

Nassau BOCES Safety Training for Low Elements: 4/23/2014

Facilitator: Mary Watros

In attendance: Bette Bass; Fanny Kleisler; Kathy Frost; Steve Lander; Pat Cohen; Sharon Kennelty Cohen; Bill Lauto; Elaine Young; Dana Henry; Kathy Berry; Ceil Stepanian; Anne Johnson; Mark Bender; Kimberly Uresk; Carl Storm; Anne Coneys; Dawn O'Connell; Brett Curlew; Carolann James; Bill Monahan

Notes from discussions and questions: (3 Handouts referenced)

- **Assessing the Group** is extremely important!
 - Your experience helps with this but can be still challenging when the day's schedule starts with your group in the Low Elements area.
 - Suggest starting with simple activity prior to going into activity area; asking students "What do we need to get through the day?" Typical answer: "Teamwork!" But go deeper as many kids only know it as a pat answer: what does it mean/entail? "Communication/listening to each other; cooperation. Etc.
 - Other "easy elements" to start with that help to assess your group are the Swinging Rope and/or the Swinging Log
 - Handout: Facilitation Rubric
- Naturalist should be good model for safety especially when demonstrating an activity.
- Keeping the group attentive/together is essential to keeping them on task especially when the activity takes a long time (example: cable bridge when going one at a time): Ideas for regrouping or "Circling Up" and to make the group create circles of different diameters:
 - "No Double Parking"
 - Velcro shoulders
 - Chicken wings/broken wing
 - Develop simple contracts: This is what the day/element requires (good spotting; listening, etc.). If you agree, then at the first sign of _____ I will stop the activity and _____(offer a consequence)
- Proper sequencing of activities – **see handout "Facilitator's Toolbox: Sequencing"**
- Other concepts:
 - 2 Rules: Be safe...Be respectful
 - Provide consequences rather than punishment
 - We have safety issues rather than safety rules (it was noted that some kids turn off to all of the "rules"
 - Don't say "don't" rather invite other solutions to solving the problem
- **Safety Guidelines:** see handout and read to review. In addition, certain elements were specifically discussed during the training:
 - **Cable Bridge:** as per Inspection Report, it has been recommended that we lower the bridge so that adult spotting height allows to spot with upper arms against the upper torso to prevent fatigue. Also note that we may change hand holds to rope vs. current cable. There should not be a "Casual" approach but all involved attentive to person at height (on the cable as well as the stairs). Ideal to have kids tall enough so that they can support themselves with forearms over the hand cables/rope.

- **Wall:** assess group for physical ability to achieve success (overall heights, weight). Insist on being helped over wall with hips “plugged into wall – no walking up wall: if student were to slip or fall, aligning flat against wall assures that they will probably slide down to land on feet as opposed to catapulting off wall if in a “V” formation. Adult chaperone should monitor rear of wall. Students on top should kneel to assure that top edge of wall is at chest height (rather than waist or hip height) to prevent being pulled back over.

- **Mohawk Walk:** Be in a position where you can see everything especially if allowing student teams of 3 to work independently.
 - This activity was demonstrated using all of the staff present: Group challenge – Predict how many “touches” (to the ground or from spotters’ hand). Then teams of 3 rotated through the 3 sections. Could add or subtract touches: buy a crutch for 5 touches or subtract 3 touches by a team using Monster Feet to pick up an object a short distance away. End result? As a whole group we overestimated the actual! (151 vs 45 touches)
 - FYI – “Mohawk Walk” gets its name from the Mohawks who were well known for their sky high construction crews during the skyscraper boom in NYC