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INSIDE OUT

Resilience & Outdoor
Oriented Training

TRAINING

TOOLKIT



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ICONS MAP



Type of Activity



Duration



Learning objectives



The target group of the activity/Group Characteristics



Equipment/Resources needed/ Working space requirements



Explanation of the activity and how to be done



Further tips for trainer/ additional interactions between trainer and participant during the activity



Suggested reflection questions



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WELCOME MESSAGE

What is InsideOut Toolkit?

The InsideOut Toolkit supports youth workers and peer facilitators across Europe in delivering inclusive, practical outdoor education for young people aged 15–18. Rooted in experiential learning, emotional development, and ecological awareness, it offers structured yet flexible resources for nature-based settings.

The toolkit includes a Training Programme, a Peer Facilitator Manual, and a Mentorship Guide — giving you ready-to-use sessions, reflective exercises, and group challenges that help young people develop confidence, teamwork, resilience, and environmental responsibility. All materials adapt to your context, whether you are facilitating forest sessions, mountain hikes, or park-based workshops.

Important Notice

Before implementing any activity, check the terrain, weather conditions, and any legal requirements applicable to the natural area or park you are using. Safety is your responsibility, and local conditions can change.

All activities are designed with flexibility in mind — shorten or extend them based on your group's needs, available time, and environment. Adapt the toolkit to what works best for you and the young people you are working with.



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MODULE 1

**SURVIVAL AND
OUTDOOR
ENVIRONMENTS**



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UNIT 1

SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

This module introduces young learners to the essential principles and practical skills of wilderness survival. It is designed to build both competence and confidence in unpredictable outdoor situations, whether on planned trips or in emergencies. Participants will learn how to assess priorities using the “Rule of Threes” (shelter, water, fire, food), respond to environmental challenges, and make sound decisions under pressure.

Key content includes:

- Understanding survival psychology and the role of mindset.
- Building improvised shelters using natural materials.
- Locating and purifying water safely.
- Mastering fire-starting methods without matches or lighters.
- Recognizing basic wild foods and knowing what to avoid.
- Navigating short-term survival in various terrains (forest, mountain, coastal, etc.).

The goal is not to turn participants into survival experts, but to equip them with adaptable tools, environmental awareness, and a calm, solutions-focused mindset that will serve them in the outdoors — and in life.



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UNIT 1

SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Why Survival Training Matters

Survival training offers more than physical skills—it builds psychological resilience, decision-making, and identity in youth. In adolescence, where the brain is primed for exploratory and social learning, outdoor survival experiences activate real-world problem-solving, collaboration, and confidence development (Sabet, 2018). Outdoor education has been shown to foster both individual development and prosocial behaviors (Karisman et al., 2019).

When framed through survival, the learning becomes more urgent and embodied, enhancing attention, memory, and personal meaning (Chalman, 2019).

Recognizing Environmental Risk

Youth workers must help learners understand how to:

- Identify hypothermia, dehydration, and heat exhaustion
- Recognize natural hazards like scree, flooding zones, and lightning danger
- Manage minor injuries in field conditions

Survival scenarios also enable youth to practice adaptive coping and collaborative problem-solving—key components of Positive Youth Development (PYD) (Bakar et al., 2024).



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UNIT 1

SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Core Concepts for Educators

Rule of Threes: A Mental Framework

Teaching the “Rule of Threes” (3 minutes without air, 3 hours without shelter, 3 days without water, 3 weeks without food) helps youth prioritize under stress. Educators should revisit this regularly in practical scenarios. This improves executive function and helps reframe panic into structure (Olsen, 2021).

Regulating the Mind: Survival Starts with Calm

Panic is a greater danger than weather or wildlife. Studies show that survival learning that includes emotional regulation—such as breathing techniques and the STOP strategy (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan)—improves both psychological outcomes and skill retention (Samsudin et al., 2021).

Outdoor programs also build resilience by enabling youth to face manageable challenges, build self-trust, and learn from failure (Davidson & Foster, 2024).



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UNIT 1

SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Core Survival Skills

Shelter

Youth must understand how to find or build protection from the elements. Emphasis should be on location, insulation, and emergency improvisation. Survival-focused camps have shown that shelter building promotes resourcefulness and cooperation (Zhang, 2023).

Water

Safe sourcing and purification are vital. Educators must go beyond finding water to teaching purification via boiling, filtration, or chemical methods. Improvised filtration with cloth or sand can be practiced. Youth who grasp hydration importance show higher levels of attention and judgment during outdoor tasks (Bakar et al., 2024).

Fire

Teaching how to gather tinder, kindling, and fuelwood—and light a fire using safe, legal methods—provides both a physical and emotional anchor. The process teaches sequencing, patience, and group coordination. Fire-building also helps reinforce calm in emergencies (Akin et al., 2020).

Wild Food

Foraging should be framed as awareness, not necessity. Teaching plant categories and ethical foraging practices (e.g. leave no trace, respect conservation zones) encourages critical thinking and environmental stewardship (Down et al., 2023).



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Challenge: Build to Survive



Simulation, teamwork, problem-solving



30-35 minutes



- Natural area with branches, leaves, and open space
- Optional: tarp pieces or ropes
- Space: wooded area, park, or green outdoor classroom
- Safety: clear area of hazards (e.g., sharp branches, unstable slopes)



3–5 participants per group



In this activity, participants work in teams to build a survival shelter using only natural materials. The simulation encourages quick decision-making, collaboration, and critical awareness of environmental conditions such as wind, ground moisture, and insulation needs.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role of shelter in survival hierarchy
- Identify suitable natural materials and locations
- Apply teamwork under time pressure
- Develop problem-solving and creativity in real conditions



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Challenge: Build to Survive



1. Introduction & Scenario Setup (5 minutes)

Gather participants and introduce the session with a realistic scenario: “You’re lost in the forest. The temperature is dropping, and rain is expected. You must build a temporary shelter using only the natural materials around you to stay warm, dry, and protected until help arrives.” Explain that the focus is not perfection, but **problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity under pressure.**

2. Safety Briefing & Rules (2 minutes)

Explain clear safety and environmental guidelines:

- Only collect **fallen or dead natural materials** — no harming living plants or trees.
- Watch for trip hazards, sharp branches, or uneven ground.
- Stay within **visible boundaries** you define in advance.
- No climbing or lifting heavy logs alone.

Encourage them to **respect nature and leave no trace** when the activity is over.

3. Group Formation and Role Assignment (3 minutes)

Divide the group into **teams of 3–5**. Encourage each group to assign roles:

- **Scout** (looks for the best location)
- **Builder(s)** (construct and position materials)
- **Engineer/Planner** (decides structure layout)
- **Timekeeper** (monitors progress)

Let them choose roles based on interest or rotate throughout the task.



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Challenge: Build to Survive



4. Shelter Construction Phase (15 minutes)

Participants build a shelter using branches, sticks, leaves, grass, or any other **available and safe** materials.

Give them **criteria to aim for**:

- It should protect from wind and imaginary rain.
- At least one person should be able to fit inside.
- Use insulation from below (e.g., leaves or grass as bedding).

Encourage creativity (e.g., lean-to against a log, A-frame, debris hut).

5. Walkthrough & Optional Testing (5 minutes)

Have teams **present their shelters**. If possible, simulate environmental conditions:

- Use a **water bottle “rain” test** (pour water gently over the top to test runoff).
- Simulate **wind** by waving a jacket or having a teammate shake the structure gently.
- Discuss whether the shelter offers **concealment and comfort**.

6. Debrief, Reflection & Clean-up (5–8 minutes)

Bring everyone back to a central spot for a guided debrief. Ask each group:

- What worked well?
- What was harder than expected?
- How did the group communicate?
- How would you improve your design next time?

Finally, ensure **all materials are dismantled** and the space is returned to its original condition.



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Challenge: Build to Survive



- Encourage strategic thinking: Where is the wind? What keeps body heat in?
- Highlight creativity and group roles (leader, builder, scout).
- Monitor safety closely; intervene if energy gets chaotic.
- Use environmental features as teaching tools (e.g., tree lean angles, dry vs. damp ground).



- What made your shelter effective (or not)?
- How did your team divide tasks and make decisions?
- What surprised you about finding materials or choosing a site?
- What real-life situations could this be useful for?
- How did the activity make you feel — confident, rushed, calm?





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ACTIVITY 2

Compass Quest: Navigate the Natural Maze



Teamwork, simulation, problem-solving, movement-based learning



30-35 minutes



- Basic compasses (one per group)
- Pre-marked outdoor area with 4–6 hidden checkpoints (can use natural features, flags, or cones)
- Map sketch or verbal orientation to the area (optional)
- Space: Park, forest path, or large outdoor field with trees or objects as reference points



2-4 participants per team



In this navigation challenge, teams use compasses and bearings to find hidden “checkpoints” in an unfamiliar outdoor space. The task simulates real-life route-finding and strengthens orientation, spatial reasoning, and group decision-making.

Learning Objectives:

- Apply compass bearings to real terrain
- Strengthen directional skills and pacing
- Build communication and spatial awareness
- Gain confidence in tool-based navigation



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ACTIVITY 2

Compass Quest: Navigate the Natural Maze



1. Orientation Briefing (5 minutes)

Begin by introducing the basic structure of a compass:

- Magnetic needle (red = north)
- Rotating bezel (compass dial)
- Direction of travel arrow
- Orienting lines inside the housing

Explain that the compass is a tool for **following a specific direction**, not pointing directly to a destination. Emphasize that to use it well, participants must trust it — even if it feels “off.”

2. Safety and Area Overview (2 minutes)

Define the boundaries of the activity area clearly — use physical markers (trees, cones, rocks) or natural landmarks. Go over any obstacles or terrain hazards to avoid, such as ditches, brambles, or low branches. Reinforce the rule: **no running** and always stay in teams. All teammates must reach each checkpoint together.

3. Demonstration: Taking a Bearing (3 minutes)

Give a simple walk-through:

- “Let’s say you need to go 120°.”
- Rotate the bezel until 120 aligns with the index line.
- Hold the compass flat and rotate your body until the red magnetic needle sits inside the orienting arrow (“red in the shed”).
- Walk forward in the direction the arrow on the baseplate is pointing.
- Count steps to measure distance (e.g., 50–60 steps \approx 50 meters depending on stride).

Do a quick group trial — give a bearing and walk 10–15 meters together to reinforce.



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ACTIVITY 2

Compass Quest: Navigate the Natural Maze



4. Compass Quest Instructions (3 minutes)

Each group will receive a **navigation card** (or you may verbally assign steps).

The card contains:

- A sequence of 3–4 bearings (e.g., “Step 1: Go 75° for 40 meters”)
- Each bearing leads to a **natural checkpoint** marked with a small sign, color marker, or clue card.

At each checkpoint, participants collect:

- A keyword (e.g., name of a tree, terrain feature)
- A mini challenge (e.g., “Which way is the wind blowing?” or “What direction is the sun in now?”)

Each group starts from a slightly different point to avoid overlap.

5. Navigation Phase (15–17 minutes)

Teams must work together to:

- Determine direction using the compass
- Walk the correct number of steps (using pacing)
- Spot the next checkpoint and complete the clue

They cannot skip steps — each bearing must be followed in sequence.

Encourage them to adjust their route if they drift off-course (they can “backtrack” and reorient).

Trainer circulates, checks technique, encourages problem-solving, and offers support.



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ACTIVITY 2

Compass Quest: Navigate the Natural Maze



6. Completion and Regroup (5 minutes)

Once all groups finish, gather them in a circle. Let teams share their routes, surprises they encountered, and how they managed disagreements or drift.

This phase is essential for helping them **link physical action to spatial understanding** and build confidence with using tools in a dynamic setting.



- Walk the route in advance and test bearings to ensure accuracy.
- Add complexity with natural signs (sun, wind) if time allows.
- Offer help for compass misalignment or team confusion — without giving away full answers.
- Adjust difficulty by increasing or shortening bearings or combining with map tasks.



- What was the easiest and hardest part of using a compass?
- How did your group make decisions under uncertainty?
- Did any checkpoints surprise you in terms of distance or direction?
- What real-life situations might require compass navigation?
- How did your communication affect your success?



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ACTIVITY 3

Nature Detectives: Decode the Outdoors



Teamwork, guided observation, field-based simulation, experiential learning



30–60 minutes (flexible based on group size, environment, and depth of engagement)



- Natural or semi-natural outdoor space (park, woodland, open field, urban green zone)
- Optional: paper and pencils for notes, clipboards or firm surfaces
- Optional: compass, sun compass, magnifying glass
- Trainer-prepared observation prompts or cards (optional, if natural signs are limited)
- No printed materials required if trainer guides with verbal prompts



3-5 participants per team (adaptable)



In this session, young participants work as "nature detectives" to observe environmental signs—wind, cloud patterns, moss, animal behavior—to decode real-time natural information. The activity develops awareness, interpretation skills, and the ability to assess safety and navigation clues from nature alone.

Learning Objectives:

- Build skills in environmental observation and interpretation
- Recognize weather indicators, terrain changes, and natural hazards
- Understand basic orientation using natural signs
- Strengthen teamwork and inquiry-based learning



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ACTIVITY 3

Nature Detectives: Decode the Outdoors



1. Introduction and Engagement (5–10 minutes)

Gather the group and introduce the concept:

“Nature is full of signs. Today, you’ll explore how to read them—not just with your eyes, but with your ears, skin, and full awareness.”

Discuss a few examples:

- Why does moss grow on one side?
- What does cloud shape tell us about the weather?
- What might sudden bird silence mean?

Explain that their goal is to **notice, interpret, and connect clues** to understand nature’s “language.”

2. Group Setup & Safety Briefing (3–5 minutes)

Split into small teams (3–5 people).

Set safety boundaries and expectations:

- Move slowly and respectfully
- Don’t disturb wildlife or damage vegetation
- Avoid touching mushrooms, fungi, or unknown plants
- Remind them to stay within visible range



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ACTIVITY 3

Nature Detectives: Decode the Outdoors

3. Nature Clue Challenge (25–40 minutes)



Teams explore the area and respond to a set of natural prompts. Use one of the following options:

Option A – Trainer-led Verbal Prompts (minimal materials):

Read out clues one by one as the group walks together or in small groups.

Examples:

- Which way is the wind blowing? How do you know?
- Can you find signs of recent rain or dryness?
- What side of the trees does moss grow on? Why?
- What sounds do you hear? What might they mean?

Option B – Nature Clue Cards (if stationary or circuit-style):

Prepare 6–8 stations with cards. Teams move from station to station, spending 3–5 minutes interpreting and discussing each prompt.

Sample Clue Card Prompts:

- “Look up: What cloud types do you see? Predict what the weather may do in 3 hours.”
- “Use your hand to test wind direction. Now use a compass. Are they aligned?”
- “Find a tree with exposed roots. What might this say about soil conditions or erosion?”
- “Spot bird tracks or insect signs. What can you learn from their presence or absence?”

Encourage use of senses: touch, hearing, sight, even smell.



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ACTIVITY 3

Nature Detectives: Decode the Outdoors



4. Group Reflection and Debrief (10–15 minutes)

Bring the group back to a central meeting point. Have teams share:

- 2–3 signs they observed
- How they interpreted those clues
- Anything surprising or difficult to notice

Trainer can highlight real-world application:

- Cloud awareness → storm safety
- Moss/sun direction → orientation when lost
- Animal silence → sign of predators or storms



- In urban or low-wildlife areas, you can place subtle environmental “clues” (e.g., wet ground, scattered leaves, photo clues).
- Vary challenge level by age: older teens can estimate wind speed (using leaf motion), younger teens can focus on simple tracking.
- Reinforce that noticing = safety — many accidents happen because signs were ignored.
- Use follow-up questions like “What would you do if this clue appeared during a hike?”



- Which natural sign did you find easiest to interpret? Which was hardest?
- How did you confirm your guesses — did you rely on senses, logic, or group ideas?
- Did anything you learned change how you see nature or feel in it?
- How could this awareness help you in a real outdoor situation?
- What would you like to explore more about after today?



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MODULE 1

SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

Short summary

This module introduces youth to essential outdoor survival knowledge, navigation tools, and environmental awareness through experiential learning. Participants will learn how to prioritize needs in survival situations, use a compass for basic orientation, and interpret natural signs like weather patterns, animal behavior, and terrain features. Each unit is designed to build both competence and confidence in the outdoors, helping young people make safe, informed decisions and develop a deep, respectful connection with nature. The module empowers them with lifelong skills in observation, self-reliance, critical thinking, and environmental responsibility.

Further reading

To deepen understanding or design follow-up sessions, we recommend:

Books & Field Guides

- *Outdoor Survival Skills* by Larry Dean Olsen
- *NOLS Wilderness Navigation* by Darran Wells
- *The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams
- *Reading the Forested Landscape* by Tom Wessels
- *Be Expert with Map and Compass* by Björn Kjellström

Websites & Tools

- [National Outdoor Leadership School \(NOLS\)](#) - Survival, navigation, LNT ethics
- [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#)
- [iNaturalist](#) - Citizen science & species ID
- [Met Office UK / National Weather Service](#) - Youth-friendly weather learning tools
- [Orienteering USA](#) - Games and courses for compass navigation



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MODULE 2

PRACTICAL
OUTDOOR
TECHNIQUES



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MODULE 2

PRACTICAL OUTDOOR TECHNIQUES

Introduction

In this module, participants will learn the basics of safely and responsibly building a fire in an outdoor setting. The module covers how to properly prepare, light, use, and extinguish or allow a fire to burn out – always considering environmental, safety, and group-related aspects. The goal is not only to master this skill practically but also to safely pass it on to young people.

Theory

- Different types of fires (cooking fire, warming fire, pagoda fire)
- Materials and ignition aids: tinder, kindling, hardwood
- Safety aspects: fire site, distance, wind direction, extinguishing materials
- Environmental awareness: No fires on rocks, moorland, or during droughts
- Legal framework: Where is fire making permitted?
- Role in youth work: teamwork, responsibility, respect for nature



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Building

Stay Dry, Stay Safe!



Teamwork, outdoor construction, reflection



Approx. 90 minutes (15 min intro + 60 min practice + 15 min reflection)



- Natural materials (branches, leaves, grass, bark)
- Paracord / rope
- Tarp or plastic sheet (optional)
- Knife / multitool (only under supervision)
- First aid kit
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Forest area or wild terrain with permission
- Sample sketches or visual guides (optional)



6–12 participants (2–3 small groups)



Participants will learn how to assess a location and build a weather-resistant shelter using natural and/or basic materials. The activity promotes teamwork, creative problem-solving, and awareness of environmental conditions in outdoor survival.



1. Introduction (15 min):

- Importance of shelter (protection from wind, rain, sun, cold)
- Show common shelter types: lean-to, A-frame, debris hut, tarp setup
- Discuss site selection criteria: wind direction, slope, hazards, proximity to water



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ACTIVITY 1

Shelter Building

Stay Dry, Stay Safe!



2. Planning phase (10 min):

- Groups explore and select a suitable site
- Assess terrain, drainage, shelter orientation

3. Construction (40–45 min):

- Gather materials (dry wood, leaves, moss, grass)
- Assign tasks (structure, insulation, testing)
- Build using knots, cord, or stacking methods

4. Testing & Group Review (10 min):

- Inspect stability, insulation, weather protection
- Groups present their shelter and reflect on process

5. Reflection Circle (10–15 min):

- What worked well?
- How did you decide on your design?
- What would you do differently in a real survival scenario?



- Inspect sites beforehand (avoid dead branches overhead)
- Remind participants not to damage living trees or disturb animal habitats
- Provide sample shelters or diagrams if needed
- Have backup materials for poor weather
- Ensure a clear role structure in each group
- Use moments of struggle as learning opportunities



- Was your shelter effective and stable?
- What was the biggest challenge?
- How did your group cooperate?
- What will you remember for future outdoor situations?



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ACTIVITY 2

Fire Making The Right Way!



Teamwork, hands-on exercise, reflection



Approx. 90 minutes (20 min intro + 55 min practice + 15 min reflection)



- Tinder (wood wool, birch bark, cotton with petroleum jelly, etc.)
- Kindling & hardwood
- Fire steel / matches
- Bucket with water or sand
- Stones to mark the fire circle
- Designated outdoor area with permission to make fire
- First aid kit



6–12 participants (2–3 small groups)



Participants will learn how to safely prepare, light, and extinguish a campfire under basic outdoor conditions. The aim is to pass on skills, promote mindfulness, and reflect on group processes involving fire.



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ACTIVITY 2

Fire Making The Right Way!



1. **Introduction:** Brief safety briefing, presentation of materials (15 min)
2. **Planning:** Groups choose a site, inspect the ground, set up the fire pit (15 min)
3. **Preparation:** Collect and sort firewood and kindling (15 min)
4. **Execution:** Each group lights a fire independently (20 min)
5. **Extinguishing & Cleanup:** Fully extinguish fires with water or sand (15 min)
6. **Reflection Circle:** Group discussion on teamwork, responsibility, and what was learned (10 min)



- Check location and weather conditions in advance
- Safety is top priority – have an emergency plan ready
- Assign roles within each group to ensure structure
- Allow space for mistakes – guide supportively
- Do not skip reflection: What was challenging? What worked?



- What went well during the fire-making?
- What was challenging?
- How did your group organize itself?
- What can you take away from this for your youth work?



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ACTIVITY 3

Finding & Purifying Water!



Exploration, practical exercise, teamwork, reflection



Approx. 90 minutes (15 min intro + 50 min practice + 25 min reflection/demo)



- Topographic maps (e.g., Komoot, Outdooractive)
- Examples of water sources (springs, streams, etc.)
- Water bottles (PET, wide-mouth, collapsible)
- Filtration materials (e.g., charcoal, cloth, coffee filters)
- Water purification tablets (e.g., Micropur)
- Small camp stove or pot for boiling
- UV water sterilizer (optional)
- Natural area with access to potential water sources
- First aid kit



6–12 participants (2–3 small groups)



Participants will learn how to identify safe water sources and apply simple purification methods. This essential survival skill helps prevent dehydration and waterborne illnesses and builds environmental awareness and responsibility.



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ACTIVITY 3

Finding & Purifying Water!



1. Introduction (15 min):

- Importance of clean drinking water in survival situations
- Present types of natural water sources
- Discuss risks of contaminated water (bacteria, protozoa, chemicals)

2. Exploration & Source Evaluation (15–20 min):

- Groups assess the area and mark potential water sources on the map
- Discuss visible signs of water safety: clarity, flow, upstream location, no animal traces nearby
- Practice holding up bottles to ask for water in communities (non-verbal communication)

3. Purification Techniques Demo (20 min):

- Demonstrate water boiling (5+ minutes rolling boil)
- Show use of charcoal filters, cloth filtering
- Add tablets or demonstrate UV sterilizers
- Participants test filtering steps with pre-filled dirty water bottles

4. Reflection & Application (20–25 min):

- Discuss when each method is most appropriate
- Groups share which method they preferred and why
- Mini-quiz or scenario cards: “What would you do if...?”



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ACTIVITY 3

Finding & Purifying Water!



- Pre-check the outdoor site for available water or use simulation
- Ensure hygiene: participants should not drink unpurified water
- Provide real examples of poor vs. safe water sites (images or local examples)
- Create “emergency scenarios” for fun and learning
- Emphasize ecological respect: don’t pollute water sources



- What surprised you about the water purification process?
- What would be your first action if your bottles were empty in the wild?
- How did your group assess water safety?
- What will you remember next time you’re hiking or camping?



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ACTIVITY 4

Food in the Wilderness

Know What to Eat



- Exploration, identification, teamwork, cooking, reflection



- Approx. 90 minutes (20 min intro + 50 min activity + 20 min reflection)



- Field guides or plant identification apps (e.g., Flora Incognita, PlantNet)
- Samples or pictures of edible wild plants
- Basic cooking utensils (pot, pan, knife, spoon)
- Campfire or portable stove (optional)
- Pre-packed food items (e.g., trail mix, dried fruit, oatmeal)
- Fresh herbs (e.g., dandelion, nettle, mint – for practice)
- Cutting boards and small containers
- Trash bags (Leave No Trace!)
- First aid kit



- 6–12 participants (2–3 small groups)



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ACTIVITY 4

Food in the Wilderness

Know What to Eat



- Participants will explore edible wild plants and understand basic principles of outdoor nutrition. They will learn to recognize safe food sources, handle and prepare meals in nature, and reflect on sustainable eating and survival nutrition.



1. Introduction (20 min):

- Importance of knowing what's edible in nature
- Overview of edible plant types (raw, salad, tea, cooked)
- Discuss risks: poisonous plants, lookalikes, allergic reactions
- Introduce Rule of 3 (3 weeks without food ≠ no problem, but weak)
- Present food types: wild vs. packed

2. Activity: Identification & Snack Prep (50 min)

- Small groups walk the area with guides/apps to identify plants
- Collect small samples where allowed (e.g., dandelion, mint)
- Alternatively: use provided herbs to “simulate” foraging
- Prepare a mini-tasting session with edible greens or herbal tea
- Discuss how to plan nutritious outdoor meals with packed items
- (e.g., combining oats, seeds, dried fruits for energy)

3. Reflection (20 min):

- Share what was found or prepared
- Discuss the balance of wild vs. packed food
- Compare flavor, energy gain, effort
- Reflect on how knowledge of nature can support food security



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ACTIVITY 4

Food in the Wilderness

Know What to Eat



- Never allow real wild plant consumption unless plant is 100% identified
- Prepare some “safe plants” in advance for practice (e.g., mint, nettle)
- Emphasize respect for nature: don’t uproot plants unnecessarily
- Include a quick quiz on edible vs. toxic plant images
- Allow participants to express doubts or fears—normalize caution



- How confident do you feel identifying wild plants now?
- What did you learn about food sources in nature?
- Which was easier to prepare: wild plants or packed meals?
- How can you apply this in future outdoor trips?



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ACTIVITY 5

Hygiene & Health

Stay Clean, Stay Strong!



- Self-care, practical group work, discussion & reflection



- Approx. 90 minutes (20 min intro + 50 min group tasks + 20 min reflection)



- Small wash bowls or collapsible basins
- Biodegradable soap (e.g., Dr. Bronner's)
- Hand sanitizer
- Toothbrushes & toothpaste
- Toilet paper or tissues
- Trash bags
- Water (for washing)
- Clean towel or cloths
- Tweezers, bandages, blister plasters
- Illustrations/posters of hygiene routines
- First aid kit



- 6–12 participants (2–3 small groups)



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ACTIVITY 5

Hygiene & Health Stay Clean, Stay Strong!



- Participants will learn how to maintain personal hygiene, prevent illness, and treat minor health issues while outdoors – even without access to showers. They will develop routines for cleanliness, understand infection risks, and build resilience through mindful self-care.



1. Introduction (20 min):

- Why hygiene matters: infection prevention, group health, comfort
- What happens without hygiene: illness, wounds, low morale
- Show & tell: essential hygiene items for the backpack
- Cover key areas: hand hygiene, oral care, toilet in the wild, foot care, wound care

2. Group Activity (50 min):

- Divide into 2–3 small stations (rotate every 15–20 min):
 - a. **Hand & face washing practice** with little water
 - b. **Toilet routine in the wild:** cat hole digging (demo only), toilet paper vs. natural alternatives, Leave No Trace principles
 - c. **Blister/wound care simulation:** bandaging a “wound”, changing socks, foot hygiene basics

3. Reflection (20 min):

- What surprised you about outdoor hygiene?
- Which part would be hardest to stick to in real life?
- How can we support each other in staying healthy on a trip?



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ACTIVITY 5

Hygiene & Health

Stay Clean, Stay Strong!



- Emphasize water-saving techniques
- Normalize conversations around bodily functions in a respectful way
- Always highlight Leave No Trace when using nature as a toilet
- Encourage humor to reduce embarrassment, but keep the tone safe
- Have a “Hygiene & First Aid Box” visible throughout the course



- What small habits can make a big difference in outdoor hygiene?
- How can you balance cleanliness with limited resources?
- What will you pack differently next time?
- Why is it important to talk about hygiene in youth groups?



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MODULE 2

PRACTICAL OUTDOOR TECHNIQUES

Short summary

Activity 3 teaches young people how to find water sources in the wild and how to treat them safely using basic methods. It supports independent thinking, group work, and knowledge about hydration and health in nature. Participants gain knowledge of safe wild plants, food planning, and basic outdoor cooking. The activity promotes caution, creativity, and nutrition awareness under outdoor survival conditions. The last activity teaches youth how to maintain essential hygiene and personal health outdoors with limited resources – covering everything from washing, wound care, to waste disposal in nature.

Further reading

To deepen understanding or design follow-up sessions, we recommend:

Books & Field Guides

- Survival Skills for Teens – J. Beck
- The Ultimate Guide to Wilderness Living – J. & G. McPherson
- Wasser finden, filtern und aufbereiten – Bushcraft Handbuch Reihe
- WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality – World Health Organization
- Bushcraft 101 – Dave Canterbury
- The Forager's Handbook – Miles Irving
- Outdoor-Küche für Pfadfinderinnen* – Deutscher Jugendbund
- Surviving the Wild – Joshua Enyart
- *Outdoor Hygiene Basics – Outward Bound*
- *The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide – Andrew Skurka*
- *Bushcraft First Aid – Dave Canterbury*
- *Field Guide to Wilderness Medicine – Paul Auerbach*



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MODULE 3

**RISK AND SAFETY
AWARENESS**



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MODULE 3

RISK AND SAFETY AWARENESS

Introduction

This module focuses on helping youth aged 15–18 develop self-reliance, resilience, and responsible decision-making in outdoor environments. It offers a series of experiential learning activities for recognising, assessing, and responding to real-life risks in nature. Designed for youth workers and facilitators, the module equips you to guide young people through unfamiliar terrains — such as forests, mountains, rivers, and unpredictable weather — with calm, confidence, and care. Through active group learning and scenario-based exercises, young people will improve their risk awareness, learn practical survival skills, and develop key psychological traits like emotional regulation, teamwork, and assertiveness.



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

Mountains and forests are dynamic natural environments that offer young people powerful opportunities for solitude, challenge, and connection with nature — but they also involve real physical and psychological risks. Awareness in these settings is not about creating fear, but about fostering preparedness, informed decision-making, and modelling calm, responsible behaviour. Mountain environments in particular can be unpredictable: rapid weather changes, uneven terrain, and group fatigue can quickly escalate into serious situations. Adolescents aged 15–19 are especially vulnerable to these conditions, as their ability to perceive and respond to risk is still developing. They are more likely to act impulsively and underestimate danger. Structured outdoor safety education in mountain settings supports the development of executive functioning — including planning, judgement, and inhibition (Sennett, 2022). When educators combine real terrain challenges with youth-led route planning, peer support, and post-activity reflection, young people gain both practical skills and psychological resilience (Cureton, 2023). They become better at managing fear, assessing danger, and responding with confidence — not just outdoors, but in any challenging environment.



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

Common Hazards in Mountain and Forest Environments

a. Terrain-related Risks

Loose rocks or unstable ground: Common on slopes, near scree, or root-covered trails. These increase the chance of ankle injuries or falls.

Uneven ground: Twisting an ankle or tripping is more likely on forest floor or mountain trails where visibility of the ground is limited.

Dense vegetation: Can reduce visibility, disorient young people, or hide tripping hazards.

b. Orientation and Navigation Risks

Losing the path: Trails can disappear or be poorly marked, especially in fog, rain, or snow.

Poor visibility: Tree cover or elevation changes can interfere with GPS or mobile signals.

Disorientation: Youth may not notice they're veering off course — especially if chatting or distracted.



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

Common Hazards in Mountain and Forest Environments

c. Weather-Related Risks

Rapid changes: In mountains, weather can shift within minutes — sunshine can turn to fog, cold wind, or rain.

Hypothermia risk: Especially if wet and unprepared, even in summer.

Overheating/dehydration: Forests can feel cool but still lead to dehydration if you don't drink enough.

d. Isolation and Emergency Access

Distance from help: Forests and mountains may be far from roads or phone coverage.

Limited access: Evacuation is harder if someone is injured. It's vital to assess accessibility before choosing a route or site.



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

Psychological Dimensions of Outdoor Risk

Overconfidence: Youth may underestimate risk or overestimate their ability to deal with problems.

Panic or emotional flooding: Getting lost, separated from a group, or facing an injury can trigger intense fear, freezing, or impulsive decisions.

Group behaviour: Peer influence can lead to risk-taking or ignoring cautionary advice.

Nature unfamiliarity: Urban-based youth may lack intuitive understanding of terrain, weather, and movement in wild spaces.

Your role as a youth worker is to normalise talking about risk and help youth learn to respond with awareness, not fear.

Key Risk Management Skills to Teach (and Model)

Preparation Skills:

- **Clothing:** Encourage layers, waterproofs, and sturdy footwear even for short walks.
- **Packing:** Demonstrate how to pack essentials (map, water, snack, whistle, emergency foil blanket). You can check here the mountain packing essentials.
- Introduce [The 4 Packing Principles](#) ([link](#) for translation)



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

On-the-ground Awareness

- Environmental scanning: Teach youth to look ahead, spot changes in terrain, and anticipate issues (e.g. slippery log, muddy slope).
- Weather watching: Encourage noticing clouds, wind, humidity — and link this to decisions (pause, turn back, take cover).
- Pacing and energy: Monitor group pace. A slow youth may hide fatigue; an overly fast group can miss hazards.

Emergency Preparedness

- Lost procedure: Agree what to do if separated (stay in place, whistle signal, retrace steps).
- First response: Know how to treat minor injuries (scrapes, twisted ankle), and when to seek help.
- Stay calm strategies: Breathing exercises or group check-ins reduce anxiety if conditions change or challenges arise.

You do not need to eliminate all risk — but you must show you've taken reasonable steps to prepare and prevent avoidable harm.

It's important not to scare young people or overwhelm them with technical details.

Sample message:

"We don't expect anything to go wrong, but we do expect you to notice what's around you and think ahead. That's part of being responsible — and it makes you a stronger group member."



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

1-Minute Risk Plan (STOP-CHECK-DECIDE-ACT)

What it is:

A 60-second habit to pause, scan what changed, choose a safe option, and move together.

When to use it:

- At the **start** of the route and before any **obvious hazard** (steep/loose ground, riverbanks, exposed ridges).
- Whenever **conditions change**: weather shift, fading light, tired or anxious group member, new terrain.
- On a **timer** during longer sections (every ~10-15 minutes).

How to run it (group flow, ~60s):

STOP – Leader says: “Pause. What just changed?” Everyone looks up and around.

CHECK – Call out the 4 fast checks: **Terrain, Weather, People, Time** (daylight). Teens name one thing each.

DECIDE – Pick one aloud: **Avoid** (choose safer option) / **Reduce** (slow down, space out, layers/gear) / **Accept (low)** (continue, stay alert).

ACT – Confirm roles (front/back/buddies), any gear change, and the **next safe stop** if it worsens. Then move.



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UNIT 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

How youths take part:

- Each teen shares a **1-line observation** (“muddy slope,” “wind stronger,” “I’m cold”), then the group agrees on one action.
- **Buddy check** before tricky bits: “feet/heat/head?” If anyone flags red, the group adjusts.

Link it to existing skills here:

- Use after **Packing/Preparation** to check layers, water, comms.
- Use during **On-the-ground Awareness** to turn observations into a decision.
- Use with **Emergency Preparedness** if someone is separated or conditions spike: STOP, regroup, decide, act.

Example:

- **Ridge wind builds** → Reduce: jackets on, increase spacing; agree turn-back point if gusts rise.



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ACTIVITY 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!

- Planning, applied group work, map reading, outdoor risk awareness



- 30-35 minutes



- Smartphone, tablet or computer with access to Google Maps, Mapy.cz, or similar
- Paper and pens for marking risks
- Optional: printed screenshots or hand-drawn sketch maps
- Indoor or outdoor seating for planning



- 3-5 people



- Participants choose a real outdoor destination using online maps and identify key hazards along the route. This activity helps them build map-reading skills, understand risk in varied terrain, and practise planning with safety in mind.





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ACTIVITY 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!



1. Introduction & Framing

Explain that young people will be choosing their own route using online maps — this can be a forest, hill path, mountain route, or even a local nature trail. The goal is to look at a real place, imagine leading a group there, and spot the possible risks.

Make clear that this is not about creating fear — it's about building awareness and confidence by learning to read the landscape before stepping into it.

2. Tools & Setup

Each group needs:

- Access to a map app (Google Maps, Mapy.cz, Outdooractive, etc.)
- A method to mark or list hazards (on paper or digitally)

You can guide them to features like:

- Satellite view or terrain layers
- Elevation lines (in Mapy.cz)
- Trails, rivers, and forest cover
- Paths crossing roads or exposed areas

Encourage groups to explore areas they already know or want to visit.



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ACTIVITY 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!



3. Task: Spot the Risks

Ask groups to identify at least 5 risk points along their route. These could include:

- Steep climbs, rocky paths, or drops
- River or stream crossings
- Dense forest or poor visibility areas
- Wildlife zones or remote stretches
- Weather exposure (e.g. hilltops, open ridges)
- Difficult access or poor phone signal

Encourage discussion: What would make this part risky for a less confident walker? What might be overlooked at first glance?

4. Group Presentation

Have each group briefly present:

- The route they chose (basic location and type of terrain)
- The main hazards they found
- How they would reduce or manage each risk (e.g. change in route, gear, communication)



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ACTIVITY 1

Mountain: Risk Spotters!



- Let participants choose freely — ownership increases engagement.
- Avoid leading them to the “right answers” — their reasoning is more important than perfect choices.
- Ask guiding questions to deepen thinking, like:
 - “What would this feel like in fog or after rain?”
- If there’s time, encourage them to revise their plan with feedback.



- Did anything surprise you once you started looking closely?
- What risks were obvious, and what were harder to notice?
- Would you feel more confident visiting this route now? Why?
- How could this kind of planning help a youth group feel safer and more included?



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UNIT 2

Rivers: Sit, Watch, Listen Reading the River!

Rivers are dynamic and captivating natural spaces that often attract young people due to their movement, sound, and coolness — especially in warm weather. However, even shallow streams and slow-looking water can pose serious dangers. In an outdoor education context, rivers are both an opportunity and a responsibility: youth workers must ensure participants understand how to appreciate these environments safely and with respect.

Common Risks Around Rivers

Hydrological Hazards

- **Currents:** Even calm surfaces may conceal strong undercurrents or fast-flowing water beneath.
- **Depth misjudgement:** Water may appear shallow but deepen suddenly. Rocks and mud can distort perception.
- **Slippery banks and stones:** Wet surfaces, mossy rocks, and mud increase the risk of falls and twisted ankles.
- **Flash flooding:** Heavy rainfall upstream can cause a sudden rise in water levels even if it's not raining locally.
- **Cold water shock:** Entering cold water (especially below 15°C) can cause gasping, muscle cramps, and panic.



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UNIT 2

Rivers: Sit, Watch, Listen Reading the River!

Common Risks Around Rivers

Environmental Conditions

- Erosion and unstable ground: Riverbanks may be fragile or undercut, collapsing without warning.
- Obstacles: Submerged branches, man-made debris, or weirs can trap feet or create entrapment risks in current.
- Weather interplay: Wind and rain can make banks slippery and increase the danger of falling into water.

Behavioural Risks

- Jumping or diving: Youth may impulsively jump in without checking the depth or hidden objects.
- Peer pressure: River settings often invite risky challenges, especially in groups.
- Inattention: Lulled by a peaceful scene, participants may misstep or ignore hazards (especially in warm weather).

Risk Awareness and Youth Psychology Near Water

Rivers trigger varied emotional responses in youth:

- Overexcitement: Especially when hot, youth may rush into water or take impulsive risks.
- False confidence: Shallow water often leads to underestimating danger.
- Curiosity vs comfort: Some youth may feel curious but nervous — it's important to validate caution and normalise hesitation.
- The goal is to cultivate calm, observational behaviour and decision-making, even in exciting environments.



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UNIT 2

Rivers: Sit, Watch, Listen Reading the River!

Key Skills to Teach or Model Around Rivers

Site Awareness

- Evaluate entry and exit points before approaching the river.
- Identify where the water is moving quickly vs slowly.
- Spot hazards: broken branches, litter, algae, submerged rocks.

Movement and Spacing

- Encourage walking slowly near the edge, using natural anchors (trees, dry patches).
- Maintain group spacing — no crowding near the edge.
- Practise a “safe distance” zone from fast-flowing or high water areas.

Emergency Awareness

([Link for translation](#))

Clothing and Gear Considerations

- Dry footwear with grip is critical. Avoid open sandals or bare feet near stony banks.
- Extra layers or towel in bag for wet weather or falls.
- Have access to a first aid kit and emergency contact info.
- *Important: Even if swimming is not part of the plan, you still need a water safety strategy whenever rivers are present.*





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ACTIVITY 1

Rivers: Sit, Watch, Listen – Reading the River!



- Mindful observation, sensory reflection, individual experience + group sharing



- 30-40 minutes



- Safe access to a riverbank, stream, or waterside location
- Notebooks or paper
- Pens or pencils
- Optional: sitting mats, dry bags, or clipboards



- Individual activity with group reflection



- Participants quietly observe and reflect beside a natural river or stream, noticing movement, sound, mood, and details. This activity builds personal connection to water, sharpens awareness, and encourages a calm, focused presence in nature.



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ACTIVITY 1

Rivers:

Sit, Watch, Listen – Reading the River!



1. Introduction:

Set the tone by inviting a calm and quiet mindset. Say something like:

“In this activity, we’re not focusing on rules or risks. We’re going to sit by the river, observe in silence, and simply notice what it’s like to be here. Imagine this is your first time seeing a river. What would stand out to you? What would make you feel curious, nervous, calm, or alert?”

Explain the aim: to slow down and experience the river with all senses — as a person, not just a participant.

2. Observation Time (10–15 minutes)

Ask each young person to find their own safe sitting spot near the river (within view and earshot).

Give a few prompts (verbally or printed):

- What do you see moving? What’s still?
- What sounds can you hear clearly? What’s behind them?
- How do you feel here — relaxed, focused, alert, unsure?
- If you were younger or smaller, how would this place feel?

Keep it quiet. Encourage them to write, sketch, or just sit. No talking during this part.



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ACTIVITY 1

Rivers:

Sit, Watch, Listen – Reading the River!



3. Reflection (5–10 minutes)

Invite them to write down or draw what they noticed. Remind them:

There's no “right answer”

This is about what the river made them feel, not just what they saw

They can use words, shapes, or patterns — anything that reflects their experience

Optional Variations:

- Repeat it later in the programme and compare what's changed — in the place or in them
- Run it in different weather conditions (mist, wind, drizzle) to deepen awareness
- Use this activity as a cool-down after something energetic or group-heavy



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ACTIVITY 1

Rivers: Sit, Watch, Listen – Reading the River!



- Model silence and presence — don't use phones or talk during the observation
- Choose a space with gentle sound and visual interest (ripples, wildlife, movement)
- If possible, use this activity early in the module to help youth settle into the natural setting
- Great follow-up: creative writing, nature mapping, or a group discussion on “comfort zones” in wild places



Group Debrief (10–15 minutes)

- Bring the group back together for optional sharing. Ask:
 - “What did you notice when you stayed still for a while?”
 - “Did anything surprise you?”
 - “How did this place make you feel — safe, alive, calm, unsettled?”
 - “Why might slowing down like this help us be safer outdoors?”

Allow honest answers — it's fine if some felt bored, distracted, or unsure. That's part of the experience.



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UNIT 3

Animals: Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?

When working with young people outdoors, especially in forests, mountains, farmland, or riverside areas, encounters with animals — real or imagined — are common. These include wildlife (insects, mammals, reptiles), livestock (sheep, cows), and domestic animals (dogs). Understanding animal-related risks helps youth remain calm, respectful, and observant, not fearful.

Youth may also carry fears or misunderstandings from home (e.g. fear of spiders or dogs) that can affect their experience outdoors. Supporting them means preparing for both **actual** safety concerns and **perceived** threats.

Wild Animals – Risks and Approach

Type	Risk	Approach
Insects (wasps, bees, hornets, horseflies, mosquitoes)	Stings, swelling, allergic reaction (anaphylaxis in rare cases), minor infection from horseflies	Encourage long sleeves/trousers, use unscented products, ask about allergies, carry antihistamines if needed
Ticks	Lyme disease (higher risk the longer the tick is attached)	Teach tick checks after walks, recommend tucking trousers into socks, carry tick remover
Snakes (e.g. adder)	Venomous bite if stepped on or provoked	Teach snake recognition, avoid disturbing undergrowth, stay on clear paths
Foxes, badgers, deer, wild boar	Defensive behaviour if startled, especially with young	Encourage natural noise while walking, don't allow "sneaking up" or chasing
Birds of prey or nesting birds	Swooping or flapping near nests during breeding season	Teach awareness of nesting zones, avoid disturbing birds, explain calmly if observed
Rodent droppings/urine	Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) via open cuts or contact with water	Promote hand hygiene, avoid encouraging play in stagnant or dirty water
Bats (rabies risk regions)	Rabies risk if bitten (very rare in Europe)	Never touch bats or grounded mammals, seek immediate medical attention if bitten
Feeding/touching wild animals	Increased aggression, disease transmission, disrupts natural behaviour	Promote "observe, don't interfere", encourage sketching/photography instead of contact



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UNIT 3

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?

Psychological & Group Factors

Youth responses to animals vary widely:

- Curiosity can lead to unsafe proximity or chasing
- Fear or anxiety may cause panic, withdrawal, or distraction from surroundings
- Peer behaviour – one young person provoking or teasing an animal may encourage others
- Lack of knowledge can lead to unsafe assumptions (“It’s small, it’s harmless” or “Let’s feed it!”)

It’s essential to treat fears seriously while maintaining a calm tone. Validate their feelings without creating unnecessary drama. Provide facts, simple actions, and group reassurance.

Key Topics to Cover

a. Understanding Animal Behaviour

- Most animals only react when they feel threatened
- Animals use body language to signal discomfort or stress
- The best protection is awareness and non-interference

b. Basic Safety Around Animals

- Don’t touch or feed wild or farm animals
- Stay calm and quiet — sudden movement can trigger a defensive response
- Observe from a distance — use binoculars or phones for photos
- Do not run from dogs or chase animals
- If an animal approaches: stand still, avoid direct eye contact, back away slowly



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UNIT 3

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?

Key Topics to Cover

c. Insect Awareness

- Wear long sleeves and light colours in high-risk seasons
- Check for ticks after walks in grassy or wooded areas
- Avoid perfumes and sweet drinks that attract bees and wasps

d. Recognising Real Risk vs. Perceived Risk

- A deer or fox near the trail is not dangerous
- A loud insect may sound scary but is usually harmless
- Help youth learn to tell the difference through calm discussion and observation



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?



- Debate critical thinking, structured discussion



- 45–60 minutes



- Whiteboard or flipchart (for note-taking)
- Space to move or change roles



- 4–6 per 6–20 (4–6 speakers + observers; larger groups can rotate or break into parallel debates)(can run multiple groups in parallel)



- Participants explore whether humans should manage or interfere with wildlife when animals become “a problem”. The debate encourages critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and respectful listening. It helps participants understand the complexities of human-wildlife interaction and their role in it.



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?



1. Introduce the Question:

“Should humans have the right to control, relocate, or remove wild animals when they’re seen as a risk or nuisance?”

Give examples to spark thinking:

- Removing foxes from urban parks
- Culling wild boar near farmland
- Relocating birds nesting near trails
- Trapping or sedating animals for ‘their own good’

2. Split the group into two sides:

- YES: Humans have a responsibility to manage wildlife for safety and balance.
 - NO: Wild animals have a right to live freely without human interference.
- (Optional: allow participants to choose, assign randomly, or rotate roles midway.)



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?



3. Group Preparation (10–15 mins):

Each team works together to prepare 2–3 key points and responses to expected counter-arguments.

4. Debate Rounds:

- Opening arguments (2 minutes per side)
- Rebuttals (1 minute per side)
- Open questions from the audience or facilitator
- Closing statements

Reflection Circle (optional):

Allow participants to step out of their role and share personal views.



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Animals:

Do Humans Have the Right to Control Wildlife?



- Encourage emotional honesty, not performance — this is not about acting, but exploring perspectives.
- Let the group feel uncomfortable — ethical dilemmas don't have easy answers.
- Emphasise *respectful disagreement* and *shared responsibility*.
- If time allows, repeat the role play with reversed roles or a different scenario (e.g. domestic dog attack, injured bird, farm animal stuck in fence).



- Did this debate change your mind or make you see another side?
- What's the difference between protecting nature and controlling it?
- Are there situations where doing nothing causes more harm?
- Who should decide what's "too dangerous" in nature?
- What kind of relationship do you want to have with the wild — and why?



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UNIT 4

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay & Pack for the Weather

Weather is one of the most unpredictable and influential elements in any outdoor activity. It directly affects visibility, comfort, group energy, terrain stability, and emergency response. Youth workers must not only check the forecast — they must interpret it, plan accordingly, and guide young people to respond calmly and sensibly to changing conditions.

Outdoor programmes should never rely on “good weather” to succeed. Instead, youth should be taught how to adapt, assess risk, and feel confident — even when the skies turn grey.

Main Weather-Related Risks

a. Cold and Wet Conditions

- Hypothermia: Risk increases in cool, damp, and windy settings, especially if youth are tired or wearing inappropriate clothing.
 - Early signs: shivering, clumsiness, confusion, slurred speech.
- Wet terrain: Increases slips, especially on rocks, tree roots, and slopes.
- Mud and waterlogged paths: Can cause loss of footing or stuck boots, slow group pace, or increase fatigue.

b. Heat and Sun

- Dehydration: Youth may forget to drink water if it's not obviously hot.
- Heat exhaustion/heatstroke: Especially in open areas like mountains or riverbanks.
- Sunburn: Can occur even on overcast days. Young people may resist wearing hats or using sunscreen unless guided.



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UNIT 4

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay & Pack for the Weather

Main Weather-Related Risks

c. Wind and Storms

- Falling branches: Wind in forests or near cliffs can cause injuries.
- Sudden weather changes: Wind can bring rain or drop temperatures quickly.
- Blown-away gear: Loose items (papers, hats, shelters) may distract or cause panic.

d. Fog and Poor Visibility

- Disorientation: Losing the trail or missing a group member becomes easier.
- Map and landmark confusion: Harder for youth to follow directions or navigate independently.
- Increased stress: Reduced visibility can trigger fear or withdrawal.



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UNIT 4

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay & Pack for the Weather

Key Skills and Practices

a. Reading the Forecast

- Use detailed apps (like Yr.no, Windy, or local weather services) and check both the day-of and hour-by-hour forecast.
- Understand symbols and alerts (UV index, wind speed, temperature changes).

b. Clothing and Kit Guidance

- Teach the “3-layer system”: base (sweat-wicking), middle (insulation), outer (wind/rain protection).
- Explain that cotton holds water and cools the body dangerously when wet.
- Model appropriate dress and explain your choices (e.g. “I’m wearing this because the temperature will drop after 4pm”).

c. Group Monitoring

- Plan regular check-ins for temperature, hydration, and mood.
- Encourage sharing if someone feels too hot/cold — without judgement.
- Have clear “stop points” for weather reassessment: when to shorten or end the activity if needed.

d. Flexibility and Backup Plans

- Always prepare a weather-safe alternative (indoor, under shelter, shorter route).
- Carry group emergency gear: spare layers, emergency blankets, dry socks, group shelter or tarp, high-calorie snacks.



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UNIT 4

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay & Pack for the Weather

Legal and Duty of Care Considerations

When facilitating any outdoor activity, especially those involving risk (mountains, rivers, wildlife, or changing weather), youth workers have a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure safety, informed participation, and appropriate supervision. This responsibility is often referred to as the duty of care.

Risk Assessment

- Always carry out a written risk assessment before the activity.
- Include terrain, weather, visibility, access, wildlife, and group-specific needs (e.g. allergies, fitness levels, fears).
- Update the risk assessment if conditions change on the day.

Consent and Information

- Ensure all participants (and parents/guardians where required) have given informed consent.
- Communicate clearly what the activity involves, what risks exist, and what is expected of participants.
- Have emergency contacts and medical details available and securely stored.

Supervision and Ratios

- Use age-appropriate adult-to-youth ratios based on the setting, activity, and experience of the group.
- Maintain visual supervision during activities in wild areas — no group should be left unaccompanied.
- Assign clear responsibilities to co-leaders or peer facilitators if working in teams.



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UNIT 4

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay & Pack for the Weather

Emergency Planning

Prepare a simple, realistic emergency action plan:

- What if someone gets injured?
- What if you need to leave quickly?
- Who contacts emergency services?

Know where the nearest access points, shelters, and phone signal areas are.

Equipment Responsibility

- Check that all necessary equipment is suitable and in good condition.
- Ensure participants understand how to use essential safety items (e.g. whistle, map, torch).
- Carry group safety gear (first aid kit, emergency shelter, extra layers or foil blankets).

Youth workers must model calm, safe, and respectful behaviour — especially in moments of pressure, discomfort, or conflict.

- Good risk management means building trust, setting a calm example, and making clear, careful decisions when needed.
- Duty of care means recognising that risk is part of outdoor learning — the focus is on managing it wisely, communicating openly, and being ready to respond when things don't go to plan.
- Alongside protection, duty of care also involves guiding young people to become confident, capable, and independent in outdoor environments.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 1

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay



- Active group challenge, situational decision-making



- 40–50 minutes



- Printed weather scenario cards (at least 6–8, one per group or rotation)
- Pens and paper or whiteboards
- Open space (indoors or outdoors) for moving between “stations” or completing challenges
- Optional: stopwatch or time prompts



- Ideal for 4–6 per group, multiple groups can run in parallel



- Teams race to respond to weather-related outdoor scenarios by quickly discussing and presenting what they would do. The goal is to build awareness of weather-based risks, encourage fast thinking, and promote group communication under mild time pressure.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 1

Weather:

Weather Scenario Relay



1. Preparation:

Prepare 6–8 weather scenario cards in advance. Each card should describe a realistic outdoor situation affected by weather. Examples:

- “You’re hiking and it starts to hail.”
- “One group member has no jacket and the temperature drops to 6°C.”
- “You’re having an activity and a thunderstorm approaches.”
- “Your route is fogged over and your map is soggy.”
- “It’s 32°C and two people say they feel dizzy.”
- “Strong wind is shaking the trees and blowing dust into your eyes.”

2. Split the group into teams of 4–6.

3. Station Setup (2 options):

- **Relay style:** Groups move between stations (each scenario on a table/poster).
- **Rotation style:** Groups stay seated; the facilitator reads or hands out a new scenario every 5–6 minutes.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 1

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay



4. Group Task:

For each scenario, groups must:

- Identify the risk
- Decide what to do
- List what equipment, knowledge, or plan would help
-

5. After each round, groups either move to the next station or receive a new scenario. Keep answers short (3–5 mins).

6. Final Discussion:

Review common patterns and smart solutions. Ask each group to share their most challenging or creative response.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 1

Weather: Weather Scenario Relay



- Consider including one deliberately ambiguous or tricky scenario to generate debate.
- You may assign “wildcards” like: “You forgot the map”, “The mobile phone is wet”, etc.



- Which scenario was most difficult? Why?
- What were your first instincts vs your final decision?
- Did your group struggle to agree? How did you handle it?
- How could you prepare better before going outside next time?
- Did any response feel risky in hindsight?



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 2

Weather: Pack for the Weather



- Team sorting game, practical discussion



- 30–40 minutes



- Printed list of items or real gear (backpacks, jacket, hat, foil blanket, etc.)
- Scenario cards describing different outdoor conditions
- Paper and pens
- Indoor or outdoor space with tables or floor space to sort items



- 3–6 per group, flexible



- Youth teams are given a weather-based outdoor scenario and must “pack” a suitable kit from a mixed pile of items. The activity builds practical understanding of weather preparation and encourages discussion on essential vs optional gear.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 2

Weather: Pack for the Weather



1. Print the outdoor scenarios (*you can change them or add more depending on the group*)

2. Create a pile of items for teams to pick from or print the list

- Useful items: waterproof jacket, map, whistle, torch, sunscreen, hat, foil blanket, extra water
- Misleading/irrelevant items: flip-flops, heavy jumper, cotton hoodie, phone with 5% battery, large speaker

3. Assign a scenario to each team and give them 10–15 minutes to pick 5–8 items from the pile.

4. Teams present their “pack” to the group and explain:

- Why they chose each item
- What they left out, and why

Optionally, let groups review each other’s packs and offer feedback.



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UNIT 4

ACTIVITY 2

Weather: Pack for the Weather



- Include some items that are “context-dependent” to encourage deeper thinking (e.g. umbrella, tablet, waterproof trousers).
- Encourage discussion, not just speed. Ask, “Is that useful *because of the weather* or just in general?”



- What item did your team debate the most?
- Did you overpack or underpack?
- Would your decisions change if you had to carry it all yourself?
- How does your mood or confidence change when you know you’re properly packed?
- How can you pack smarter without carrying too much?



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MODULE 3

RISK AND SAFETY AWARENESS

Short summary

Module 3 equips young people with essential awareness and skills to navigate the natural world responsibly and safely. It blends theoretical knowledge with experiential learning to address four core areas of risk: **terrain (mountains/forests), rivers, wildlife, and weather**. Through scenario-based activities and reflective practices, youth develop **environmental literacy, emotional resilience, and confident decision-making** in the outdoors.

Key theoretical underpinnings include:

- **Risk perception in adolescents** (developing executive function and impulse control)
- **Psychological responses to risk** (e.g. overconfidence, group influence, fear regulation)
- **Duty of care and legal responsibility** for facilitators
- **Preparation and planning frameworks** (e.g. packing principles, weather monitoring, route safety)

Impact:

The module fosters a mindset of **awareness over fear**, encouraging participants to stay alert, adaptable, and considerate of group safety. By linking physical risk with emotional awareness and group dynamics, the training prepares young people not just for outdoor challenges but also for broader life situations requiring responsibility and calm leadership.











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MODULE 3






RISK AND SAFETY AWARENESS

Resources


Websites & Online Tools

-  [AdventureSmart UK](#) – Comprehensive trip planning and safety advice for all environments
-  [AdventureSmart Water Safety](#) – Specialized guidance for rivers and open water
-  [Mountain Training England](#) – Navigation, weather, and safety certifications
-  [ViewRanger / Komoot](#) – Route planning and GPS navigation
-  [RLSS UK](#) – Water safety and drowning prevention
-  [Health and Safety Executive – Livestock](#) – Adaptable safety guidelines for working near animals
-  [National Trust – Dog and Livestock Advice](#) – Public guidance on walking near animals
-  [Met Office Education](#) – Weather science for youth

Books & Publications

-  Outdoor Safety Handbook – Mountain Training UK
-  Outdoor Safety and Survival – Mike Clelland
-  How to Stay Alive in the Woods – Bradford Angier
-  Outdoor Safety Manual – B. Stone & S. Woods
-  Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning – Research on experiential risk education

Videos

-  How to Plan a Safe Mountain Hike – [Mountain Rescue Scotland](#)



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MODULE 4

TEAMWORK
ESSENTIALS



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UNIT 1

TEAMWORK ESSENTIALS

Effective teamwork and communication are essential skills for successful outdoor experiences. This module provides youth workers with evidence-based methods to help young people develop these competencies through engaging outdoor activities.

Content Overview:

Unit 1: Team Development Stages - Understanding how teams naturally progress through forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning phases

Unit 2: Team Roles and Contributions - Recognizing the nine different ways people contribute to team success

Unit 3: Active Listening and Communication - Developing SOLER active listening skills for effective outdoor communication

Goals:

- Build understanding of team dynamics and development processes
- Develop skills for inclusive collaboration with diverse group members
- Build respect, empathy, and clear communication in outdoor settings
- Enhance ability to contribute meaningfully to shared outdoor challenges



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UNIT 1

TEAMWORK ESSENTIALS

Team Development Theory (Tuckman's Model)

Bruce Tuckman's research identified five predictable stages all teams experience. For youth workers, understanding these stages helps normalize group conflicts and provides framework for supporting teams through challenges.

The Five Stages:

Forming - Initial politeness and uncertainty as members get acquainted

Storming - Conflicts emerge as different ideas and personalities clash

Norming - Ground rules establish and roles clarify as trust builds

Performing - High productivity as team works effectively together

Adjourning - Reflection and closure as team's work concludes

Application for Youth Workers: Recognising these stages helps teams stay patient during storming phases, facilitate norming discussions, and celebrate when teams perform. However, not all teams perform—some remain stuck in earlier stages without proper support.



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UNIT 1

TEAMWORK ESSENTIALS

Team Roles Theory (Belbin's Model)

Meredith Belbin's research identified nine distinct roles people naturally play in teams. Understanding these roles helps appreciate diverse contributions and address team imbalances.

The Nine Roles:

Thinking Roles: Plant (creative), Monitor Evaluator (analytical), Specialist (expert knowledge)

Action Roles: Shaper (drives forward), Implementer (practical), Completer Finisher (detail-focused)

People Roles: Coordinator (natural leader), Teamworker (supportive), Resource Investigator (networker)

Application for Youth Workers: Help participants recognize their natural strengths while appreciating others' different approaches. Balanced teams need multiple roles - use this knowledge to form effective groups and address missing roles.



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UNIT 1

TEAMWORK ESSENTIALS

Active Listening Theory (SOLER Model)

The SOLER model provides concrete framework for developing active listening skills essential for outdoor leadership and safety.

SOLER Components:

Square Shoulders - Face the speaker directly

Open Posture - Keep body language welcoming

Lean In - Show engagement through position

Eye Contact - Maintain appropriate visual connection

Relax - Stay calm and comfortable

Application for Youth Workers: Active listening builds trust and safety in groups. These skills are crucial for emergency situations, conflict resolution, and creating inclusive environments where all voices are heard.



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

The Nature Tower Challenge



- Team work, reflection, presentation



- 45-60 minutes (30 min activity + 15-30 min reflection)



- Pre-collected natural materials: twigs, leaves, grass, small stones, bark pieces, pine cones (enough identical sets for each team)
- Timer (phone/watch)
- One small natural object per team to serve as a top of the tower element
- Notebook for trainer observations
- Outdoor space for activity



- 9-20 participants (divided into teams of 3-5)



- Teams build the tallest freestanding structure using identical sets of natural materials, topped with a designated object. Through this challenge and structured reflection, participants experience and identify Tuckman's five stages of team development firsthand, learning to recognize team dynamics and navigate group processes more effectively in outdoor settings.



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

The Nature Tower Challenge



Setup (5 minutes):

- Divide participants into teams of 3-5 people
- Give each team identical set of natural materials
- Explain challenge: build tallest freestanding tower using only provided materials, supporting the object on top
- Set 20-minute time limit

Construction Phase (20 minutes):

- Teams work with their materials to build
- Trainer observes team dynamics and takes notes on stages witnessed
- Give time warnings at 10 minutes and 2 minutes remaining

Testing Phase (5 minutes):

- Teams place their object on top
- Measure heights of successful structures
- Celebrate all efforts

Reflection Discussion and Theory (15-20 minutes):

- Initial reactions and feelings
- Guide discovery of experienced team stages using specific moments from activity
- Connect to Tuckman's theory (presentation of the theory)
- Discuss applications in real life
- Detailed explanation in Recommended questions for debriefing



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

The Nature Tower Challenge



- Pre-collect materials before session to ensure fair and identical sets for each team
- Don't intervene during storming phases - let teams work through conflicts naturally
- Take photos/mental notes of specific moments to reference during reflection
- Some teams may not reach performing stage - this is valuable learning too
- Ensure all materials are safe (no sharp objects or hazardous items)
- Be patient with reflection - participants may need help identifying abstract concepts



Phase 1: Initial Reactions (5 minutes)

- "How did that feel?"
- "What was the most challenging part?"
- "What surprised you about working with your team?"

Phase 2: Discovering the Stages (15-20 minutes) Guide participants through identifying the stages they experienced:

Forming Discovery:

- "Think about the first few minutes. How did you start? What was the mood like?"
- "Who took charge initially? How did you decide what to build?"
- *Help them identify: politeness, uncertainty, looking for direction*



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

The Nature Tower Challenge



Storming Discovery:

- "Was there a moment when things got tense or frustrating? Tell me about that."
- "Did anyone disagree about the approach? What happened?"
- *Help them identify: conflicts, different ideas, power struggles*

Norming Discovery:

- "How did you move past the disagreements? What helped you work together?"
- "Did you settle into roles? Who did what?"
- *Help them identify: compromise, role clarity, establishing "rules"*

Performing Discovery:

- "Was there a moment when everything clicked and you were working smoothly?"
- "How did it feel when you were in your groove?"
- *Help them identify: efficient collaboration, natural support*

Phase 3: Connecting to Theory (10 minutes)

- Introduce Tuckman's model and help them see their experience through this lens
- "You just experienced what every team goes through - these are called the 5 stages of team development"
- Present the stages and have them identify examples from their experience

Debrief Extensions

- **"What if we did this again?"** - Discuss how knowing the stages might change their approach
- **"Do you see connections with your past team work experience?"** - Where else do they see these stages in their lives?
- **"How can you apply this theory if future?"** - Connect the experience with the future



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Challenge for Nine Characters



- Group problem-solving, collaborative simulation, peer learning



- 60-75 minutes (40 min activity + 20-35 min reflection)



- Outdoor setting (forest, park, or large outdoor space)
- One master scenario card for the entire group (create your own based on your conditions following the activity structure)
- Collection of survival materials using available resources: rope/string, tarp/large plastic sheet, empty containers/bottles, map (printed or drawn), compass (or smartphone), basic first aid supplies, various household tools
- Large flipchart paper and markers for group planning (or ground/tree for drawing)
- Timer (phone/watch)
- Notebook for trainer observations
- Note: If two trainers are available, this is highly recommended - one can facilitate while the other observes group dynamics



- 9-25 participants (working as one large team)



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Challenge for Nine Characters



- The group faces one complex wilderness survival scenario requiring multiple solutions and diverse expertise. Natural team roles emerge clearly as individuals gravitate toward their strengths during collaborative problem-solving. Participants identify Belbin's 9 team roles through structured reflection on behaviors witnessed during the challenge.



Scenario Introduction (5 minutes):

- Present complex survival scenario to entire group: following example "Your expedition is stranded in wilderness after severe weather. Multiple challenges must be addressed simultaneously before rescue in 6 hours" and adding details
- Challenges include: shelter for everyone, signalling system, water procurement, navigation planning, injury treatment, food rationing, group morale

Initial Response Phase (up to 10 minutes):

- Let group naturally organize themselves - no assigned leaders
- Observe who steps forward, who generates ideas, who asks questions
- Group must decide how to tackle multiple simultaneous challenges



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Challenge for Nine Characters



Planning and Organization Phase (15 minutes):

- Group develops comprehensive survival strategy
- Must allocate people to different survival tasks
- Natural role differentiation becomes apparent

Implementation Phase (15 minutes):

- Group implements their plan using available space and materials
- Multiple sub-teams work on different aspects simultaneously
- Strong role behaviors emerge under pressure and time constraints

Role Discovery Reflection (20-30 minutes):

- Facilitate group discussion about what just happened to cover the theoretical aspect of the activity
- Follow the debriefing process described below



- Keep detailed notes with specific behaviors to reference during debrief
- If two trainers available: one facilitates, one observes and notes individual contributions and behaviors
- Resist urge to provide structure - let natural organization emerge
- Watch for all 9 roles - in larger groups, most should appear naturally
- Be prepared for initial chaos - this is valuable learning about group dynamics
- Focus on behaviors, not personalities, during reflection



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Challenge for Nine Characters



Phase 1: Initial Reactions (5 minutes)

- "How did that feel?"
- "What was the most challenging part?"
- "What surprised you about working as such a large group?"

Phase 2: Discovering the Roles (15-20 minutes) Guide participants through identifying the different roles they witnessed:

Creative Thinkers:

- "Who came up with unusual or innovative solutions? What did that look like?"
- "Who thought outside the box when we faced problems?"
- *Help them identify: Plant behaviors - creative, innovative thinking*

Organizers and Leaders:

- "Who naturally stepped up to coordinate different activities?"
- "Who helped delegate tasks and kept the big picture in mind?"
- *Help them identify: Coordinator behaviors - natural leadership, delegation*

Action-Oriented People:

- "Who pushed the group to make decisions and get moving?"
- "Who focused on actually implementing our plans?"
- *Help them identify: Shaper, Implementer, Completer Finisher behaviors*

People-Focused Members:

- "Who made sure everyone was included and the group stayed positive?"
- "Who helped resolve conflicts or tensions that arose?"
- *Help them identify: Teamworker, Resource Investigator behaviors*

Analytical Thinkers:

- "Who asked critical questions about our plans?"
- "Who brought specific expertise or knowledge to the challenge?"
- *Help them identify: Monitor Evaluator, Specialist behaviors*



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Challenge for Nine Characters



Phase 3: Connecting to Theory (10 minutes)

- Introduce Belbin's 9 team roles model
- "What you just experienced shows how people naturally contribute different strengths to teams"
- Present the roles and help them identify examples from their experience
- Discuss how different roles contributed to (or were missing from) their success

Debrief Extensions:

1. **"What if we did this again?"** - How might knowing these roles change their approach?
2. **"Do you see connections with your past teamwork experience?"** - Where else do they recognize these patterns?
3. **"How can you apply this theory in future adventures?"** - Connect roles to real leadership and teamwork



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 3

Crisis Communication Challenge



- Role-play simulation, peer observation, active listening practice



- 45-50 minutes (5 min theory + 30 min activity + 10-15 min reflection)



- Setting with space for groups of three to spread out
- Scenario cards with outdoor crisis situations (prepared by trainer)
- SOLER observation checklists (simple paper forms)
- Pens/pencils for observers
- Timer (phone/watch)



- 9-24 participants (works best with numbers divisible by 3)



- Participants practice SOLER active listening skills through outdoor emergency role-plays. Working in triads as speaker, listener, and observer, they experience effective communication under pressure. Through structured observation and feedback, participants develop concrete understanding of how body language and attention create trust and safety in outdoor communication.



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 3

Crisis Communication Challenge



Brief Theory Introduction (5 minutes):

- Explain SOLER model: Square shoulders, Open posture, Lean in, Eye contact, Relax
- Demonstrate each component briefly
- Emphasize importance in outdoor/emergency situations

Setup and Role Assignment (3 minutes):

- Divide participants into groups of three: Speaker, Listener, Observer
- Give each group one outdoor crisis scenario card
- Distribute SOLER observation checklists to observers

Round 1: First Role-Play (8 minutes):

- Speaker shares crisis scenario with emotion (4 minutes)
- Listener practices SOLER techniques
- Observer notes behaviors on checklist
- Quick feedback within group (2 minutes)

Round 2: Role Rotation (8 minutes):

- Rotate roles, new scenario card
- Repeat process with same timing

Round 3: Final Rotation (8 minutes):

- Final rotation, third scenario
- Complete observation cycle

Contrast Experience (5 minutes):

- One rotation demonstrates poor listening (looking away, crossed arms)
- Immediate discussion of difference

Group Reflection (10-15 minutes):

- Share observations and experiences
- Connect to SOLER theory



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 3

Crisis Communication Challenge



- Encourage speakers to show genuine emotion - makes listening more challenging
- Move between groups to observe and support
- Emphasize this is practice - mistakes are learning opportunities
- Have backup scenarios ready for groups that finish early



- How did it feel to be listened to using good SOLER techniques?
- What was most challenging about being the active listener?
- Observers, which SOLER component had the biggest impact when done well?
- What happened when we demonstrated poor listening? How did that change the interaction?
- Which SOLER element do you think you need to work on most?
- How might these skills help in real outdoor emergency situations?
- When else in outdoor adventures would active listening be crucial?
- What surprised you about the power of body language in communication?

Attachments:

- **Scenario Cards**
- **Solar Observation List**



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UNIT 1

TEAMWORK ESSENTIALS

This module equips youth workers with practical tools to develop effective teamwork and communication skills in outdoor settings. Through three interactive units, participants learn to understand team development stages, recognize diverse team roles, and practice active listening techniques. The module combines experiential learning with proven theoretical frameworks, making abstract concepts concrete through hands-on outdoor activities. Youth workers gain skills to facilitate better group dynamics, resolve conflicts, and create inclusive environments where all participants can contribute meaningfully to shared challenges.

Further reading (in case the reader wants to gain more knowledge on the topic)

Team Development:

- Tuckman, B. (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups"
- Bonebright, D. (2010). "40 years of storming: a historical review of Tuckman's model of small group development"

Team Roles:

- Belbin, R.M. (2010). "Team Roles at Work"
- Belbin, R.M. (2004). "Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail"

Active Listening and Communication:

- Egan, G. (2013). "The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach"
- Rogers, C. & Farson, R. (1987). "Active Listening"

Outdoor Education Applications:

- Priest, S. & Gass, M. (2005). "Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming"
- Wagstaff, M. & Attarian, A. (2009). "Technical Skills for Adventure Programming"



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MODULE 5

**SUSTAINABILITY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
RESPONSIBILITY**



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MODULE 5

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

This module supports youth workers and facilitators in guiding adolescents aged 15–18 toward a deeper understanding of their impact on the environment. It equips educators with interactive, real-world activities that develop awareness, accountability, and leadership in environmental sustainability.

Grounded in practical learning, each unit explores key aspects of sustainability; ecological footprint, ethical consumption, and eco-leadership. The goal is not only to educate but also to empower young people to adopt low-impact lifestyles and become positive change-makers in their communities. Facilitators will lead reflection sessions, hands-on challenges, and creative projects that help young people understand how their daily actions shape the future of the planet.



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UNIT 1

What Is an Ecological Footprint? (Scientific and Educational Framing)

The ecological footprint is a widely accepted sustainability metric that measures the human demand on natural resources and compares it to the Earth's capacity to regenerate those resources. Originally developed by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees in the 1990s, the concept is now central to education for sustainable development (ESD).

The ecological footprint translates abstract environmental impacts into a tangible and visual indicator: the number of "Earths" required if everyone lived like a specific individual, group, or country. For example, if your lifestyle consumes more resources than the planet can replenish, your footprint exceeds 1 Earth.

The footprint aggregates several components:

Carbon Footprint: The CO₂ emissions generated from energy use, travel, and production.

Water Footprint: The direct and indirect use of freshwater (including virtual water in food and products).

Material/Waste Impact: The land, energy, and waste associated with the lifecycle of goods and services.



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UNIT 1

What Is an Ecological Footprint? (Scientific and Educational Framing)

2. Why Teach Ecological Footprint to Youth?

Youth aged 15-18 are at a developmental stage where values, identity, and long-term thinking are beginning to form. They are highly impressionable and often motivated by justice, fairness, and autonomy — values that intersect strongly with environmental responsibility.

The Ecological Footprint

MEASURES

how fast we consume resources and generate waste



Energy



Settlement



Timber & Paper



Food & Fiber



Seafood

COMPARED TO
how fast nature can absorb our waste and generate new resources.



Carbon Footprint



Built-up land



Forest



Cropland & Pasture



Fisheries



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UNIT 1

What Is an Ecological Footprint? (Scientific and Educational Framing)

The ecological footprint model:

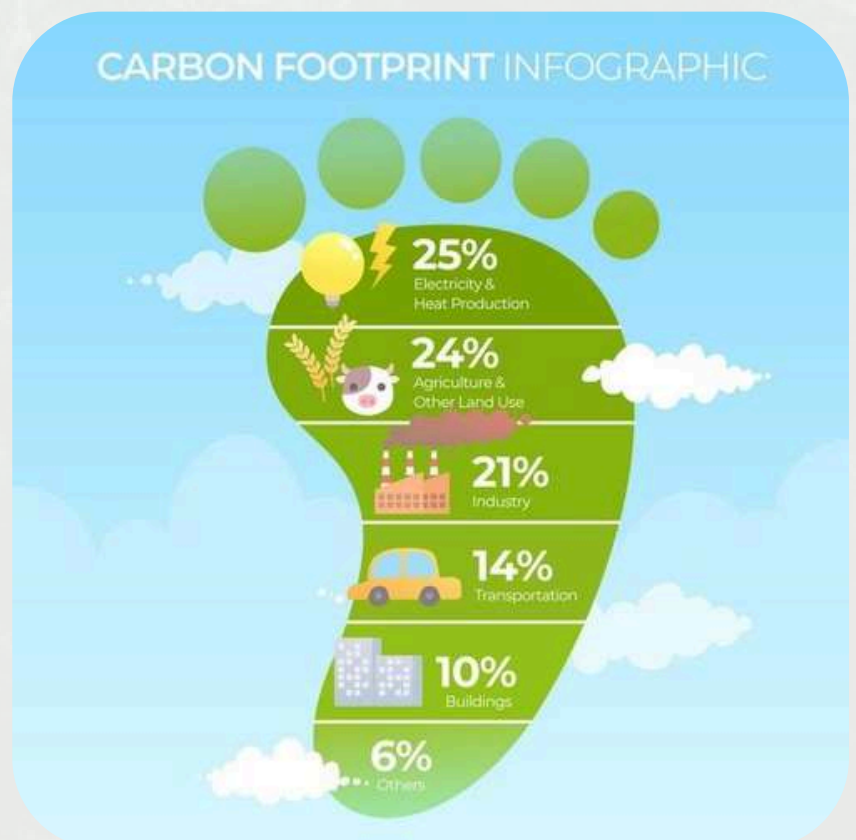
Makes invisible systems visible: It helps youth understand the hidden impacts of everyday decisions (e.g., buying a snack, taking a shower, choosing a transport method).

Promotes systems thinking: Young people begin to see the interconnection between food, energy, consumption, and climate.

Builds self-efficacy: They learn that small changes matter, especially when replicated by many.

Encourages critical consciousness: Learners begin to ask where things come from, who is affected, and what alternatives exist.

This aligns with UNESCO's education priorities for the SDGs, particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 13 (Climate Action).





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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

How Big Is Your Footprint?



Self-assessment, online tools, reflection, environmental tracking



45–60 minutes



- Internet-enabled device (smartphone, tablet, computer)
- Access to <https://www.footprintcalculator.org>
- Reflection worksheet or notebook
- Optional: visual charts for tracking water/energy/waste/transport habits



10–15 people



Participants calculate their personal ecological footprint and reflect on which habits have the greatest impact on the planet. The 3-day challenge promotes mindfulness about resource use and builds intrinsic motivation for sustainability.



Framing the Activity

Introduce the concept of an “ecological footprint” and explain its key components (carbon, water, waste). Emphasize that the purpose is awareness, not guilt.



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 1

How Big Is Your Footprint?



Calculator Use

Guide participants through the ecological footprint calculator at <https://www.footprintcalculator.org>.

Ask them to record their score: “If everyone lived like me, how many Earths would we need?”

Reflection Discussion

- What surprised you?
- Where could you easily reduce impact?
- How do your daily habits compare to others?

3-Day Footprint Challenge (Optional Extension)

Distribute or display tracking charts (energy, water, waste, transport).

Ask youth to log habits for 3 days, then reflect:

- Which category had the biggest impact?
- What small changes could reduce it?



- Normalize imperfection: “It’s not about being perfect—it’s about becoming more aware.”
- Discuss systemic vs. personal responsibility: help youth see both are important.
- Offer examples of quick wins: shorter showers, unplugging devices, walking short distances.



- What was the most surprising part of your footprint?
- Did tracking your habits change your behaviour?
- How can small changes add up over time?



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Ethical Consumption Research Project



- Inquiry-based learning, digital research, creative presentation, group collaboration



- 60–90 minutes



- Internet-enabled device (computer, tablet, or smartphone)
- Access to online research tools (search engines, ethical brand directories)
- Poster paper, markers, or presentation software (e.g. Canva, PowerPoint)
- Infographic or worksheet template (optional)
- Indoor classroom or workshop space with group seating



- 2–4 people per team



- Participants investigate a product or industry they regularly use and explore its environmental and social impact. They learn to evaluate sustainability, identify ethical alternatives, and communicate findings through presentations that raise awareness of responsible consumption.



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Ethical Consumption Research Project



1. Framing the Activity

Introduce ethical consumption as mindful decision-making that respects people, planet, and animals. Explain that this project helps uncover hidden stories behind everyday items and encourages values-based choices.

2. Choose a Product or Industry

Each group selects a common product (e.g., t-shirts, chocolate, smartphones, bottled drinks).

3. Research Phase

Ask participants to find:

- Where and how the product is made
- Environmental impact (e.g. emissions, water, pollution)
- Labor conditions (fair wages, safety, exploitation)
- Brand policies (certifications, transparency, sustainability)

4. Explore Ethical Alternatives

Find and compare ethical versions of the same product:

Local, fair trade, upcycled, biodegradable, certified ethical

Bonus: Use visual rating tools (e.g. Good On You, Ethical Consumer)



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UNIT 1

ACTIVITY 2

Ethical Consumption Research Project



5. Create a Presentation

Groups prepare an infographic, poster, or short slideshow to showcase:

- Main issues with the product
- Their ethical alternative
- Why others should care

6. Share and Discuss

Each group presents. Encourage Q&A and connect ideas between groups.



- Provide example products or industries to help groups start quickly.
- Offer a short list of trusted sources or ethical brand guides.
- Celebrate storytelling and visuals—accuracy matters, but engagement is key.
- Normalize complexity: "There isn't always a perfect product—ethical means informed, not perfect."



- What did you learn that surprised or shocked you?
- How did it feel to discover the story behind your product?
- Would you change your habits now? Why or why not?
- How can you influence others through this information?



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UNIT 2

Ethical Consumption and Sustainable Choices

What Is Ethical Consumption?

Ethical consumption refers to making everyday choices that consider environmental, social, and economic impact. It's about choosing sustainably made products, supporting fair trade, reducing waste, and favoring local and seasonal options.

Key Principles Illustrated

Sustainability: Choose durable, reusable, or low-impact products (e.g., organic cotton, bamboo goods).

Fair Trade & Social Justice: Support brands ensuring fair wages, worker rights, and ethical sourcing.

Waste Reduction: Avoid single-use items, opt for minimal or compostable packaging, and reuse materials.

Local & Seasonal: Buy locally-grown produce and support nearby artisans to reduce transport emissions and strengthen communities.

Why It Matters?

Every purchase influences global production systems.

Ethical choices reduce ecological footprints and promote transparency and accountability.

Young people have collective power—by aligning values with action, they can influence markets and peer behavior.



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UNIT 2

Ethical Consumption and Sustainable Choices

Behind the Theory

Systems Thinking: Helps youth see how production, transport, and disposal connect (use supply-chain visuals).

Moral Agency: Encourages responsible decision-making aligned with values like fairness and compassion.

Social Practice Framework: Ethical consumption is shaped by societal norms, policies, infrastructure, and peer influence

Common Barriers Young People Face

Feeling powerless to influence big systems.

Belief that ethical products are too expensive.

Peer pressure or social norms favor fast fashion or mass consumption.

Facilitator Note: Reinforce that small changes matter, ethical options can be accessible, and creativity (e.g. upcycling) is valued.



1millionwomen.com.au



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UNIT 2

ACTIVITY 1

Upcycling Challenge



- Hands-on creativity, sustainability practice, collaborative design



- 60–90 minutes (plus optional time for showcasing or drying)



- Discarded or unused items (old clothes, jars, boxes, furniture, etc.)
- Creative tools: scissors, glue, tape, paint, fabric, thread, hot glue gun (optional)
- Tables or floor space for group projects
- Optional: camera or phone for before-and-after photos
- Poster board or slideshow tools for project showcasing



- Individuals or small groups (2–3 people)



- Participants give new life to discarded materials through creative reuse. By transforming waste into something useful, stylish, or artistic, they reduce environmental impact, reflect on consumer habits, and develop practical and imaginative sustainability skills.



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UNIT 2

ACTIVITY 1

Upcycling Challenge



1. Framing the Activity

- Introduce upcycling as a fun and impactful way to reduce waste. Explain how it supports sustainability, reduces consumption, and empowers creativity.

2. Gather & Sort Materials

- Invite youth to bring or choose from available “junk” materials:
 - Old clothes, broken items, packaging, jars, boxes, unused wood/fabric

3. Brainstorm Ideas

- Ask each group to identify what they can transform. Encourage:
 - Reusable bags from shirts
 - Organizers from cardboard
 - Planters from jars
 - Art or furniture reinvention

4. Upcycling Project Time

- Let groups build their items with available tools. Provide help with cutting, stitching, or designing. Encourage both practicality and creativity.

5. Showcase & Reflect

- Have each group present their final product:
 - What it used to be
 - What it became
 - What problem it solves
 - Optional: create a gallery or photo collage with before/after shots.



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UNIT 2

ACTIVITY 1

Upcycling Challenge



- Offer upcycling examples or visual inspiration at the start.
- If tools are limited, emphasize low-tech methods (e.g., hand stitching, paper folding).
- Encourage sharing or trading ideas between teams.
- Focus on mindset: “This is about seeing value where others see trash.”



- How did it feel to repurpose something instead of throwing it away?
- What sustainable benefits do you see in this kind of practice?
- Could you upcycle more things at home or school?
- What did you learn about waste and creativity today?



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UNIT 3

Why Is Eco-Leadership Crucial Outdoors?

Outdoor spaces are living ecosystems—where trash, disturbance to wildlife, and resource depletion can happen easily. Eco-leaders encourage mindfulness—proper disposal of waste, water conservation, respect for wildlife, and group decisions that minimize environmental impact.



<https://www.cec-managers.org/>

Theoretical Foundations

Systems Thinking & Eco-Mindset

Eco-leadership recognizes communities and ecosystems as interlinked systems: humans, nature, tools, and culture all interact.

Outdoor Experiential Learning

Programs like NOLS emphasize expedition behavior and decision-making skills alongside environmental ethics and leadership roles (peer, self, designated)

Environmental Identity & Activism

Youth leadership in nature contexts builds lasting agency—encouraging responsibility and lifelong environmental commitment

British Ecological Society Journals

Collaborative Leadership Models

Eco-leadership embraces inclusive, participatory structures—encouraging all group members to contribute creatively and responsibly



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Eco-Scavenger Hunt: Discovering Sustainable Practices in Nature



- Outdoor exploration, team-based learning, sustainability observation, leadership in action



- 30–60 minutes (plus optional reflection session)



- Printed or digital scavenger hunt checklist (with eco-items to spot)
- Clipboards or phones for note-taking/photos
- Outdoor area: schoolyard, park, trail, or urban green space
- Optional: Sustainability Scoreboard, reusable gloves, trash bags
- Indoor or shaded space for post-hunt reflection



- Small teams of 3–5 people



- Participants explore an outdoor area in small teams to spot eco-friendly practices and natural features. Each team is guided by a youth leader who ensures sustainable behavior. The activity builds observational skills, reinforces sustainability habits, and fosters peer leadership in nature-based settings.



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Eco-Scavenger Hunt: Discovering Sustainable Practices in Nature



1. Framing the Activity

- Explain the purpose: "We're going to explore our environment and see how many sustainable practices we can find — and model." Introduce the checklist categories (e.g. reusable items, native plants, water sources, wildlife signs, composting).

2. Distribute Materials

- Give each team:
 - A printed checklist or mobile version
 - A pencil or phone for notes/photos
 - Optional: gloves or a reusable bag for litter pick-up

3. Organize Teams & Assign Leadership

- Form teams of 3–5 participants. Each team designates one Eco-Leader to:
 - Ensure the group stays respectful to nature
 - Encourage sustainable actions (e.g. picking up litter)
 - Support quieter team members to contribute

4. The Hunt Begins!

- Set a clear time limit (30–45 minutes). Teams explore and check off as many items/practices as possible.



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 1

Eco-Scavenger Hunt: Discovering Sustainable Practices in Nature



5. Group Reflection

- Bring everyone together to debrief. Ask each team to:
 - Share 3–5 things they discovered
 - Describe what the Eco-Leader did
 - Reflect on any surprises or challenges



- Choose a space with natural diversity and human impact (trails, bins, signs).
- Highlight observation over speed — "The most aware team wins!"
- Encourage photographing instead of touching wildlife/natural features.



- What sustainable actions did you observe in your environment?
- How did your team apply eco-friendly behavior during the activity?
- What leadership moments stood out in your team?
- What could be improved or added in your community to support sustainability?



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 2

Nature Clean-Up Challenge: Leading a Group Cleanup with a Purpose



- Service-based learning, eco-leadership practice, outdoor teamwork, environmental action



- 60–90 minutes



- Reusable gloves, buckets or bags for trash (sorted if possible)
- Sorting bins or boxes (recyclables, compost, general waste)
- Camera or phone for documenting before/after
- First aid kit and water
- Outdoor cleanup site (park, beach, roadside, schoolyard)



- 8–20 participants divided into 2–4 functional teams



- In this challenge, teens organize and lead an outdoor cleanup to reduce human impact and foster a sense of stewardship. Through assigned roles and leadership responsibility, participants learn how to lead peers, promote eco-conscious behavior, and reflect on their environmental contribution.



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 2

Nature Clean-Up Challenge: Leading a Group Cleanup with a Purpose



1. Framing the Activity

- Open with: “Today, you’re not just participants — you’re cleanup leaders.” Emphasize leadership, safety, and environmental impact.

2. Set a Cleanup Goal

- Examples: “Let’s collect 10 kg of waste,” or “Sort and recycle at least 3 categories of litter.” Define time constraints (45–60 min for cleanup).

3. Assign Roles Within Each Group

- Group Leader: Manages time, safety, and group focus
- Waste Trackers: Weigh or count the collected items
- Photographers: Document the process and final result
- Sorters: Categorize trash into recycling, compost, general waste

4. Begin the Cleanup

- Ensure gear and boundaries are clear. Allow enough time for teams to act and adjust their approach.

5. Reflection and Showcase

- Once finished, document and share:
- Before/after photos
- What types of waste were most common
- What leadership looked like in action



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UNIT 3

ACTIVITY 2

Nature Clean-Up Challenge: Leading a Group Cleanup with a Purpose



- Make sure the area is safe and approved for cleanup.
- Have a disposal plan ready in advance.
- Recognize and celebrate all team efforts equally.
- Play upbeat music or create team badges to boost engagement.



- What role did you play and what did you learn from it?
- How did the team handle challenges (weather, motivation, sorting)?
- What changes would make this area cleaner long-term?
- How did it feel to lead or support a cleanup effort?



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MODULE 5

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Module 5 empowers young people to become conscious, responsible stewards of the environment by making sustainability personal, practical, and actionable. The module blends foundational theory with experiential activities to build awareness in three key areas: ecological footprint, ethical consumption, and eco-leadership.

Through interactive challenges like footprint tracking, product research, upcycling projects, eco-scavenger hunts, and clean-up leadership, participants not only learn about environmental issues—they learn to lead solutions.

Key theoretical underpinnings include:

Ecological systems thinking: Understanding the interdependence of consumption, production, and planetary health

Behavior change theory: Motivation, ability, and environmental “triggers” influence sustainable action

Environmental identity development: Helping youth align values, lifestyle, and leadership

Youth agency and civic responsibility: Equipping teens to advocate for change in their communities



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MODULE 5

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Impact:

This module cultivates a generation of eco-literate leaders who make intentional choices and influence others through example and action. It shifts mindsets from passive awareness to empowered environmental citizenship, preparing youth not only to reduce their personal impact but to lead transformative change within peer groups, schools, and families.

By linking internal values with visible action, the module builds sustainable habits, boosts confidence, and fosters a hopeful sense of control in a time of climate anxiety.

Resources

Websites & Tools

-  Global Footprint Network – Ecological Footprint Calculator
<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/home/en>
-  WWF – Living Planet Report <https://www.wwf.org.uk/>
-  Good On You – Ethical Brand Ratings <https://goodonyou.eco/>
-  Ethical Consumer – Product & Company Guides
<https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>
-  Fair Trade International – Certification Information
<https://www.fairtrade.net/iberica-pt.html>
-  B Corporation Directory – Certified Ethical Companies
<https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/find-a-b-corp/>
-  Leave No Trace – Outdoor Ethics and Sustainability <https://lnt.org>
-  Fashion Revolution – Who Made My Clothes?
<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/>








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MODULE 5



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Resources

Books & Publications

-  The Story of Stuff – Annie Leonard
-  The Green Teen Handbook – Jenn Savedge
-  Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things – William McDonough & Michael Braungart
-  Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things – John C. Ryan & Alan Thein Durning
-  Environmental Education and the Role of Youth Leadership – Journal of Environmental Education

Videos

-  [The Story of Stuff](#) – Animated Explainer
-  [What Is Ethical Consumption?](#) – BBC Earth Lab



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MODULE 6

MENTORSHIP GUIDE



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MODULE 6

MENTORSHIP GUIDE

This mentorship guide is designed for youth workers supporting peer facilitators aged 15-18 in outdoor education settings. As part of the InsideOUT project's commitment to building resilience and self-reliance among young people, this guide recognises that effective peer facilitation requires skilled mentorship. You play a crucial role in developing the next generation of outdoor education leaders by sharing your experience, providing guidance, and creating safe spaces for growth.

The peer facilitators you mentor are not just learning to work with their contemporaries—they are developing essential life skills, building confidence, and discovering their potential as leaders. Your mentorship creates a ripple effect extending beyond individual relationships,



contributing to a sustainable network of skilled facilitators who can authentically connect with and support other young people. This guide provides practical tools, strategies, and frameworks to help you navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of mentoring in outdoor education, ensuring that you and your mentees can thrive in this important work.



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UNIT 1

Understanding Your Role as a Mentor

What is Mentoring in Outdoor Education?

Mentoring in outdoor education is a supportive relationship where you guide peer facilitators in developing their leadership skills while working with adolescents in nature-based settings. Your role combines the wisdom of experience with the flexibility to adapt to dynamic outdoor environments. You create a safe space for learning while encouraging independence and growth.

Your Core Responsibilities

As a mentor, you share your experience and knowledge with peer facilitators who are beginning a journey you have already travelled. You have walked the path of working with young people in outdoor settings, faced similar challenges, and learned valuable lessons along the way.

This experience allows you to provide relevant guidance and realistic expectations.

You support peer facilitators on their own unique journey, but you don't create that journey for them. Each mentee will develop their own style, make their own discoveries, and learn from their own experiences. Your role is to be a trusted guide who offers perspective, encouragement, and practical wisdom when needed.

You also serve as a connector, helping mentees build professional networks by introducing them to other youth workers, outdoor educators, and professionals who can contribute to their development. This network-building is an essential part of their growth as outdoor education facilitators.





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UNIT 1

Understanding Your Role as a Mentor

What Mentoring is NOT

Understanding what mentoring is not helps you maintain appropriate boundaries and realistic expectations:

- Not a therapist - You don't provide psychological treatment or address deep emotional issues
- Not a parent - You don't replace family relationships or assume parental authority
- Not a doctor - You don't diagnose medical conditions or provide medical advice
- Not a teacher - You don't deliver formal curriculum or assign grades
- Not a friend - You maintain professional boundaries while being supportive and approachable
- Not a supervisor - You guide and support rather than direct or control

The Unique Outdoor Context

Outdoor settings present unique opportunities and challenges for mentoring. Nature provides a level playing field where traditional hierarchies often dissolve, creating authentic learning moments. However, outdoor environments also require heightened attention to safety and adaptability to changing conditions.

Your mentoring approach must be flexible enough to handle unexpected weather, group dynamics, and the physical demands of outdoor activities while maintaining focus on peer facilitator development.



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UNIT 2

Building Effective Mentoring Relationships

Understanding Your Mentees

Adolescents aged 15-18 are at a unique developmental stage where they're forming their identity while seeking independence. As peer facilitators, they're taking on leadership responsibilities that can feel both exciting and overwhelming. They want to be seen as capable adults while still needing guidance and support. These young people are naturally motivated to connect with their peers and often bring fresh energy and authentic perspectives to outdoor education. However, they may also experience self-doubt, fear of judgment, or uncertainty about their abilities. Understanding this balance helps you provide appropriate support.

Initial Relationship Building Strategies

Building trust starts with showing genuine interest in your mentee as an individual. Begin by learning about their motivations, interests, and concerns. Ask open-ended questions about what drew them to peer facilitation and what they hope to achieve.

Create a welcoming environment where they feel comfortable expressing doubts or asking questions.

Share appropriate stories from your own experience without overwhelming them with advice.

Remember that relationship building is a gradual process that requires consistency and patience.

Demonstrate reliability by following through on commitments and being present when you say you will be. Young people are particularly sensitive to adults who make promises they don't keep.





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UNIT 2

Building Effective Mentoring Relationships

Setting Clear Expectations and Boundaries

Establish clear expectations about the mentoring relationship from the beginning. Discuss what they can expect from you as a mentor and what you expect from them as a mentee. Be specific about communication methods, meeting schedules, and response times.

Set professional boundaries while remaining approachable. Explain confidentiality limits and when you might need to involve other adults. Make it clear that your role is to support their professional development, not to be their personal counselor or friend.

Create agreements about how you'll work together, including how they prefer to receive feedback and what support they need most. This collaborative approach helps them feel invested in the relationship.

Communication Techniques That Respect Adolescent Autonomy

Use communication approaches that acknowledge their growing independence and decision-making abilities. Ask for their input before offering solutions, and encourage them to think through challenges before providing answers.

Practice active listening by reflecting back what you hear and asking clarifying questions. Avoid interrupting or rushing to fix problems. Instead, guide them toward their own solutions through thoughtful questioning.

Respect their communication style and preferences. Some may prefer face-to-face conversations, while others might be more comfortable with text or email follow-ups. Adapt your approach to meet their needs while maintaining professional standards.



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UNIT 2

Building Effective Mentoring Relationships

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusive Practices

Recognize that each mentee brings their own cultural background, experiences, and perspectives. Take time to understand how their cultural identity might influence their approach to leadership and peer interaction.

Be aware of your own cultural biases and how they might affect your mentoring approach. Create space for mentees to express their cultural values and incorporate them into their facilitation style when appropriate.

Ensure that your mentoring practices are inclusive of different learning styles, communication preferences, and life experiences. What works for one mentee may not work for another, and flexibility is key to effective mentoring.



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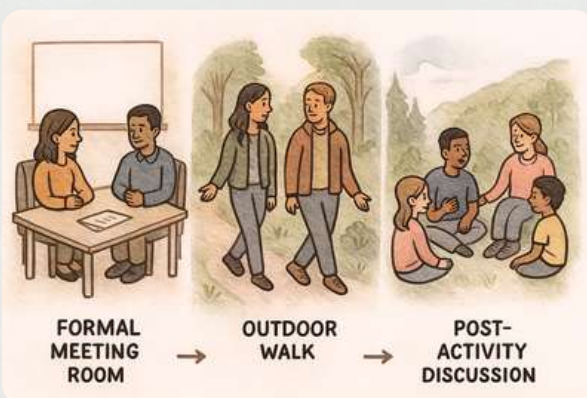
UNIT 3

Setting Up Effective Mentoring Meetings

Determining Meeting Frequency and Duration

The frequency of your mentoring meetings depends on your mentee's experience level and current challenges. New peer facilitators typically benefit from weekly check-ins, while more experienced mentees may need bi-weekly or monthly meetings. Start with more frequent contact and adjust based on their growing confidence and independence.

When establishing meeting schedules, consider both your mentee's needs and your own availability. A sustainable mentoring relationship requires a schedule that works for both parties. Be realistic about what you can commit to consistently, as irregular meetings due to overcommitment can undermine trust and progress. Keep meetings focused and manageable. Most effective mentoring conversations last 30-60 minutes, allowing enough time for meaningful discussion without overwhelming busy schedules. Shorter, more frequent meetings often work better than long, infrequent sessions.



Be flexible and responsive to your mentee's needs while maintaining your own boundaries. During challenging periods or before big events, you might increase meeting frequency. During stable periods, you can space meetings further apart while maintaining regular contact.



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UNIT 3

Setting Up Effective Mentoring Meetings

Choosing Appropriate Meeting Formats

Vary your meeting formats to keep engagement high and match different purposes. Formal sit-down meetings work well for goal setting, serious discussions, and structured feedback sessions. These provide focused time for deep conversation and planning.

Informal meetings can happen during shared activities, walks, or casual conversations. These often lead to more natural discussions and help mentees feel comfortable sharing concerns or asking questions they might hesitate to bring up in formal settings.

Consider the outdoor education context when planning meetings. Sometimes the best mentoring conversations happen during or immediately after outdoor activities when experiences are fresh and learning moments are apparent.

Creating Structured Meeting Agendas

Structure helps ensure productive meetings while allowing flexibility for emerging topics. Start each meeting with a brief check-in about their current challenges and successes. This gives you insight into their state of mind and immediate needs.

Include regular agenda items such as reviewing progress on previous goals, discussing recent experiences, addressing current challenges, and planning for upcoming activities. End meetings by summarizing key points and agreeing on next steps.

Prepare a simple template that you can adapt for different meetings, but remain flexible enough to follow important conversations that arise naturally. The agenda should serve your discussion, not restrict it.

MEETING AGENDA

Date: _____ Time: _____

CHECK-IN

GOAL REVIEW

CURRENT CHALLENGES

UPCOMING PLANS

NEXT STEPS

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS



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UNIT 3

Setting Up Effective Mentoring Meetings

Balancing Scheduled Meetings with Spontaneous Check-ins

While regular meetings provide structure and reliability, spontaneous check-ins often capture important learning moments. Be available for brief conversations when your mentee faces immediate challenges or wants to share successes.

Create multiple ways for mentees to reach you between formal meetings, such as quick text messages, brief phone calls, or informal conversations when you see each other. Make it easy for them to ask for support when they need it.

Establish expectations about response times and availability. Be clear about when you're accessible for impromptu conversations and when you might need to schedule time to talk properly.

Adapting Meeting Styles to Individual Mentee Preferences

Pay attention to how your mentee communicates best and adapt your meeting style accordingly. Some prefer direct, structured conversations, while others need time to warm up and share gradually. Some think out loud, while others need time to process before responding.

Consider their personality and learning style when planning meetings. Introverted mentees might prefer one-on-one settings, while extroverted ones might benefit from occasional group discussions or meetings that include other peer facilitators. Ask directly about their preferences and adjust your approach based on their feedback. What meeting style helps them feel most comfortable and engaged?



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UNIT 3

Setting Up Effective Mentoring Meetings

Documentation and Follow-up Strategies

Keep simple records of your meetings to track progress and follow through on commitments. Note key discussion points, agreed-upon actions, and areas for continued focus. This documentation helps maintain continuity and shows your mentee that you take their development seriously.

Send brief follow-up messages after meetings to confirm next steps and provide any resources or contacts you promised to share. This reinforces important points and demonstrates your commitment to supporting their growth.

Create a simple tracking system that works for you, whether it's a digital note-taking app, a physical notebook, or a shared document with your mentee. The key is consistency and accessibility when you need to reference previous conversations.



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UNIT 4

Goal Setting with Peer Facilitators

SMART Goal-Setting Techniques for Peer Facilitators

Effective goal setting provides direction and motivation for your mentee's development. Use the SMART framework to help peer facilitators create goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This structure turns vague aspirations like "I want to be better at facilitation" into concrete objectives like "I will lead two icebreaker activities confidently during next month's outdoor sessions."

Guide your mentee through each SMART component. Help them identify specific skills they want to develop, determine how they'll measure progress, ensure goals are realistic given their current abilities, connect goals to their role as peer facilitators, and set realistic deadlines.

Remember that goal setting is a collaborative process. While you bring experience and perspective, your mentee should be the primary decision-maker about their development priorities. Your role is to help them think through their goals and make them more achievable.



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UNIT 4

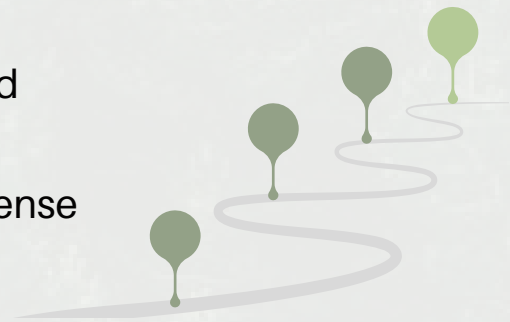
Goal Setting with Peer Facilitators

Short-term vs. Long-term Goal Planning

Balance immediate skill development with longer-term vision building. Short-term goals (1-3 months) should focus on specific, achievable skills like learning new activity facilitation techniques or improving communication with challenging group members.

Long-term goals (6-12 months) can address broader development areas such as becoming a confident outdoor leader or developing expertise in conflict resolution. These goals provide direction and motivation while allowing flexibility in how they're achieved.

Help your mentee see how short-term goals build toward long-term objectives. This connection helps maintain motivation during challenging periods and provides a sense of progress and achievement along the way.



Breaking Down Complex Goals into Manageable Steps

Large goals can feel overwhelming, especially for young people who may lack experience with long-term planning. Help your mentee break complex objectives into smaller, actionable steps that feel achievable.

For example, if a mentee wants to "become confident leading outdoor activities," help them identify specific components: learning safety protocols, practising activity instructions, managing group dynamics, and handling unexpected situations. Each component becomes a smaller goal with its own action steps. Create action plans that specify what needs to be done, when it will happen, and what resources or support are needed. This detailed planning makes big goals feel manageable and provides clear next steps.



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UNIT 4

Goal Setting with Peer Facilitators

Regular Goal Review and Adjustment Processes

Schedule regular goal review sessions to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. Monthly reviews work well for most mentoring relationships, providing enough time to make progress while maintaining momentum.

During reviews, celebrate achievements and acknowledge effort, even when goals aren't fully met. Help your mentee analyse what worked well and what challenges they encountered. Use this information to adjust goals or strategies for better success.

Be prepared to modify goals based on changing circumstances, new interests, or unexpected opportunities. Flexibility in goal setting demonstrates that adaptation is a valuable skill, not a failure.



Celebrating Achievements and Learning from Setbacks

Recognition and celebration are crucial for maintaining motivation and building confidence. Acknowledge both major achievements and small wins along the way. Help your mentee recognise their progress and take pride in their development. When goals aren't met or setbacks occur, frame these as learning opportunities rather than failures. Help your mentee analyse what happened, what they learned, and how they can apply it moving forward.

Encourage self-reflection about the goal-setting and achievement process. What types of goals motivate them most? What obstacles tend to derail their progress? How can they better support their own success? This meta-learning builds lifelong skills for continuous improvement.



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UNIT 5

Providing Effective Feedback

Creating Safe Spaces for Feedback Conversations

Effective feedback requires a foundation of trust and psychological safety. Choose appropriate settings for feedback conversations, ensuring privacy and freedom from distractions. The physical environment should feel comfortable and non-threatening, whether it's a quiet indoor space or a peaceful outdoor setting.

Begin feedback conversations by establishing a supportive tone. Remind your mentee that feedback is intended to help them grow and succeed in their role as a peer facilitator. Emphasise that you share observations to support their development, not criticise or judge them personally.

Create an atmosphere where your mentee feels comfortable asking questions, sharing their perspective, or expressing concerns about the feedback. Make it clear that feedback conversations are dialogues, not one-way lectures, and that their input and reactions are valuable parts of the process. Remember to provide feedback only when your mentee asks for it, otherwise it can resemble criticism.

Balancing Positive Reinforcement with Constructive Criticism

Structure your feedback using a balanced approach that acknowledges strengths while addressing areas for improvement. Start with specific observations about what your mentee is doing well, highlighting their progress and effective facilitation techniques.

When addressing areas for growth, focus on specific behaviors and situations rather than personality traits. Instead of saying "You're too quiet," try "I noticed you seemed hesitant to speak up when the group became chaotic. Let's explore some strategies for asserting yourself in those moments."

End feedback conversations on a positive note by reaffirming your confidence in their abilities and summarising the key strengths they can build upon. This approach helps maintain motivation while encouraging growth.



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UNIT 5

Providing Effective Feedback

Real-time Feedback During Outdoor Activities

Outdoor education settings provide unique opportunities for immediate, relevant feedback. When you observe teachable moments during activities, find appropriate ways to offer quick guidance without undermining your mentee's authority with the group.

Use subtle signals or brief private conversations during natural breaks in activities. A thumbs up, encouraging nod, or quick whispered suggestion can provide support without disrupting the flow of the session.

Save detailed feedback discussions for after the activity when you can have a proper conversation without distracting from the group experience. However, brief positive reinforcement during activities can boost confidence and encourage continued good practices.

Structured Feedback Sessions and Reflection Techniques

Establish regular feedback sessions that provide dedicated time for thorough discussion of your mentee's development. Use structured approaches that help organise the conversation and ensure important topics are covered.

Guide your mentee through self-reflection before offering your observations. Ask questions like "How do you think that activity went?" or "What would you do differently next time?" This approach helps them develop self-awareness and critical thinking skills.

Use specific examples from recent experiences to illustrate your points. Instead of general statements, reference particular moments: "When Sarah was upset during the trust exercise, you handled it well by giving her space while staying nearby in case she needed support."



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UNIT 5

Providing Effective Feedback

Helping Peer Facilitators Self-Assess and Reflect

Develop your mentee's ability to evaluate their own performance by teaching them reflective questioning techniques. Help them identify what went well, what they found challenging, and what they learned from each experience.

Provide frameworks for self-assessment that they can use independently. Simple questions like "What was my biggest success today?" "What challenged me most?" and "What will I try differently next time?" can become regular reflection habits. Encourage them to keep a reflection journal or log where they can record insights, questions, and observations about their facilitation experiences. This practice builds self-awareness and helps track growth over time.

Addressing Challenges and Areas for Improvement Sensitive

When discussing areas that need improvement, be specific about behaviors rather than making general criticisms. Focus on actions they can change rather than personality characteristics they cannot easily modify.

Frame challenges as normal parts of the learning process. Share examples from your own experience or from other peer facilitators who have faced similar challenges. This helps normalize struggles and reduces feelings of inadequacy. Collaborate on problem-solving rather than simply pointing out problems. Ask "What ideas do you have for handling this differently?" or "What support would help you feel more confident in these situations?" This approach empowers them to take ownership of their growth.



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UNIT 6

Practical Tools, Safety, and Sustainability

Crisis Management and Safety Protocols While Building Independence

Balance allowing peer facilitators to develop independence with ensuring participant safety. Establish clear protocols for different crisis levels, from minor conflicts to serious safety concerns or emotional distress.

Create a decision-making framework that helps peer facilitators assess when they can handle situations independently versus when they need adult support. Teach them to recognize warning signs and trust their instincts about seeking help. Practice crisis scenarios through role-playing. This builds competence and confidence while ensuring they know backup support is available.

Supporting Peer Facilitators Through Outdoor Challenges

When your mentee faces difficult group dynamics, weather issues, or activity problems, position yourself as a supportive resource rather than immediately taking over. Guide them through problem-solving by asking strategic questions: "What's causing this conflict?" "What options do we have?" "How might you re-engage that withdrawn participant?"

Be physically present and available while allowing them to lead. Your presence provides security while your restraint allows authentic learning to occur.



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UNIT 6

Practical Tools, Safety, and Sustainability

When to Step In vs. Allowing Learning Through Experience

Step in immediately when safety is at risk, situations exceed your mentee's skill level, or participant well-being is threatened. Allow learning through experience when situations are manageable and struggling through challenges will build valuable skills.

Establish clear signals with your mentee for when they want help—eye contact, a phrase, or gesture that doesn't undermine their authority with the group.



Preparing Peer Facilitators for Independence and Future Mentor Roles

Gradually increase responsibility and reduce direct involvement as peer facilitators develop competence. Help them build support networks beyond your relationship through introductions to other professionals and development opportunities. Encourage capable peer facilitators to begin mentoring newer facilitators. This transition from mentee to mentor represents ultimate success and creates program sustainability.

Self-Care Strategies for Mentors to Prevent Burnout

Recognize burnout signs: feeling overwhelmed, dreading meetings, or losing patience. Establish and maintain boundaries around availability while modeling healthy work-life balance.

Seek support from other mentors when facing difficult situations. Create sustainable practices like limiting simultaneous mentees, taking breaks between relationships, or pursuing professional development.



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MODULE 7

PEER FACILITATION MANUAL



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MODULE 7

PEER FACILITATION MANUAL



Welcome to peer facilitation in outdoor education! This manual is designed for experienced volunteers, youth leaders, and educators who want to harness the power of peer-to-peer learning in outdoor settings. While your InsideOUT Guidebook provides content for young people and your Toolkit offers structured activities, this manual focuses specifically on the facilitation skills you need to help peers aged 15-18 learn from each other effectively.

As a peer educator, you're not the traditional "teacher" – you're a guide who creates conditions for authentic learning relationships to flourish naturally in outdoor environments. The four units ahead will give you practical tools, techniques, and strategies to navigate group dynamics, structure meaningful experiences, and support young people as they become both teachers and learners in their outdoor education journey.



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UNIT 1

Foundations of Peer Facilitation in Outdoor Education

What Makes Peer Learning Special?

When young people learn from each other, something magical happens. They speak the same language, share similar experiences, and connect on a level that adults sometimes can't reach. In outdoor education, this peer connection becomes even stronger because everyone faces the same challenges together

– whether it's building a shelter, navigating through unknown terrain, or working as a team to solve problems.



Your Role as a Peer Educator

As a peer educator, you're not the traditional "teacher" standing at the front with all the answers. Instead, you're more like a skilled guide who helps create the right conditions for learning to happen naturally between peers. You facilitate connections, ask the right questions, and step in when needed – but most importantly, you trust your group to learn from each other.

Think of yourself as a bridge between the structured toolkit materials and the real, authentic experiences of the young people you're working with. You help translate activities into meaningful peer interactions.



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UNIT 1

Foundations of Peer Facilitation in Outdoor Education

Building the Foundation: Trust and Safety

Before any real peer learning can happen, you need to create an environment where young people feel safe to be vulnerable, make mistakes, and share their thoughts honestly. In outdoor settings, this psychological safety becomes even more crucial because participants often face physical challenges that can make them feel exposed or uncertain.

Start every session by establishing ground rules together with your group. Let them contribute to creating a space where everyone feels heard and respected. Remember: when people feel safe, they're more willing to learn from each other.

The rules can include:

- Active listening
- Learning from each other
- No judgment zones
- Shared challenges
- Mutual support
- Failure is a learning point

The Outdoor Advantage

Outdoor environments naturally break down social barriers and hierarchies that might exist in classroom settings. When everyone is learning to start a fire or navigate together, traditional social roles fade away. The shy student might turn out to be excellent at reading weather patterns, while the usual leader might struggle with knot-tying and need help from others.

This natural leveling effect makes outdoor education perfect for peer facilitation. Use this to your advantage by choosing activities that allow different group members to shine and teach others.



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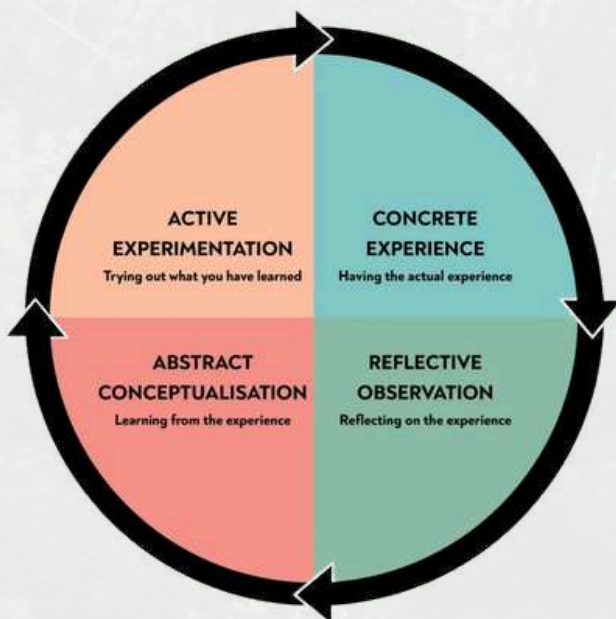
UNIT 2

Applying Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in Peer Facilitation

Understanding the Learning Cycle

David Kolb discovered that people learn best when they move through four stages: doing something (Concrete Experience), thinking about what happened (Reflective Observation), understanding why it worked or didn't work (Abstract Conceptualization), and trying it again with improvements (Active Experimentation). This cycle is perfect for outdoor peer learning because it mirrors how we naturally learn from experience.

As a peer educator, your job is to guide your group through each stage, making sure they don't get stuck in just "doing" without reflecting, or "thinking" without acting.



Stage 1: Concrete Experience - "Let's Do This Together"

This is where peers dive into hands-on activities from the toolkit. Whether they're learning fire-building techniques or practicing navigation skills, encourage them to work in pairs or small groups. Let them experience challenges, make mistakes, and discover things together. Your role here is minimal – just ensure safety and let the experience unfold naturally.

Don't rush to fix problems or give answers. Let peers struggle a bit and help each other figure things out. This builds stronger connections and deeper learning.



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UNIT 2

Applying Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in Peer Facilitation

Stage 2: Reflective Observation - "What Just Happened?"

After the activity, create space for peers to share their experiences with each other. Use questions like: "What did you notice?" "How did it feel when...?" "What was different from what you expected?" Encourage them to listen to each other's perspectives – often peers will notice different things about the same experience.



This stage is crucial for peer learning because young people often process experiences differently when they hear how others felt or what others observed.

Stage 3: Abstract Conceptualization - "Why Did That Work?"

Help peers connect their experiences to bigger principles or concepts. This is where you can gently introduce relevant information from your toolkit materials, but let it emerge from their observations first. Ask questions like: "Based on what you experienced, what do you think are the key principles of...?" or "How does this connect to what we learned about...?"

Encourage peers to teach each other the "why" behind what they discovered. Often, when a peer explains a concept they just figured out, it sticks better for everyone.



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UNIT 2

Applying Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in Peer Facilitation

Stage 4: Active Experimentation - "Let's Try It Better"

Now peers get to test their new understanding. Give them opportunities to apply what they've learned in new situations or to teach others what they've discovered. This might mean trying the same activity with improvements, or applying the principles to a completely different challenge.

This stage is where real peer facilitation shines - experienced learners naturally become teachers for newer group members, creating ongoing cycles of peer learning.

Making the Cycle Flow

Remember, not everyone learns at the same pace or in the same style. Some peers love jumping into action, while others prefer to observe first. Help create multiple entry points into the cycle, but make sure everyone experiences all four stages eventually. The magic happens when peers support each other through the parts that feel less natural to them.



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UNIT 3

Essential Facilitation Techniques and Tools for Peer Educators

The Art of Asking the Right Questions

The most powerful tool in your facilitation toolkit isn't giving answers – it's asking questions that help peers discover answers together. Instead of saying "Here's how you tie this knot," try asking "What do you think would make this knot stronger?" or "Who has an idea about why this knot might be better for this situation?"

Open-ended questions spark peer discussions, while closed questions shut them down. Questions starting with "What if...?", "How might we...?", and "What do you think about...?" invite multiple perspectives and encourage peers to build on each other's ideas.

Reading the Room: When to Step In, When to Step Back

Learning to read group dynamics is crucial for peer facilitation. Watch for signs that productive peer learning is happening: people are engaged, asking each other questions, building on ideas, and helping each other. When you see this, step back and let it flow – even if the conversation goes in directions you didn't plan.

Step in when you notice safety concerns, one person dominating the discussion, or the group getting completely stuck. But even then, try facilitation techniques first: "I'm noticing some quiet voices – what are your thoughts?" rather than taking over the conversation.



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UNIT 3

Essential Facilitation Techniques and Tools for Peer Educators

When Your Group Hits a Wall: Getting Unstuck

Sometimes your group will face a topic or challenge where they genuinely don't know where to start. Don't panic – this is actually a great learning opportunity!

Instead of jumping in with explanations, try these gentle nudges:

Start with what they DO know: "This might be new territory, but what experiences have you had that might be related?" or "What have you seen in movies or heard from others about this?" Often, peers have more relevant knowledge than they realize.

Use the "educated guess" approach: "Based on what we've learned so far, what's your best guess about how this might work?" This removes the pressure of being "right" and encourages experimentation.

Try the "think out loud" technique: "Let's brainstorm together – even wild ideas are welcome. What comes to mind when you think about this challenge?" Write down all suggestions without judgment.

Your Body Language Speaks Louder Than Words

In outdoor settings, your physical presence communicates volumes. Position yourself at eye level with your group – sit on the ground or a log rather than standing over them.

Use open gestures and maintain relaxed body language. When peers are working through challenges together, resist the urge to hover. Instead, find a spot where you can observe without making them feel watched.

Your facial expressions and energy level set the tone for the group. If you're anxious or tense, peers will pick up on that. Stay calm and confident, especially when things don't go according to plan.





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UNIT 3

Essential Facilitation Techniques and Tools for Peer Educators

Using Toolkit Materials as Conversation Starters

Your toolkit materials aren't scripts to follow word-for-word. Instead, think of them as conversation starters and activity frameworks that peers can adapt and make their own. Before introducing any activity, ask the group what they already know about the topic. Let their existing knowledge and questions guide how you present the material.

Encourage peers to modify activities based on their group's interests and abilities. When someone suggests a variation, ask the group "What do you think about trying it that way?" This builds ownership and investment in the learning process.

Creating Space for Different Voices

Not everyone feels comfortable speaking up in groups, especially outdoors where some people might feel less confident. Use techniques like "think-pair-share" where people first reflect individually, then discuss with a partner, before sharing with the larger group. This gives quieter participants multiple chances to process and contribute.

Pay attention to who's not speaking and gently create opportunities for them: "Sarah, I noticed you had a thoughtful expression when we were talking about navigation - what were you thinking?" But never force participation - some people contribute better through actions than words.

The Power of Silence

Don't be afraid of quiet moments after you ask questions. Count to ten slowly in your head before speaking again. Often, the most thoughtful responses come after a pause when peers have time to really think. Resist the urge to fill every silence - sometimes the best peer learning happens in those quiet moments when people are processing together.



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UNIT 4

Managing Challenges and Group Dynamics in Peer Settings

The Dominator: When One Voice Drowns Out Others

Every group has that one person who always has something to say, jumps in first, or thinks they know everything. While enthusiasm is great, dominators can shut down peer learning by making others feel their contributions aren't valued. Your job isn't to silence them, but to redirect their energy productively.

Try techniques like "Thanks for that idea, Jake. Let's hear what others are thinking before we dive deeper" or "I can see you're excited about



this – would you be willing to help me make sure everyone gets a chance to share?" Sometimes, giving dominators a specific role (like timekeeper or encourager) channels their energy while creating space for others.

The Silent Treatment: Drawing Out Reluctant Participants

Some people process internally and need more time or different approaches to feel comfortable contributing. Don't assume silence means disengagement – they might be thinking deeply or feeling uncertain about their ideas. Avoid putting them on the spot with direct questions in front of the whole group.

Instead, try approaching them during activity time for a quiet conversation: "I noticed you had an interesting expression when we were talking about shelter building – what were you thinking?" or create small group opportunities where quieter voices often emerge naturally. Sometimes, offering non-verbal ways to contribute (like demonstrating a skill or helping with equipment) opens doors to verbal participation later.



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UNIT 4

Managing Challenges and Group Dynamics in Peer Settings

Peer Conflicts: When Things Get Personal



When you put peers together in challenging outdoor situations, conflicts are inevitable. The key is addressing them quickly before they poison the group dynamic. Most peer conflicts stem from misunderstandings, different communication styles, or feeling unheard rather than genuine dislike.

Use the "separate, reflect, reconnect" approach: briefly separate conflicting individuals, help each reflect on what happened from their perspective, then facilitate a conversation where they can hear each other. Ask questions like "What were you hoping would happen?" and "How do you think they experienced that situation?"

Remember, your role isn't to be a judge but to help peers understand each other and find ways to work together effectively.

The Authority Challenge: "Why Should We Listen to You?"

As a peer educator, you're often closer in age to your participants than traditional instructors, which can sometimes lead to challenges to your authority. This is actually normal and healthy – peers testing boundaries shows they're engaging with you as a real person rather than just following rules blindly.

Acknowledge the challenge directly but don't get defensive: "You're right that I'm not that much older than you. I'm here because I've had some experiences with these activities that might be helpful, but honestly, we're all learning together."

Emphasise your role as a facilitator rather than an expert, and demonstrate your value through your skills rather than demanding respect.



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UNIT 4

Managing Challenges and Group Dynamics in Peer Settings

Cultural and Social Divides: Bridging Different Worlds

Outdoor education brings together peers from different backgrounds, and sometimes cultural or social differences create invisible barriers to peer learning. Someone might feel excluded because they don't have expensive outdoor gear, or cultural differences might affect communication styles or comfort with certain activities.

Be proactive about creating inclusive environments. Address practical barriers (like equipment access) and watch for subtle signs of exclusion. Use your position to highlight different perspectives as strengths: "That's interesting - in your family/culture, how do you approach problem-solving like this?" Help peers see differences as learning opportunities rather than divisions.

When the Group Dynamic Just Isn't Working

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, the group chemistry is off. Maybe there are pre-existing conflicts, the activity level doesn't match the group's needs, or personalities just clash. Don't take it personally - group dynamics are complex and not always within your control.

Have backup strategies ready: break into smaller groups, change the activity focus, or take a reset break. Sometimes acknowledging the situation openly helps: "I'm sensing some tension in our group today. What would help us work better together?" Often, peers appreciate honesty and will help problem-solve group issues.



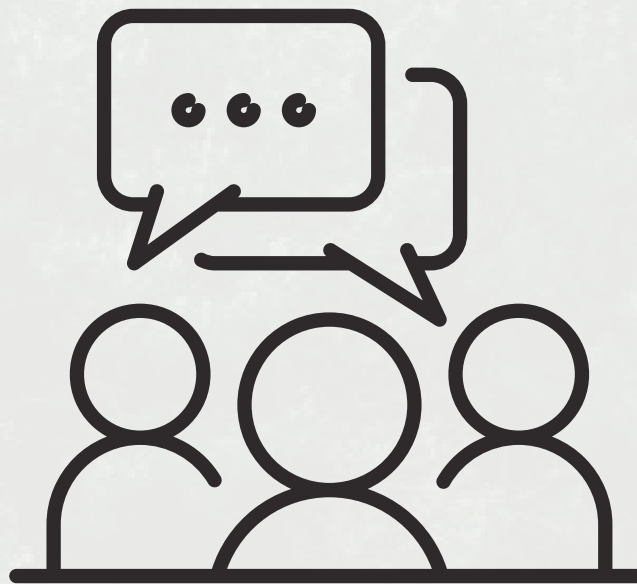
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UNIT 4

Managing Challenges and Group Dynamics in Peer Settings

Knowing When to Seek Support

Part of being an effective peer educator is recognizing when challenges are beyond your experience level. If conflicts escalate to personal attacks, if someone seems genuinely distressed, or if safety becomes a concern, don't hesitate to involve more experienced supervisors. There's no shame in asking for help – it shows maturity and puts participants' wellbeing first.





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CONCLUSION OF THE TOOLKIT

The InsideOut Toolkit is a practical resource for youth workers and peer facilitators supporting young people (15–18) through outdoor education. It combines hands-on activities, reflective tools, and proven methods to build self-reliance, emotional resilience, and environmental awareness through experiential learning and connection with nature.

We sincerely thank all partners, educators, and youth leaders whose ideas, feedback, and experience shaped this toolkit. It reflects a shared belief in the transformative power of outdoor learning.

As you use the InsideOut Toolkit, we hope it inspires growth, confidence, and a sense of belonging among young people — creating spaces where everyone feels empowered to lead, listen, and learn.

Thank you for being part of this journey toward stronger, more connected communities across Europe and beyond.

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