Outdoor Education Programs
Outdoor Center
Minor in Outdoor Education

Challenge Course Facilitators Handbook

Effective January 29, 2021

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Introduction

This Challenge Course Facilitator Handbook serves as the staff manual for Outdoor Center programs and outdoor education academic classes that use group development and challenge course activities. A separate Tripping Handbook provides similar guidance for Outdoor Center programs and outdoor education academic classes that use land- and water-based activities.

This document is formatted to differentiate between the four types of information.
1. **Definitions** are stated at the beginning of most sections or sub-sections. They provide common language for faculty, staff, and students to use when reading this manual and other related documents, in classes or training, and delivering programs to professional colleagues or clients.
2. **Policy** describes "what" facilitators will do. Policy is the least flexible expectation and uses words like *will*, *must*, or *shall*. Policy statements are organized using numbers.
3. **Procedures** describe "how" policy is typically implemented. Procedures provide flexibility by using words like *should*, *may*, or *includes, and is not limited to*. Adjustments to procedures are based on factors such as client group characteristics and readiness, contextual factors such as weather, and program or course outcomes. Procedures are organized using lower case letters and are normally as subsets of the policy statements to which they refer.
4. **Curriculum** is the highest level of detail and may include instructional content, strategies, or specific outcomes associated with implementing policy and procedures. Curriculum is organized using bullets and is normally a subset of the policy or procedural statement to which it refers.

Information contained within this document is assumed to be consistent with Georgia College policy, University System of Georgia policy, and State of Georgia and federal law. In case of divergence from or conflict with any of these authorities, they (not this document) are considered prevailing.

Common Definitions

Throughout this handbook, the following concepts, activities and facilities are assumed to be understood.

Behavioral Contracts are used by facilitators to help groups develop operating norms and to explain non-negotiable rules. There are a wide range of options for integrating behavioral norms with program activities depending on program goals, client characteristics, sequence, and logistics.

Buddy Spotter is the spokesperson for the spotting team and is selected by the active participant (i.e. climber, faller, etc.) to support her/him throughout the activity. The buddy spotter checks to make sure that spotters are "ready to spot" and interacts with the participant on behalf of other spotters. The buddy spotter supports the participant from beginning to end of an activity.

Goal Setting is used by facilitators in two ways. One is to encourage small groups to set goals for a specific activity. The other is to negotiate individual learning goals with program participants. There are options for integrating goals with program activities depending on program goals, client characteristics and expectations, sequence, and logistics.

Ground School is built on five 25-foot poles and is located adjacent to the high challenge course. The structure includes a foot cable, platforms, and two belay cables at approximately 9 feet and 17 feet. It is pre-requisite to the static high challenge course and offers an approximate replication of the static belay experience, including platforms, for teaching communication protocols and procedures for transfer between static elements. It also offers a location to teach dynamic belay skills to climbers and belayers, should participants be ready and willing to belay each other based on client assessment and program

design. It is also used to facilitate the low challenge course elements Wild Woozy and Cable Traverse (with or without additional components).

Group Development Activities include sequences of warm-ups, icebreakers, acclimatizers, and initiative tasks. They may comprise an entire program or be used to develop skills for subsequent activities.

High Challenge Course Elements are built on poles. The course offers dynamic-belay elements and static-belay elements that are separated by group elements. The high challenge course is connected to the tandem zip lines.

Low Challenge Course Elements include permanent low ropes course components as well as pre-constructed or partially constructed mobile components that require the use of spotting techniques. Cable construction properties include dynamics that may be unpredictable and require close attention to spotting. OC low challenge course elements are situated in various locations around the general challenge course area and on the Ground School structure. Mobile components are situated in the Yurt.

Spotting Sequences are a planned set of experiences focused on building spotting skills before taking participants "off the ground" on cable elements or initiative tasks. Off the ground is normally defined as 18" or higher. They may be used to prepare participants to spot off the ground activities or to enhance program goals.

The Tango Tower is built on poles. It is a multi-climber structure that includes two artificial climbing walls, several individual and tandem climbing elements, and a processing platform. Its components may be used as a group initiative incorporating vertical and horizontal options.

The Yurt is located past the Tango Tower. It is an indoor program site adjacent to the challenge course.

<p style="text-align: center;">**<u>Section One: Personnel Responsibilities</u>**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**Program Staff**</p>

Program Staff refers to faculty, professional staff, students, and others who work for the Outdoor Center or deliver outdoor education academic courses. Program staff designations include lead facilitator and assistant facilitator. Each program will have a designated lead facilitator. Each program staff may be paid or volunteer.

<u>Program Staff Responsibilities</u>
1. Program staff will maintain complete and current personnel files and complete all required paperwork and training through Georgia College Human Resources.
    a. Submit copies of certifications, certificates of training, or refresher training cards;
    b. Update the personnel file checklist annually.
2. Program staff will maintain competency in knowledge, skills, and values associated with program activities for which they are designated.
3. Program staff will plan and implement programs and services in compliance with relevant outdoor education and Georgia College policy.
4. Program staff will participate in program planning meetings to discuss:
    - client or course goals and objectives;
    - client group characteristics, needs, and potential expectations;
    - relevant policy and procedures;
    - relevant participant, program administration, and personnel forms;
    - program and personnel evaluation/assessment processes.
5. Program staff will develop program designs considering the following:
    - activities, and processing strategies that are appropriate for participant characteristics and program goals;
    - environmental, facility, and equipment stewardship as a component of program design;
    - emotional, social, intellectual, and physical safety as a component of program design;
    - program staff roles and responsibilities.
6. Program staff will meet prior to participant arrival to inspect and prepare facilities and equipment and to review program logistics.
7. Program staff will conduct a program briefing at the beginning of the program and safety briefings at the beginning of activities.
8. Program staff will adjust program design and specific activity dimensions based on ongoing participant assessment, environmental factors, and program goals.
    - Program design elements such as, but not limited to, challenge progression, specific activities, breaks and event location may be adapted accordingly.
    - Activity dimensions such as, but not limited to, level of processing and participant roles may be adapted accordingly.
9. Program staff will teach appropriate skill sequences and safety procedures based on program and instructional goals, client characteristics, and context.

<u>Teaching</u>
1. Sequence activities with consideration for client characteristics, agency or program goals, and emotional, social and physical safety needs.
2. Assess individual and group readiness for moving forward to new challenges.
3. Participate in warm-ups, ice-breakers and acclimatizers as appropriate. Avoid participation that interferes with the group experience.
4. Observe and monitor activities to inform processing strategies and provide an appropriate level of supervision and control.

5. Use a variety of processing approaches and techniques to encourage individuals and groups to make personal and collective meaning from experiences as appropriate.
6. Provide opportunities for individuals and groups to self-regulate as appropriate.
7. Use challenge of and by choice to encourage appropriate levels of participation and behavioral contracting to encourage groups to monitor their own process.

Safety
1. Place first aid and emergency response equipment in a location that is accessible to staff.
2. Maintain appropriate staff /participant ratios and position facilitators to maximize participant supervision for all activities.
3. Review current instructional and safety guidelines for all activities and discuss adaptations thoroughly with the facilitation team.
4. Set activity parameters that are safe and flexible.
5. Deal with safety issues in a meaningful way that will contribute to the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social safety of individuals and groups by using techniques such as:
   a. clarifying instructions, purpose, boundaries, or expectations;
   b. refocusing the group;
   c. reviewing challenge of and by choice and behavioral contract components;
   d. speaking with a person privately;
   e. changing or renegotiating the activity or the program design to accommodate group readiness.
7. Consider personal competency limits, and process issues that are within the skill and training experience of facilitators.

Lead Facilitator
The following steps will be followed for all Outdoor Center programs. Academic programs will adapt the following as appropriate.

Pre-program
1. Obtain the program information from the OC Director or designate (program file, metal file with keys).
2. Review program file contents (client intake form, contact information, risk management forms, etc).
3. Contact the program sponsor well in advance of the program to:
   a. confirm logistics (times, location, risk management forms, etc.), and discuss program goals, program design, group and/or individual characteristics, and other topics as necessary;
   b. communicate the need for participants to wear clothing appropriate for the activity, the climate in general, and the specific weather forecast;
   c. communicate the option for participants to bring extra clothing, water and snacks, in consideration of the duration of the program and weather;
   d. communicate the need for participants to wear closed shoes (not sandals) that are secured at the toe and the heel.
4. Disseminate (unless the OC Director or designate does so), collect, and review participant forms.
5. Consult with OC Director or designate about facilitation team, questions, concerns and program design outline.
6. Design a program to meet client needs and expectations using appropriate forms and when possible in conjunction with the facilitation team.
7. Meet with facilitation team members to:
   a. establish facilitator learning goals;
   b. communicate client needs and characteristics, program design, participant information, risk management procedures, and facility and equipment logistics;
   c. assign roles and responsibilities for program set-up and delivery;
   d. review the Emergency Action Plan and establish roles and responsibilities;

     e.   review relevant policy.

8. Email copy of program design to OC Director or designate for approval.
9. Reserve program equipment. Equipment reservation forms should be completed by the lead facilitator for all equipment needs. Completed reservation forms should be submitted a minimum of one week prior to the program date to ensure that the request can be met. Completed forms may be emailed to the oecequip@gcsu.edu.
10. Arrange in consultation with OC Director or designate for program support logistics (food, water, facilities, transportation, publicity, etc).
11. Obtain a weather report and if necessary, in conjunction with the OC Director or designate, make arrangements with the program sponsor for communicating program adaptations or cancellation to participants.

Day of Program
1. Complete program set-up requirements with the facilitation team prior to participant arrival and assign staff to meet and greet participants near the parking lot.
2. Collect outstanding forms and organize the group for the program.
3. Process outstanding participant forms and collect missing information on forms that were pre-submitted. Collect additional medical screening information as appropriate.
4. Introduce staff and welcome participants to the Outdoor Center at Georgia College.
5. Ensure the provision of housekeeping and program related information (rules, expectations, challenge of and by choice, goals, and behavioral expectations or contract).
6. Ensure the conduct of preliminary and ongoing safety briefings.
7. Provide oversight for program implementation, site safety and security, equipment, and staff.
8. Provide oversight for program participants in conjunction with group liaison, as applicable.
9. Complete incident/accident forms as necessary.
10. Conduct program closure and disseminate and collect program evaluation forms from participants. The University System of Georgia requires program evaluation forms to be completed for all OC programs by every participant unless otherwise justifiable. At minimum the program sponsor should complete the form in cases where participants cannot or will not complete the form.
11. Record number of participants present for program (including leaders who participated).
12. Conduct staff debrief and have facilitation team complete Facilitator Feedback forms.

After the Program
1. Record program notes on the program file summary.
2. Revise program design form in accordance with actual events of program day.
3. Return metal file and keys to the Outdoor Center.
4. Submit the completed program file to the OC Director or designate within 14 days of the program.

Ethical Guidelines
1. Program staff is expected to exhibit a high level of integrity in their practice.
    a.   Be fair, honest, and respectful during interactions with participants and other professionals.
    b.   Represent personal and professional competency honestly and provide programs within the boundaries of one's competence.
    c.   Stay current about information in the field and participate in ongoing professional efforts to maintain knowledge and skills.
    d.   Strive to be aware of personal belief systems, values, needs, limitations and the effect of their impact on participants and other professionals.
    e.   Accept responsibility for personal behavior and decisions.
    f.   Avoid situations where personal problems or conflicts may impair work performance or judgment.
2. Program staff is expected to be socially responsible for their actions and serve as effective advocates for the field of outdoor education.
    a.   Avoid misrepresenting the profession.

b. Avoid making statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive when describing services, products or fees.
c. Be aware of professional responsibilities to community and society.
d. Conduct programs in a manner that has minimal impact on the environment.
e. Comply with relevant local regulations or laws.

3. Program staff is expected to be responsible for the overall quality of their professional work.
   a. Plan experiences with the intent that decisions made during and after the experience are in the best interest of the participant.
   b. Offer a program only if it is reasonably clear that the participant will benefit from the experience.
   c. Adapt programs to best meet the needs of participants.
   d. Be aware of and tactfully deal with inappropriate behavior from others.
   e. Clarify roles and responsibilities with other staff and hold self and others accountable for these responsibilities.
   f. Comply with all Georgia College policy and procedures.

4. Program staff is expected to respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people.
   a. Provide participants with appropriate information about the nature of programs, their rights, the actual risks associated with the activity, and the responsibilities of the provider.
   b. Ensure that participants understand anything that they are signing.
   c. Respect participants' rights to refuse or consent to services or activities.
   d. Respect participants' rights to make decisions and understand natural consequences.
   e. Respect participant's rights to decide the extent to which confidential material can be made public, except under extreme conditions such as when required by law, to prevent a clear and immediate danger to a person or persons, or if permission has previously been obtained in writing.
   f. Strive to be sensitive to cultural and individual differences, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status.

5. Program staff is expected to provide for the welfare of participants and other staff.
   a. Provide for the physical needs of participants (water, nutrition, clothing, shelter, rest, or other essential needs).
   b. Avoid exploiting, misleading, or harassing participants or other staff.
   c. Avoid dual relationships with participants that could impair professional judgment (e.g. sexual relationships, inappropriate physical contact, etc.).
   d. Recommend that participants needing services beyond the scope of service provided by program staff should seek assistance from the appropriate student service at Georgia College or an appropriate medical professional.

Section Two: Risk Management

Risk management is a system that maximizes the effectiveness of programs while minimizing the number and severity of program incidents and accidents. Policy and procedures are central to risk management and together with good judgment, training, and administrative support provide a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services. Program management (covered in this section) includes processes that are used to proactively anticipate risk and minimize incidents and accidents during the planning and delivery of programs and services. Emergency response (covered in the next section) includes emergency action processes for responding to specific incidents or accidents.

Staff/Participant Ratios

For all staff/participant ratios, there will be a minimum of two (2) facilitators (a lead facilitator and an assistant facilitator) for all activities. Therefore, the following ratios are minimum guidelines. These ratios are general and are used to allocate staff. They may be changed based on type of challenge course activities, facilitator experience, client characteristics, and group readiness. Modifications to these guidelines should be based on a careful assessment of client needs and characteristics, and the nature of the program activities. In most cases, if a change to these guidelines is justifiable, the ratio will decrease. In some cases it may be appropriate to include supervisory staff from the sponsoring agency in the staff/participant ratio if they are willing to play a supervisory role in the program delivery and are informed of their roles and responsibilities in advance of the program implementation. As an example, teachers may be counted as supervisory staff for group development activities, provided the procedures outlined for group development activities in this manual are followed.

Staff/Participant Ratios **Minimum 2 staff for all programs**	
Group Development Activities	1:12
Low Challenge Course	1:10
Tango Tower	1:8
High Challenge Course- dynamic elements	1:8
High Challenge Course- static elements	1:8 (min. 3)
Zipline	1:8 (min. 3)

General Safety Guidelines

1. An administrative backup, typically the OC Director, will be assigned to all programs. The administrative backup will be available by cell phone for the duration of the program and will be briefed on program information including, but not limited to, program design and program logistics.
2. Facilitators are responsible for participants and therefore have an obligation to anticipate and avoid potential dangers. Participants look to facilitators for informed, professional instruction and guidance so that they can participate in our programs and services in reasonable safety.
3. Lead facilitators should be thoroughly acquainted with participant forms prior to the commencement of a program, ensure that they are complete, and that relevant information is disseminated to staff at a suitable level of confidentiality.
4. Common issues that may impact program delivery include, but are not limited to, expectations that:
   a. roles and responsibilities for staff and participants are understood - check and recheck;
   b. instructions are clear and understood - never assume;
   c. supervision is working - as the degree of risk increases so must the level of supervision;
   d. equipment and facilities are suitable for a program and staff and participants know how to use them – inspect carefully;
   e. hydration and nutrition are the responsibility of participants and facilitators – monitor closely.

Safety Briefings

1. Participants are entitled to know the nature and scope of risks involved in the program-specific activities before participation. All participants will sign appropriate informed consent and assumption of risk forms indicating that they know and accept these risks.
2. Program staff will brief all participants about site and activity risks and safety procedures before they engage in the activity.
    a. Do not assume that a potential danger is evident to participants.
    b. Discuss the dangers and risks with them until you are confident that each person understands and voluntarily assumes the risks involved. Judgment is crucial in this matter, especially when dealing with hesitant participants.
    c. Be as persuasive as possible in an effort to reinforce confidence and to motivate participation. However, do not force a participant to participate and use challenge of and by choice strategies to negotiate levels of successful participation.
3. The lead facilitator is responsible for checking that all participants hear and have an opportunity to ask questions about a safety briefing.
4. A safety briefing should include, but is not limited to, the following information:
    - inherent dangers in the area, along with preventative information (flashflood, poisonous flora and fauna, lightning and other weather-related dangers, widow makers, and natural disasters, etc.);
    - inherent dangers in the activity, along with preventative information (as falling, spotting, buddy systems, etc.);
    - participant & staff responsibilities related to the conduct of the activity and emergency procedures;
    - safety equipment use and location; and
    - challenge of and by choice.

Challenge by Choice

Challenge [of and] by choice is a request of participants to challenge themselves and participate fully in an experience. It recognizes that any activity or goal may pose a different level and type of challenge for each group member and that authentic personal change comes from within. It contributes to an environment where participants are asked to search for opportunities to stretch and grow during an experience. It challenges each group member to seek optimal learning opportunities. All group members are asked to add value to the group experience by finding a way to contribute to the group's efforts while also seeking to find value in an experience.

1. Program staff will discuss challenge of and by choice in the program briefing and as appropriate throughout program implementation. An example of an explanation to participants might be: "Challenge of and by choice is based on the idea that you choose your level of engagement in the activities that we will be doing today. We encourage you to challenge yourself in each opportunity, whether physically, mentally or emotionally, but only you know best what that might look like for you today."
2. Staff will not force, pressure, or coerce program participants to engage in an activity.
    a. Encourage participants to examine and respect thoughtful choices.
    b. Provide a supportive and caring atmosphere in which participants can stretch themselves.
    c. Encourage individuals and the group to accept responsibility for decisions about challenging themselves.
    d. Encourage individuals and the group to set goals that provide the greatest opportunities for growth and learning.
    e. Present participants with appropriate challenges.
    f. Communicate to participants any limits to choices when they are known in advance.
3. Program staff will acknowledge a participant's decision not to participate in specific activities without pressure or coercion.

a. Discuss options for engagement at some level.
b. Define success as committed engagement.
c. Take into account a participant's physical, emotional, and social abilities.
d. Celebrate success.
4. Program staff will not compromise the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical safety of other participants or staff when negotiating a level of challenge that is appropriate for a group member or group.

Medical Screening

Medical screening is a review of participant and program staff medical information. The process helps to ensure that pertinent medical information is compete and available to staff and to medical providers in the case of an accident. Relevant medical history may also allow staff to adapt program activities to better meet participant needs. Finally, medical screening may help participants to make informed decisions about appropriate participation in program activities.

1. Program staff will comply with HIPAA Privacy Rule (http:www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/) in all matters pertaining to health information privacy before, during, and after a program.
2. All program participants and staff will complete a medical screening process.
3. Completed medical information forms are reviewed and signed by the lead facilitator.
   a. Ensure the forms are complete and signed by the participant or parent/guardian.
   b. Note the need for additional information or actions about medically related conditions that may include, but are not limited to:
      • clarification about medication or side effects;
      • explanation of items answered in the affirmative (see Medical Screen Follow-up Questions and Actions);
      • equipment constraints or adaptations; or
      ▪ the need for medical clearance from a physician.
   c. Requests to participants for additional information will be addressed in a sensitive manner with regard for participant confidentiality and emotional safety.
4. It is the responsibility of the lead facilitator to ensure that medical information is located in a secure location and available for emergency response.

Medical Screening Follow-up Questions and Actions
Have you experienced an asthma attack at any time in your life?
1. Have you visited the emergency room in the last year due to your asthma?
2. Have you had to use epinephrine following an asthma attack in the last year?
3. Were you diagnosed with asthma in the last year?
4. How often do you use your inhaler to treat your asthma or wheezing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your asthma?
Response: If the participant has a prescribed rescue inhaler and has needed it, epinephrine, or emergency treatment in the past six months, he or she must bring the inhaler to the program.

Have you ever been diagnosed with type I or type II diabetes?
1. Have you visited the emergency room in the last year because of your diabetes?
2. Do you have poor circulation due to your diabetes?
3. Were you diagnosed with diabetes in the last year?
4. Will you be carrying insulin or wearing an insulin pump during your outing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your diabetes?
Response: Make sure the participant has opportunities to eat, drink, and test blood sugar if necessary.

Have you ever visited a medical professional for a serious allergic reaction, or have you ever been given a shot of epinephrine for an allergy or anaphylaxis?
1. What triggers your allergies?
2. Have you had a serious allergic reaction in the last year?
3. Have you ever been given epinephrine because of your allergies or anaphylaxis?
4. Will you be bringing/carrying epinephrine on the outing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about allergies?

Response: If the participant has a prescribed Epi Pen, he or she must bring it to the program. Facilitators should monitor for potential exposure to the allergen.

Have you ever received medical treatment for angina, a heart attack, any type of heart disorder/disease, or high blood pressure?
1. Were you diagnosed with a heart condition within the past year?
2. Are you able to exert for long periods without experiencing angina pain?
3. Have you had chest pain in the past six months? If so, did you see a doctor?
4. How often do you take medication for chest pain?
5. Have you been hospitalized within the last year because of a heart condition?
6. Is your blood pressure under control?
7. Has your physician ever asked you to limit your physical activity? Are these limitations current?
8. Is there anything else you think we should know about your heart condition or blood pressure?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.

Have you ever seen a medical professional following a seizure, or are you currently being treated for any type of seizure disorder?
1. Are you currently taking medication for your seizures?
2. When is the last time you had a seizure?
3. Were you diagnosed with a seizure disorder in the last year?
4. Has your physician ever asked you to limit your activities?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your seizures?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.

Have you had broken bones or joint injuries that cause recurring problems?
1. Has your physician asked you to limit your physical activity?
2. Is there anything else you think we should know about your injury?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.

Are you currently pregnant?
1. At what stage is the pregnancy?
2. Have you had any complications?
3. Has your physician asked you to limit your physical activity?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program. Women in their third trimester of pregnancy should not participate in most of our programming.

Have you been diagnosed with any other medical condition or asked by your physician to limit your activities in any way?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program. Other conditions should be monitored as necessary.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

1. Georgia College promotes and requires a drug-free and alcohol-free work campus particularly amongst its employees. Therefore, alcohol and drugs are not permitted for use by participants or staff during outdoor education programs.
2. Georgia College is also a Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus. Georgia College students, faculty, and staff as well as campus visitors (including all program participants) are not allowed to use tobacco products on campus or in campus-owned vehicles.
   a. "Tobacco Product" is defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless tobacco, clove cigarettes, and any other smoking devices that use tobacco such as hookahs or simulate the use of tobacco such as electronic cigarettes.
3. Program staff will manage the administration of non-prescription drugs that are available in the FA kit.
   a. Legal guardians must be consulted prior to administration of non-prescription drugs for minors. The lead facilitator will record who gave permission, contact information for the guardian, and time and dosage of non-prescription drugs administered on the program file summary. This usage will also record non-prescription drug usage in the FA kit.
   b. Participants over the age of 18 may request non-prescription drugs from program staff. Program staff will record non-prescription drug usage in the FA kit.
   c. Medication necessary for immediate administration such as asthma inhalers and Epi-pens should be carried by all participants (minors and those over the age of 18) as appropriate.

Child Protection

Georgia College has specific policy for the protection of minors and requires additional risk management when minors are involved in any programming. Most Outdoor Center and academic programs are exempt from this policy because they either 1) only include Georgia College students (even those under 18 years old) or 2) are groups that are supervised by parents, teachers, or other leaders who remain with the youth throughout the program. Additional information about this policy may be found at https://www.gcsu.edu/protection-minors.

Section Three: Emergency Response System

Emergency response is a comprehensive plan for the management of a complex and potentially dangerous situation for staff or participants. The first line of defense is prevention in the form of good planning and participant preparation.

1. The lead facilitator shall ensure that a context specific first aid kit is accessible at all times.
2. First aid will be administered by trained personnel and in accordance with procedures set forth by the training organization. All program staff will have a minimum of first aid and CPR.
3. The lead facilitator will manage the Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Emergency Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a set of steps that guide emergency response by providing staff members with relevant, clear information. Every emergency situation is different and requires some degree of judgment. The following process should be used to develop an EAP that permits staff members to exercise professional judgment in the way they respond to a specific situation. The EAP should be implemented for accidents in which a participant is evacuated from the program site to primary medical care or leaves the program site on their own to seek outside medical care. Incidents that require basic first aid do not necessitate implementation of an EAP. Incidents and accidents require the completion of the Incident/Accident Form.

1. Prior to the program, establish emergency response roles and responsibilities including a primary responder (PR) and an emergency response manager (ERM).
2. The PR, also known as the "first-in," provides initial first aid to the patient and is a staff member with appropriate or highest, current level of medical training.
3. The lead facilitator may elect to be the ERM based on the qualifications of other staff members to perform PR roles and responsibilities.
4. Other staff members will manage the group to minimize risk of further harm to participants and assist the PR or ERM as necessary.
5. The ERM in conjunction with the PR will determine if primary medical or emergency response system assistance is necessary. If outside assistance is required:
   a. call GC Public Safety (478-445-4400), who will coordinate with local emergency personnel. Provide your name, the location of the program, the patient's name, the patient's condition, any suspected injuries, and anything else that the dispatcher may ask for;
   b. direct emergency response personnel to meet the group at the Lake Laurel Lodge parking lot;
   c. do not end the call until the dispatcher hangs up;
   d. instruct a facilitator or client representative to wait for emergency personnel in the parking lot to provide instructions or escort to the scene and to transfer patient information;
   e. write related information clearly on a SOAP note or piece of paper to give to emergency medical personnel;
   f. transport the patient to the Lake Laurel Lodge parking lot if appropriate based on patient assessment and a judgment that further injury is not likely during transit. OC staff should defer to EMS personnel regarding transport on Kubota or other options. If the Kubota is used to transport a patient, the patient should ride in the front seat with seat belt, or secured in the bed with four spotters accompanying the transport. Driver should use low gear and move slowly, aware of patient and spotters' safety.
   g. do not move a patient with a possible neck or back injury, an unstable skeletal injury, or any condition where moving the patient could worsen the situation. In such a situation, treat, monitor and comfort patient until emergency medical personnel arrive on site to manage the situation;
   h. comply with emergency response personnel instructions and requests for information;
   i. make a copy of information to be transferred to emergency or primary care personnel if possible;
   j. a facilitator or client representative should accompany the patient to the primary care facility;

    k.   Administrative Backup should be contacted as soon as possible;
    l.   the ERM or Administrative Backup should notify the emergency contact listed on the medical form.
6.   The lead facilitator, Administrative Backup, OE Faculty, or a counseling professional may debrief the situation as appropriate and within the parameters of facilitator competency.
7.   Complete an Incident/Accident form.
8.   Obtain written statements from witnesses if appropriate.
9.   Cancel or postpone the program in consideration of client/staff ratios or contextual factors that may be unsafe or detrimental to learning and growth.
10. In the case of a life-threatening injury or fatality:
    a.   do not remove the body unless instructed by legal authority to do so;
    b.   limit access to the scene of the accident;
    c.   attend to the physical and emotional needs of staff and other participants.

Universal Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Blood-borne Pathogens

Universal precautions require that staff administering aid consider every person and all blood and body fluids, to be a potential carrier of infectious disease. Universal precautions apply to blood, other body fluids containing visible blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Universal precautions also apply to tissues and to the following fluids: cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids. Universal precautions do not apply to feces, nasal secretions, saliva, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, and vomitus unless they contain visible blood.

1.   Use protective barriers (gloves, masks, and protective eyewear) to prevent exposure to blood, body fluids containing visible blood, and other fluids to which universal precautions apply. The type of protective barrier(s) should be appropriate for the procedure being performed and the type of exposure anticipated.
2.   Handle needles and other sharp objects carefully. Use caution to prevent needle stick injuries when using, cleaning, or disposing of needles or other sharp instruments.
3.   Wrap disposable items contaminated with blood or other body fluids in gauze and place them in a biohazard or sealed container that prevents leakage for storage and transportation back to Georgia College.
4.   Report immediately all needle stick accidents, mucosal splashes, or contamination of open wounds with blood or body fluids.
5.   Participants and staff should refrain from sharing items such as water bottles.

<div align="center">Communication</div>

Notification Protocol for Fatalities and Serious Accidents

1.   In the event of a fatality or serious, life threatening accident the administrative backup will notify the next administrator in order of chain of authority as available. The administrator will determine if it is necessary to alert the next administrator in the chain of authority, the Director of University Communications, and/or relevant support services.
2.   The administrative backup, in conjunction with the next administrator in order of chain of authority as available, will determine who will contact the patient's emergency contact. Depending on the situation, this may be the lead facilitator, the administrative backup, an administrator in the chain of authority. or the Director of University Communications.
3.   Information about any accident or fatality will be released to the press by the Director of University Communications or an appointed representative of GC.
    a.   Lead facilitator will direct inquiries from the media to the administrative backup and return to supporting participants and staff.
    b.   Program staff will avoid speaking to anyone about:
        • assessment of fault or criticism of conduct;

- assessment of Georgia College policy, equipment, or facilities;
- information regarding the nature of the injury or illness;
- names of participants or parties involved; or
- estimates of property damage.

<u>Notification Protocol for Minor Accidents</u>

1. In the event of a <u>minor accident (not life threatening)</u>, the lead facilitator will implement the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) as necessary. The lead facilitator, in conjunction with the patient and/or administrative backup, will determine if it is necessary to contact the patient's emergency contact.
2. The following guidelines will be used when speaking to an emergency contact person in the event of a <u>minor</u> accident.
   a. The opening statement to an emergency contact should immediately convey the wellbeing of a participant if possible (e.g. this is [your name] with GC, [student or participant name] is fine, but I need to inform you of a situation]
   b. Think through what you will say before speaking.
   c. Organize the facts and be accurate in conveying them.
   d. Explain the situation using precise, objective language.
   e. Explain what is being done in response to the situation.
   f. Anticipate possible questions.
   g. Be sensitive to feelings and concerns.
   h. Provide appropriate follow up contact information if possible.
   i. Direct follow up conversations to appropriate Georgia College personnel and when possible provide contact information.
   j. Avoid stating conclusions, causes, or interpretation of the event.

Exiting a Participant, Student, or Staff Member

1. Grounds for exiting a participant, student, or staff member from a program include, but are not limited to:
   - possession of or use of alcohol or illegal drugs;
   - use of illegal or prescription drugs that are prescribed to someone else;
   - consistent behavior that compromises the health and safety of self, participants, staff members, or program effectiveness; or
   - consistent non-compliance with outdoor education policy.
2. Prior to a decision to exit a participant, student, or staff member from a program, the lead facilitator will consult with the administrative backup to consider:
   - details of the behavior, context, and program;
   - attempted or potential strategies for continuance in a program;
   - impact on the participant, student, or program staff member, other participants, students, or program staff members; the program or class; or
   - factors related to the exit logistics.
3. In the event that it is determined that a participant, student, or staff should leave the program, the following guidelines will be implemented.
   a. Speak to the individual in a confidential context.
   b. Attempt to dismiss the individual from further participation in the program as quickly as possible.
   c. Escort the individual to a safe place and provide supervision as necessary.
   d. Arrange transportation to the program start location or another agreed upon location in conjunction with the administrative backup.
4. The lead facilitator will discuss program continuance with the group and inform the administrative backup.

5. The administrative backup will notify the emergency contact person, if necessary, listed on the Medical Information form in compliance with HIPAA Privacy Rule (http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/).
6. The lead facilitator will complete the incident/accident report.

<div align="center">**Environmental Hazards**</div>

Every environmental hazard is unique; some are weather related and others are inherent in a location. The decision to continue or move a program, seek temporary shelter, or postpone or cancel a program should be made based on program goals, client characteristics, and the specific environmental conditions both on the site and for traveling to another location. The Yurt is available to programs and Lake Laurel Lodge may be requested for backup. There is no substitute for having a keen weather eye to help anticipate and prepare for inclement weather and for knowing how to recognize the presence of hazardous animals and plants.

1. Anticipate inclement weather during planning process and program implementation
2. Inspect program areas prior to use for signs of dangerous or nuisance flora and fauna, weather damage, and dangerous ground and overhead conditions.
3. Establish activity boundaries that are free from hazards. Inform participants about hazards such as nails, splinters, rocks and surface roots.

Weather-Related Hazards
Rain
Rain, especially heavy rain, increases the likelihood of slipping on wet poles, cables, or ground cover. Heavy rain may be accompanied by heavy winds and lightning, decreased visibility, and on occasion produce rare weather systems like a tornado. Rain does not necessarily indicate that a challenge course program should be cancelled.
Wind
Heavy wind may pick up debris from the ground cover making visual supervision difficult and may affect hanging structures by creating difficult situations for climbing. In such cases, the use of high challenge course elements or the Tango Tower may need to be postponed.
Lightning
Lightning is the leading direct meteorological cause of casualties in the United States. Lightning may take the form of a direct strike, induced currents near a strike, and/or ground currents. Participants should be instructed about specific lightening drill procedures during the initial safety briefing if a storm is noted. The following is a list of protection measures that the lead facilitator should utilize to make a decision about lightning storm response.
1. Counting the interval between a flash and the following thunder and dividing the number by 5 may estimate the distance of lightning potential. Five seconds = l mile.
2. Lightning protection measures should begin no later than an estimated five-mile distance (25 seconds) from group location. Activity may resume when the lightning is a minimum of an estimated five miles away (25 seconds).
3. Groups should seek shelter in a nearby building (the Yurt, Lake Laurel Lodge, Outdoor Center, etc.) until activity can resume.
Tornados
Tornados form as a thunderstorm's gust front kicks air up into a skinny, twisting, stringy funnel that may last only a few minutes or as the spin that keeps a massive storm going spawns one that can last for hours and do significant damage. The National Weather Service issues tornado watches and warnings. A tornado watch indicates that conditions are conducive to the development of tornadoes in and close to the watch area. A tornado warning indicates that a tornado has actually been sighted by spotters or indicated on radar and is occurring or imminent in the warning area.
1. In the event of a tornado watch or warning prior to a program, postpone the program.

2. In the event of a <u>tornado watch</u> during a program, adapt activities to move inside a sound building or postpone.
3. In the event of a <u>tornado warning</u> or sighting during a program, instruct participants about tornado protocol.
    a. Seek shelter inside a sound building if possible.
    b. Lie down in a ditch or other low area.
    c. Protect the head from falling objects or flying debris.
    d. Stay out of vehicles.

Flora and Fauna

Contact with any fauna in the wild should be avoided. Sensitivity to toxins associated with poisonous plants may vary with age, weight, physical condition, and individual susceptibility. Snakes, alligators, red ants, and ticks may be found in and around areas at Lake Laurel Campus used for OC programs. Poisonous plants such as Poison Ivy, Tread Softly, and Coral Bean may be a hazard.

General procedures
1. Adhere to LNT ethics to minimize contact with flora and fauna.
2. Move away from animals slowly, while facing the animal, if a sighting/contact takes place.
3. Know common poisonous flora for the area.
4. Inspect the site prior to use.
5. Include information about poisonous flora and hazardous fauna in safety briefings as appropriate.
6. Suggest "tick-checks" as appropriate.

<div align="center">

Incident/Accident Reporting

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<u>Incident and accident reports</u> are used to identify trends that require immediate or future action, monitor policy and procedures, evaluate program quality, and establish professional development priorities.
1. The lead facilitator will complete reports for an incident that requires:
    - more than simple first aid such as the application of a band aid;
    - more than cursory staff attention;
    - follow-up care by staff in the field, a medical professional, therapist, psychologist or social worker;
    - use of prescription and non-prescription medications counter to labelling;
    - evacuation from the field;
    - a loss of a day or more of participation in the program or interference with active participation in a program for a significant period of time; or
    - are considered a near miss.
2. Incident/accident reports will be complete, objective, and include a full description of relevant information to enable Outdoor Education Professional Staff to review the form and determine action as necessary.
    a. Complete incident/accident reports as soon after the event as possible. Update the form with any additional information that later becomes available such as follow-ups with medical providers.
    b. Additional relevant information may be submitted with the incident/accident report such as SOAP notes, witness accounts, incident notes.
    c. Record first and last names of all parties and print the name under potentially illegible signatures.
    d. Write narratives in a clear and professional manner. State the facts; do not indicate fault or responsibility.
    e. Make every effort to obtain the injured party's signature or have a witness sign the form if the injured party is in transport or unable to do so.
3. In the case of an accident where a participant is transferred to EMS personnel:
    a. Provide EMS personnel with relevant insurance and medical information, but retain all Medical Information Form, SOAP notes, and incident/accident reports.

      b.   Record the name of EMS personnel and the location of the primary care facility to which the injured party is being transported on the Medical Information Form.

      c.   If the person returns to the program, note the name of the physician giving permission to do so on the incident/accident report.

4. Completed incident/accident report forms are submitted with the program file for review at outdoor education risk management meetings.

5. Incident/accidents that involve staff getting hurt also must be reported to Human Resources for purposes of Worker's Compensation claims.

Equipment Management

1. Program staff are responsible for using program equipment and monitoring student use of equipment according to manufacturer specifications and outdoor education policy and procedures.
   a. Inspect program equipment prior to use.
   b. Emphasize the importance of equipment stewardship.
   c. Model behavior that demonstrates a high regard for equipment.
   d. Teach participants appropriate procedures for using and caring for equipment.
2. Program staff are responsible for properly returning equipment after a program.
   a. Clean and inspect equipment prior to returning it.
   b. Include information on the form for maintaining rope use logs.
   c. Clearly state or graphically identify maintenance and repair requirements on the equipment reservation form and program summary form.
   d. Note lost or destroyed equipment on the program summary form.
   e. Note use of first aid supplies in the FA kit.

Transportation

Kubota
1. Program staff will successfully complete Kubota training with an outdoor education faculty member or an approved designee prior to use.
2. The key to the Kubota will be located in the OC equipment room.
3. Notify the OC Director or Assistant Director that fuel is needed if the tank is less than half full.
4. Use low gear between the OC and the post at the top of the hill.
5. Additional operation guidelines are on the laminated card stored in the Kubota.

Section Five: Program Design

Purpose

1. To use a planned sequence of group development and challenge course experiences to meet the goals of groups and individuals.
2. To provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals and groups.
3. To provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to:
   a. work as an effective team;
   b. communicate effectively;
   c. solve problems collectively and creatively;
   d. explore decision making;
   e. foster a sense of empathy and respect for others;
   f. provide honest, constructive feedback to group members;
   g. resolve conflicts constructively;
   h. manage resources effectively;
   i. build community.

Program Design Sequence

The program design sequence can be described by the following six stages.

Ignition includes introductory, warm-ups, icebreakers, and acclimatizing activities to ignite the program, seed behavioral and safety expectations, and provide opportunities to observe individual and group behavior. They develop a foundation for group building, goal setting, behavioral contracting and challenge of and by choice. They set the stage and the tone of the program.

Level 1 activities take place on the ground and provide the facilitator with goal-focused assessment information about client's social, intellectual, emotional, and physical characteristics. Subsequent activities are selected, implemented, and processed based on assessment insights. Goal setting, behavioral contracting, challenges of and by choice, and spotting/trust activities are integrated throughout this level. Level 1 activities are fun, novel, and challenging.

Level 2 activities take place on the ground and provide the facilitator with opportunities to focus on goal-related skill development and competency building. Groups begin to identify and address individual and group topics. Processing may be increasingly more intentional and in depth. Activities are more complex and challenging, involving increasing levels of physical, social and emotional risk. Goal setting, behavioral contracting, and spotting/trust skills are completed by the conclusion of this level.

Level 3 activities may take place off the ground and are used to deepen and refine goal-related competencies, develop realistic strategies and applications, and celebrate success. Groups begin to self-monitor and processing becomes less facilitator driven. The group revisits earlier commitments and competency areas.

Level 4 activities are the "peak experiences" that vary based on program goals. They are used to apply learning to challenging tasks. They may include the development of action plans for application to real world settings. They draw on everything achieved to this point. They may include high ropes elements, demanding initiative tasks, service projects, or an expedition. Participants demonstrate individual and group effectiveness.

Closure provides facilitators, individuals, and groups with opportunities to celebrate success, acknowledge relationships, and begin to transition back to the real world. Commitment to action and real-world applications is central. Activities may be summary in nature, fun, and emotional – all at the same time!

Section Six: Group Development Activities

Group development activities may comprise an entire program or be used to develop individuals and groups for subsequent activities on the low or high challenge course and/or the Tango Tower. They include warm ups, ice breakers, acclimatizers, a variety of level 1 & 2 initiative tasks, and closure activities.

They are focused on having fun as well as intra- and interpersonal skills such as communication, problem solving and decision making, respect for diversity, constructive controversy, leadership, and goal setting. They require careful sequencing to develop emotional, social, physical and intellectual safety. They may be used to clarify expectations, introduce rules, establish behavioral contracts, set goals, and introduce active challenge of and by choice.

Facilitators may participate in some group development activities at the beginning of a program, however should be cognizant of interfering with group processes as a program progresses. Facilitators should not participate in activities which require focus, such as spotting boundaries, keeping time, monitoring the conduct of the activity, or providing backup spotting. Since group development activities are a source of information about how individuals and groups behave and interact, good observation skills from outside the group are necessary for processing experiences at an appropriate level.

General Procedures

1. Select activity sites based on factors such as the number of participants, the nature of the activity, client goals, equipment, proximity to indoor facilities, and site characteristics such as surface material (e.g. grass, gravel, concrete), contour (e.g. slope, evenness), noise interference and other safety features.
2. Inspect sites and equipment prior to use.
3. Explain the purpose of the activity and present instructions in a clear manner.
4. Set appropriate boundaries.
5. Answer questions prior to starting the activity and throughout as they arise.
6. Review rules, expectations, behavioral contract components, and challenge of and by choice as appropriate to the sequence and activity characteristics.
7. Discuss safety considerations including using appropriate communication, keeping "bumpers up", and other relevant parameters.
8. Encourage participants to ask for what they need.
9. Monitor activities closely for unsafe behavior such as pushing or pulling, not following rules or instruction, distracting behavior, inappropriate touch, inappropriate communication, or horseplay.
10. Intervene in a timely and purposeful fashion as necessary.
11. Provide backup spotting support as necessary.
12. Process the activity as appropriate.

Spotting Skills

Spotting is a concept that is used in two ways. First, it describes a set of technical skills that are taught before participants are responsible for spotting each other off the ground. When included in a program for this purpose, a sequence of at least three activities is required (see Spotting Sequence). The entire spotting sequence may be taught at once or integrated throughout Level 1 and 2 activities.

Additionally, spotting is a concept that may also be used to determine the development of social, emotional, and physical support of individuals within a group. Spotting and/or catching a partner develops an understanding of body weight and movement, as well as concepts like appropriate touch. Supportive spotting and catching allows participants to develop balance, judgment and appropriate falling posture, rather than enabling a participant to overly depend on spotters. In this sense, facilitators are always developing spotting skills because they are central to group growth. Facilitators often model caring, positive approaches for supporting individual and group interactions early in a program, gradually encouraging or explicitly asking group members to do so themselves. Spotting activities may also include games and initiatives that lay a foundation for a particular level of behavior that is desired.

Buddy spotters are used in both of these ways. Technically, the buddy spotter monitors the communication system on behalf of the participant doing an activity when there is more than one spotter. Supportively, the buddy spotter encourages, communicates, and engages in an experience with a participant doing an activity from start to finish. When a climber touches the ground, the buddy spotter is there to provide a steady hand, celebrate success, and help with equipment.

Spotting skills are often overlooked and yet are some of the most important skills to develop early on and throughout a program.

Spotting Sequence

1. Minimum requirements for teaching spotting skills for taking participant off the ground include:
   a. a two person Tic;
   b. a three person Tic Toc;
   c. Wind in The Willows.
2. The spotting activity Levitation will be used if an element that requires lifting, falling, or catching is appropriate to the program design and assessment of group and individual readiness has been completed. This can be completed after the initial minimum spotting requirements or prior to facilitation of the relevant element.

Spotting Structures

Spotting structures should match the spotting requirements for program activities.

The <u>basic spot</u> is used to spot anyone who is ascending or descending, or moving along a cable traverse element. It is the "basic" spotting structure used often for any situation in which a participant may be unstable. A minimum of two spotters are positioned in each fall zone. Participants and facilitators may be spotters as appropriate.

The <u>group spot</u> is used when the group is engaged in an activity where individuals are connected in a way that provides stability and support to the group as a whole. Facilitators provide on-the-ground basic spot coverage. Group members may ask for additional spotting or be asked to assist with on-the-ground basic spot coverage. Participants and facilitators may be spotters as appropriate.

The catching/lifting spot is used to catch a pre-planned fall or lift a person. It is used in conjunction with the basic spot as participants are moving into or from positions that require them to be caught or lifted. Formations differ according to the activity (zippers, buddy positioning, stance, etc.), however lifting using leg muscles, catching critical areas, participant readiness and strength, and faller tendencies to jackknife or flail should be addressed.

Spotting Sequence Activities

General Procedures
1. Inspect the site.
2. Explain the purpose of the activity and present instructions in a clear manner.
3. Answer questions prior to starting the activity and throughout as they arise.
4. Review challenge of and by choice.
5. Demonstrate spotting procedures that are appropriate for the activity.
6. Discuss safety considerations, including: spotter's stance, faller body position, spotter body position and readiness in relation to movement, distance parameters, protecting critical areas (neck and head) and actions that promote safe spotting.
7. Discuss appropriate touch.
8. Teach appropriate spotting command systems.
9. Explain the concept of team spotting for activities that require more than one spotter to act together.
10. Ask the faller to designate a 'buddy spotter' to respond on behalf of multiple spotters and explain the buddy spotter role before starting the activity.
11. Monitor activities closely for unsafe behavior such as pushing or pulling, inappropriate distance between the faller and spotters, distracting behavior, inappropriate touch, inappropriate communication sequence, or horseplay. Reinforce behavioral contract elements, challenge of and by choice and other strategies for monitoring behavior.
12. Encourage participants to ask for what they need.
13. Intervene in a timely and purposeful fashion as necessary.
14. Provide backup spotting support as necessary.
15. Process the activity as appropriate.

Spotting Command Systems
1. Teach and practice appropriate spotting communication systems.
2. Emphasize the importance of simple, timely, and clear communication.
3. Note environmental noise or lack of visual access to the system that may interfere with information flow between participant and spotters.
4. Match commands and responses within communication systems according to the activity including the following components in each:
   a. participant's readiness to spotters;
   b. spotters' readiness to participant;
   c. participant's intention to begin action;
   d. spotters' signal to start action.
5. Appoint or ask the participant to select a buddy spotter who will communicate readiness on behalf of multiple spotters.

Basic Spot

Spotter Information
1. For *basic* spotting technique, spotter's:
   a. knees are bent and feet in athletic stance creating a stable base with one forward and one back;
   b. hands are up and ready;
   c. eyes are on the participant at all times;

d. support is provided by absorbing the faller's weight like a shock absorber, bending at the elbows and knees, and then extending to bring the faller upright.

Tic
Description
This activity introduces a *basic* spotting stance and a communication system that will be adapted and used in subsequent activities. The faller crosses arms in front of body and initiates commands. The spotter supports the faller as he/she leans backward a small distance towards the spotter and is then assisted back to center. Gradually, and using a progression of leans, small increases in distance are added as appropriately negotiated.

Tic Toc
Description
Two spotters are positioned to the front and back of a faller to promote an understanding of body weight and movement. Emphasize the difference between supportive spotting and enabling a faller to depend on spotters rather than developing balance, judgment and appropriate falling posture. This activity reinforces the basic communication system that will be adapted and used in subsequent activities and may be used to introduce or review concepts such as appropriate touch. Two spotters take a spotting position in front of and behind the faller. The faller may fall forward, then be brought to center before falling backward, and brought back to center. The faller will select a controlled fall to the forward and back spotters before trying a slow, continuous forward-to-back motion. The faller crosses arms in front of body and initiates commands.

Facilitator Information
In addition to teaching spotting, catching a fall may be taught with the Tic or Tic Toc activities, if the group is ready, to prepare for low challenge course activities. When falling, the faller will possibly bend at the hips. In this event, the catcher moves hands under the arms and gently rests the faller against the thigh of the forward leg as the faller is slowly brought to a sitting position on the ground. The faller is then assisted to a standing position.

Wind in the Willows
Description
The activity reinforces body weight and movement, supportive spotting, the basic communication system, appropriate touch, spotting posture, the buddy spotter, and introduces team spotting. There should be a minimum of 8 spotters and a maximum number of spotters to ensure that the circle is not too big. Larger groups can form into appropriately sized smaller groups. Form a shoulder-to-shoulder circle around the faller and assume spotting posture. The faller selects a buddy spotter who will respond with verbal spotting commands for the group as a whole and return the faller to an upright position. The faller initiates the motion by starting commands and falling in any direction. The group smoothly passes the faller around or across the circle and back to center.

Catching/Lifting Spot

Levitation
Description
This activity prepares participants for lifting another participant. It is an appropriate lead-up to the Spider's Web or other lifting-type activities and reinforces the basic communication system that will be adapted and used in subsequent activities, as well as concepts like appropriate touch, buddy spotter role, and co-spotting. One participant lies on the ground in ready position. A minimum of eight lifters place hands, palm up beneath the participant at intervals down the length of the body to support key weight and movement. The participant designates a buddy spotter who will support the head and keep it in line with the body, communicate with the lifters, help the participant up and walk the person to standing position at the end of the activity. Lifters lift the body slowly to a height that does not require lifters to change hand

positions. Attempt to keep participant's head level or higher than feet at all times. Lifters then slowly lower the participant, either to the ground or a level that permits the feet to be lowered to the ground, and assist the participant to a standing position. The participant may close their eyes. Rocking and tilting should be avoided.

Section Eight: Low Challenge Course

Low challenge course elements are located throughout the ridge area above the Outdoor Center. The Ground School structure also offers facilitators an opportunity to design low challenge course elements that meet the needs of program goals by creating sequences of experiences that are interchangeable and temporary. Props for the Ground School structure are located in the box inside of the Yurt. Groups complete a spotting sequence prior to doing any activity that is "off the ground" and requires participants to spot each other.

General Procedures

1. Inspect the site and element components.
2. Explain the purpose of the activity and present instructions in a clear manner.
3. Answer questions prior to starting the activity and throughout.
4. Reinforce challenge of and by choice.
5. Demonstrate and/or review activity specific spotting procedures.
6. Discuss safety considerations including stepping off the cable, platform, or log.
7. Require appropriate spotting command systems.
8. Remind participants that they may ask for additional spotters or be asked by the facilitator to assist with spotting.
9. Encourage participants to ask for what they need.
10. Ask group to agree to attempt solutions that provide adequate spotting.
11. Be aware of the strength and body size of group members and ask for agreement not to have members lifting, supporting, or being supported in a manner in which they are not comfortable.
12. Monitor activities closely for unsafe behavior such as pushing or pulling, inappropriate distance between the faller and spotters, distracting behavior, inappropriate touch, or inappropriate communication sequence.
13. Reinforce group behavioral contract.
14. Intervene in a timely and purposeful fashion as necessary.
15. Provide backup spotting support as necessary.
16. Process the activity as appropriate.

Low Challenge Course Elements and Initiative Tasks

A-Frame
Description
This initiative task consists of a 10' tall wooden "A" that can be assembled as a part of the initiative or be pre-assembled. Control ropes can also be pre-attached or added as a part of the building process. All ropes are girth hitched to the element in a way that they cannot slide off. Group members use the control lines to maneuver the A-Frame along a predetermined course while one group member rides the cross bar of the A-Frame. The *basic* spot is used to support the rider.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* spotting procedures.
2. Instruct riders to step off the crossbar to avoid uncontrolled falls.
3. Have participant "riding" the element wear a helmet.
4. Be positioned to provide *basic* spotting for the participant riding the A-Frame.
Participant Information
1. Agree not to use excessive force to maneuver the A-Frame around.
2. Agree to maneuver the A-Frame such that control ropes are only pulled outward or downward (no lifting is required).
3. Agree to maintain support for the A-Frame until the rider steps off of the crossbar.
4. Agree to not wrap the control ropes around arms, hands or wrists.

All Aboard
Description
This low challenge course element consists of a wooden platform on which the entire group attempts to balance for a predetermined or a progressively more challenging period of time. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *group* and *basic* spotting procedures.
2. Inform participants that they cannot stack people or ride on shoulders.
3. Be positioned to provide a *basic* spot to the participants.
Participant Information
1. Agree to assist any and all group members who might need or ask for it.
2. Agree to step off the element when falling.

Cable Traverses, Triangle Traverse & Group Traverse
Description
These low challenge course elements consist of one or more single foot cables between poles. Individuals or groups traverse one or more cables using support from group members and/or hand props that may be permanently or temporarily affixed to poles. Hand props are sequenced to develop skills by the facilitator or may be proposed by the group. Hand props include single and multiple rope attachments that may be used to create elements such as the vine walk and various types of tension for two-line elements. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* and *group* spot procedures.
2. Design, or negotiate with the group, element sequences based on program goals and client assessment.
3. Be positioned to provide a *basic* spot to the participants.
Participant Information
1. Agree to provide *basic* spotting reinforcement to a *group* spot as needed before starting or when finished.
2. Agree to assist any and all group members who might need or ask for it.
3. Agree to step off the element when falling.

Islands
Description
This low challenge course element consists of three wooden platforms placed 4-6 feet apart. The group is given two props, one plank that is about two feet long and one plank that is about 1.5 feet shorter than the distance between the platforms, and asked to move the group across a series of platforms. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* and *group* spot procedures.
2. Review safety hazards associated with the height of the planks when lifted and the platforms.
3. Inform the group that there is to be no jumping between platforms.
4. Approve the plank positioning before participants traverse them.
5. Be positioned to provide a *basic* spot to the participants as they move between platforms.
Participant Information
1. Agree to keep planks below waist height.
2. Agree to step off the element when falling.
3. Agree to have both feet from at least two participants supporting the plank.

King's Finger
Description
This initiative task consists of a wooden base in which a PVC pipe can be inserted to stand approximately 10 feet tall. A hula hoop or rope circle is placed around the pipe. The group is challenged to remove the hoop or rope without touching the pipe. The *basic* spot is used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* spot procedures.
Participant Information
1. Agree to have two spotters for every participant who is off the ground.

Spider's Web
Description
This low challenge course element consists of a prefabricated web strung between two trees made up of many holes or open web sections that normally differ in size. The group challenge is to pass members from one side to the other using the holes and without touching anything that is part of the structure of the web. Participants may be passed through separate holes or everyone may go through one hole. The group may be asked to return to the beginning side, the person who touches may be asked to return, or the group may lose holes if a touch occurs. A *lifting* spot is used to pass participants through the holes and a *basic* spot is provided for participants moving under their own initiative.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* and *lifting* spot procedures.
2. Ensure that the group has a designated spotter for the head/neck.
Participant Information
1. Agree to maintain a rigid position with arms, legs, and hands staying still while being lifted and passed.
2. Agree to support the head and neck while lifting a participant.
3. Agree to pass participants face up and feet first when lifted completely off the ground.
4. Agree to continue to spot participants even when the web is touched.
5. Agree to lift with legs and not the back.
6. Agree to lower participants feet first.

Team Wall
Description
This low challenge course element consists of a 12-foot, flat wall (start side) with a small platform close to the top of the other side for participants to stand on (finish side) and a ladder on the side for participants to lower themselves. The task is to get the group up and over the wall using no props. Participants who are on the platform may assist participants to ascend the wall. Three people are allowed on the platform at one time and normally participants must descend the platform in the same order they came over the wall. A *basic* spot is used to spot exits off the platform. A *basic* spot is used to spot climbers from behind and to the sides of the wall face, in a tight rainbow formation. A *moving basic* spot with other participants closing in using a *basic* spot is used to spot final participants who choose to run at the wall intending to jump and reach the hands of the people on the platform.
Facilitator Information
1. Review variations on *basic* spotting procedures with participants, emphasizing the need to spot all possible fall directions.
2. Review safety issues related to lifting and pulling participants over the wall, and supporting and pushing participants up the wall.
3. Emphasize that spotters must keep hands up until climber is completely over the wall and standing upright.
4. Indicate that both feet of all participants on the platform must remain in contact with the platform at all times.

Participant Information
1. Agree to communicate clearly with other group members.
2. Agree to spot each other from the beginning of starting the wall, while on the top, and all the way down the exit.
3. Agree to have a maximum of three people on the top of the platform and one in transition.
4. Agree that participant's feet will never be above their head.

TP Shuffle & Maybe a Rectangle
Description
These low challenge course elements consist of one or more utility poles that are on the ground. The classic TP Shuffle is a single pole and the Maybe a Rectangle is a number of different size and length logs that provide corners to maneuver. Participants are challenged to change/switch positions on the log(s) without stepping off. This may be accomplished through many variations including a variety of line-up tasks or switching ends. Variations may be used as part of a sequence that should be determined based on client assessment and program goals. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *group* and *basic* spotting procedures.
2. Be positioned to provide a *basic* spot to the participants in transition.
Participant Information
1. Agree to assist any and all group members who might need or ask for it.
2. Agree to step off the element when falling.

Trolleys
Description
This initiative task consists of two boards with a number of ropes inserted through the boards for participants to hold. The group walks on the boards over a prescribed course (straight line, with obstacles on the ground, around obstacles, etc.) with each foot placed on one trolley. Participants who touch the ground may be asked to start at the back of the trolley, or turn backwards. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *group* and *basic* spotting procedures.
2. Design course over level ground.
3. Be positioned to provide a *basic* spot to the participants in transition.
Participant Information
1. Agree to assist any and all group members who might need or ask for it.
2. Agree to step off the element when falling.
3. Agree to ensure that all ropes are held, and not wrapped, in the hands of the group members so that they do not get caught under the trolleys.

Whale Watch
Description
This low challenge course element includes a platform balanced on a fulcrum like a giant seesaw. The group is challenged to balance itself on the platform for a negotiated amount of time or for long enough to complete a short task that does not require them to move. The *basic* spot and *group* spot structures are used as appropriate.
Facilitator Information
1. Review *basic* and *group* spotting procedures.
2. Instruct participants to enter and exit near the fulcrum of the platform.
3. Instruct participants to step off the platform carefully to avoid uncontrolled falls.
4. Inform participants of safety issues, such as not having toes or fingers under the platform.
Participant Information
1. Agree to communicate when stepping off the element.

<u>**Wild Woozy**</u>

Description

This low challenge course element consists of two cables that form a "V." Two participants, one per cable, walk the diverging cables while maintaining physical contact to a point where they can no longer continue without falling or they reach the end. A *zippered catching* spot is used in the center of the cables and a *basic* spot is used outside the cables.

Facilitator Information

1. Review *basic* and *catching* spots.
2. Inform participants not to interlock fingers during activity.

Participant Information

1. Agree to not interlock fingers with partner.
2. Agree to *basic* spot participants from the outside of the cables.
3. Agree to perform *zippered catching* spotting technique between active participants. Continue to add spotters to the outside of spotters who are in place in a way that does not unnecessarily interfere with the progress of participants.

Section Nine: High Challenge Course

The high challenge course is designed to accommodate a variety of individual and group experiences. Three types of high challenge course elements are available: dynamic belay elements, static belay elements, and zip lines. The high challenge course procedures included in this handbook require facilitators to be experienced in and able to teach specific spotting and belay techniques to participants as appropriate. Most programs that include the high challenge course are sequenced to culminate with this peak experience.

1. If at any time the lead facilitator determines that the group is not ready for the high challenge course, the program should be adapted to achieve readiness for the high challenge course or be adapted to provide alternative, developmentally-appropriate activities.

The Tango Tower is an exclusive ERi, Inc. dynamic climbing structure. It challenges individuals and groups to climb to the top of a tower using various route options that support individual or paired efforts. Once at the top, participants may "top off" and enjoy the view while processing the experience individually or with their group.

General Procedures

Set-Up and Take Down
During periods of regular use, belay hardware is left on the course and lazy lines are used to string belay ropes prior to each use. During periods of irregular use, belay hardware may be removed and facilitators may have to climb via leading edge to set up the belay system.

1. All ladders used as access points should be securely attached to a pole by means of a cam strap.
2. At the end of programs, lazy lines and hanging element structures (i.e. hand lines) should be securely wrapped around staples at least 12 feet off of the ground to deter unapproved access. All climbing holds below 12 feet should also be removed.
3. Ladders should be locked to trees, poles, or other permanent structures when not in use.

Ladder Access
Ladders are used by both facilitators and participants to reach the lowest level of staples when climbing poles.

1. Participants must have a minimum of two spotters holding the ladder while climbing up or down.
   a. Instruct climbers to use every rung of the ladder and not step off early.
   b. A rope ladder may also be attached to the Tango Tower as an additional means of access.

Equipment
1. Handle hardware carefully by not dropping or throwing hardware to prevent potential fatigue and stress fractures.
2. Yell 'ROCK' in the event that something falls from height to alert people on the ground.
3. Place equipment on a ground cloth or tarp out of the way of participant and facilitator traffic.
4. Instruct participants in the proper use and care of equipment including, but not limited to, helmets, harnesses, static belay claws, belay ropes, and carabiners.
5. Teach the proper use of helmets to protect the head from bumps, scrapes, and falling objects including:
   a. adjusting for proper fit;
   b. wearing helmets within the "fall zone" (area within an element's guy lines).
6. Demonstrate to the participant how to put on and properly fit a harness.
7. Require the use of a chest harness and a seat harness on elements that specify to do so.
8. Offer participants the option of using a chest harness and encourage it for participants who may desire or require more upper body support.
9. Attach dynamic belay lines to the harness using a double figure eight loop with a locking carabiner or a figure eight follow through directly into the harness.

10. Use static belays, called lobster claws, on static belay elements.
11. Demonstrate how to adjust lobster claws to lengthen or shorten as needed.
12. Connect lobster claws onto carabiner and clip the carabiner to the seat harness according to the manufacturer's specifications.
13. Check harnesses for proper fit and belay attachment prior to ascending the course.

Harness Types

The Challenge seat harness manufactured by Edelweiss can be used with both a dynamic belay line and static belays. The dynamic belay line can be clipped into the large black belay loop or tied into the belay loop. Static belay claws should be clipped into the belay loop.

The Challenge chest harness manufactured by Edelweiss is used in conjunction with the above seat harnesses. The seat-chest harness combination is clipped into one double figure eight loop on the end of the belay line with a separate locking carabiner into each harness.

The full-body harnesses made by Singing Rock should be clipped into at the large metal ring on the back of the harness.

Belay Benches

Belay benches are available as anchors for belayers on the Tango Tower. To use the belay bench as an anchor:
1. Attach the end of the dynamic belay line (opposite the climber) to the belayer's harness using a figure 8 on a bight with a carabiner;
2. Make a figure 8 on a bight on the belay rope approximately three feet from the belayer (belayer should adjust for appropriate length);
3. Clip this loop into the belay bench eyebolt with a locking carabiner, thus anchoring to the bench;
4. Load rope into belay device between bench and climber, and attach loaded belay device to belayer's harness with a locking carabiner.

Topping Off

It may be necessary for participants to top off on the Tango Tower in order to access the zip line or to transfer to a rappel. The lead facilitator may also choose to have participants top off for processing.
1. When topping off is an option for the Tango Tower, one facilitator should be belayed to the top of the tower and then transfer onto claws.
2. Participants may then be transferred onto tethers and off of their dynamic belays by the facilitators on top of the tower.
3. There must be one facilitator for every eight participants on the platform and not more than four people on a cable.
4. One facilitator should remain on the ground to manage emergency situations.

Belay Procedures

High challenge course elements include dynamic belay, static belay systems, and special element belay systems. Element descriptions are grouped according to belay systems.

Participant Belayers

1. The lead facilitator may elect to teach participants how to belay other participants. This decision should be based on, but not limited to:
    a. the number of facilitators available to teach, supervise, or provide belay systems;
    b. participant readiness to participate as dynamic belay teams;
    c. program length and design;
    d. number of participants;
    e. physical attributes of the element.

2. Provide direct supervision for the belay system or perform a backup belay role to a participant belayer.
3. Ensure that participant belayers have both a backup belayer and an anchor (person or belay bench) prior to belaying.

Dynamic Belay Systems
1. Teach participants to belay using a dynamic belay system at Ground School should participants be ready and willing to belay each other based on client assessment and program design.
   a. Belay ropes can be affixed to the middle cable of Ground School using a steel locking carabiner to simulate a dynamic belay system.
   b. The climber and belayer start approximately 20 feet from Ground School, where they check and double check each other's equipment.
   c. The climber initiates the communication system and then moves towards Ground School, simulating a vertical climb, while the belayer takes in rope.
   d. Climbers may move left and right on the ground or on a foot cable if a *basic* spot is used to simulate traversing an element.
   e. Groups should practice using a backup belayer, anchor, buddy and other roles that will be used in programs to promote group involvement and responsibility.
   f. Participants should practice the dynamic belay skills until they demonstrate physical and emotional readiness to belay others using a dynamic belay system at height.
2. Maintain a clear view of the climber from a place on the ground that is free from environmental obstruction and is accessible to backup assistance.
3. Inspect the climber for readiness to climb by doing a visual and/or tactile check prior to climbing, including:
   a. ensuring that the harness and helmet are secured properly;
   b. ensuring that the dynamic belay rope is secured to the harness (in accordance with manufacturer specifications) using the appropriate knot that is properly tied;
   c. ensuring that carabiners are locked with a "squeeze check" and properly positioned;
   d. ensuring that objects, clothing, or hair that affect the system are removed or tucked in.
4. Use proper spotting and climbing commands.
5. Review spotting and belay procedures and commands with participants as needed.
6. Use the "BUS Method" (below, under, slide) of belaying with an ATC. The belay line is held in the "braking position" while the brake hand slides up the rope to take in slack.
7. Remain attentive to a climber's needs, taking in or letting out slack as necessary.
8. Remind climbers to "follow their rope up" to prevent the belay rope from snagging on element structures and causing falls to result in swings.
9. Control descents when a climber descends an element for any reason.
10. In the unlikely event that a participant cannot be lowered via ground belay, a designated facilitator will initiate and manage rescue lowering procedures.
11. The primary belayer will be responsible for the safety of the climber until the climber communicates that he/she is "off belay."
12. Limit one participant to a single belay cable or bar to enable a facilitator to move on any cable in an emergency.
13. Several dynamic elements have double belay lines allowing the element to be used with two participants at once. In this case:
   a. element ropes are designated for use on the inner or outer belay cable;
   b. belayer should be located inside or outside the respective belay cable;
   c. care should be exercised when two contiguous "inner" elements are used at the same time to prevent confusion at the joining poles.

Traversing and Ascending Dynamic Elements
Dynamic elements on the High Challenge Course are typically "traversing" elements in which the participant moves from one pole to another, while those on the Tango Tower, the Pamper Pole, and the Static Course access are "ascending" elements in which the participant climbs to the top of the element and is then lowered to the ground. Different techniques are utilized for traversing and ascending elements.
1. Ascending elements allow for the use of belay benches such as at the Tango Tower. People are used as anchors for traversing elements or when belay benches are not accessible or selected for use. In these cases, the anchor person stands behind the belayer and securely holds the belayer's harness waistbelt.
2. Pole climbs and lowering at the end of an element should be belayed as an ascending element. Falls while a climber is on a pole could lead to a pendulum swing due to the sag built into the belay cable. Belayers should position themselves to bring the belay system as close as possible to the starting pole while the participant is ascending and have the participant move back out onto the element approximately 8-10 feet to be lowered whenever possible.
3. Belayers should generally position themselves to minimize the sliding of the belay system in the event of a fall.
4. Ensure that the ground area is clear of obstructions and coordinate with other facilitators to minimize contact between belay teams on contiguous elements.

Dynamic Belay Commands

Belayer	Climber	Meaning and Response Needed
	"on belay?"	Are you ready? Is the belay on?
"belay on"		All set. The belay will now catch you if you fall.
	"climbing"	I am ready to climb.
"climb on"/ "rappel on"		Go ahead. The rope will be controlled by the belay.
	"slack"	The climber needs some slack in the rope. The belayer should feed out a small amount of rope. No verbal answer required.
	"tension"/ "that's me"	The climber has some slack in the rope. The Belayer should take in rope until the climber communicates "that's me."
	"rope" or "rock"	A rope or another object is coming down – do not look.
"clear"		You may drop the rope, the area is clear.
	"off belay"	Take off the belay, I am secure and will no longer need the belay.
"belay off"		The belay is off, echoed to ensure there is not misunderstanding.

Static Belay Systems
1. Teach static changeovers at Ground School prior to climbing.
   a. Static belay transfer practice is pre-requisite to the use of static elements on the high course. The lower level of Ground School provides an opportunity to practice this skill in a controlled environment.
   b. Skill instruction includes an overview provided by staff of the process of belay transfers, focusing on belay transfers with appropriate communication systems, and emphasizing the responsibility of the participant for their own safety throughout the experience.
   c. Participants practice two or more transfers until they can demonstrate physical and emotional readiness to self-belay using lobster claws.
   d. Participants may also practice adjusting the length of the lobster claws and regaining a foot cable.
   e. The facilitation team should implement a system to ensure that all participants have completed Ground School prior to using static elements on the high course.
2. Use dynamic belay systems to access static elements.
3. Inform climbers of their responsibility for personal safety.

4. Review the use of spotting, climbing, and transfer commands used throughout the experience.
5. Secure the dynamic belay rope and static lobster claws to the harness.
6. Designate platform supervisor(s) to monitor climbers ready to commence a dynamically belayed ascent or descent from a platform, including establishing a static belay prior to removing dynamic belay and vice versa.
7. "In the air" minimum ratio for supervising transfers is 1:4. The number of facilitators to participants may be increased (i.e. 1:3, 1:2) based on program design, group readiness, and facilitator experience.
8. Limit three participants to a single belay cable at the same time to enable a facilitator to move on any cable in an emergency. Exceptions are the platform on the Tango Tower and the group elements which may have four participants on a single cable.
9. Position at least one facilitator on each level of the static course when both levels are being used.
10. Position facilitators comfortably "in the air" on platforms or other structures.
11. Require participants to execute the appropriate communication system for transfers between elements and to receive verbal authorization from the supervising facilitator for every transfer.

Static Transfer Commands

Participant to facilitator on platform:	"Will you watch me transfer?"
Facilitator to participant:	"Yes I will."
Participant to facilitator on platform:	"May I transfer first carabiner?"
Facilitator to participant:	"Transfer first carabiner. Please flip and squeeze-check gate."
Participant to facilitator on platform:	"Squeeze check. May I transfer second carabiner?"
Facilitator to participant:	"Transfer second carabiner. Please flip and squeeze-check gate."
Participant to facilitator on platform:	"Squeeze check. May I continue?"

Special Element Belay Systems

The **Four-Way Pamper Pole** makes use of a special belay technique called a Z-belay which uses two permanently installed eyebolts on a pole for creating friction. The eyebolt on the very bottom of each pole is not part of the Z-belay system.
1. The Z-belay is set up by running the belay rope down the pole from the shear reduction device on the belay cable, through the lower eyebolt, up through the upper eyebolt, and finally back down along the pole. The final set-up should resemble a sideways "Z."
2. The Z-belay is managed by a minimum of three participant belayers or two facilitators. The belayers alternate sides of the belay rope and use an alternating hand sliding technique to move rope through the belay system.

Zip lines utilize a tether attached to a steel double-wheeled cable pulley. The full use of this system is described below.

Tango Tower and static access platforms often do not require participants to transfer from one static belay cable to another, such as when participants have a group debrief or are preparing to use the zip line. A static tether may be used in these situations.
1. Static belay lobster claws are used "upside down" so that two participants may tether to each leg of the lobster claw.
2. Up to four people may be attached to each belay cable on the top of the Tango Tower and the Static Access platforms.
3. Designate one facilitator "in the air" for every eight participants "in the air" to supervise static tethers. This is a minimum ratio and should be adjusted based on the amount of activity on the platform (e.g. zip line).
4. One facilitator should remain on the ground to manage emergency situations.
5. Participants using static tethers are not required to complete Ground School training if a facilitator directly supervises (hands-on) all transfers to and from the tether.

Leading Edge Climbing

1. Facilitators should avoid climbing in leading edge environments whenever possible by using dynamic belay systems.
2. Leading edge lobster claws are to be used with LEAP anchors when leading edge climbing is necessary. Staples are not an appropriate anchor for leading edge climbing.
3. Participants should never climb in a leading edge environment.

Tango Tower Elements

Centipede
Description
A vertically suspended utility pole with randomly placed climbing holds to be used as hand and foot holds. The goal is to climb up the pole using the climbing holds.

Climbing Walls
Description
The Tango Tower offers two climbing walls: an "overhang wall" that faces the zip corridor and a "slab wall" that faces away from the zip corridor. The activity may be used in conjunction with rappelling to enable participants to climb to and rappel from the tower platform. The artificial climbing walls may be used as part of an instructional sequence to prepare participants for rock climbing or may be used as an individual experience.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Attach climbing holds to the bottom 12 feet of the wall. Holds on the "overhang wall" are attached with the installed brackets. Holds on the "slab wall" are attached with hex bolts into pre-placed T-nuts.
2. Provide instruction in and practice for spotting wall access and falls that may occur during the first six to eight feet of climbing.
3. Remind participants to climb holds, not the cracks between planks or wall edges.
4. Remove all climbing holds from the bottom 12 feet of the wall at the end of the program.

Giant's Ladder
Description
A "ladder" with rungs of 4x4's is suspended from the top platform. Two participants climb the ladder using only the support of the 4x4's and the other participant. Use of the side cables for climbing is discouraged.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Separate dynamic belays are used for each participant.
2. Participants should use a full-body harness or seat-chest harness combination.

King Swing
Description
Two poles each have two platforms that are facing each other at two different heights. There is a rope hanging between the two poles. Participants climb to the first platform and swing across to the platform at equal height on the opposite pole. They then climb to the upper platform and again swing across to the final platform. Participants may then use the pole or the hanging rope to "top off." Participants may attempt this element solo or with a partner.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Separate belay systems are used for each partner.
2. Inform participants of potential to swing into platform. Note that center most belay bar location leaves a wide pendulum possibility for that climber. Reinforce challenge of and by choice.
3. Remind participants to watch that their belay ropes do not get crossed as they swing between platforms when working in tandem.
4. Warn participants not to let their belay ropes catch on the element platforms.

Vertebrae Ladder
Description
A series of vertically suspended utility pole sections have randomly placed staples to be used as hand and foot holds. The goal is to climb up the pole sections using the staples as hand and foot holds.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Warn participants not to grab the cable or hardware between the utility pole sections as they are a pinching hazard.

Wilder Woozy
Description
Two utility poles progress outward from a common utility pole terminating approximately 12 feet apart and 35 feet from the starting pole. Two participants, one on each pole, move out along the diverging pole using each other for support until they can go no further.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Each participant is belayed with a separate dynamic belay.
2. Participants may use either the rope ladders or the utility poles to access the start of the Wilder Woozy.
3. Participants should use a full-body harness or seat-chest harness combination.
4. Ensure that the participants don't cross their belay lines.
5. If using a seat-chest harness combination, ensure that belay lines remain in front of participants and inside of arms.
6. Do not allow participants to interlock fingers during the activity.
7. Manage the location of the belay rope in respect to the King Swing platforms to minimize swing and rope wear when participants fall.

X Ladder
Description
A length of crisscrossing multiline creates a series of ascending X's culminating in a cargo net. Participants climb the structure using only the support of the multiline X's and the cargo net. Participants may attempt the element solo or with a partner.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Separate dynamic belays for each participant are used.

Dynamic Course Elements

Four-Way Pamper Pole
Description
One to four participants climb a utility pole using staples to reach a platform at the top of the pole. Upon reaching the platform, participant(s) leap from the platform attempting to touch a large red ball that is suspended in the air. The Four-Way Pamper Pole uses the Z-belay technique. (See Special Element Belay Systems.)
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Ensure that participants use a full body harness or seat and chest harness combination.
2. Ensure that no more than two participants are climbing the pole at any time.
3. Remind participants to tag, not catch, red balls.
4. As the participant jumps, the belayers should take up as much slack as possible.
5. The element is dynamically belayed directly off of the anchors on each utility pole using a Z-belay.
Belay Team Responsibilities
1. Agree to maintain control of ropes and lower participant slowly.

Disco (a.k.a. 12 Steps)
Description

A series of 12 wooden discs are suspended from a cable with multiline. Participants swing from disc to disc to traverse the element. This element has a single belay cable.

Hourglass
Description

Two multiline ropes are tensioned between two poles to form an hourglass-shape with each multiline attached at foot height on one pole and shoulder height on the opposite pole. This element has a single belay cable.

Pipe Dream
Description

A foot cable and support cable six feet higher suspend five vertical sections of PVC, some solid and some spinning, which participants use to cross the span. This element has a double belay and can be done with either one or two participants.

Pirate's Crossing
Description

A series of two multiline loops, a cargo net, and two more multiline loops are suspended from a cable. The participant uses the multiline loops to reach and then cross the cargo net and then uses the second set of multiline loops to reach the opposite pole. This element has a single belay cable.

Plank Bridge
Description

Two foot cables strung between utility poles with 16 wooden planks. The participant traverses the element, using the wooden planks for support. This element has a double belay and can be done with either one or two participants.

Tension Traverse (a.k.a. Ships Passing in the Night)
Description

A single foot cable with a long multiline hand line attached to each pole at shoulder height. This element has a double belay and can be done with either one participant, or two participants moving in opposite directions.

Vine Walk
Description

A single tension foot cable with a series of multiline ropes suspended from an overhead cable, positioned just beyond the average person's reach. The participant walks across the foot cable, using the various vines for aid. This element has a double belay and can be done with either one or two participants.

Static Course Elements

Burma Lunge
Description

A single foot cable between two utility poles with one multiline hand line attached four feet up one pole and descending to the foot cable for two thirds of the length of the element. There are also two multiline hand lines attached four feet up the opposite pole descending to the foot cable for two thirds of the length of the element in the other direction forming an hourglass-shape.

Burma Bridge
Description

The Burma Bridge connects the top and bottom levels of the static course. Two cables at chest height form hand lines with multiline hanging from them forming V-shaped steps.

Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Warn participants of the possibility of sliding down the belay cable if they fall from the element.

Cat Walk
Description
A utility pole supported horizontally between two poles.

Commando Crawl
Description
A single piece of multiline strung between two poles that participants use to "crawl" across the element.

Flippy Planks
Description
Two foot cables are strung between poles with wooden planks hanging from one of the cables in alternating order. Participants create a bridge to walk on by flipping the planks to rest on the opposite cable as they traverse the element. Multiline is suspended from the two poles and hangs between the two foot cables. Upon completion of the activity, the participant pulls on the multiline to flip the planks off the other cable and returns them to a hanging position.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Boards will slowly slide towards the middle of the element. Facilitators will need to occasionally return boards to an evenly spaced position.
2. Participants often use the multiline for support during the element and will have to be readjusted in order to be able to flip planks to original position.

Magic Carpet
Description
A 2.5'x 2.5' wooden platform slides on two cables with pulleys. Participants sit or stand on the platform and use multiline ropes connecting each pole to the platform to pull them across the element.

Smile Vines
Description
A foot cable between two utility poles with five multiline hand lines that fall in a U-shape attached to a cable above the foot cable.

Temple of Doom Bridge
Description
Two parallel foot cables strung horizontally with a series of wooden planks. In the middle of the bridge is a hanging multiline used to swing across a short distance with no planks.

Tired Two Line (a.k.a. Charlie Chaplin Walk)
Description
Two parallel foot cables strung between two poles.

Two-Line Bridge
Description
A foot cable strung between two utility poles with a multiline hand line approximately four feet above the cable.

Team Element Upper
Description
Two foot cables are strung diagonally between the two large platforms creating an hourglass-shape with a vertical PVC pipe at the intersection of the cables. The element has two belay cables between each pole allowing up to 8 people (2 per belay cable) to work together to move across the element.

Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Inform participants of the need to keep their lobster claws loose at the beginning so that they are not pulled off near the middle of the cable.
2. Inform participants of potential to swing if they fall off the foot cable near the middle of the element.
3. Ensure that the participants don't cross their lobster claws with other participants.
4. Do not allow participants to interlock fingers during the activity.

Team Element Lower
Description
Two foot cables are strung between the two large platforms with PVC pipe segments suspended to provide support for participants. The pipes are tethered together and to the starting platform in such a way that they will need to be passed between members of the group. The element has two belay cables between each pole allowing up to 8 people (2 per belay cable) to work together to move across the element. The element can only be used starting at the entrance platform to the static course.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. Ensure that the participants don't cross their lobster claws with other participants.
2. Remind participants to pay attention as they pass the PVC pipes to prevent injury to unaware participants.

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Special Elements

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Tandem Zip Line
Description
Two zip line cables connect the top platforms between the Tango Tower and the Dynamic Course/Static Course. A participant zips on a designated zip wire pulley down the length of cable. When the participant slows to a complete stop, an A-frame ladder is brought under the participant so they can disconnect from the pulley and climb to the ground.
Facilitator Responsibilities
1. One facilitator serves as the platform facilitator and monitors transfers to the zip tether and platform launches; a second facilitator coordinates the ground crew to clear the zip corridor and help participants exit off the zip line.
2. The platform facilitator has access to two rescue bags.
3. The platform facilitator attaches the designated two-wheel pulley to the zip line cable. The main tether is then attached to the pulley using a locking carabiner. A backup lanyard, which also assists to prevent the pulley from running away, should be attached to the cable on the back of the pulley. The backup lanyard is longer than the main pulley and should not be shortened.
4. The participant is instructed to sit on the edge of the platform beneath the zip cable facing the zip corridor.
5. Participants are transferred from lobster claws or dynamic belay to the zip tether. The tether is attached to participant's harness attachment point with a locking carabiner. The backup lanyard is also attached to participant's harness attachment point with a locking carabiner. The platform facilitator must execute caution during this process, ensuring with a squeeze check that the zip tether is securely attached before the primary belay is removed.
6. Platform facilitator explains that participant may hold lanyard and may not jump/swing or invert/hang upside down.
7. The platform facilitator communicates with the ground facilitator to ensure that the zip corridor remains clear of people and equipment. Platform facilitator asks: "Zip Clear?" Ground facilitator responds when appropriate, "Zip clear." Platform facilitator announces: "Zipping." Ground facilitator responds: "Zip away." The facilitators may also coach participants to exchange commands when appropriate.
8. When the zip corridor is cleared, the facilitator releases the primary belay and coaches participant to ease their way off the platform.

9. When the participant stops, ground crew brings A-frame ladder to them. Participant climbs the ladder to release tension and removes the tether from their harness.
10. Participant attaches the retrieval cord to the zip tether carabiner, and safely dismounts from the ladder with ladder spotters in position.
11. Ground facilitator clears ladder from the corridor and walks the pulley back towards the launching platform, swinging it back to the platform facilitator for the next participant to use.
12. Two participants may zip at the same time, using separate cables and must depart from the same platform. The platform facilitator must focus on one participant at a time during transfers. Participants may not attempt to touch each other as this increases potential for injury. The ground facilitator ensures that both participants have stopped before allowing the ground crew to approach either participant.
13. The zip line may be used from one end only for the duration of a program.

Technical Rescues

A **technical rescue** is one in which some level of technical competency is required to bring a participant(s) to a safe place. Remember, the first line of defense is prevention. The best rescue is the one that is not needed.

Most rescues, regardless of activity or environment, may be categorized into one of four levels that are normally implemented in sequence. However, there may be cases in which the decision to proceed to a more complex response is appropriate. Determine the level of rescue that is necessary based on the nature and context of the situation and the type of activity. Consider speed, safety, and simplicity because generally, the faster, safer, and simpler an option is, the better it is.

Level I rescues are assisted self-rescues in which the responder provides psychological support to a person from a position of relative safety in order to help a participant help them self. The responder normally provides verbal, emotional or technique support to increase the participant's ability or desire to self-rescue.
- **Verbally** encouraging a challenge course participant to trust their belay system and be lowered, or to gain a position from which they can continue.

Level II rescues are assisted self-rescues in which the responder provides physical or equipment support from a position of relative safety in order to help a participant to help them self. The responder normally provides equipment and instruction to aid self-rescue.
- Sending an etrier out to a participant who has fallen off a cable and cannot regain the foot cable.

Level III rescues increase the complexity, time to respond, and relative safety of responders who make physical contact with the participant to provide a basic mechanism for moving the participant to a safer place.
- Moving out on an element to a stuck challenge course participant, attaching a rescue belay system, removing their initial belay system, and then lowering them safely to the ground.

Level IV rescues further increase the complexity, time to respond, and relative safety of responders who make physical contact with the participant to provide a more advanced mechanism or procedures for rescue that involves greater risks for both the rescuer and the participant.
- Moving out on an element to a stuck challenge course participant, attaching a rescue belay system, cutting away their initial belay system, and then lowering them safely to the ground.

Rescue Procedures
1. Designate one facilitator to initiate and manage standard rescue procedures.

2. Locate rescue bags for dynamic course elements to enhance potential rescue requirements considering client assessment and program design; locate rescue bags for static course elements in the air on the static course.
3. Inspect the contents of rescue bags prior to the program for the following contents:
   a. belay rope;
   b. rescue figure 8;
   c. rescue knife or EMT shears;
   d. etrier;
   e. two steel carabiners;
   f. two cordelette loops.
4. Provide calm, deliberate, and safe actions to provide help.
5. Rescue a stuck participant using a sequence of steps including:
   a. move toward a participant who is unable to regain an element or needs to be lowered on dynamic belay with a rescue bag via the quickest route;
   b. attach rescue equipment to the belay cable using a steel carabiner;
   c. calm the participant with words of comfort and reassurance;
   d. assist the participant to climb back onto the element (talking, tension, etrier, etc.);
   e. continue to communicate with a participant throughout the completion of the element;
   f. if the participant needs to be lowered on dynamic belay, move to emergency rescue procedures.
6. Rescue a participant in an emergency situation using a sequence of steps including:
   a. move toward a participant who is unable to regain an element or needs to be lowered on dynamic belay with a rescue bag via the quickest route;
   b. assess the severity of the situation and request that a ground facilitator call 911 if needed;
   c. begin emergency take down procedures immediately including:
      • communicate intentions clearly to ground crew,
      • attach and lock carabiner with figure-eight device to belay cable,
      • hook and lock the carabiner on the super figure eight to the participant's harness,
      • remove shears and prussic loops from pocket of bag,
      • make sure the ground is clear and drop the rescue bag,
      • select a lowering method and communicate the chosen method to other facilitators,
      • if available, a facilitator on the ground should manage the rescue belay,
      • ensure that the rescue belay is on and that all possible slack is out of the rescue belay system,
      • attempt to loosen and remove original belay system. If the initial belay system cannot be removed either from the harness or the belay cable, it will need to be cut with rescue shears,
      • safely lower participant to ground on rescue belay rope.
7. Perform most rescues from the middle of the zip line by using a stepladder to access the participant.
8. Perform rescues at the far ends of the zip line by using the contents of one rescue bag to "lower" slowly down the zip line to prevent the rescuer from colliding with the participant, and a second rescue bag to perform a lower as described above.

Appendix 1: Universal Access

The Americans with Disabilities Act focuses primarily on public accommodations and employment of persons with disabilities. Outdoor education programs at Georgia College support efforts to make outdoor education activities accessible to persons with disabilities. However, the issue of accessibility is one that must be judged on the basis of risk management. Therefore, accommodations for people with disabilities may be reasonable in some cases and in other cases they may not, depending on facilities, equipment, or staff competency.

1. Rynders and Schleien[1] offer guidelines for assessing accommodations for people with disabilities that form the basis for decision making:
    a. Adapt only when necessary. Do not assume that every activity will need to be adapted to meet the needs of the person with a disability. The goal should be to keep the participant's experience as realistic as possible. If an adaptation is warranted, seek participant input. In most cases the participant will be eager to communicate needs;
    b. View adaptations as temporary, transitional changes. Whenever possible, facilitators should work toward engaging persons with disabilities in the activity as it was originally designed. If adaptations have been made to get the participant involved, the goal should be to reduce dependency on the adaptation;
    c. Adapt on an individual basis. Do not assume that every participant with a disability will have a problem with eye/hand coordination or some other condition that requires special consideration. In consultation with the participant, and through careful observation, adaptations may be devised that meet particular needs;
    d. Adapt for normalization. If a modification for an activity is found to be appropriate for an individual with a disability, care should be taken to keep the activity as close to the original version as possible. By using unnecessary adaptations or modifications, the participant may be made to stand out from his/her peers unnecessarily.
2. Should an adaptation be unreasonable because it may create unsafe conditions for staff or participants, the lead facilitator should inform the participant in private that he/she may not be directly involved in an activity program. The situation should be explained in such a way that the participant understands that there is a safety issue for which adaptation is not possible at this time and encouraged to participate in another way. Every effort should be made to prevent a situation of this kind prior to the program.
3. Appropriate confidentiality should be maintained. It is the option of a person with a disability to share information with a group.

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[1] Rynders, J.E. & Schleien, S.J. (n.d.). *Together Successfully.* Association for Retarded Citizens of the U.S (now the National Association of Parents with Children in Special Education).