

...FOSTER INCLUSIVITY

In a rapidly transforming world, EE programs must creatively adapt so as to remain relevant. Program innovation and success increase from deliberately embracing diversity in all its forms.

Achieving inclusion takes concerted effort and skilled facilitation. If an EE program's curriculum unintentionally perpetuates dominant cultural values of privilege or oppression, then staff may be less effective at setting a tone of inclusivity. Therefore, engage the marginalized populations in curriculum, program, and event planning. Look around for the voices not being heard; invite them to speak, share, and connect.

Attending to socio-emotional and spiritual safety, as well as physical security, allows trust to build and healthy relationships to form. In healthy relations, clients maintain their identities and individual responsibilities, yet function well in a group and feel a sense of inclusion or belonging.

When staff support psychologically nourishing and nurturing spaces, clients are less socially threatened. They can practice new relationship skills and behaviors. Even if they feel or are awkward, they can get support for their efforts.

In these emotionally nurturing spaces, cohesion is based on healthy relationships, resulting from shared experience, learning, change, and task accomplishment, rather than on reactive bonds such as scapegoating people or fighting nature. Humor becomes laughing with others, not at them. Problems are solved and conflicts are resolved without blaming or finding fault.

When authentic choice is practiced, staff can heavily influence how group dynamics develop. Study universal design for learning (UDL). Avoid masculine normative language (two-man tents or virgin forest) and militaristic terms (attacking or conquering). Extinguish linguistic violence (under the gun or throws like a girl) that may harm, invalidate, or marginalize others.

JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) and other common acronyms for diversity work, guide people to counter forms of discrimination and to problematize and address age, gender, race, economic, class, citizenship, mind, body, ability, or family composition inequities. Most staff are well intentioned, yet disparities endure in EE programs. Consider these steps to change.

1. **Acknowledge the injustices** in society and resolve that they do not have to persist. Oppression extracts a heavy psychological toll and is socially constructed. For example, White supremacy is baked into U.S. culture.
2. **Undertake extensive education.** Allyship is only a beginning. Show up, read, watch, and learn from others: women, people of color, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA2S+ folks.
3. **Center oppressed people**, not oppressors. Decolonization actively removes colonizers from their historically dominating power. Even if unpleasant, study inclusive histories.
4. **Learn about trauma** by understanding the persistence of intergenerational trauma and the impact of adverse childhood events. Practice trauma informed leadership.
5. **Become a co-conspirator** who understands the role of power in EE settings and uses their privilege for the compensatory benefit of marginalized people. Listen to and work through the guidance of those folks who have no choice but to live the struggle.

Is your program designed for the nondisabled, neurotypical, white, male, middle-class "norm"? Do you emphasize physical and technical skills over social, emotional, and/or communication skills? Do you provide sensitive facilitation and instruction that equitably shares speaking time, eliminates derogatory language, and is fully supportive of those impacted by trauma?

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FURTHER RESOURCES

This extensive list is organized for a few diversity issues and is a mix of readings and viewings. As is often the case with inclusivity, these diversity issues are intersectional, where multiple issues may overlap for single clients. Instead of alphabetical listings, as in ability and race, a chronological listing for gender and sexuality gives perspective to the evolution of writing about these particular issues in EE.

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ABILITY

Disabled Hikers: www.disabledhikers.com @disabledhikers

Fat Girls Hiking: <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fat-girls-hiking?fbclid=IwAR1f25UuklgSrs0Oyczq2olqCVkeSgLIzcn3b1vBGYSF7j4z-edt0ecTqA>

Mirna Valerio: <https://themirnavator.com/> The Mirnivor is an 11-minute documentary <https://youtu.be/c5-CSQcYeXk> and a 12 minute video: <https://youtu.be/lx3cjfmNFVQ>

Unlikely Hikers: <https://unlikelyhikers.org/> @unlikelyhikers

RACE

Black Girls Trekkin: <https://blackgirlstrekkin.com/> @blackgirlstrekking

Black Women Running <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1536504219854726>

Brown Gal Trekker: <https://www.browngaltrekker.com/> @browngaltrekker

Indigenous Women Hike: <https://www.indigenouswomenhike.com/> @jolievarela,

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Melanin Basecamp: <https://www.melaninbasecamp.com/> @melaninbasecamp

Natives Outdoors: <https://www.natives-outdoors.org/> @nativesoutdoors

Outdoor Afro <https://outdoorafro.com/>

GENDER

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SEXUALITY

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