



The Intersection of Risk Management Systems and Kayak Programming

8am-3pm

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Introduce Yourselves

Name

Organization

What is happening in your current place of work related to paddling that makes this opportunity feel relevant?

Overview

Classroom 8-11 am

- Risk Management Systems
- Integration of Risk Management Systems in Adaptive Kayak Programming

Pool Deck 11:15-Noon

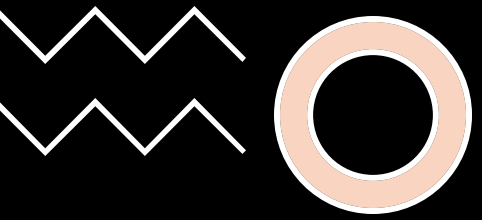
- Equipment and Outfitting Overview

Lunch Break Noon-1pm

- Enjoy lunch and get ready for the pool

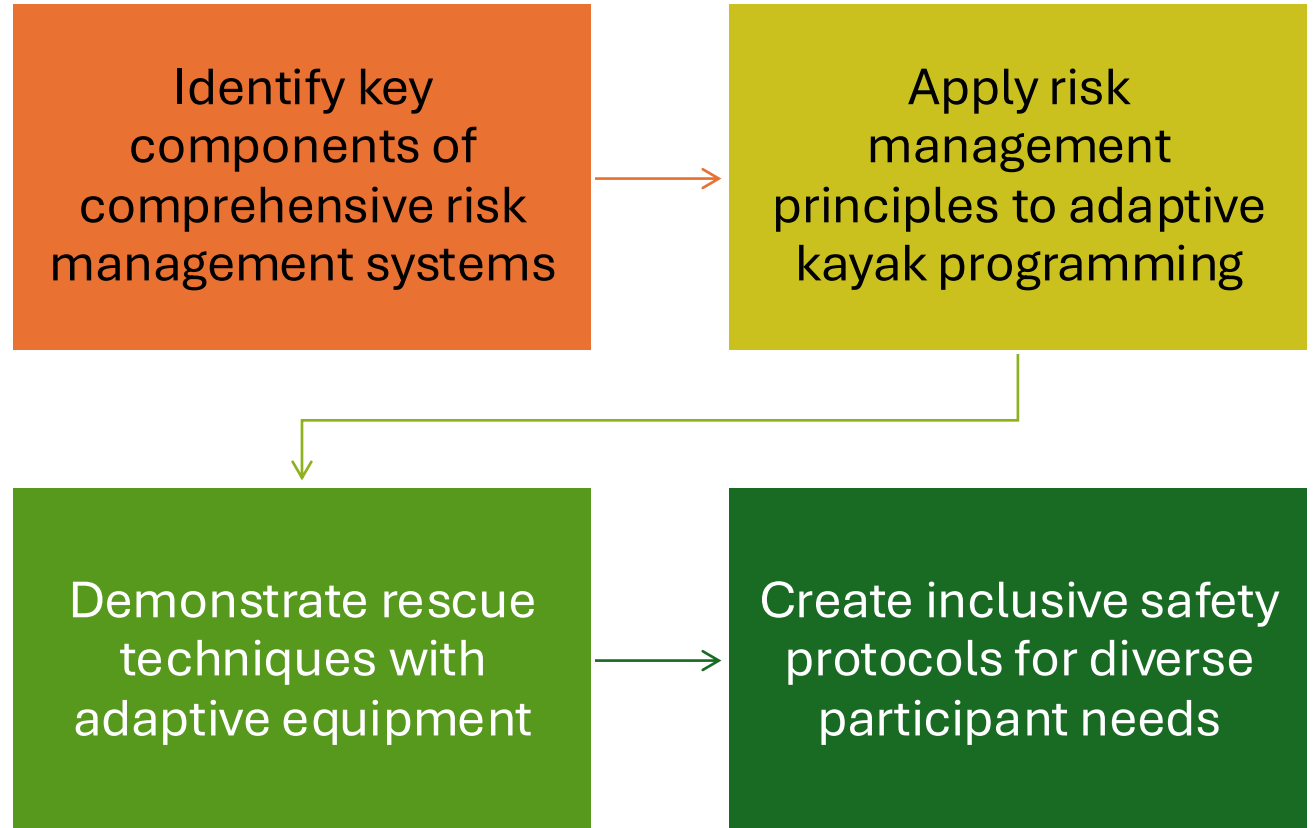
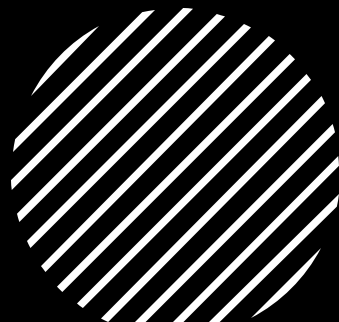
Pool Immersion 1-3pm

- On Water Risk Management and Rescue Practice



Learning Objectives

By the end of today, you will be able to...”





Risk Domains





Risk Management for Outdoor Programs

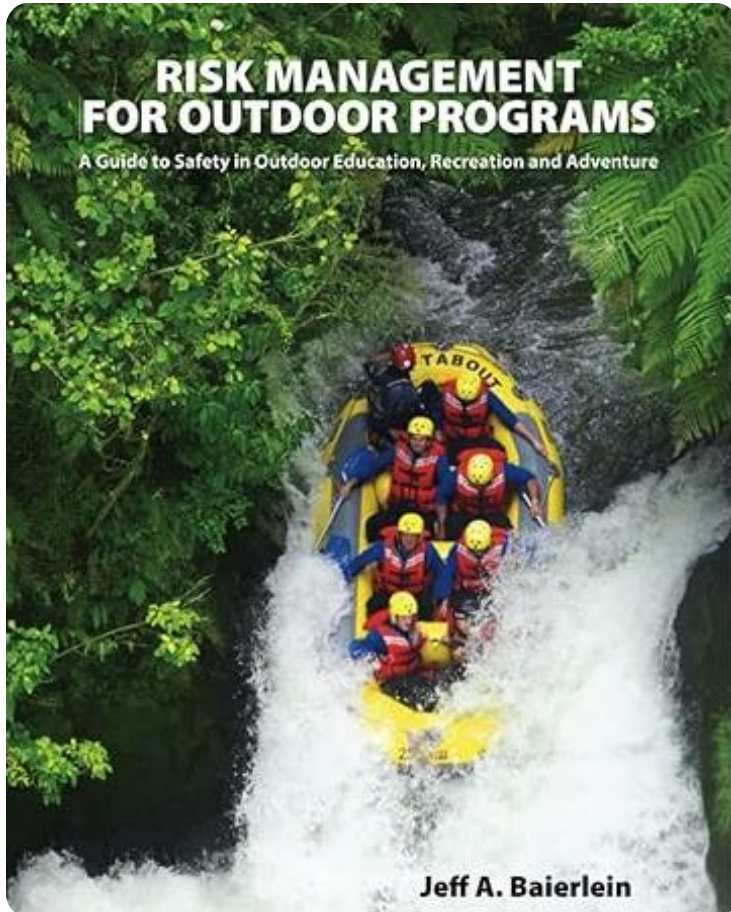
www.viristar.com/education/risk-management/

Learn the science behind why incidents occur.

Engage with case studies, scenarios, and small group projects to master safety principles.

Understand how to develop a comprehensive risk management plan.

Create a customized strategy to help your organization achieve safety excellence.



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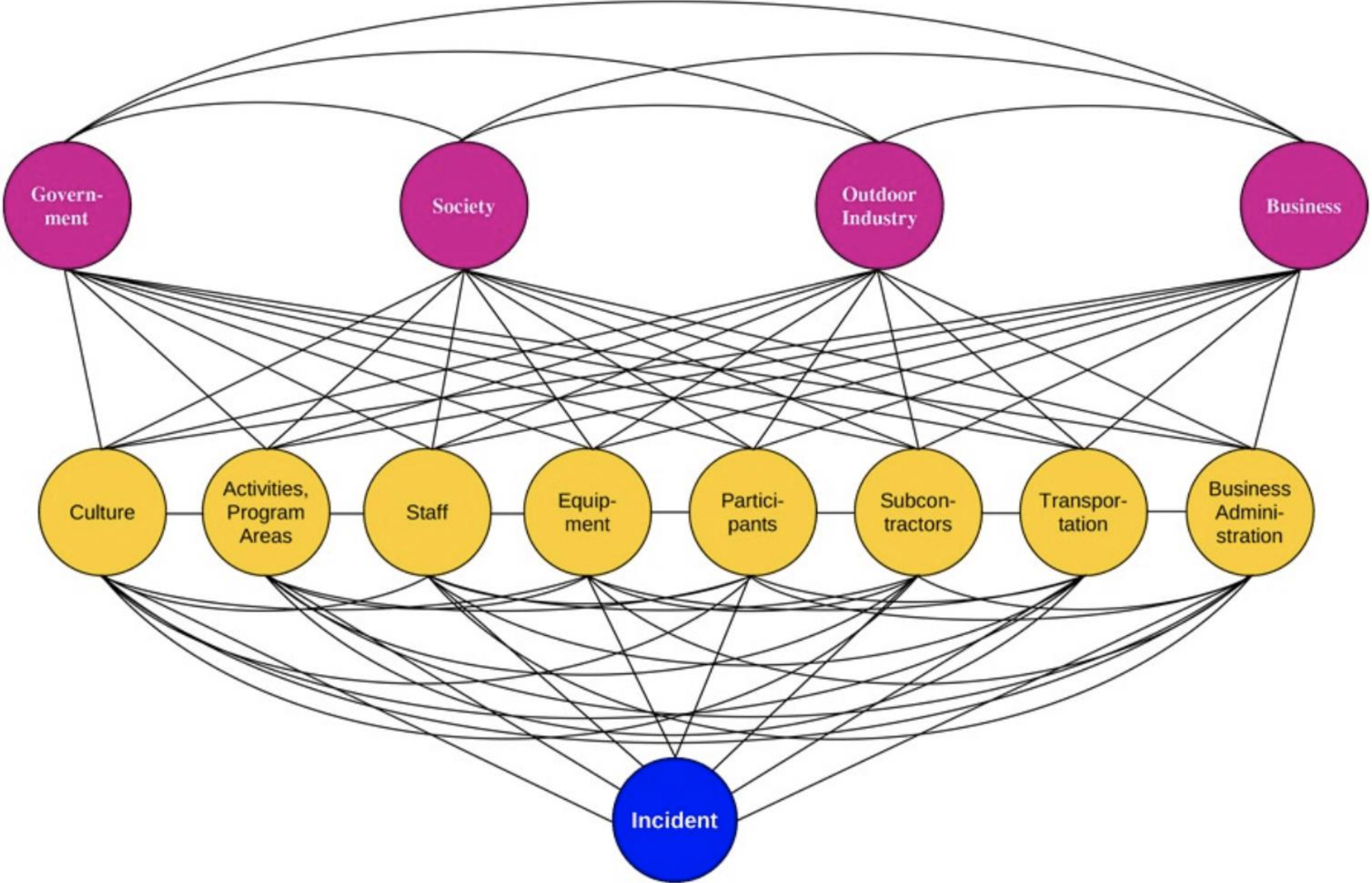
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Risk Domains

Baierlein, Jeff A. *Risk Management for Outdoor Programs : A Guide to Safety in Outdoor Education, Recreation and Adventure*. Seattle, Washington, Viristar LLC, 2019.



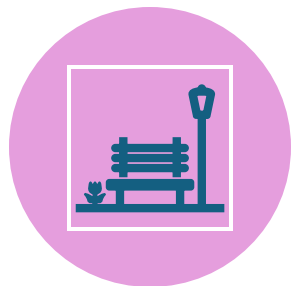
Top Level (Pink) - External Influences



Government
(regulations, permits,
laws)



Society (cultural
expectations, litigation
trends)



Outdoor Industry
(standards, best
practices)



Business (organizational
structure, financial
pressures)

Middle Level (Yellow) - Operational Factors

- Culture (organizational values, safety culture)
- Activities/Program Areas (specific programming)
- Staff (training, experience, judgment)
- Equipment (selection, maintenance, appropriateness)
- Participants (abilities, behaviors, expectations)
- Subcontractors (vendors, partners)
- Transportation (vehicles, logistics)
- Business Administration (policies, procedures, documentation)



Bottom Level (Blue) - Outcome

Incident (the event that occurs when risk domains interact)

Domain Mapping

As a group, go through each of the 8 operational domains (yellow circles) and brainstorm at least 2-3 specific risk factors for kayaking.

Domain [Name of Domain]

Ex. Equipment

Risk Factor [Specific Factor]

Ex. Adaptive Paddle Release Failure

Kayaking Example [How this shows up in your programs]


Ex. Paddle support does not detach during capsize, creating entrapment hazard.

--

Choose ONE domain that your group feels is most critical or most often overlooked in kayaking programs.

Be prepared to share why.





Let's see how
these domains
interact to create
incidents.



Using sticky notes (or drawing on your poster)

Identify which operational domains contributed to this incident.

Write one domain per sticky note.

Identify any external influences that might have played a role.

What could have prevented this incident?

Write specific interventions in each relevant domain.

Draw lines showing how these domains interacted to create the incident.

Incident Analysis Scenario

During a private adaptive kayaking group session, a participant with limited upper body strength capsizes.

The rescue takes longer than expected because the outriggers interfere with the standard T-rescue technique. The participant becomes anxious and struggles, making the rescue more difficult.

Staff eventually complete the rescue, but the participant refuses to continue the program and causes the session to end and the group leaves early.



Real Incident Example

Unplanned Participant Medical Emergency

A lead instructor invited a participant's spouse to join an adaptive kayaking session when a last-minute cancellation created an available boat. The spouse had no paddling experience and hadn't planned to participate.

Shortly into the paddle, the spouse disclosed they had diabetes and had left their management supplies in their vehicle onshore. They were concerned about losing consciousness.

The instructor stabilized the kayak, coordinated safety boaters to tow the client, and returned the group to shore. The client retrieved supplies without further incident, but the session ended early.



Real Incident Example

Allergic Reaction on Water

During a group paddle, a volunteer in a tandem kayak was stung by a bee shortly after launching. 5–10 minutes later, he reported feeling unwell. Staff observed a sting site and hives developing on his face. The volunteer stated he had no known bee-sting allergy.

Staff administered Benadryl from the medical kit and began returning to shore while monitoring closely. During the return paddle, hives and itching worsened. Staff attached a tow line to expedite travel and coordinated vehicle transport.

Upon reaching the dock (15–20 minutes post-medication), the volunteer reported difficulty seeing and breathing. Staff immediately called 911, provided supportive care, and guided EMS to the site. Paramedics administered epinephrine and transported him to the hospital. He was later cleared and released.

**Risk
Management
Techniques**

Eliminate

Reduce

Transfer

Accept

Eliminate

Reduce

Transfer

Accept

Example:

One could eliminate the risk of drowning by not offering water-based programming.

Staff selection, training and supervision

Equipment management

Participant screening and training

Activity location selection

Subcontractor assessment

Emergency plan development

Eliminate

Reduce

Transfer

Accept

Insurance

Subcontracting

Agreements with
participants

Indemnification and hold
harmless

Release of liability

Assumption of risk

Eliminate

Reduce

Transfer

Accept

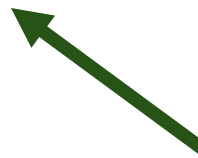
Some risk is
inherent,
unavoidable,
and acceptable,
in every human
activity.

Eliminate

Reduce

Transfer

Accept



Risk Management Instruments



Risk
Transfer



Incident
Management



Incident
Reporting



Incident
Reviews



Risk
Management
Committee



Medical
Screening



Risk
Management
Reviews



Media
Relations



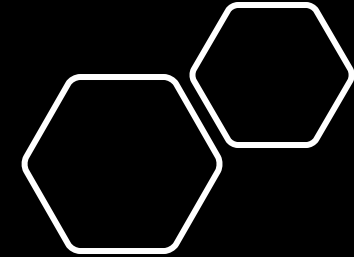
Documentation



Accreditation

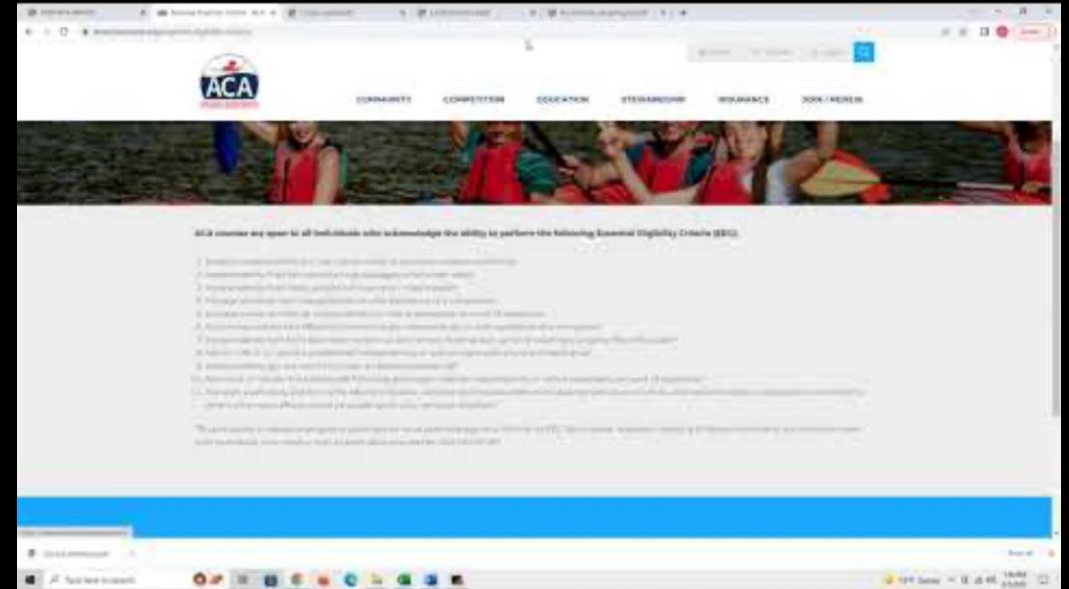


Seeing Systems



(“Risk Management - Viristar”)

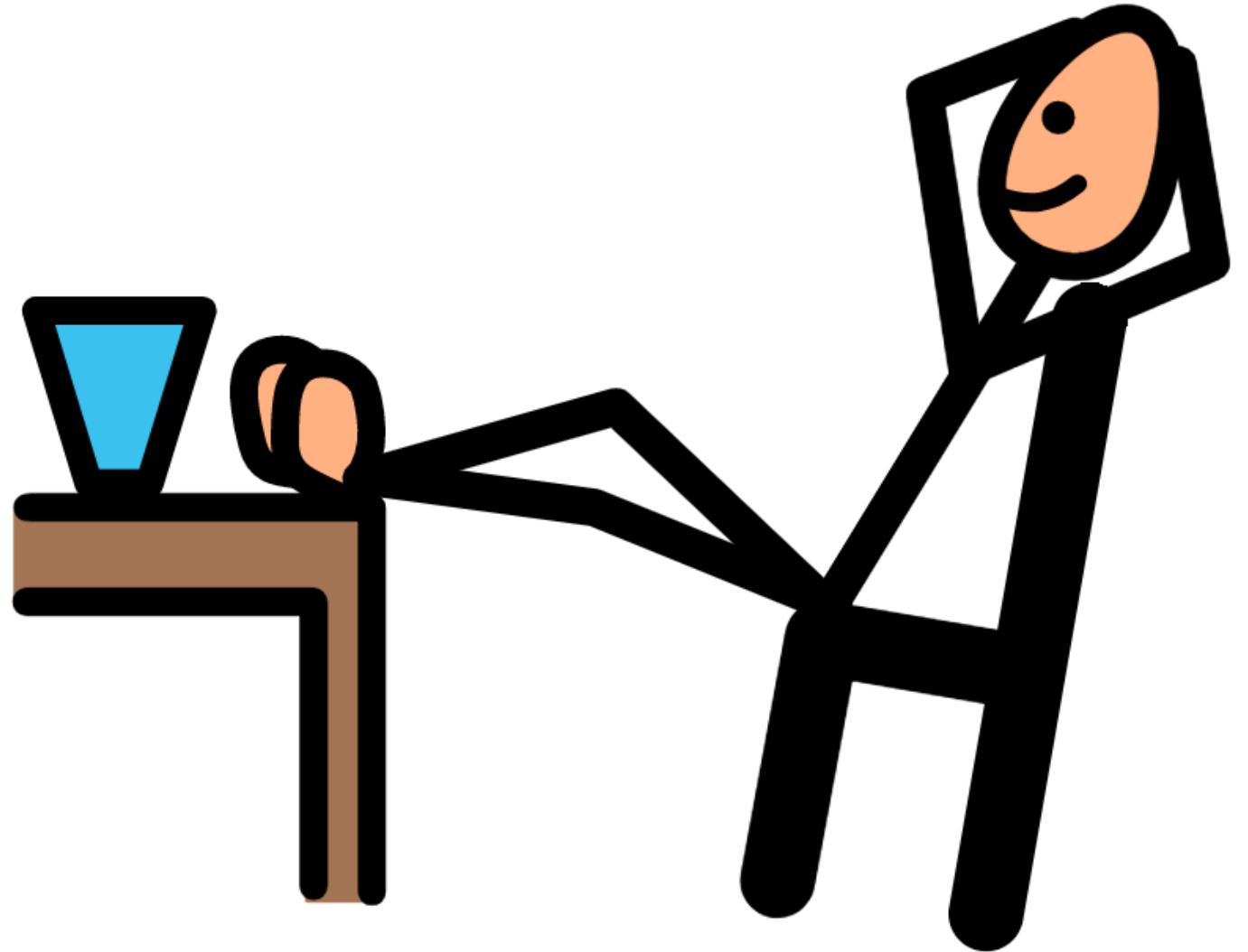
Outdoor Recreation Risk Assessment





Play the “What If ?” Game

Break

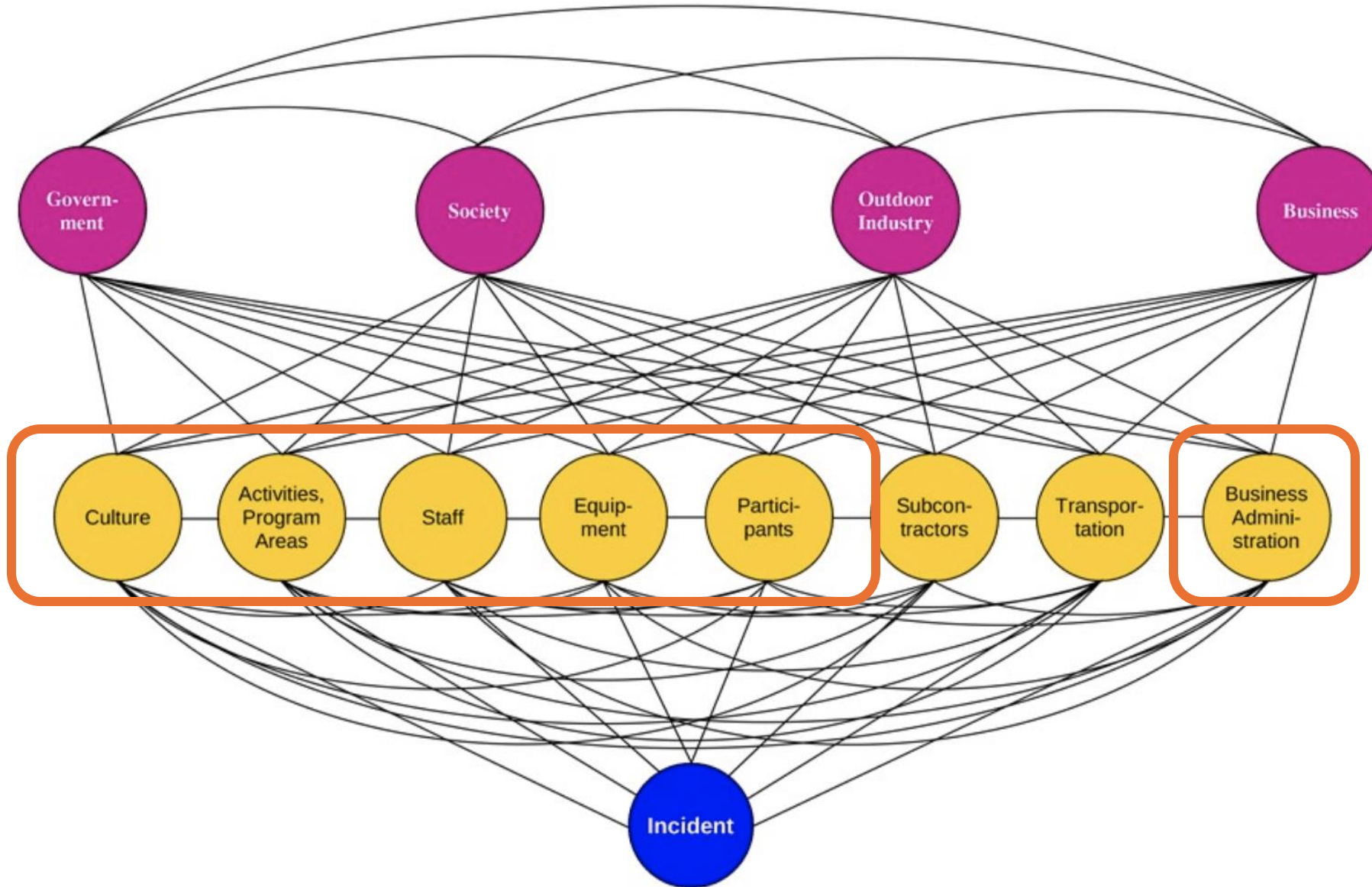




How Risk Domains Apply to Adaptive Programming

Risk Domains

Baierlein, Jeff A. *Risk Management for Outdoor Programs : A Guide to Safety in Outdoor Education, Recreation and Adventure*. Seattle, Washington, Viristar LLC, 2019.



Operational Factors



What can you do to mitigate risk in your adaptive program planning in these domains?

- Culture
- Activities/Program Areas
- Staff
- Equipment
- Participants
- Business Administration

Culture: Organizational Culture of Inclusion

- Organization's core values or mission statement
- Internal accessibility for employees
- Accessible website
- Disability education provided to all staff, not only program staff
- Disability education part of onboarding and ongoing staff trainings
- Adaptive gear to accommodate any disability
- Adaptive instruction to accommodate any disability



Culture

- Disability History
 - Full staff should know disability history
 - Most recent Civil Rights movement in US history
- Consider disability history and education as an essential part of your staff trainings
 - Aim to always be learning
 - Embed it in your staff culture
 - Follow disabled content creators, watch films featuring disabled actors, follow disability advocacy and rights issues in the news
 - Listen to disabled clients (however, it's not their burden to teach you)



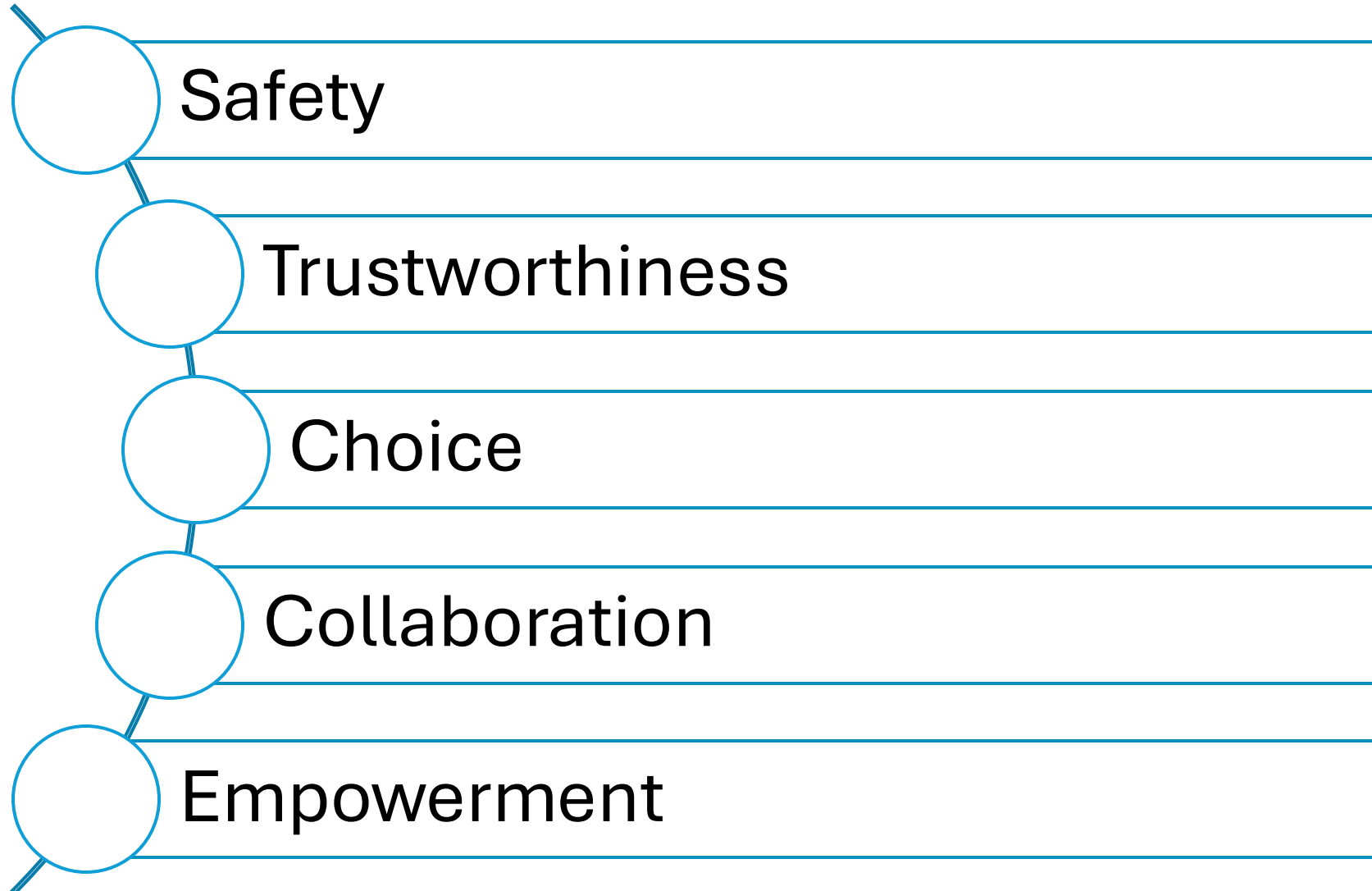
Culture

- Aim to understand the lived experiences of your participants and understand the impact of trauma that often comes with disability
- Adding trauma informed practices to your programming will improve your participants' experiences



Disabled people experience trauma at 5× the rate of non-disabled people.

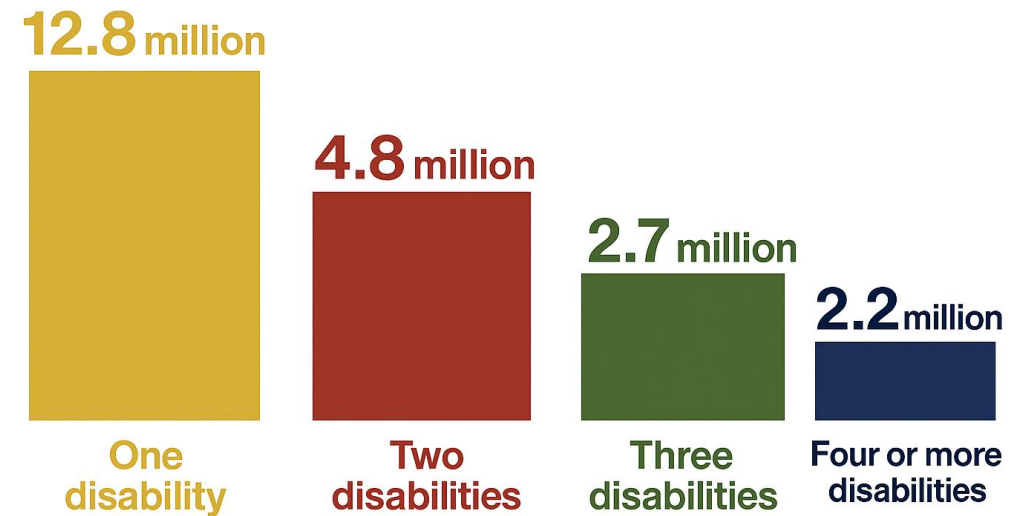
Trauma Informed Practices



Culture: Intersectionality

- Often specific disabilities are siloed in services and programming
 - 43% of people with disabilities have more than 1 disability
- How do or could you consider the intersectionality of disability on your programs?

Working-Age Adults with Disabilities



Activity and Program Areas

Site Selection

- Flat water
- Current
- Tides
- Access
- Bathrooms
- Motorboats
- Transportation

Emergency
plans for sites

Staff

- Regular, annual trainings
 - Kayak skills
 - Rescues
 - Adaptive boat setups
 - Adaptive boat rescues and scenarios practicing rescuing people using adaptive seatbacks, paddle adaptations, and outriggers
- Industry trainings: American Canoe Association
 - ACA Skills Assessment Course
 - ACA Instructor Level 1 or Level 2 Course
 - Adaptive Paddling Workshop
 - Advanced Communications Workshop
- Day of programming staff physical and mental health and wellness





Equipment

- Kayak selection
 - Sit inside or sit on top kayak
 - Size of kayak cockpit
 - Single or tandem kayak
 - Instructor kayak vs. participant kayak
- Paddle Selection
- Outfitting
 - Foam
 - Paddle/hand adaptations
 - Seating and positioning
 - Kayak adjustments
 - Outriggers
- Inspection
- Repairs and documentation of repairs

Participants & Business Administration

- Information gathering
 - Disclosed health considerations
 - Registration forms
 - Intakes
 - Previous experience
 - Eligibility
 - Goals for the day





Day of Participant Assessment Activity



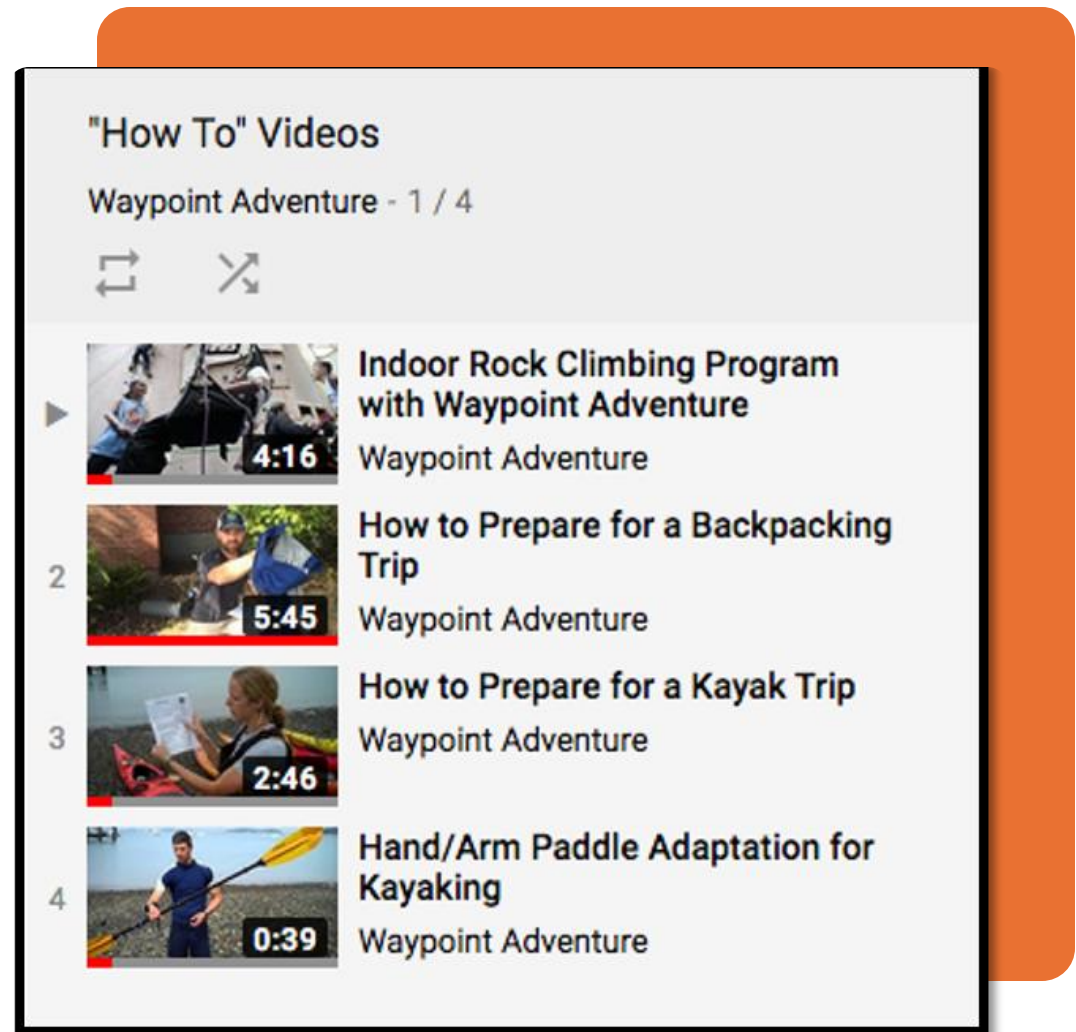
Participants

Communication needs and
behavioral considerations







Before a Program

- Descriptive registration information
- Videos of gear available
- Pictures that represent a variety of disabilities, ethnicities, and genders – people want to see themselves represented in your program marketing
- Social stories for those who benefit from these



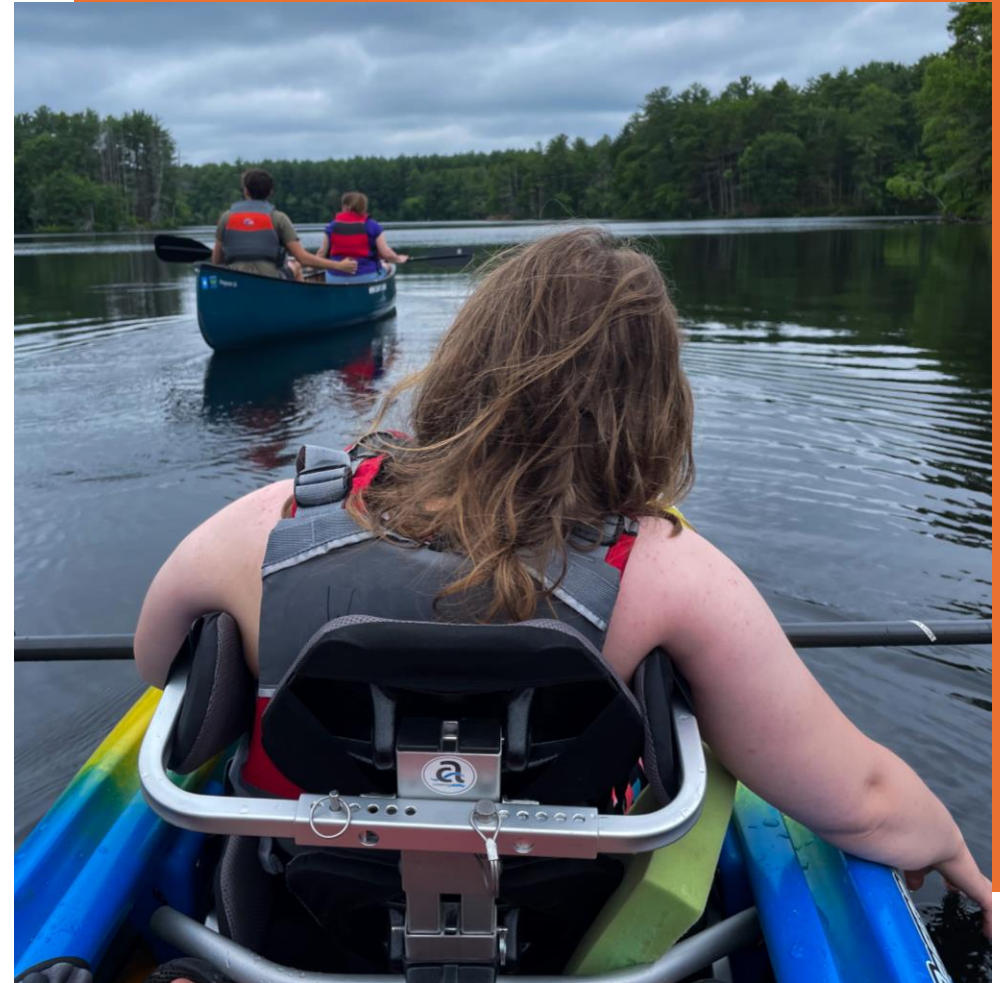
"How To" Videos
Waypoint Adventure - 1 / 4

↻ ↗

-  **4:16**
Indoor Rock Climbing Program with Waypoint Adventure
Waypoint Adventure
-  **5:45**
How to Prepare for a Backpacking Trip
Waypoint Adventure
-  **2:46**
How to Prepare for a Kayak Trip
Waypoint Adventure
-  **0:39**
Hand/Arm Paddle Adaptation for Kayaking
Waypoint Adventure

Before a Program

- Do a thorough intake and update your notes after each session
- With permission, take photos of great setups of a client for their file
- Having a conversation with someone helps you assess risk
 - How are they coming in that day?
 - Do they have an injuries currently?
 - What physical supports are they already utilizing that can inform what adaptive equipment or setup they may need?



During a Program

- Talk through the schedule of the day
- Make them aware of your expectations
- Icebreaking activities for a group
- Demonstrations and multimodal instruction



Tips for Instruction

1. Speak literally
2. Preview what is happening
3. Repeat key information
4. Use simplified wording
5. When giving important directions, use simple sentences, not complex sentences.
6. Be persistent



Tips for Instruction

7. Use pictures, videos, & demonstrations
8. Teach and give directions in small chunks.
9. Use task analysis
10. Reduce environmental stimuli
 - If someone get's overstimulated, allow for time away from the activity without penalty





Safety Briefing

Teaches participants about risk of the activity and how to manage those risks.

Teaches people how to manage risks associated with the site.

Informs people about their responsibility in managing risks during the activity.



Safety Briefing Scenario Cards

Time for Pool Practice



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