

Expedition Mental, Social, and Leadership Skills

(adapted from NOLS River Rescue Guide, pp.241-246)

Leadership roles (4)

Designated leaders – guardian of group process; delegate & collaborate, not abdicate
-- guides or monitors complex, potentially risky, or tough activities/decisions

Active followers – seek clarity, give input, respect plan, help out, work to support group & goals

Peer leaders – largely expressed in living arrangements on expedition
-- each person sees what needs to be done and does it w/out hierarchy
-- all members assure quality completion of group tasks, functions, goals
-- works better when members clarify who is responsible for each function

Self-leaders – leadership thru character & judgement
-- group member = leader by behavior & how influence others, not by position held

Leadership Skills & Expedition Behavior (7)

Attitude – be respectful and work hard to do your best; group mentality

Competence

- certification card not demonstrate competency
- telling many stories about great prior experiences not = competency
- do not keep practicing what do well to ignore areas of weakness
- competence = technical skills AND leadership & risk management skills
- raise bar on yourself; avoid satisfaction in present skills
- demonstrate integrity: walk own talk and practice regularly
- strive for proficiency (not settle for mere competency)

Communication

- Verbal contrib.all meetings, trainings, briefings/debriefings = responsibility everyone
- no silent confusion, no silent disagreements
- embrace conflict as healthy aspect of team growth
- experiment w/ approaches that move group forward
- express your needs, ID w/ your actions honestly,
give others timely growth oriented feedback

Judgement & Decision-making

- Regularly determine acceptable level of risk
- Heuristics (mental short-cuts); decision-making traps
 - Social proof (“Everyone else is doing it”)
 - Familiarity (“I’ve been here/done that before”)
 - Acceptance (“I want to be liked”)
 - Commitment (“no turning back after decision; not open to new discussion”)
 - Expert halo (“experts have done it, and did not say not to”)
 - Scarcity (“It’s now or never”) – beware closing windows of opportunity

Self-Awareness

- self-assess & account for your skills & abilities
- facilitate formal & informal feedback sessions w/ team members (group & individuals)
- seek out info about yourself (conversations, feedback forms, etc)
- reflect on above (e.g., in journal) – insight & record your own progress
- understand your abilities & limitations
- have courage to state values & limits

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Tolerance for adversity and uncertainty

- Challenge = adventure
- embrace difficulties when things not go as planned
- enjoy process of discovering what does and does not work
- we are human; capable of mistakes, deserving of forgiveness
- if consider your performance was mistake-free, time to reconsider self-awareness

Vision and action – assure group vision is understood; rests on shared values