

NASSAU BOCES
BROOKVILLE CHALLENGE COURSE
SITE SPECIFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES

The purpose of this document is to outline specific safety guidelines for each element and activity at the Brookville site. It is not intended that these be the only resource for successful facilitation of the course; personal, hands-on training, observation of groups, and the Brookville Competencies for Project Adventure are other necessary resources.

GENERAL SAFETY

- talk with group about philosophy (cooperation, communication, trust, etc.) before beginning activities; emphasize: don't abuse/play with trust
- remove jewelry and watches for most activities
- walk (don't run) in PA and initiative areas (roots, stumps, cables pose hazard)
- group stays together, following facilitator from element to element
- avoid parking lot, if possible; if necessary, move through safely and ASAP
- if you see something unsafe with group (i.e., not spotting properly), STOP the activity and process the problem with the group
- if you see something unsafe with the equipment or conditions (e.g., a precariously hanging limb overhead), STOP the activity and inform the site coordinator/other facilitators
- you may need to touch a participant (e.g., feet on cable bridge) if coordination is a problem (e.g., physical impairment of participant)
- for all activities, unless otherwise indicated the facilitator should be in a general position of readiness for safety and observation of the group; be aware of participants' actions at all times; teachers/parents should be used to supplement facilitator safety and supervision
- all participants, even if handicapped by silence, have the power and responsibility to address anything unsafe that is noticed
- if you are uncomfortable with a particular activity or element, ask site director/program coordinator to lead that activity (e.g., trust falls) for you

ALL ABOARD

- take care with ankles as step on/off platform
- facilitator position: general spotting of whole group if necessary (watch for domino effect)

THE BEAM

- only with groups working well and safely; probably for M.S. and older
- emphasize importance of spotting
- remove rings, watches, bracelets, hanging earrings
- only 2 people up on beam, and they must have spotters also (at least 2/person)
- spotters: - whole group spots from start to finish - until climber is safely on ground
- spot both sides of the beam, ascent and descent
- climber: - head should never be the lowest point - keep feet as lowest point
- if making a running attempt, at least 2 spotters must be in position at the beam
- facilitator position: directly spotting climber

BLINDFOLD ACTIVITIES (Sherpa Walk, Maze, Herds, etc.)

- walk at a slow pace with "bumpers up" (arms out in front to sense obstacles)

BUCKING LOG

- take care that the log doesn't swing into the shins of the spotters

CABLE BRIDGE

- choose bridge size appropriate for group (generally, large bridge is for grades 5 and above, but you must assess your group)
- crosser:
 - climb ladder only when facilitator directs
 - must hold hand cables (elbows should be above cables)
 - no jumping or rushed crossing
 - if using blindfold, put on after climbing ladder; must have an adult spotter
 - if two people crossing, communicate plan and cross within hand cables (not to outside of cables)
 - remove blindfold before coming down ladder
 - descend ladder facing tree, with sufficient spotters
- spotters:
 - whole group spots along bridge length;
 - no touching the cable or the crosser (unless indicated by the facilitator)
 - take care not to trip on roots as walk along cable length
- facilitator position: walking along with the crosser; if 2 crossers, other adult should spot other crosser (with support of group)

DAZED AND CONFUSED

- take care with weight of tire on body (e.g., neck) - use discretion based on size of participants
- group awareness of feet, etc. in relation to other participants

GIANT'S RING (tire and pole)

- cannot throw tire
- spotters: whole group spot climber, esp. if on shoulders of another
- facilitator position: directly below climber

HEEBIE JEEBIE

- very challenging: high safety consciousness essential (assume that crosser WILL fall, probably near middle of element; can happen VERY quickly)
- only one participant at a time crossing
- spotters: - whole group, alertly, in front and behind crosser
- don't touch cable
- facilitator position: - directly in front or behind crosser
- if another adult is available, stand across from facilitator

ISLANDS

- don't jump to/from planks (they can swing out)
- group must be alert and careful in passing planks: - pass below knee level
- no tossing planks

LOG CROSS

- spotters: on each side of log (2 spotters per crosser)

MOHAWK WALK (Postman's Walk, Multivine, Cable, Tension Traverse, Log Cross)

- use with controlled, safety-conscious groups only
- see individual element safety directions
- spotters: - minimum of 2 per person up on each element
- follow crosser attentively but without touching unless necessary for safety
- crosser: - at cable, no crossing without support (either the last multivine or bodies of other participants up on elements)
- if falling, step down with control rather than trying to hold on out of control

- facilitator position: - need to have view of all that's going on, so position self facing in toward center of Mohawk Walk
 - if see noncompliance with safety, STOP the activity
 - be additional spotter at cable and tension traverse

MULTIVINE

- spotters: on each side of foot cable (2 spotters per crosser)
- no "Tarzan" swinging from rope to rope; feet must support weight throughout crossing

POSTMAN'S WALK

- spotters: - on individual element, whole group spots crosser(s)
 - on Mohawk Walk, minimum of 2 spotters, one on each side of the foot cable
 - be alert! crosser may suddenly swing forward or back and could hit heads with the spotters

SPIDER WEB

- for younger groups, can be adapted so no lifting is involved (use only lower holes)
- should be preceded with instruction on how to lift a body safely and efficiently e.g., with trust falls, if age appropriate)
- spotters: - use sufficient spotters (whole group) on EACH SIDE of the web
 - stronger spotters at torso positions
 - designate one spotter for crosser's head
 - use clear commands for readiness
 - spot alertly from beginning to end, until crosser's feet are safely on the ground
- crosser: - no jumping/diving through holes
 - only one crosser at a time
 - keep body stiff and arms crossed or at sides until safely on ground
 - use clear commands with spotters to indicate readiness

- facilitator position: -in primary spotting position (torso)
- have other adult(s) spot other side of web with students

SWINGING ROPE (NITRO CROSSING, PROUTY'S LANDING, DISC JOCKEYS)

- no jumping for rope
- participants aid/spot each other from platform positions (help catch as land)
- facilitator position: spot with back to tree; spot as cross on rope

TENSION TRAVERSE

- spotters: - on individual element, whole group spots crosser, each side of cable
- on Mohawk Walk, crosser needs minimum of 2 spotters; facilitator supports this element
- don't touch cable or step on rope
- spot alertly: hands up close to crosser
- facilitator position: with and behind crosser, slightly toward tree that rope is attached to (if the crosser falls, (s)he will probably fall in this direction)
- crosser: let go of rope and step down when falling (don't swing on rope)

TRUST SEQUENCE (WILLOW IN THE WIND, PAIRED TRUST FALLS, GROUP TRUST FALLS, LEVITATION)

Willow in the Wind

- choose a level area with soft ground and no obstructions (rocks, branches, etc.)

- make sure size of circle allows group to stay shoulder to shoulder and no gaps
- "willow tree": - cross arms across chest; keep feet planted and body stiff
- use clear communication to indicate start of fall
- spotters: - stand in stable, ready position with one foot back and knees bent
- at least three pairs of hands support "willow tree" at all times
- use clear communication to indicate readiness to start and finish
- gently pass "willow tree" around the circle
- facilitator position: outside the circle; extra support at any weak spots

Paired Trust Falls

- choose a flat open area with soft ground and no obstructions/hazards
- partners should be of similar height and weight (use 2 catchers if necessary for larger fallers)
- faller and catcher: use clear commands ("ready?" "ready" "falling" "fall on")
- faller: - keep body stiff and feet planted, arms straight out to sides
- do not fall until command "fall on" is given
- catcher: - keep knees bent, body in stable position;
- catch faller under arms and gently lower to the ground (use legs to support faller, not back)
- facilitator position: - careful watch on all pairs;
- extra support (spotting) where needed

Group Trust Falls

- *** only to be done with M.S. and older students who have excellent spotting, listening, and safety skills***
- choose a level area with soft ground and no obstructions/hazards
- remove jewelry!

- "facilitator": very important to have full attention of group and to give clear instructions
- catchers:
 - stand in 2 lines facing each other, arms out in front and "zippered" with arms of catchers in opposite line (not interlocked - holding can lead to injury when faller lands)
 - keep spring in knees, head and shoulders back; be aware that faller might panic and sit so all weight might concentrate in that area
 - stronger catchers should be where torso will land
 - use clear command sequence:
 - Faller: "Ready?"
 - Catchers (ALL): "Ready!"
 - Faller: "Falling!"
 - Catchers: "Fall on!"
 - keep supporting faller until feet are firmly on the ground (lower feet first)
- faller:
 - keep body stiff and arms crossed across chest (interlock fingers or hold onto clothing at both shoulders so that arms don't fly out instinctively on fall)
 - wait for group to be quiet to begin command sequence
 - use clear command sequence, as above; wait for "fall on" command to fall
- facilitator position: "FACILITATOR MUST BE IN CATCHING POSITION"
 - stand in one line at the position where the faller would land if (s)he sat on the fall (usually 2nd person in from faller)
- note: facilitator should not be the faller unless there is a trained adult (i.e., another facilitator) to be in the primary catching position (kids have been known to drop their facilitator, even when the facilitator had a high degree of confidence in their abilities and maturity)

Levitation (great alternative for individuals wary of the trust fall)

- choose a level area with soft ground and free of obstructions/hazards
- lifters:
 - enough lifters to support "liftee's" weight, esp. at torso
 - in stable position, with both hands under body of liftee, lift with leg strength, not back strength

- one lifter designated for head protection
- clear, gentle commands for readiness and coordination of lifters (one person designated to give commands to group after facilitator models the options)
- liftee: keep body stiff, arms crossed across chest
- facilitator position: along torso of liftee

WALL

- only to be done with groups working well and safely
- choose appropriate wall for size/age of group (generally, the larger wall is appropriate for grades 5 and above, but you must assess your group)
- great and continual emphasis on importance of spotting
- remove jewelry, esp. rings, watches, bracelets
- climber:
 - only one person at a time
 - no "walking up wall" (no butt out, weight away from wall surface)
 - keep head above rest of body (head should never be the closest part of body to the ground)
 - wait to climb until spotters are ready; clear communication
- on platform:
 - only 2 people helping; once climber arrives, 1 goes down
 - must be in kneeling position (can get pulled over top by climber)
 - come down ladder facing inward toward ladder; no jumping
- spotters:
 - everyone must spot, even if have gone over wall already
 - 1 spotter at ladder
 - stand in stable, ready position
 - communicate any unsafe positions noticed
 - protect eyes from any debris falling from climber's shoes
 - ****spot until climber is safely and completely over the wall****
- facilitator position:
 - support spotters at wall (ready to catch climber)
 - awareness of people on platform and other side of wall
 - have other adult supervise ladder/other side of wall

WILD WOOSEY

- emphasize importance of whole group spotting
- crossing pair: - step up on cable only when instructed by facilitator
- if falling, step down under control
- spotters: - whole group, half behind each crosser
- as pair gets to wider part, some spotters join facilitator in between cables to assist in spotting; ready to catch bodies falling inward
- take care not to trip over or touch cable while spotting or waiting
- if crosser falls, ease to standing position on ground
- be esp. vigilant as crossers bodies get more and more horizontal
- facilitator position: - directly spotting crossers, between the cables
- hold on to crossers until they reach a stable spot on cables
- have extra spotters join you in middle as crossers get further along cables
-you should have a clear view of all group members