

Operational Steps Balancing Inclusion and Risk Management

1. Staff training/hiring & recruitment

1. Add the following as job requirements:
 - a. Ability to work with people different from you
 - b. Demonstrated cultural competence
 - c. Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
2. Create interview questions that allow candidates to expound upon the above requirements
3. Recruit people who have experience working with your student/participant constituencies
4. Remind yourself about what are teachable skills (i.e. tying knots) vs. less teachable skills (ability to connect with all students regardless of background)
5. Invest in high quality DEI/cultural competency training that can flex with participants varying levels of buy in and familiarity with DEI work
6. Hold staff accountable throughout the season for being culturally competent
7. Train staff on mental health and psychological risk management

2. Program structure:

1. Make sure the sign up process is inclusive including:
 - a. If you are asking about demographic information, make sure participants can see themselves in the options. (i.e. for gender, do not just have male and female. Include gender identities beyond the binary like genderqueer, trans, and agender)
 - b. Ask for the right information – be sure to understand why you are asking for some information and what you will do with that information. (i.e. if you are asking if a person has seen a counselor in the last year, what is the protocol for following up with that information?)
2. Create a flexible or multiple program structures to honor different lifestyles (i.e. if a potential participant has to take care of a sibling, they may only be able to leave the house for a weekend)
3. If you are requiring single gender sleeping arrangements, be sure to have a plan for folks who are trans and/or non-binary. Communicate that plan to those folks as soon as possible
4. Work to provide application and program information in different languages so caregivers and parents who are not English speakers/readers can understand the program
5. Provide information about hygiene in the backcountry regardless of gender identity (i.e. do not just give female identified participants' hygiene information about menstruation)
6. Collect the right data – just like we collect data for near misses and accidents, your organization should collect data as it relates to inclusion. Ensure that your risk management forms have a component for understanding how social inclusion/exclusion could have contributed to any incident (physical or behavioral)

3. Inclusive course culture:

1. Ensure your curriculum is relevant (meaning it connects to learners' lives), responsible (it presents multiple perspectives on one issue), and responsive (is taught to reach different learning styles).
2. Role model inclusive language including, but not limited to gender neutral language until otherwise disclosed, avoiding culturally appropriative terms (i.e. "powwow"), and triggering terms (i.e. "bomb proof")
3. Provide privacy for changing and showering before and after course; instruct students that while living in tents, they should ask for privacy if needed
4. Honor all ways that participants/students connect to the outdoors
5. Do not label students as challenging; there are no bad students, only bad situation.
6. Don't assume all students need to cultivate a sense a grit; it is possible their lives have been challenging thus far and their greatest need is actually community and a sense of belonging. If your ultimate goal is for students to learn, then ask yourself how to best support their learning process, rather than assuming they need to cultivate more grit
7. Be open when suggesting gear – do not assume people need high end gear and/or gear that necessarily corresponds with their gender