INFORMATION CARD B

FACILITATION OF THE EXPEDITION EXPERIENCE

FACILITATION

Facilitation is the process of moving a group or individual toward a desired outcome. Facilitation:

- fosters productive group dynamics;
- enables group members to work toward completing the outdoor adventure activity (OAA), in a safe and enjoyable manner; and
- works to develop interpersonal relationships among group members.

FACILITATOR

A facilitator provides the means for making experiences possible. As a facilitator, outdoor leaders (OLs) will:

- be required to resolve conflicts;
- communicate effectively;
- foster personal trust and group cooperation; and
- debrief and guide reflection on OAA.

An effective OL can facilitate the experience and shift the outdoor experience from a mere excursion in the outdoors to a dynamic learning experience.

TECHNICAL ABILITIES

OLs may possess excellent facilitations skills and may be extremely effective at organizing OAAs, however, without technical ability to serve as the foundation for conducting the activity, these skills cannot be used. Technical abilities are organized into two main areas – generic competency skills and specific competencies.

Generic Competency Skills

Generic competency skills are those skills in which, no matter the OAA, an OL must be competent. They include:

- weather prediction,
- wilderness first aid,
- trip planning,
- navigation,
- camp skills,
- general outdoor skills,
- physical fitness, and
- mental awareness.

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Specific Competency Skills

Specific competency skills are those skills unique to the OAA the OL will be leading. Examples include:

- trekking,
- mountain biking,
- abseiling,
- climbing,
- caving,
- canoeing, and
- kayaking.

There is no requirement for an OL to be an expert in all activities. In many cases they choose activities that interest them the most and capitalize on the experiences they offer. Proficiency in an OAA can only be gained through experience. The more experience OLs gain, the more competent they become.

OLs cannot allow their skills to decay; they should continuously participate in professional development training to refresh their knowledge and skills. It is the responsibility of the OL to stay up-to-date in the areas in which they lead others.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Instructional skills are important because OLs often have the opportunity to teach and thus share important skills and knowledge with the people they lead.

OLs with the responsibility of teaching others need to be well versed in skills such as:

- using instructional aids;
- developing skill lesson plans; and
- employing different teaching strategies.

Experiential education is the primary method by which OLs deliver their educational content. Every lesson involves some degree of explanation and demonstration, and a greater degree of practice – which gives individuals the opportunity to learn skills in a hands-on manner.

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