

COMMUNITY SERVICE VS. TAKE ACTION

Overview

Community Service makes the world better for some people “right now.” These acts of kindness are important ways to help people—for a short time.

Take Action is more than community service by offering a long term solution rather than a short term fix. This also picks up where community service leaves off. The best way to take action is to find something you’re passionate about and connect it to your community. In Girl Scouts, we have two ways to take action:

1. **Take Action for Journeys** is a service learning project that will help girls understand the issues and ways to help make a difference in their community.
2. **Take Action for Highest Awards** is where sustainability come in. This project addresses the root cause and is sustainable. The three essential elements of these projects are:
 - Identifies the root cause of a community need
 - Engages community support & collaboration
 - Sustains long-term benefits for the community

Examples

Community Service	Take Action (Journeys)	Take Action (Highest Awards)
Cleaning out storm drains in your neighborhood	Create posters for your school or a local faith community that educate people about not dumping chemicals or other materials into storm drains.	Create a chemical dumping waste day for your community. Talk with city council to make it an annual event.
Pick up trash at a local park	Plant seedlings to begin reforestation after a fire.	Create a program on outdoor fire safety for elementary students. Work with the parks district to add to their curriculum.
Make a healthy snack station at school for a week	Lobby to have the school cafeteria serve more healthy snacks and drinks.	Start a program and partnership with a local organization to supply healthy foods to the school district.



Pearl of Wisdom

- To make a sustainable change:
 - A. Make your solution permanent
 - B. Educate and inspire others to be a part of the change
 - C. Change a rule, regulation, or law

In Partnership With:



Activity 1: Community Service vs. Journey and Highest Awards Take Action

Instructions:

Break into small groups and provide each group a different scenario listed below.

- A. If the scenario is a community service project, describe how you could make this a Journey Take Action project.
- B. If the scenario is a Journey Take Action project, what steps could be taken to transform it into a Highest Awards Project?
- C. If the scenario is a Highest Awards Take Action project, how is it meeting the following three requirements:
 - I. Identifies the root cause of a community need
 - II. Engages community support & collaboration
 - III. Sustains long-term benefits for the community

Community Service	Journey Take Action	Highest Awards Take Action
Volunteer to serve food at a homeless shelter	Create posters for your school or a local faith community that educate people about not dumping chemicals or other materials into storm drains.	Work with other troops to organize an after-school tutoring center at a homeless shelter
Donate toys to a children's hospital	Plant seedlings to begin reforestation after a fire.	Work with school to help make a mental health resources page
Make blankets for an animal shelter	Lobby to have the school cafeteria serve more healthy snacks and drinks.	Build a pollinator garden for a local library and work with them to develop a curriculum to educate children.
Sing songs at a assisted living home	Make a buddy bench for your local school's playground	Work with your local community on developing a process for pedestrians crossing the street safely and how to educate the public

Activity 2: Community Mapping

What is a community map? A community map is a drawing or a list that shows the community's needs and resources, including contacts that might help the girls when working on a Take Action project.

Instructions:

Fill out the following community mapping guide using the guided questions below:

- What are the community's needs?
- What sparks an interest in you?
- What disappoints you about your community?
- Where do you see an injustice?
- Think about your own skills and interests.
- Group project: think about each girls' strengths.
- Include resources such as the library, animal shelters, parks department, but do not forget to include parents, friends, and the girls themselves under resources.
- If your group is having a hard time visualizing their community, take a walk around your neighborhood to get ideas.

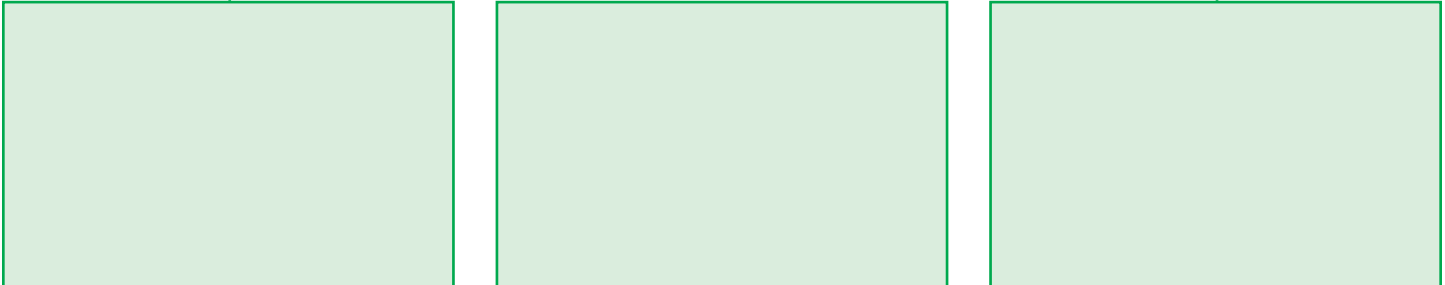
Community Problem _____ **in** _____

Topic Area

Name of Community

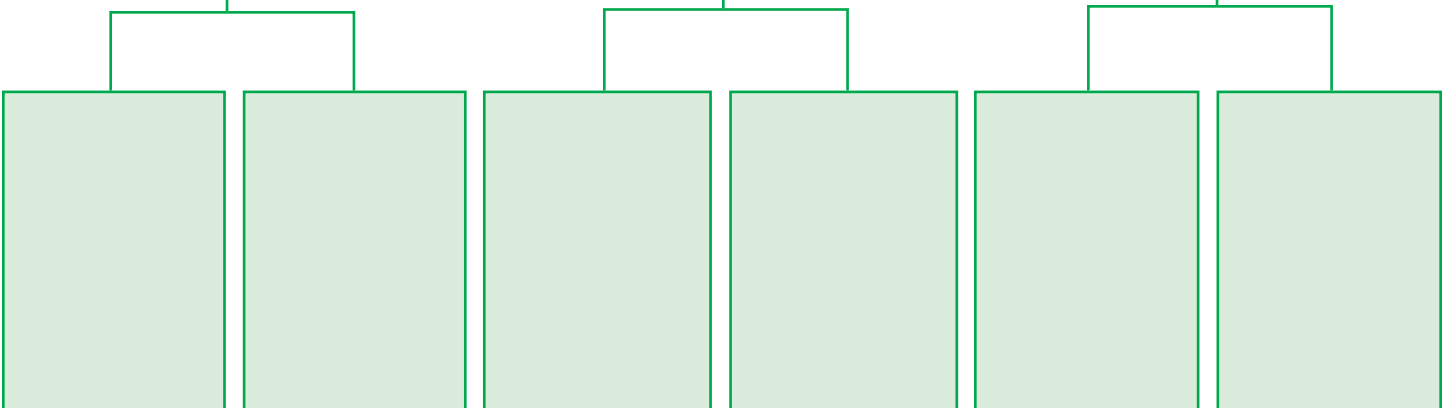
Root Causes:

This is the “why” behind the problem.



Possible Solutions:

What can I do that would address the root cause and solve the problem?



Identify Partners:

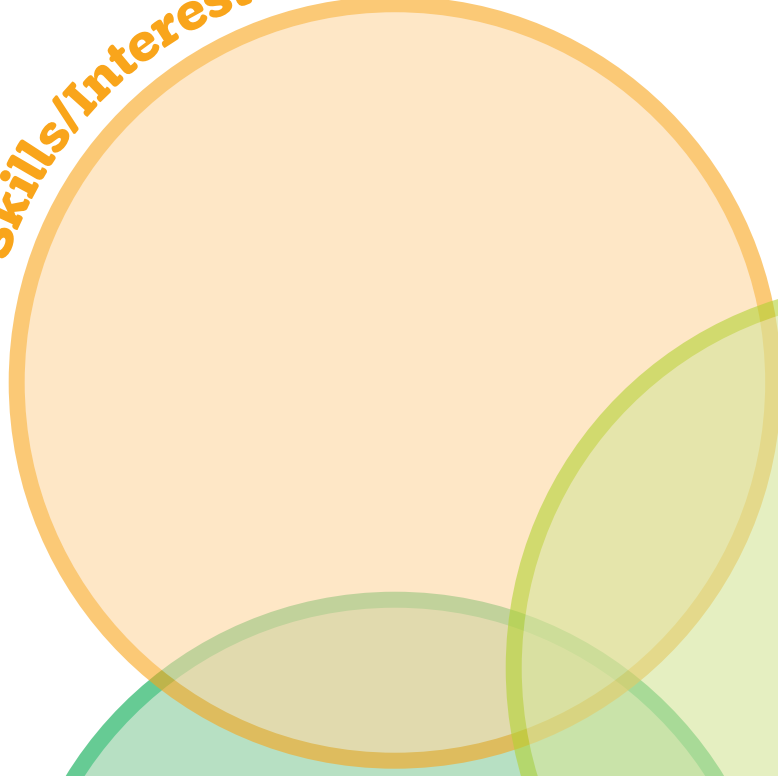
These are the experts in your community that know a lot about this problem/topic and are likely doing work to help solve it already.

What’s Next?

Now that you have found the root cause of the problem and have brainstormed possible solutions and partners, it is time to contact these partners and start developing what your project could look like.

COMMUNITY MAPPING

Skills/Interests



Needs/Issues

Community Resources

Activity 3: Mind Mapping

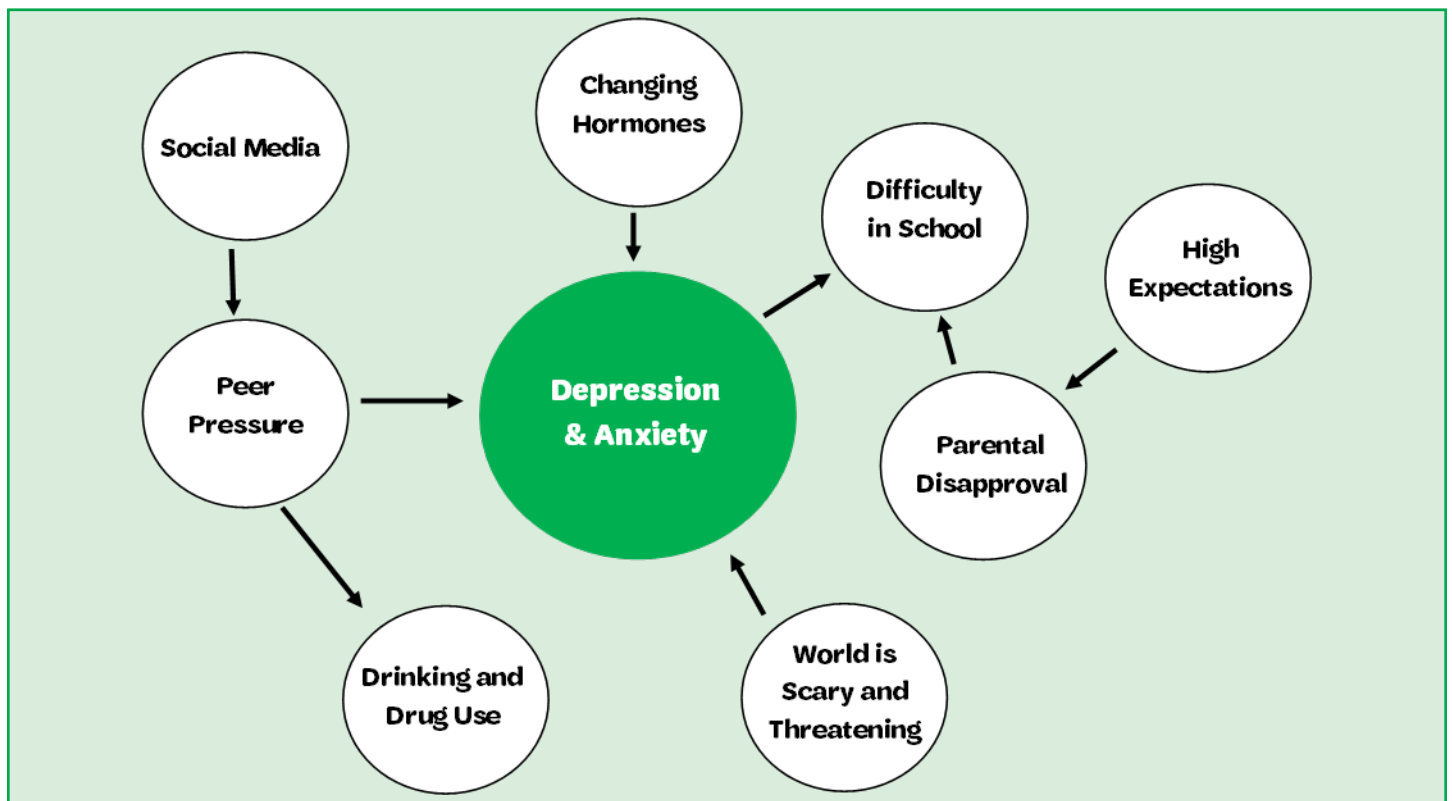
Facilitator Note:

Hand out one blank piece for each participant.

Mind-Mapping Tool

Create your own mind-mapping diagram like the one shown here, using one of the issues facing your community. Follow these instructions:

1. Write the community issue in the middle of the paper.
2. Think about what are some of the causes of this issue.
3. Now, try connecting the different causes you come up with to each other and to the main issue. How do the causes connect to each other?
4. Do you see the pattern? This activity will help you come up with different ways to approach a problem, as well as different ways you might go about addressing it.



S'more Info

- [GSWO Blog > The Five Essential Steps to Take Action](#)
- Google/YouTube for Project Ideas
- Girl Scout Journeys by Grade Level
- [Girlscouts.org > Adults > Volunteer > Tips for Troop Leaders > Program Success > Community Service and Take Action Projects: What's the Difference](#)
- Podcast Community Service vs Take Action: <https://www.silverandgoldpodcast.com/episode/24>
- Girlscouts.org > <https://my.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-vtk/global/resource/Take-Action-Guide-for-Volunteers.pdf>