

Exclusive Spaces:

Managing Inherent Risks of Racism in Outdoor Spaces

October 20, 2023

Build Resiliency, Broaden Horizons, Grow Community, Develop Skills for

OUR MODEL:

Our program is based around three core principles: long-term youth engagement, outdoor adventure and experiential education programming, and goal setting with a focus on future planning.









OUR PROGRAM:

- Ranger Year: Be Courageous
- Mountaineer Year: Be Compassionate
- Elite Year: Be Excellent
- Leadership Year: Find Your Personal Power
- JET (Job Experience Trainee) Program: Create Your Vision



So what do we mean by "Exclusive Spaces?"

Our programming spans across several local, state, and national parks in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wyoming, and Idaho.

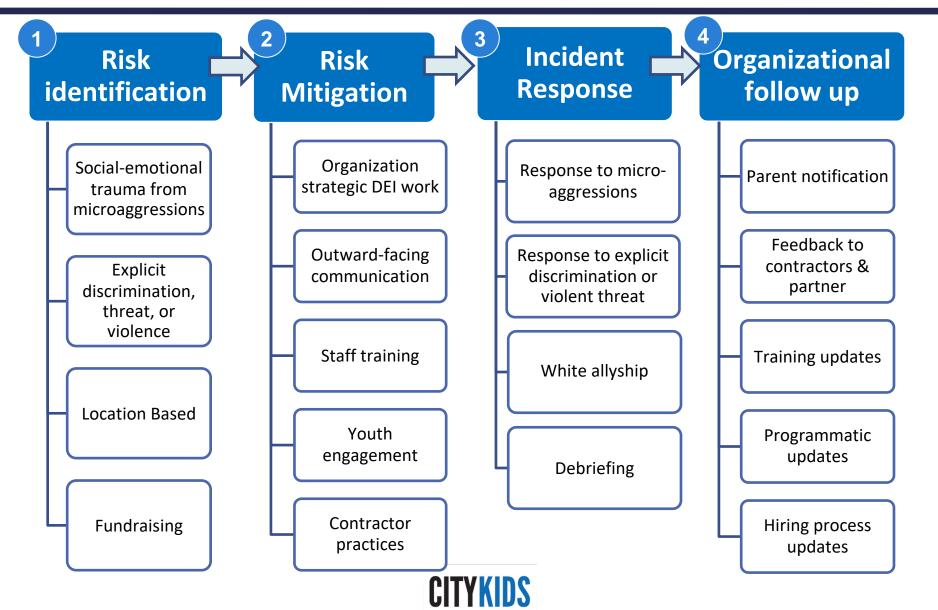
•WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AN EXCLUSIVE SPACE?

- Historically occupied by indigenous peoples, later colonized by white settlers*
- Segregation played a large role in the design of our public lands*
- MOVING TOWARDS HEALING:
 - People of the Global Majority Summit (PGM One), Outdoor Afro, Brown Girls Climb, Latino Outdoors, Queer Nature, Native Women's Wilderness, Brown People Camping, Soul Trak Outdoors and so many more!
- https://time.com/5562258/indigenous-environmental-justice/

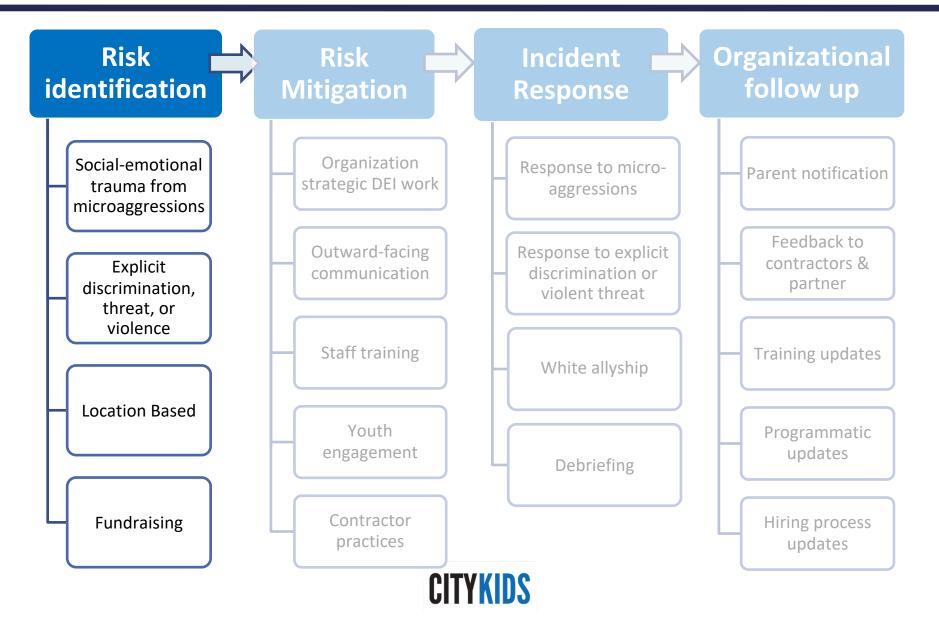
https://publiclands.colostate.edu/exclusion-on-public-lands-shenandoahnational-park-state-parks-and-segregation-in-the-american-south/



Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional trauma from microaggressions

Explicit discrimination, threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

Increasingly, research demonstrates that major experiences of discrimination, exposure to hate crimes & violence and the accumulation of small occurrences, such as everyday discrimination & microaggressions result in stress disorders, increased rates of mental health illness, and racial trauma.*

As such, we are committed to to reducing exposure to microaggressions during programs. Youth and staff encounter everyday racial microaggressions and the City Kids program uniquely exposes youth to being otherized in predominately white outdoor spaces.

*https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/Microaggressions-and-Traumatic-Stress-Series-Forward-and-Intro-Sample.pdf



Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional trauma from microaggressions

Explicit discrimination, threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

Explicit discrimination experienced by City Kids includes prejudicial treatment, racial slurs, and expands to threatening individuals unwanted physical contact, yelling, glaring, and verbal threats.

Youth reports a member of the public staring at them and pushing them out of the way

While no youth or staff have been physically harmed in a racist incident, these experiences are painful & traumatic.

City Kids anticipates the reality of physical violence based on the daily experiences lived of Black & Latinx people in the United States and the increased visibility & actions of white supremacists.



Risk identification

Social-emotional trauma from microaggressions

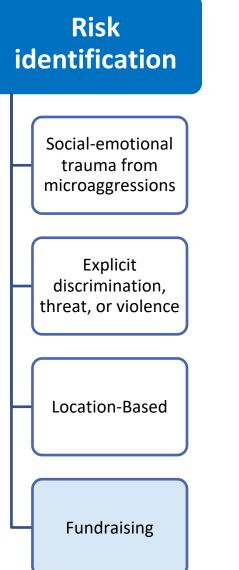
Explicit discrimination, threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

There are certain areas of the country, business and campgrounds that pose a greater risk to our youth than the benefit of traveling to or through those spaces, or partnering with those businesses. City Kids identifies these areas through significant incidents, repeated negative experiences and youth / staff feedback.





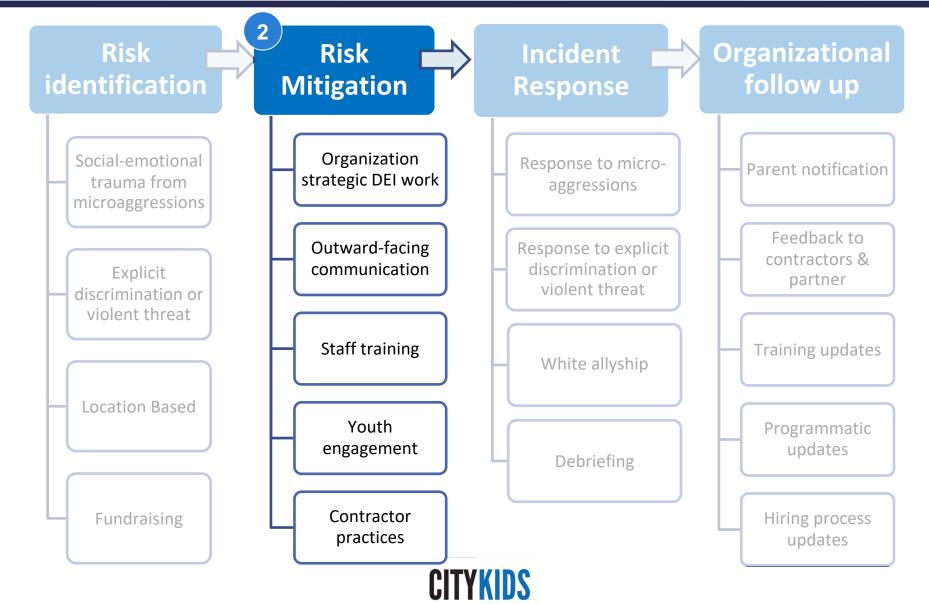
There is a long history of perpetuating harmful narratives in fundraising for non-profit organizations.

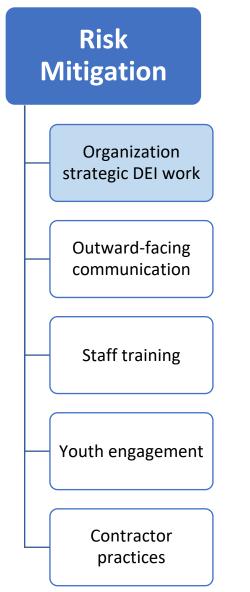
City Kids relies on a combination of individual donors, corporations, foundations, and federal grants to fund programs. Fundraising events & efforts are an exposure point for youth to come into contact with these stereotypes (from donors, in grant writing, volunteers, etc)



Risk identification	Context: City Kids partners with a few organizations to offer scholarships for our JETs (high schoolers) to go on longer backcountry trips. Interested JETs apply to go on trips all over the country and are often the only CK youth on the trip and are directly supported by the partner organization staff while in the field. Scenario: A Black male JET is going on a backpacking & kayaking trip in Alaska where he is one of two black youth and has an all white staff team.
Social-emotional trauma from microaggressions	City Kids JET is one of two Black people on the course Youth and partner org staff have an unknown understanding of cultural competency
Explicit discrimination, threat, or violence	City Kids JET is one of two Black people on the course Youth and partner org staff have an unknown understanding of cultural competency
Location Based	Alaskan backcountry - a majority white space, far away from home & City Kids staff with no phone access (for the JET)
Fundraising	This partner organization is partnered with City Kids in multiple ways, including offering additional programs to CK youth and making financial contributions to City Kids.
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Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids





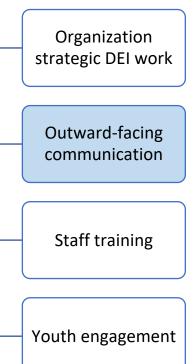
Strategic organizational JEDI work has contributed to the organization's examination of our youth & staff experiences during programing.

FORMAL JEDI WORK AT CITY KIDS HAS INCLUDED:

- Cultural surveys & reflection
- Staff professional development
- Seasonal training curriculum
- Youth curriculum
- Improved hiring practices
- DEI Statement of beliefs
- DEIJ Working Group







Contractor	
practices	

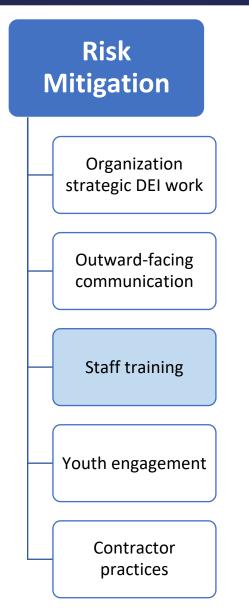
HOW WE TELL OUR STORY MATTERS.

Our outward-facing communication sets the tone and model the language, messaging, and story about our program and youth. City Kids strives to use positive and empowering youth centered stories and language. Language is complex and will continue to be an area of deep discussion and reflection for the organization.

STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDE:

- Families and youth
- Staff (current and prospective)
- Program partners
- Our DC & WY communities
- Our donors and board
- The general public





Staff training DEI curriculum focuses on clarifying explicit organizational beliefs and expectations for staff. It is considered a core component of training, as both a series of stand alone workshops and woven throughout all trainings.

KEY TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Basic principles
- Examination of individual identities, power & privilege
- Implicit bias in education
- Review of important issues to the CK community
- Incident mitigation & response



Risk Mitigation	City Kids program youth are briefed or encountering racism, training for response racism in the outdoors.
Organization strategic DEI work	 THEMES AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDE: Background knowledge of the Acknowledgement of risk with Share when you feel uncomformation
Outward-facing communication	 Request help early from staff Maintain personal & group sa instructions to de-escalate the
Staff training	 others Focus on response rather that place to share emotions where
Youth engagement	Curriculum on the historical context or movements to diversify the outdoors in empowering youth to understand a
Contractor practices	in the outdoor community and public

n the expectation of onse and to contextualize

- e formation of the "outdoors"
- h location or program specifics
- ortable or unsafe
- or teen leaders

- fety-listen to staff e situation, yourself & support
- n reaction- there will be a n the group is safe

f public lands and current has been a critical component nd advocate for their position spaces.

Risk Mitigation

Example:

Youth Resource for attending partner programs through CK scholarships

Organization strategic DEI work

Outward-facing communication

Staff training

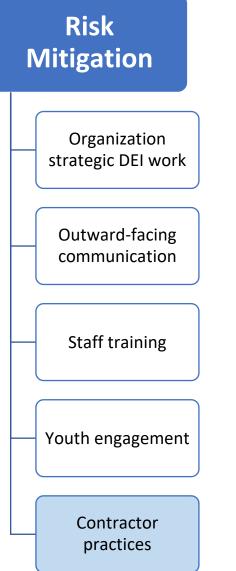
Youth engagement

Contractor practices





This laminated card goes with a youth on a partner program trip, for example a NOLS or Outward Bound. In advance of the trip, a staff member briefs youth on the possible reality of being in a predominately white space and how to use this use this card for themselves or with their instructor. This is also sent to the instructor team before the trip.



Contractors pose risks because of the direct contact between contracted instructors, guides, facilitators and CK youth & staff. Contractors have been a historical source of harm to youth & staff.

City Kids manages this exposure through:

- Vetting
- Training or briefing
- Resource sharing
- Relationship building



Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

Example:

Vetting questions to assess contractors experience working with YOC and any explicit stated DEI priorities.

1. What experience does your company and staff have working with youth of color?

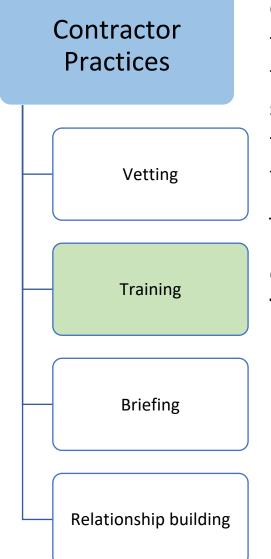
2. Does your company/org offer any specific training for staff in cultural competency or have any stated commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion ?

3. Has the contractor experienced any reported complaints and how were they handled?

4. If there was an incident who would manage it and who should it be reported to?



Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories



City Kids has started providing direct training for contractors & partners, focusing on long term partners with significant youth contact time. Training for contractors involved in backcountry travel is now understood as critical to joint decision-making during medical, behavioral, motivational challenges and evacuations.

Topics include:

- Basic cultural competency
- Implicit bias and its impacts on instructors to understand youth behavior, read emotions, and see pain in medical complaints
- Allyship for youth & staff when experiencing microaggressions & discrimination
- Short incident response direction



CITY KIDS

Contractor JEDI Training Inclusion Risk Management

Creating a Positive Experience for Youth, Staff & Guides

Youth & Staff Names

If not familiar with common Black names or pronunciation, CK can send a list of youth names in advance. Please do not comment on your personal difficulty if names are hard for you to pronounce, this is a microaggression. It's better to try again and ask to get it right, rather than comment that it's too hard or continue to mispronounce youth names.

Celebrate Youth Experience

City Kids is a 6 year program. Youth in the program have experience in the outdoors and with outdoor sports. As a non-technical focused program, youth may not always be proficient (especially when younger), but they are experienced wilderness travelers. Minimizing a youth's experience or assuming it's their "first time" is a micro-aggression that underestimates youth ability and perpetuates the idea that BPOC don't recreate outdoors.

Disrupt Harmful Narratives & Be an Ally

City Kids does not accept the following terms to taik about or discuss youth as they perpetuate harmful and disempowering narraites: a triak, inner-city, lowincome, troubled, challenged, or "hoods to the woods." The outdoors is a white dominated space and youth are often made to feel unvelceme or experience discrimination from other outdoor users. This frequently happens through questions, unwanted conversation, or negative interactions. Speak up for City Kids groups to outsiders and taik about the program in a positive light. Be an ally and don't allow strangers to assume they are "troubled, at itsk, or delinquent youth" or any of the other terms listed above. Discourage probing questions about the program or youth or assumptions this is their first time outside. White contractors and staff can be an ally when engaging with hostile or aggressive racits. Prioritize Back & POC safety first.

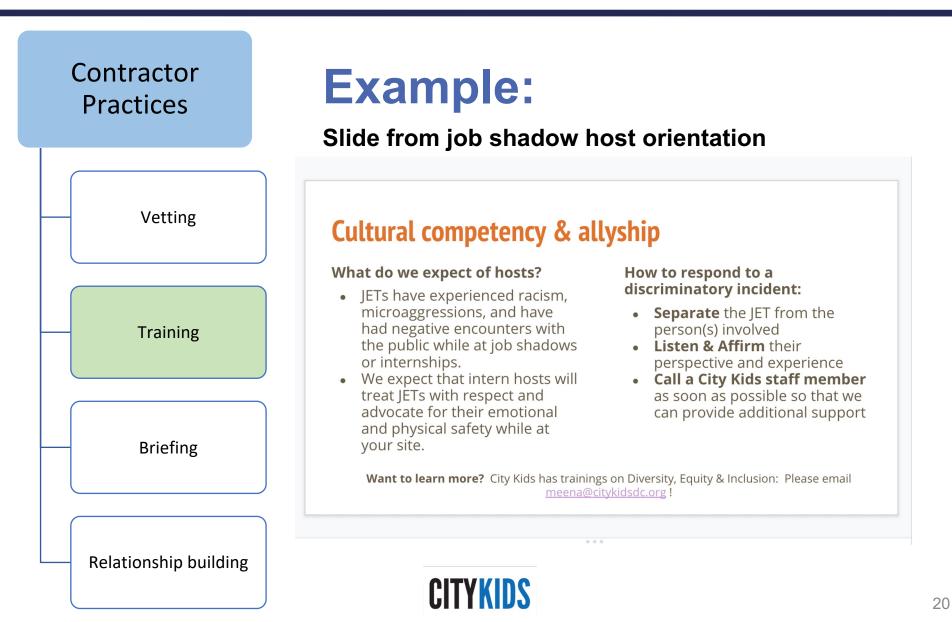
Be Mindful of Using Youth Slang

it is OK to ask for understanding but not cross the line towards making fun of it, mimicking or imitating. AAVE - African American Vernacular English is a recognized dialect of English, not poor grammar.

Be Aware of Your Own Implicit Biases

Be careful about implicit bias about who is leading the City Kids group. Frequently White staff are assumed to be in charge, rather than the designated Black or POC Lead Staff member. Please clarify if you are unsure who is leading a program or making decisions for the group. When interacting with youth or staff of color, be thoughtli about the questions you ask and the way you ask them - as we have talked about there are many microaggressions in the forms of questions in outdoor settings.





Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Briefing: Notes/Conversations City Kids has with contractors in advance of partnership as to relay inclusive practices for programming. Briefing notes change depending on contractor and program type:

Vetting Training Briefing **Relationship building**

Climbing programs:

"Do not refer to a Black participant as a monkey while climbing- there is a long history of the term monkey used as an insult towards Black people."



Contractor Practices
Vetting
Training
Briefing
Relationship building

City Kids strives to develop relationships with frequently visited locations to build local support & advocacy for youth and the program. We do this by:

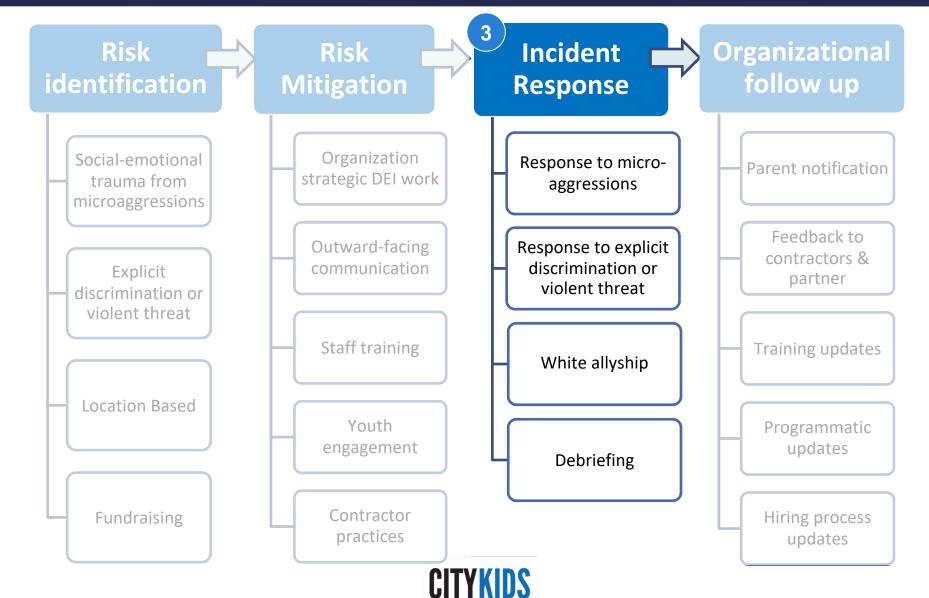
- Clear training/briefing, resource sharing and expectation setting
- Sharing examples of past incidents and their impacts on our program at the location / partner site
- Honest conversations about our programmatic goals to ensure that we are values aligned
- Continued follow up and check-ins
- Demonstrated commitment to a reciprocal partnership



Risk Mitigation: Case Study

N	Risk /litigation	Context: City Kids partners with a few organizations to offer scholarships for our JETs (high schoolers) to go on longer backcountry trips. Interested JETs apply to go on trips all over the country and are often the only CK youth on the trip and are directly supported by the partner organization staff while in the field. Scenario: A Black male JET is going on a backpacking & kayaking trip in Alaska where he is one of two black youth and has an all white staff team.
\mid	Organization strategic DEI work	City Kids has an explicit commitment to DEI work that informs partnerships and allows staff and youth* to respond to incidents with the confidence that the organization supports them.
	Outward-facing communication	Youth have the opportunity to meet with their instructors in advance of the course.
	Staff training	CK Staff are trained on how to respond to exclusion incidents at partner programs – focusing on supporting youth and maintaining youth safety.
	Youth engagement	Explicit conversations are had with both youth & parents in advance of the course about being on a majority-white course and the potential for exclusion incidents.
	Contractor practices	This partner was vetted through our contractor vetting process and had a long standing relationship with City Kids.
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Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Since 2016, City Kids defines & tracks exclusion incidents in our incident reporting system

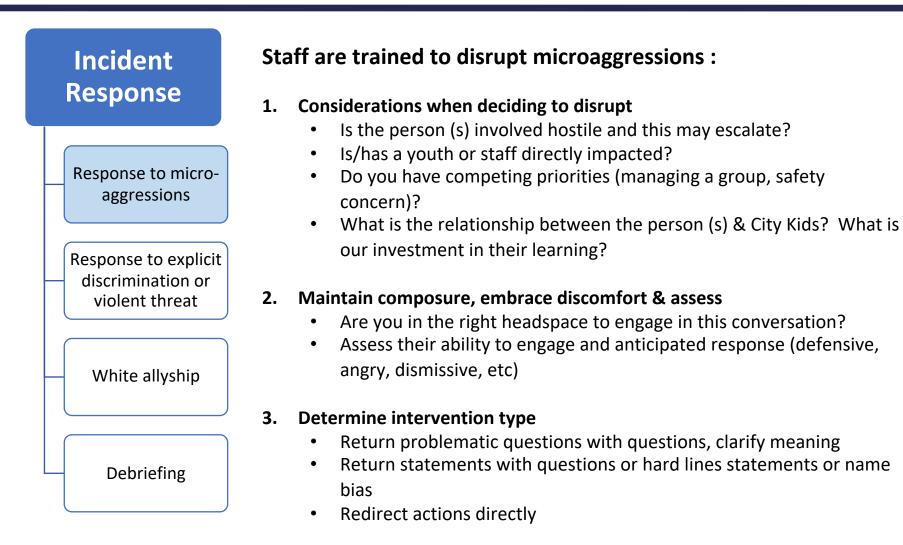
EXCLUSION INCIDENT DEFINITION:

Any event that results in the marginalization or offense of a group or identity- these could be internal or external.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased reporting
- Data driven understanding of frequency & occurrence
- Resource allocation
- Visible support creates space for conversation
- Trends illuminate mitigation
 & training areas





4. Direct the public to the website or provide next steps for further learning **CITYKIDS**

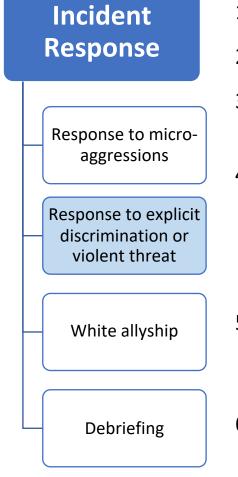
Incident Response

Example:

Training worksheet: Microaggression practice workshop

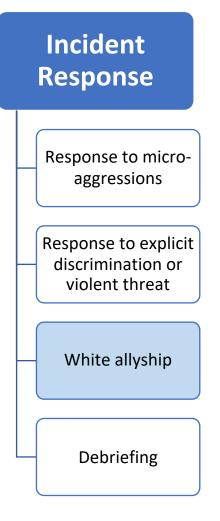
Response to micro- aggressions	Microaggression	Underlying bias & problem message	Intervention options & Convo stems: Conversation stems	Resources to reference/share in conversation
Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat	Are these troubled youth?	Black youth in a group are part of a program that works with "troubled youth".	 I'm not sure what you mean by troubled youth? Why would you assume these youth 	Black youth- suspension rates Black girls- criminalization https://www.apa.org/
White allyship		All black youth are bad, disruptive, a problem, or "delinquent"	are troubled? - These youth are not troubled, that term can be harmful to use for	news/press/releases 2020/07/racialized-
Debriefing			any youth and here's why - I'm concerned there is bias in your question because these are	
			black youth	





- 1. Recognize threatening individuals or areas
- 2. Prioritize youth safety
- 3. Divide staff resources to care for youth & staff to manage response
- 4. Validate youth emotions but work to de-escalate reactions to avoid escalating incidents
 - Remind youth there will be space to process when everyone is safe
- 5. Be proactive in using available resources to access support (park staff, campground hosts: assess engaging authorities for friendliness & be cautious about calling the police)
- 6. If police are present- limit youth interaction. Designate a staff member who feels safe for police interaction.





White staff members are trained to consider a response based on allyship principles of:

- **Stand behind:** Acknowledge they are not directly harmed by racism, and follow the lead of a youth or staff
- **Stand beside:** In solidarity with a youth or staff member in their response.
- Stand in front: There is a safety concern or a youth or staff requests a white staff respond to prioritize BIPOC safety.

White staff should use their privilege to prioritize youth & BIPOC when safety is a concern (angry or threatening individual and police interactions)

- White staff should work in coordination with BIPOC staff to determine the appropriate staff member to manage response with external people.
- Staff should always be present if youth interact with police as a guardian



Incident Response

Response to micro- aggressions
Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat
White allyship
Debriefing

Debriefing occurs for both staff and youth immediately after an incident - there can be high stress for all involved.

Youth Debriefing

- Focus on validation of youth experiences & emotions
- Request & accept feedback for staff on how the incident was managed
- Request input for youth next steps or suggestions for amends or healing

Staff Debriefing- Key Points

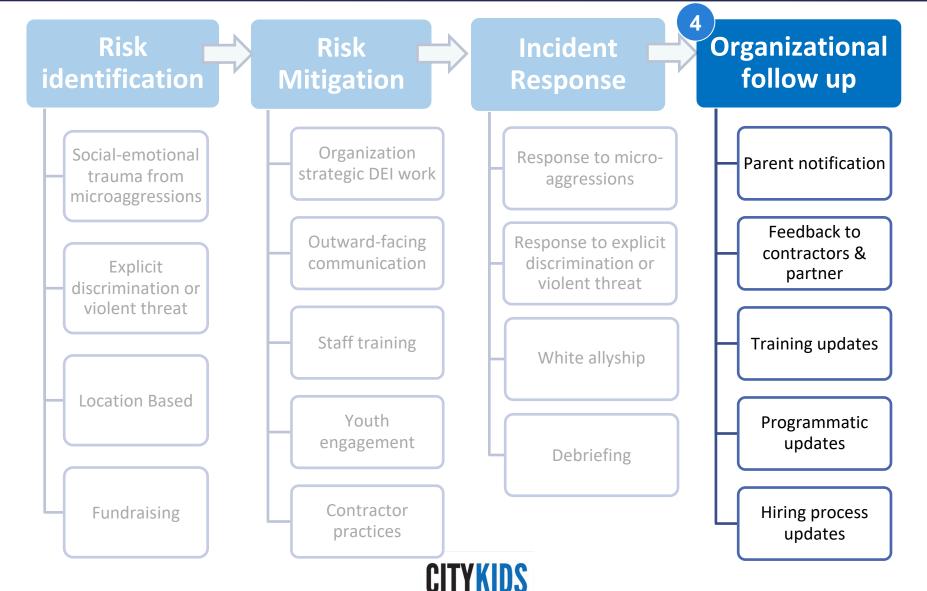
- Focus on validation of staff experiences & emotions
- Review incident response challenges, successes & failures
- Request input for next steps or suggestions for amends or healing
- Support for staff is dependent on racial identities
 - BIPOC staff may have been directly impacted by the incident
 - White staff may need to be redirected to individual coaching if personal emotions & need for learning dominate a debrief in a way that's harmful for others

Incident Response: Case Study

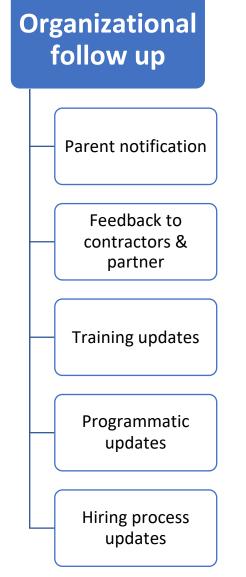
Incident Response	Response pushed out of the car because he was "taking too long" and his peers eating his food while they were out to dinner without asking. He did not share this feedback with his counselors because he		
Response to micro- aggressions	 was really upset and it's hard for him to express himself when he's feeling that way. Youth did not respond to microaggressions or ask for support because he reported he did not have the language to do so and did not want to represent City Kids "badly". Youth connected with the other Black student, who was feeling similarly. CK staff who learned about what happened after the fact validated youth's experience & documented for follow up. 		
Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat	n/a		
White allyship	n/a		
Debriefing	CK staff learned of this in the post-trip debrief. Debrief centered on youth's experience and what repairing the harm and healing would look like / feel like for him.		



Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Organizational Follow-up at City Kids



The incident review process has been beneficial to formalizing organizational next steps, followup and has helped shaped organizational change and risk management practices. Examples below:

- **Parent:** Individual and group notification
- **Contractors:** Ending contractor relationships or deepening relationship through training
- Training updates: Reviewed annually
- **Program updates:** Changes to activities, contractors, locations
- **Hiring:** Recruitment broadened, screening & scenario questions added, youth included in hiring.



Organizational Follow-up at City Kids: Case Study

Organizational follow up	Incident Summary: Upon the JET's return from Alaska, he shared that he felt excluded/isolated by the majority of his peers in the group because of his race, leading him to self-separate so that he wouldn't have to interact with them as much. Microaggressions that occured included being pushed out of the car because he was "taking too long" and his peers eating his food while they were out to dinner without asking. He did not share this feedback with his counselors because he was really upset and it's hard for him to express himself when he's feeling that way.
Parent notification	Mom was contacted while youth was still in our care to notify about what had happened and what our follow up plan was.
Feedback to contractors & partner	We met with the leadership at the partner organization and discussed the important learnings for their staff team (including recognizing microaggressions, creating a group culture where youth can self-advocate <i>and</i> recognizing power dynamics that may make it difficult for youth to self-advocate).
	See notes about partner organization staff team learnings above. City Kids created the "Outside Programs Resource" that includes training / reminders for both CK youth & partner program staff. We also updated the language about "representing Clty Kids" to ensure youth feel empowered to self- advocate and know that City Kids will always support them.
Programmatic updates	Our partnership continued but with the expansion of the training & resources given to youth to advocate for themselves outside of the City Kids community.
Hiring process updates	N/A
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Small Group Scenario Practice



In groups of 4, use the Exclusion Risk Management framework to work through a new case study.

Thank You!



Scan for resources!

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Resources

Resources to Take with You

- Worksheet with Framework for your Org
- Case Study practice worksheet

- Articles and Books Cited:
 - "The Story We've Been Told About America's National Parks Is Incomplete" Dina Gilio-Whitaker
 - https://time.com/5562258/indigenous-environmental-justice/
 - *"Exclusion on Public Lands: Shenandoah National Park, State Parks, and Segregation in the American South"* Tim Johansen, PLHC Researcher & Ariel Schnee, PLHC Project Manager
 - <u>https://publiclands.colostate.edu/exclusion-on-public-lands-shenandoah-national-park-state-parks-and-segregation-in-the-american-south/</u>
 - "Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress: Theory, Research, and Clinical Treatment" Kevin L. Nadal
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