

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.