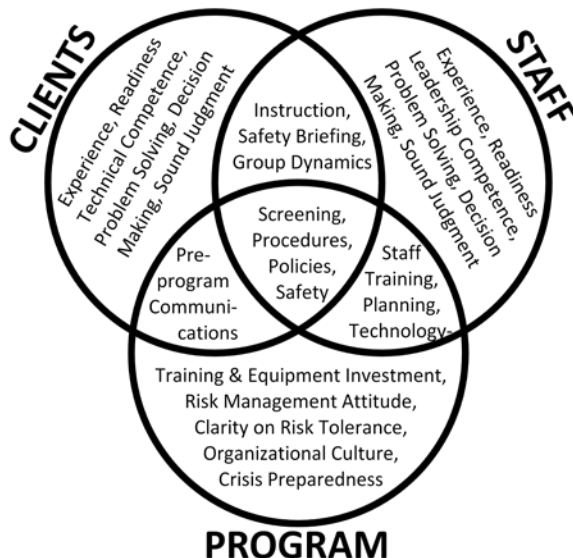# …MANAGE RISKS (26)

RISK IS ESSENTIAL

EE is one of a few professions that deliberately place clients at risk. **Risk** is the potential to lose something of physical, emotional, psychological, social, spiritual or financial value. Overcoming perceived risks is what leads to clients' personal growth. Consequently, EE programs ought to manage these risks to optimize or enhance the benefits and mitigate or eliminate the losses.
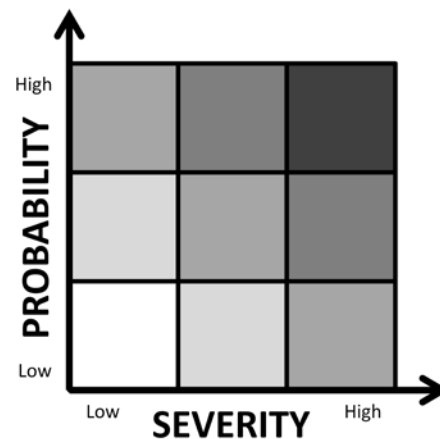
KEY FACTORS

Many factors go into managing physical risks in the field, including elements that take place long before the program activities begin. The diagram above shows some of the inter-related elements, divided among **clients**, **staff**, and the **program**, where managing risks is a shared responsibility. The extent to which a program can and should enlist clients in "participatory risk management" depends on factors such as program goals, client experience/competence, and inherent risks of the activities/settings. A well-trained and fully aware group of clients, empowered to speak up and ask questions or voice concerns, may be one of the best defenses against possible injuries or accidents.

DANGER ASSESSMENT

Danger assessment should be conducted well before a program begins. It should continue through the activities and be continuously re-assessed as circumstances or conditions shift. Several steps are necessary to assess dangers:

1. Identify human and environmental **dangers**;
2. Classify dangers as a **peril** (source/cause of loss --- to be removed) or **hazard** (condition that accentuates chances of loss --- to be avoided or encountered when minimal);
3. Anticipate **accident potential** from the estimated **severity** (impact) and **probability** (likelihood) of dangers (see diagram below).
4. Apply **mitigation strategies** (draw attention, remove perils, avoid hazards, etc.); and
5. Evaluate whether program needs modifying or **risk is acceptable** (proceed with caution).

COUNTERMEASURES

Risk countermeasures, with program examples to consider, may include: **primary/ proactive** (program planning, first aid training, equipment inspection, etc.), **secondary/active** (changing route plans, injury response, search and rescue, etc,), and **tertiary/reactive** (crisis management, trip reporting, incident analysis, etc.).

Steve Smith & Simon Priest