

The pandemic has without a doubt changed how we deliver Scouting to our Young People. Even though it may once have seemed the antithesis to Scouting, there is little doubt that even when return to face to face, there will be a place for Scouting online.

Bearing this in mind, the Scouts Association collaborated with 'Role Models' to run a Webinar on how to translate our values from offline to online with the aim of further 'keeping young people engaged online'. Role Models aims to develop young peoples' skills in leadership, confidence and resilience. The session was run by Louise Treherne.

At the time of writing, you can access the recording [HERE](#). The meeting has been summarised here.

Louise started by saying: "As much as we try, online is always going to feel different to offline. But, we mustn't underestimate the work that we are doing. Now, more than ever, the young people we are supporting need to be able to collaborate and connect."

If we split a session into 3 parts – beginning, middle and end. Each part is important in its own way, and presents its own challenges

BEGINNING

CHECK IN:

Check in with the young people. Recognise that they have probably had a busy day with many ups and downs – just like you. Ask them, how are you feeling? Role Models often use a 'feelings checker'

ICE BREAKER

This is arguably even more important online. Try and ensure that

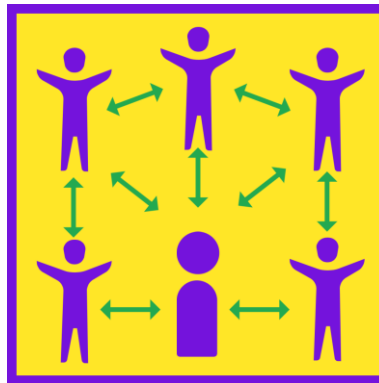
- They include everyone – and yourself if possible
- Non – threatening: something that's easy to be involved in and doesn't always involve putting a young person on the spot.

An example of an ice breaker used by Role Model is 'The Sun Shines on'everyone who has brown hair..or everyone who has a yellow top on. (Those YP can just stand up) Its non-threatening, inclusive and also gets everyone moving and drives connection.

STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Let young people know what to expect at the start of the session and lay out your expectations – even down to the fact you would like them to listen and respect each other, which is part of their promise

Keeping Young People Engaged Online



One of the things that many feel is lost online is the back and forth connection between leaders, young people and each other. It can often feel static. What can we do to build that 3-way connection online?

Allow connection time: Let them have time to talk to each other. This is probably what they are missing the most right now and may not be getting online at school. Maybe try not to get too hung up on 'I have to be delivering every second'. The unstructured moments are just as fruitful.

Building relationships: Try and find ice breaker games that build connection. They don't have to all be speaking. It can be through actions like virtual high-fives. For some YP, if they don't 'participate' quite early on it can lead to dis-engagement. Virtual high-fives can also be great. We want young people to find out about one another.

So you have got off to a strong start by adopting some of these strategies – what are the other challenges you might face.

MIDDLE

Energy	<p>We need to double the energy online to even get anywhere near replicating how we make YP people when they are in front of us.</p> <p>Lots of smiling can help get into the zone. Some people say standing rather than sitting can really up the energy and make you feel like you are 'in the zone'.</p> <p>You are giving up your time to be there - Show YP you are genuinely happy and excited to talk to them!</p>
Method	<p>Varying the method of delivery can really help keep attention. Switching between power point, video's and back and forth chat can really help with engagement. If possible, let the YP take the lead.</p> <p>Allow YP to participate in different ways – verbally and non-verbal (i.e thumbs up or by a movement)</p> <p>If you are playing a video, try to set the task before pressing play. "look out for", or</p>

Keeping Young People Engaged Online

	<p>“ after I’m going to ask you to tell me”</p> <p>Try not to keep slides up for too long. If you are having a discussion go back to camera in between so everyone can see each other and then go back to the slides</p> <p>In addition to this: show awareness of the diversity of the group: Do you have a child with mobility issues that can’t participate with a scavenger hunt? Maybe they can draw the item instead or ask a sibling / parent for help? If you have slides up, is there a child that won’t be able to read quickly enough?</p>
Leader Confidence	<p>It takes time to build confidence online. Give yourself a break and recognise that it can take time to feel comfortable delivering sessions online. Take your time, and talk the YP through what is happening. If your tech is failing, don’t panic – let them know, don’t just go silent!</p> <p>Being relaxed and comfortable and having a sense of humour can really help the session!</p>
Share ideas	<p>Take advantage of all the different resources available. The Scout Association have uploaded many programme ideas online and there’s a wealth of resources on 1st Facebook Virtual. Also, talk to other leaders to find out what has worked for them.</p>

ENDING

Reflection

Go over what you have covered – summarise to give them something digest later.

Energiser

After a great session, ending on a quick game can really leave everyone in high spirits!

Next Time

What will happen at the next session? Get them excited, even set them a challenge if you can!

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Role Models offers coaching – so here are some extra tips on how to engage young people using coaching techniques.

- ✚ Use open questions during the session – this is more engaging and you are more likely to get better participation.
- ✚ Pausing and accepting silence. Its ok to have a bit of ‘silence’. Don’t feel the need to fill it with your voice every minute. You want YP to talk. By accepting their initial answer and just moving on means you might not get ‘all’ of their thoughts. Hold the silence for a few seconds and its surprising what else they may say.!
- ✚ Flexibility – Allow for it! If the discussion goes somewhere different, allow for it where possible. It may be just what they need on that day.
- ✚ Listen to **understand** rather than to **respond** to their answers. Ie if you ask a question and they answer – make sure you listen to the ‘whole’ answer and respond appropriately. Not just the answer you were looking for.
- ✚ Reciprocity – We affect each other. By being present shows that we are there to invest in one another and genuinely want to be there. Think about how you can give this to them.

The kinds of questions and phrases that can help energise discussions...

I’m wondering...

Do you have something else you’d like to add ?

How might this be useful?

And what else?

How do you know that?

Can you build on that?