Things That Have Worked

Synergo

1. Adapted/Additional ‘Pre-Training Needs Assessment’ and documented training expectations

We are not in a ‘Post-COVID-19’ world yet. Some areas have higher levels of reported cases than others and the severity in which people view this crisis certainly varies. It feels important when we deliver trainings to act as if we are all a potential carrier and are contagious. This is true for us because we are a company that travels to deliver training in different places and we certainly have the opportunity to spread this around if we’re not diligent. This being the case, we have found it essential to have up front communication with our clients, including written expectations on how we plan to mitigate this risk. This includes expectations regarding mask or face coverings, options for washing hands and use of hand sanitizer frequently through the day. We are also aiming to reduce physical contact and maintain physical distancing at least between Trainer and Trainees (if not Trainee and Trainees) throughout the training time. Having that conversation on the front-end is helping set both parties up for success.

The information we are sending on the front-end also includes various questions that we’ve compiled to help our clients think through the planning of their own policies and procedures surrounding their course. This should come from the Policies and Procedures that they generally have in place for COVID-19 – it’s important to keep consistency on the course as with every other area of what the client is doing e.g. Summer Camps having many different activity areas.

We’re trying to be open and honest with the client, in setting the expectation that we are all still in the learning process, especially as new and changing information come out from all levels, be that CDC, State, or County etc. and we will be making some decisions in real time based upon the effectiveness of the modification in place. We ask for patience, grace, and an open mind towards solutions through a collaborative effort. In the end, our main goal is to provide a safe environment for staff to learn and grow. Our decision process will always be guided with this in mind.

2. This has been a traumatic experience for ALL

Each and every person has or is currently still processing this crisis. Whether it has directly affected the individual or not, we are certainly not privy to our clients/trainees’ individual experience with COVID and they effect it may have or is currently having on one’s friends and family. We need to approach this with a sense of compassion and deep understanding that each person is coping with this very differently. Be kind, be grateful, be patient, be flexible, modify - modify - modify.
3. Introduction and first impression is KEY.

If we are able to create a warm and welcoming environment from the start, we are more likely to have the buy-in from trainees from the beginning. We need to practice this opening introduction and not fall back to previous ways of approaching this crucial moment. Creating a full-value contract or a way to clearly reiterate the expectations for training will be essential for a positive experience. Trainees are looking to us to set the tone and will be judging us every step of the way. Accountability is key, which leads to the next point...

4. MISTAKES WILL be made. Be mindful, be accountable, and move on.

Acknowledge that mistakes will be made. We are all adjusting to this new normal and will certainly find ourselves without a mask or within a six-foot distance to one another. This is unavoidable. Especially, as Tom Leahy pointed out, once trust is established within a group, being drawn in to a closer physical proximity to one another is natural. This alone proves the power of our work and how trust can be established, even in a short training. Address this from the beginning and challenge the group to be mindful of their actions.

This will also show up during our usual acts of convenience or if/when we become tired. These added modifications and safety precautions WILL add time to training, no doubt. It is convenient to share gear. It is convenient to add one more person to the platform. It is tiring to wear a mask all day. It is tiring (especially mentally and emotionally) to constantly be thinking of these modification as well as trying to deliver an effective training. It’s tiring for the Trainees for those reasons too! As we are always trying to create a solid foundation or a ‘culture of safety’ amongst the staff, it will be important for us create space where everyone feels empowered to ask for what they need. Water, food, brain-break, etc., it is important to recognize we are not in the same head space mentally as we were before this crisis where we may have normally just powered through. This is where mistakes have been made before and are magnified even further now.

5. Modeling the use of PPE/new equipment/tools we will be using

Masks/Face coverings are annoying, yes, but an essential component to overcoming this crisis. Trainees look to us for leadership and a clear understanding of how to conduct themselves during training. It is up to us to model proper use of both the PPE as well as new policies put into place. As always, avoiding the “do as I say, not as I do” mentality.

Masks – some masks are certainly better than others. Disposable cloth masks have been very effective, lightweight, secure (even on a MASSSSIVE zipline!). Having extras is important should we need to swap our original for any reason. Have extra on hand.

Hand Sanitizer – carry a small bottle with you everywhere! Top it up from a larger container when you get chance.
Hand-held, no touch thermometers – For personal use, any metric is a good metric if we are trying to detect potential fevers.

Pouch/Bag on Harness – just as we would carry water, sunscreen, and other essential PPE, this has been a great way to keep items close and model constant use of these items.

Modeling the use of PPE is just another way for Trainers to build rapport with staff and again do what we do best and help coach our clients how to create a trusting environment with their clients in the future.

(6.) Perfect ISN’T real.
We have done the work. This does not mean that the work is done. Self-reflection and a constant push to improve on policies is on-going and requires patience, honesty, and the willingness to listen and process feedback. This also requires us to say ‘no’ once in a while, especially when some feedback goes against mandatory policies. Be patient with yourself and others. Be kind to yourself and others. Lead by example.

Challenge Design Innovation (CDI)

1. Set clear expectations in advance so both trainers and the course owner/operator are prepared. What additional supplies are needed and who is providing them (masks, handwashing stations, hand sanitizer, etc.).
2. As training progresses and trainees become more comfortable, it is important for the trainer to emphasize and enforce COVID-19 policies to combat complacency.
3. Lower trainer-to-participant ratios can serve to increase efficiency, reduce trainer stress, and assist in monitoring and enforcing COVID-19 & safety protocols.
4. Lessons in temperature testing: ambient temperature, attire, timing, & activity-level matters!
5. Demonstrate skills that require close contact within the “trainer team” if possible, then practice skills in consistent partnerships/pods (especially for those that have already breached social distancing prior to training). Model wearing masks and wash hands before and after demos.
Project Adventure

Points for ACCT Training/Facilitation Reopening
June 10th, 2020

Intro: Identifying appropriate protocols for conducting trainings during our new Covid 19 environment is difficult. This is an unprecedented situation with no contemporary comparisons. The complexity is also due to the wide differences in approaches and information disseminated by Authorities having Jurisdiction from CDC guidance, specific state and local recommendations and industry stakeholders such as ACCT and its various professional vendors.

Things PA has learned about the reopening process and moving toward restarting professional training.

1. Online training should have always been part of what we offered. If not for content knowledge and mastery, at least as a significant curricular support for different learners. PA will focus on blended learning components for all of our trainings with or without practical, live sessions.

2. Any remediation or alteration to our trainings must be done carefully to avoid unintended consequences. The first question to ask is “if” we should open live training sessions. Consideration of our business mission, ethics, sustainability will need to be strongly considered. It is not just a question “if we don’t, we won’t survive.” Loss due an outbreak at any of our training sites will have a devastating effect (see recent outbreak at TN camp).

3. The second question to ask when considering remediation due to Covid 19 is, “is this a safety issue or a standards issue”? Some things can be “safe” but not in compliance with standards. Is that helmet that is 10 years old unsafe when used on a delayed Postman’s walk? Probably not, but adherence to standards helps to satisfies part of our legal obligation to protect our clients. Likewise sometimes procedures we set for our programs (Local Operating Procedures- LOP) focus on the recommendation (no shared equipment) and not the fact that surface transmission vectors in an outdoor environment are greatly limited, particularly when combined with strong pre-screening. Discerning the difference between standards and safety when addressing changes to the program will help focus on the most important remediation. We definitely will not sanitize our way out of this problem.

4. That brings us to the difference between Subjective and Objectives measures. We are primarily focused objective measures that science tells us will have the most profound effect. We know that frequent, effective hand washing is the single best thing we can do to prevent infection. Physical distancing whenever possible, limiting viral loading by being outside, mask wearing when in brief closer proximity to others are all also effective. This cocktail approach can be very effective when all these measures are used together.

5. Additionally, the effect of Subjective measures should not be overlooked. Remember risk is in the eye of the beholder. The notion of Challenge by Choice is a fundamental element of most adventure programs. At PA we think it is worth role modeling the use of masks even when it is not always necessary. This helps prevent unintentional norm-creeping from happening and encourages participants that personal choice is an important element in staying safe.

6. Since I mentioned LOP’s earlier, when changing policy or procedures for reopening training and experiences for the public make sure they are vetted by outside eyes from a cross-section of your network. Your professional vendor should be part of the discussion as should select members of your board and trusted client groups. If your policy lines up with diverse
stakeholders, you are probably on the right track. Don’t forget, once you have confirmed modifications, don’t forget to publish, distribute widely, and formally train your entire staff.

Signature Research
1. Communication in advance is key to the training. We have a worksheet for the trainer to go through with the contact person, that, combined with State/local regulations, OSHA guidelines, and CDC recommendations, helps the trainer and contact person agree on expectations and a site-specific action plan.

2. Dedicated small workgroups has worked exceedingly well to both minimize interaction among the participants and between the participants/trainer. Participants have had a more enhanced sense of responsibility towards each other and been more actively involved in helping each other learn.

3. As a rule, younger participants (college age) and groups that are more familiar with each other have been less concerned with social distancing and have needed to be reminded to continue using their masks, especially starting around the 2nd or 3rd day.

Leahy and Associates, Inc.
1. What I learned is if there is a high level /growing level of trust developing during the time together, people start to let their guard down. Mask use drops until reminded. Minimum distance shrinks and hygiene procedures begin to loosen.
2. Participants & Trainees have different levels of buy in as to COVID as a risk.
3. Participants & Trainees have different levels of needs / concerns when being or working closely around others.
4. Feelings of being unsafe grow when those with higher concern levels are held in proximity with those with lower concerns often demonstrated by resistant behavior.
5. The level of concern about COVID does distract people as they go through the steps or procedures of training or working close to others.
6. COVID concerns can be just as strong as concern about height, exposure and being coerced to attempt or complete an element.
7. Rescue practice can be conducted using objects that allow for practice with the systems without exposing rescuer and rescue subject to the “Heavy breathing” and expulsion of mater from the lungs.
8. Small tarps are great for giving each person their own space for gear and as a work area for assembly of kits and devices. Tarps are distributed no less than 15 feet from others.
Training Adjustments Due to COVID-19

We would like to thank you for continuing to work with ABEE, Inc. for your challenge course needs. As a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, adjustments to ABEE trainings will be necessary this season. ABEE is required to follow the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) in the location our work is being performed. Therefore, our training procedures may vary for each client we work with. Below we have outlined the steps we intend to take to assure we are following AHJ requirements and doing what we can to protect both our staff and yours.

- Provide your trainer with your site-specific COVID risk management plan at least two weeks prior to the start of training
  - This will help us align with your AHJ and prepare our trainers to help implement your site-specific procedures during training. We may also require additional or more stringent procedures to protect our employees and yours.

- All trainees have a duty to report any symptoms or contact with someone experiencing symptoms prior to the start of training.

- Trainees showing any signs or symptoms of any illness will not be permitted to attend training.
  - Signs and symptoms may include:
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Chills
    - Repeated shaking with chills
    - Muscle pain
    - Headache
    - Sore throat
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Trouble breathing
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse
    - Bluish lips or face

- Individuals cell phone numbers and emails will be documented on ABEE’s roster. Rosters will be immediately sent to our main office for tracking. Persons that have been in contact with an infected individual 14 days prior to the first symptoms experienced will be contacted directly by ABEE, Inc.
- We will remain outdoors and out of confined spaces as much as possible
  - Please prepare your staff for this; dressed appropriately and ready for rain, shine, or cold

- Trainees need to bring their own PPE including masks and gloves
  - This is especially necessary for Rescue/Retrieval, Zip Line, and Low Element training

- Overall group size may need to be adjusted pending location of training and phase of reopening

- Trainees will be broken into smaller groups (3-4 people) to work together for the duration of training
  - Trainees that are sharing living space will be grouped together

- If resources allow, the same equipment will be kept with each group for the duration of training

- As much as possible people will be spaced 6’ or more apart

- Regular handwashing/sanitation schedule
  - Site will need to provide handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer at the course

- Utilizing no touch pre-flight checks with verbal and visual communication

- No touch games, activities, and initiatives will be utilized

Thank you for understanding these changes. There are additional resources below for equipment cleaning and course operations. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office staff.

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COVID-19 Resources

OSHA – COVID-19 and the Workplace

ACCT Resource Page
https://www.acctinfo.org/general/custom.asp?page=coronavirus

Equipment Cleaning – always follow manufacturer recommendations
Compilation of manufacturer recommendations from our friends at Challenge Works:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WChrP-p3NRfwNHxTrswnHy3-elt4JDC5f1Lv7Hjul/edit

Adventure Park Insider Resource Page
https://adventureparkinsider.com/category/coronavirus-updates/

Climbing Wall Association Resource Page
https://climbingwallindustry.org/general/custom.asp?page=Coronavirus

Global Association for the Attractions Industry Resource Page