

# **WILDERNESS INQUIRY'S SEVEN STEPS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION**

## **Step 1: Respect Each Person's Dignity**

- Once group members know they are accepted and respected for who they are, they will participate more readily in attaining the group goals and objectives.
- Respect legitimate needs of others.
- Avoid condescension and tokenism.

## **Step 2: Open Lines of Communication**

- Use clear communication to integrate groups of people with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- Encourage and model open discussion about situations, needs, and expectations.
- Model disclosure of physical and emotional needs.
- Ask questions and provide honest answers.

## **Step 3: Promote Cooperative Decision Making**

- Elevate a participant's status by bringing them in on making decisions.
- Making decisions with people honors their intelligence, insight and judgment, and builds their dignity.
- Staff should discuss how decisions are made at the start of a trip. The appropriate approach will vary by situation.

## **Step 4: Acknowledge All Contributions**

- In a wilderness setting, people measure their worth according to their ability to perform physical tasks and activities.
- Participants should know that if they make an effort to utilize fully the abilities they have, they will fulfill their expected role.
- Stress the value of positive attitude.

## **Step 5: Focus on Group Challenges and Activities**

- In many respects, a wilderness group is the ultimate team. Group members must live, work, and play together in an unfamiliar, remote environment.
- The goal of inclusion is better served if staff members give higher priority to group needs than to individual needs.

## **Step 6: Delineate and Delegate Tasks**

- Break down tasks into sequential steps and be prepared to delegate steps to the appropriate people.
- Each task must be a legitimate function; otherwise, the participants will feel devalued.
- Delegate carefully! Be careful not to set participants up for failure or challenge from other participants.
- Be flexible on rotation of tasks vs. repetition of tasks...in a mixed ability group it may be necessary to have certain people perform the same tasks on a repeated basis.

## **Step 7: Develop Symbiotic Relationships**

- Symbiosis is defined as two (or more) entities functioning together in a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Serve as a positive role model whose example others will follow.



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