divorce, the death of a parent and poverty. It outlines a variety of coping strategies, which could be utilized by the family or any adult working with children and youth.

Be Your Best: Developing Health and Fitness promotes physical and mental wellness to increase girls' self-esteem, and ability to handle peer pressure. The importance of good nutrition, physical exercise, taking care of your body, and looking your best, are emphasized. It explores how stress and environmental factors impact on health and fitness, and discusses how to avoid harmful substances. It offers a variety of activities to help girls develop a complete Health and Fitness Plan.

Decisions For Your Life: Preventing Teenage Pregnancy contains information and activities designed to help Junior, Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts avoid early sexual involvement and pregnancy. Emphasis is given to building self-esteem; understanding values; combating negative peer pressure; strengthening decision-making skills; and developing realistic options for the future as a way of increasing the odds against becoming pregnant at an early age.

Issues for Girl Scouts

The following *Guides for Girl Scout Adults* are available in the council store along with corresponding age-appropriate booklets.

Connections: *The Best Tomorrow for Today's Children* helps girls learn skills and attitudes that will help them get along with others. Children are not born with prejudices; they learn them from their experience with others, the media and the world. Providing activities that confront prejudice and increase respect for differences helps girls build concern for their own rights and the rights of others. Girls need to learn that they can fight prejudices and discrimination. They can become active citizens in a diverse nation where differences are celebrated, not feared, where people are different, not divided, and where everyone contributes to the common good.

Girls Are Great: *Growing Up Female* features a separate booklet for each age level. Each booklet is written for and focuses on topics relevant to one stage of development. The booklet encourages girl/adult partnership, informal hands on learning, and progression, so important in Girl Scouting. Self-esteem, assertiveness, and independent thinking form the foundation for girls' progression in understanding the issues related to growing up female.

Lead to Read illustrates that reading and writing are important skills--and that it is never too early to emphasize the importance of literacy. While most people who cannot read develop means of dealing with the literate world, lives are enhanced when reading and writing skills are strong enough to meet today's challenges. This program encourages children and adults to see that reading and writing are personal experiences that can bring meaning to their individual lives.

Media Know-How: Kids today are barraged with stimuli containing messages about values, attitudes and ideals that will ultimately guide them in the decisions that they make and the manner in which they view the world. Because the media is so pervasive, adults need to help young people harness the power of their positive aspects in order to achieve productive ends. By reading and participating in the *Media Know-How* related activities, girls will become increasingly "media literate" and become more critical of what they hear, see, or read in a way that will benefit them as individuals as well as citizens.