

# Using Research to Strengthen Adult Leadership in BSA



## How do adult leaders make a difference in Scouting?

The **BEST Study**, a first-of-its-kind national study, focused on this question in a large scale investigation.

A team of researchers from Montclair State University's Institute for Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation (RYTE) and American Institutes for Research (AIR) seek to: 1) Understand how adult leaders' training and Scouting experiences relate to positive youth outcomes; 2) Identify how adult leadership and training impact youth character development; and 3) Improve the Scouts BSA program.

Results can help BSA understand how Scouts BSA strengthens leadership and deliver a consistent program to promote positive development in youth. The results may also advance the youth character field overall by sharing evidence about adult leadership in youth programs.

## Methodology for Model Fidelity Assessments

Adult leadership is being studied in 3 parts including observations, surveys and interviews:



The researchers aim to understand the **model** through which **basic adult leadership** is taught in Scouts BSA, and how much **fidelity** and **adaptation** there is to that model. A team of researchers focused on this question by observing in-person **Scoutmaster Position-Specific trainings**.

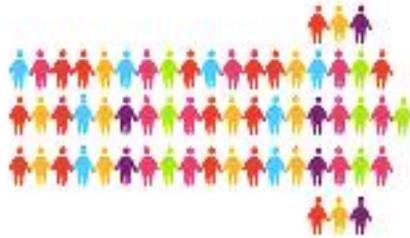


The researchers are focusing on **fidelity** and **adaptation** to the **model** through which **advanced adult leadership** is taught in BSA. A team of researchers focused on this question by observing **Wood Badge trainings**.

# Methodology for Impact Assessment

The impact assessment focuses on adult leadership in Scouts BSA troops. Scouts and leaders from **troops across the country** are invited to participate in **surveys** and **interviews**. These address how adult leader practices may be connected to positive youth character outcomes.

Adult Practice



Positive  
Youth  
Development

Over the **BEST Study's** 3 year period, 3 waves of data collection will be completed. By using both quantitative and qualitative data that include perspectives from both youth and adults, the study can provide a robust picture of experiences, successes and areas for improvement.



## Next Steps

As data come in, the **BEST Study** team uses cutting-edge analytical approaches to tell the story of adult leadership in Scouts BSA.

Future **BEST Study** questions can help BSA to:

- 1) **Celebrate & showcase** best practices;
- 2) **Improve** BSA programming to best foster character & leadership in youth & adults;
- 3) **Highlight** BSA as a **cutting-edge** youth development organization.

For more information, go to [bsabeststudy.org](http://bsabeststudy.org).