



Exclusive Spaces:

Managing Inherent Risks of Racism in Outdoor Spaces

October 16, 2024

Agenda

- Introduction to City Kids
- Exclusion Risk Management Framework: Overview
- Exclusion Risk Management Framework: Risk Identification
 - Case Study
- Exclusion Risk Management Framework: Risk Mitigation
 - Case Study
- Exclusion Risk Management Framework: Incident Response
 - Case Study
- Exclusion Risk Management Framework: Organizational Follow Up
 - Case Study
- Scenario Practice
- Questions

Overview of Today

- **TODAY WE WILL AIM TO:**

- Share background on City Kids
- Share insight and practices related to the experiences of City Kids youth, staff, and the organization while traveling in outdoor spaces
- Provide a framework for “Exclusion Risk Management” that could be adaptable to your programs

- **TODAY WE WILL NOT:**

- Focus on inclusion strategies to increase diversity in the outdoors – this presentation is about program operation.
- Focus on other identity groups– we hope that other communities find practices and tools to apply to their experiences.

Build Resiliency, Broaden Horizons, Grow Community, Develop Skills for

OUR MODEL:

Our program is based around three core principles: **long-term youth engagement, outdoor adventure and experiential education programming, and goal setting with a focus on future planning.**



OUR PROGRAM:

- **Ranger Year:** *Be Courageous*
- **Mountaineer Year:** *Be Compassionate*
- **Elite Year:** *Be Excellent*
- **Leadership Year:** *Find Your Personal Power*
- **JET (Job Experience Trainee) Program:** *Create Your Vision*



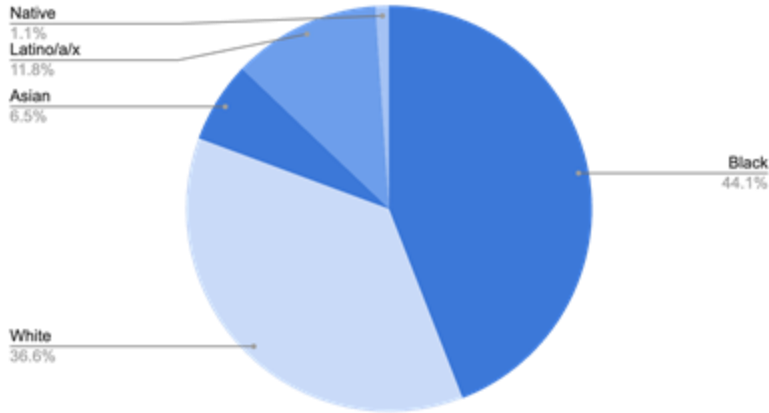
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City Kids Endless Summer

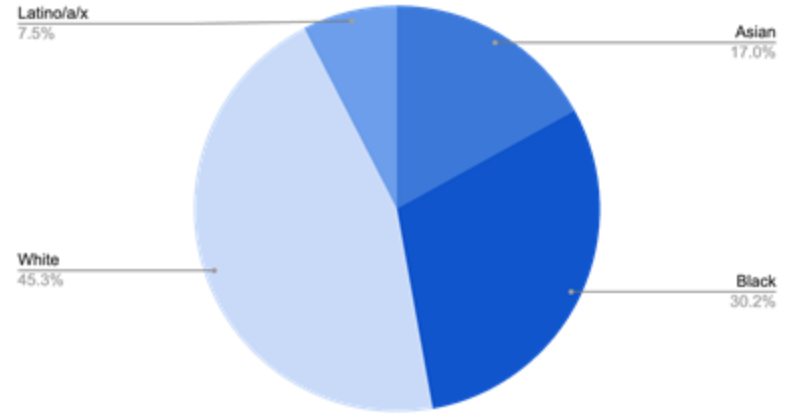


City Kids Racial Demographics (Youth & Staff)

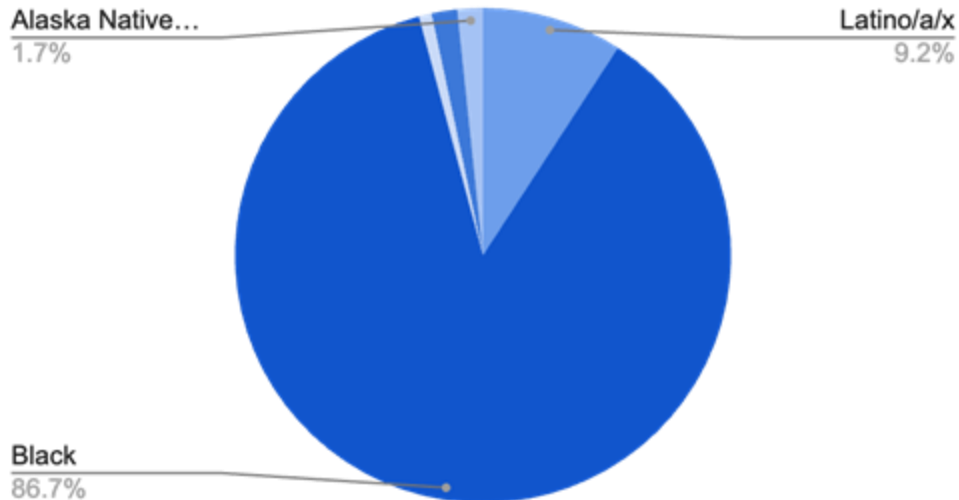
Seasonal Staff Demographics 2021-2024



Full Time Staff Demographics 2021-2024



City Kids Youth Demographics - 2024



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So what do we mean by “Exclusive Spaces?”

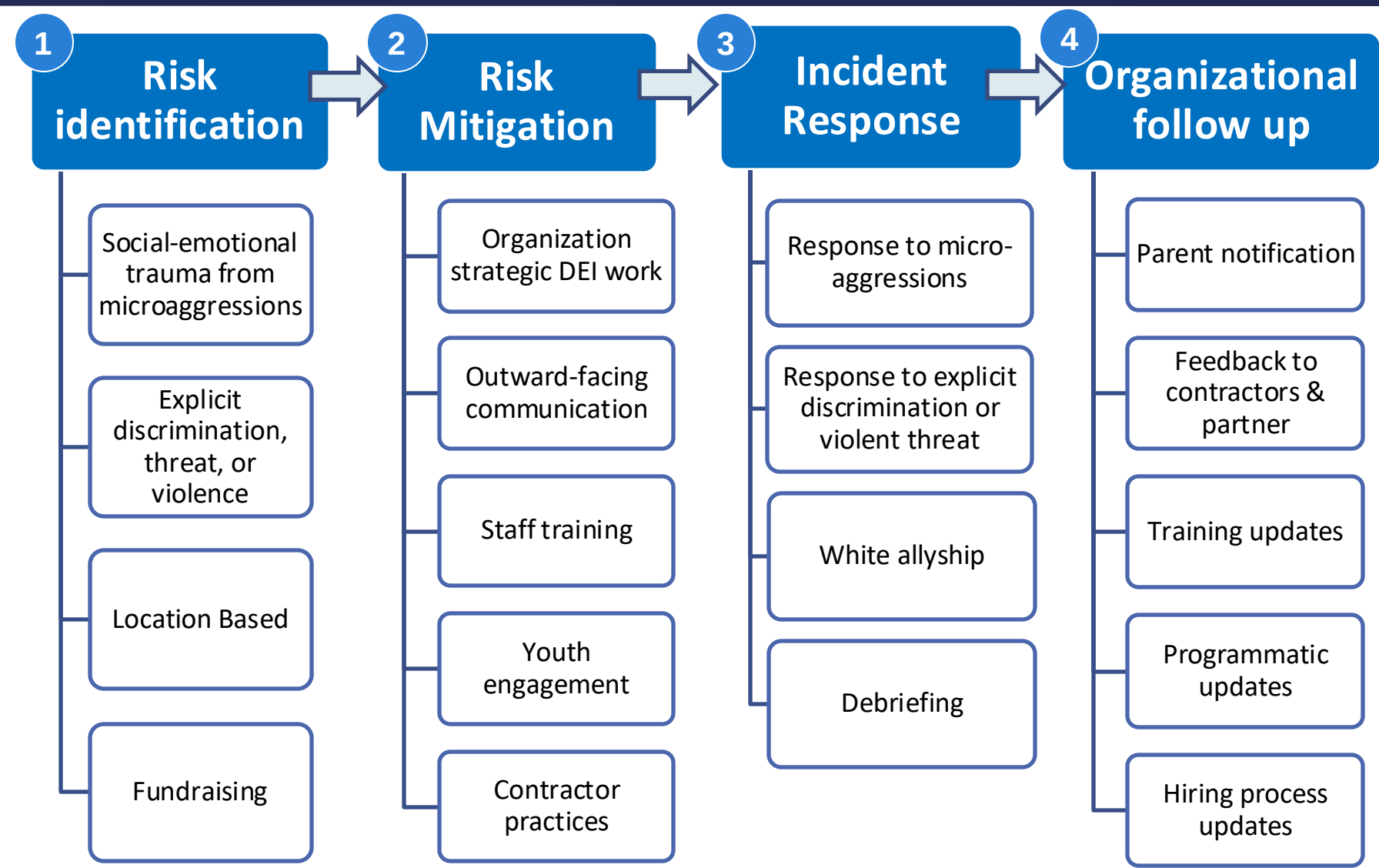
- **The Creation of National Parks and the Concept of “Wilderness”**
 - White settlers and the American Government created the National Park system & the concept of “wilderness” by forcibly removing indigenous people.
- **Segregation in Public Lands**
 - Segregation played a large role in the design of our public lands*
 - Black Codes in the 1930s & 1940s mandated segregation in the park system.

Moving Towards Healing:

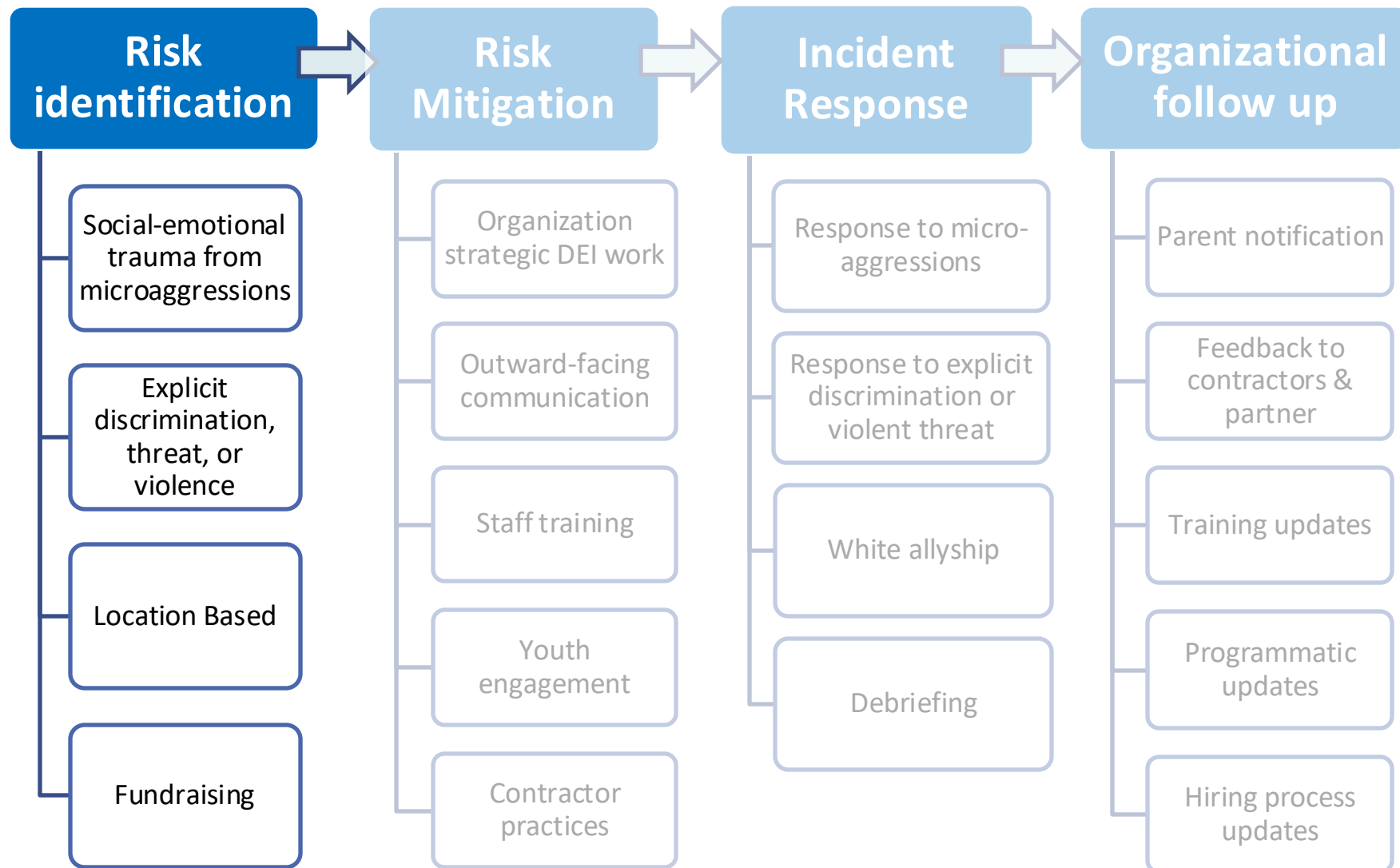
Outdoor Afro, Brown Girls Climb, Latino Outdoors, Queer Nature, Native Women’s Wilderness, Brown People Camping, Soul Trak Outdoors and so many more!

- <https://time.com/5562258/indigenous-environmental-justice/>
- <https://publiclands.colostate.edu/exclusion-on-public-lands-shenandoah-national-park-state-parks-and-segregation-in-the-american-south/>

Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional
trauma from
microaggressions

Explicit
discrimination,
threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

What did you
think of your
first time
camping?

I assume they
come from
rough
neighborhoods

experiencing
crimes

Please make
they are
know
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Are these
low-income
kids?

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kids?

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City
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Are these
troubled

This must
be life
changing
for them

What are
you all
doing out
here?

Are they
at-risk
kids?

*https

Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional trauma from microaggressions

Explicit discrimination, threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

Explicit discrimination experienced by City Kids includes prejudicial treatment, racial slurs, and expands to threatening individuals unwanted physical contact, yelling, glaring, and verbal threats.

Youth reports a member of the public staring at them and pushing them out of the way

While no youth or staff have been physically harmed in a racist incident, these experiences are painful & traumatic.

City Kids anticipates the reality of physical violence based on the daily experiences lived of Black & Latinx people in the United States and the increased visibility & actions of white supremacists.

Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional
trauma from
microaggressions

Explicit
discrimination,
threat, or violence

Location Based

Fundraising

There are certain areas of the country, businesses, and campgrounds that pose a greater risk to our youth than the benefit of traveling to or through those spaces, or partnering with those businesses. City Kids identifies these areas through significant incidents, repeated negative experiences, and youth / staff feedback.

Identifying Risks at City Kids

Risk identification

Social-emotional
trauma from
microaggressions

Explicit
discrimination,
threat, or violence

Location-Based

Fundraising

There is a long history of perpetuating harmful narratives in fundraising for non-profit organizations.

City Kids relies on a combination of individual donors, corporations, foundations, and federal grants to fund programs. Fundraising events & efforts are an exposure point for youth to come into contact with these stereotypes (from donors, in grant writing, volunteers, etc)

Risk Identification: Case Study

Risk identification

Context: City Kids partners with a few organizations to offer scholarships for our JETs (high schoolers) to go on longer backcountry trips. Interested JETs apply to go on trips all over the country and are often the only CK youth on the trip and are directly supported by the partner organization staff while in the field. **Scenario:** A Black male JET is going on a backpacking & kayaking trip in Alaska where he is one of two black youth and has an all white staff team.

Social-emotional
trauma from
microaggressions

City Kids JET is one of two Black people on the course
Youth and partner org staff have an unknown understanding of cultural competency

Explicit
discrimination,
threat, or
violence

City Kids JET is one of two Black people on the course
Youth and partner org staff have an unknown understanding of cultural competency

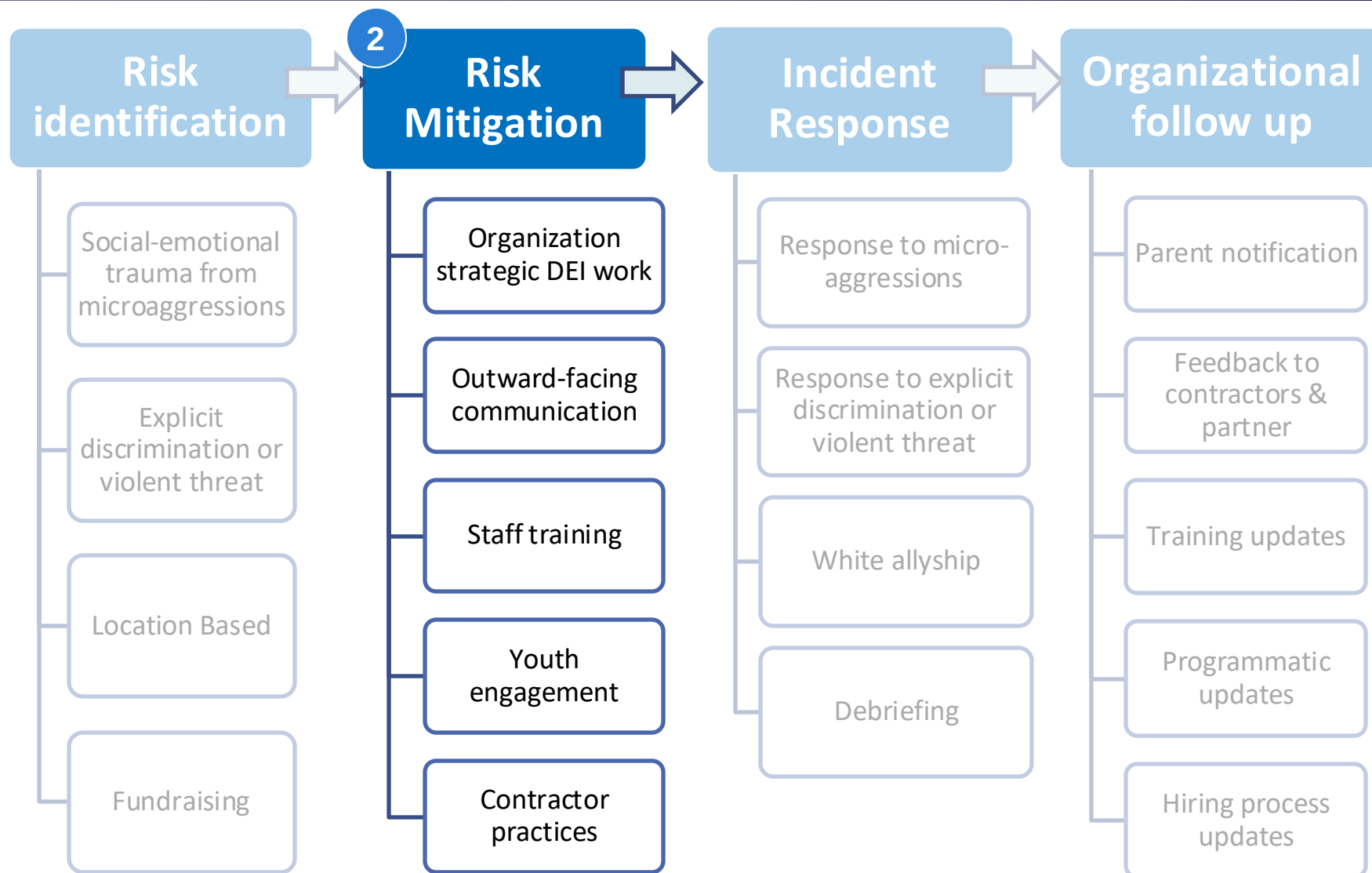
Location Based

Alaskan backcountry - a majority white space, far away from home & City Kids staff with
no phone access (for the JET)

Fundraising

This partner organization is partnered with City Kids in multiple ways, including offering
additional programs to CK youth and making financial contributions to City Kids.

Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Risk Mitigation at City Kids

Diversity
Equity
Inclusion
Justice

Risk Mitigation

Organization
strategic DEI work

Outward-facing
communication

Staff training

Youth engagement

Contractor
practices

Strategic organizational DEIJ work has contributed to the organization's examination of our youth & staff experiences during programming.

FORMAL DEIJ WORK AT CITY KIDS HAS INCLUDED:

- Cultural surveys & reflection
- Staff professional development
- Seasonal staff training curriculum
- Youth curriculum
- Improved hiring practices
- DEI Statement of beliefs
- DEIJ Working Group

Risk Mitigation at City Kids

Risk Mitigation

Organization strategic DEI work

Outward-facing communication

Staff training

Youth engagement

Contractor practices

HOW WE TELL OUR STORY MATTERS.

Our outward-facing communication sets the tone and models the language, messaging and story that we want the world to hear and reflect to others about City Kids programs and youth.

City Kids strives to use affirming, positive and empowering youth-centered stories and language. Language is complex and will continue to be an area of deep discussion and reflection for the organization.

STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDE:

- Families and youth
- Staff (current and prospective)
- Program partners
- Our DC & WY communities
- Our donors and board
- The general public

Risk Mitigation at City Kids

Risk Mitigation

Organization
strategic DEI work

Outward-facing
communication

Staff training

Youth engagement

Contractor
practices

EXAMPLES:

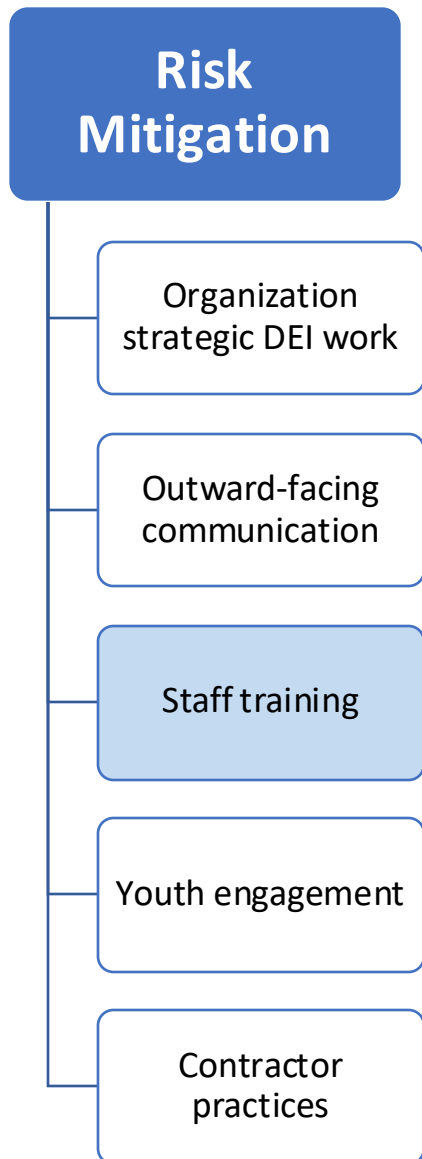
LANGUAGE WE **DO NOT** USE

- At Risk
- Inner City
- Low Income
- Troubled
- Challenged
- Hoods to the Woods

LANGUAGE WE USE

- Kids
- Kids from DC
- Awesome Kids!
- Resilient Kids who backpacked for four days at the age of 12!
- Brave kids who flew across the country with strangers for two weeks of camp in Wyoming!

Risk Mitigation at City Kids



Staff training DEI curriculum focuses on clarifying explicit organizational beliefs and expectations for staff. It is considered a core component of training, as both a series of stand alone workshops and woven throughout all trainings.

KEY TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Foundational principles of DEI work
- Examination of individual identities, power & privilege
- Implicit bias in education / youth work
- Review of important issues to the CK community
- Incident mitigation & response

Risk Mitigation at City Kids

Risk Mitigation

Organization strategic DEI work

Outward-facing communication

Staff training

Youth engagement

Contractor practices

City Kids program youth are briefed on the expectation of encountering racism, training for response and to contextualize racism in the outdoors.

THEMES AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDE:

- Background knowledge of the formation of the “outdoors”
- Acknowledgement of risk with location or program specifics
- Share when you feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- Request help early from staff or teen leaders
- Maintain personal & group safety- listen to staff instructions to de-escalate the situation, yourself & support others
- Focus on response rather than reaction- there will be a place to share emotions when the group is safe

Curriculum on the historical context of public lands and current movements to diversify the outdoors has helped us center these conversations on the core principle that City Kids youth belong in the outdoors.

Risk Mitigation at City Kids

Risk Mitigation

Organization
strategic DEI work

Outward-facing
communication

Staff training

Youth engagement

Contractor
practices

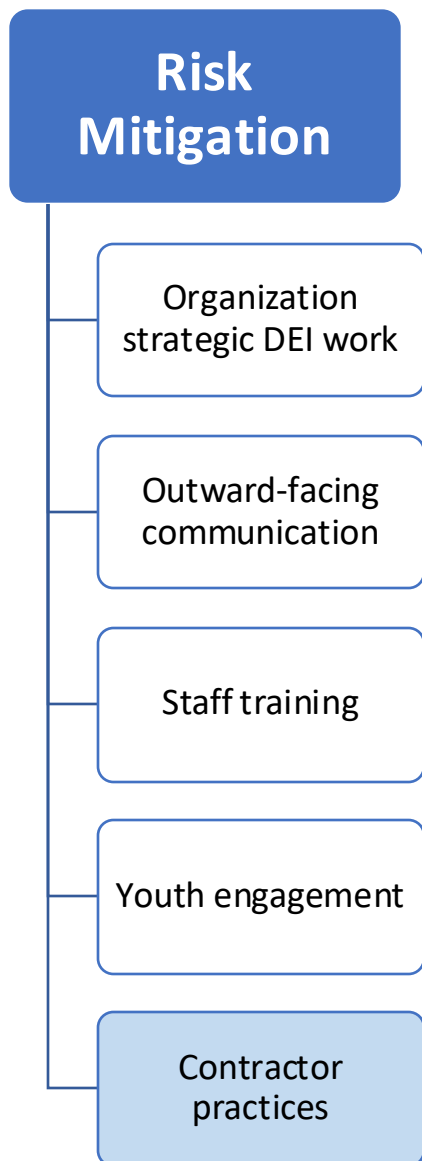
Example:

Youth Resource for attending partner programs through CK scholarships



This laminated card goes with a youth on a partner program trip, for example a NOLS or Outward Bound. In advance of the trip, a staff member briefs youth on the realities of being in a predominately white space and how to use this use this card for themselves or with their instructor. This is also sent to the instructor team before the trip.

Risk Mitigation at City Kids



Contractors pose risks because of the direct contact between contracted instructors, guides, facilitators and CK youth & staff. Contractors have been a historical source of harm to youth & staff.

City Kids manages this exposure through:

- Vetting
- Training or briefing
- Resource sharing
- Relationship building

Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

Example:

Vetting questions to assess contractors experience working with youth of color and any explicit stated DEI priorities.

1. What experience does your company and staff have working with youth of color?
2. Does your company/org offer any specific training for staff in cultural competency or have any stated commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion ?
3. Has the contractor experienced any reported complaints and how were they handled?
4. If there was an incident who would manage it and who should it be reported to?

Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

City Kids has started providing direct training for contractors & partners, focusing on long term partners with significant youth contact time. Training for contractors involved in backcountry travel is now understood as critical to joint decision-making during medical, behavioral, motivational challenges and evacuations.

Topics include:

- Basic cultural competency
- Implicit bias and its impacts on instructors to understand youth behavior, read emotions, and see pain in medical complaints
- Allyship for youth & staff when experiencing microaggressions & discrimination
- Short incident response direction

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Contractor JEDI Training
Inclusion Risk Management

Creating a Positive Experience for Youth, Staff & Guides

Youth & Staff Names

If not familiar with common Black names or pronunciation, CK can send a list of youth names in advance. Please do not comment on your personal difficulty if names are hard for you to pronounce, this is a microaggression. It's better to try again and ask to get it right, rather than comment that it's too hard or continue to mispronounce youth names.

Celebrate Youth Experience

City Kids is a 6 year program. Youth in the program have experience in the outdoors and with outdoor sports. As a non-technical focused program, youth may not always be proficient (especially when younger), but they are experienced wilderness travelers. Minimizing a youth's experience or assuming it's their "first time" is a micro-aggression that underestimates youth ability and perpetuates the idea that BIPOC don't recreate outdoors.

Disrupt Harmful Narratives & Be an Ally

City Kids does not accept the following terms to talk about or discuss youth as they perpetuate harmful and disempowering narratives: at-risk, inner-city, low-income, troubled, challenged, or "hoods to the woods." The outdoors is a white dominated space and youth are often made to feel unwelcome or experience discrimination from other outdoor users. This frequently happens through questions, unwanted conversation, or negative interactions. Speak up for City Kids groups to outsiders and talk about the program in a positive light. Be an ally and don't allow strangers to assume they are "troubled, at risk, or delinquent youth" or any of the other terms listed above. Discourage probing questions about the program or youth or assumptions this is their first time outside. While contractors and staff can be an ally when engaging with hostile or aggressive racists. Prioritize Black & POC safety first.

Be Mindful of Using Youth Slang

It is OK to ask for understanding but not cross the line towards making fun of it, mimicking or imitating. AAVE - African American Vernacular English is a recognized dialect of English, not poor grammar.

Be Aware of Your Own Implicit Biases

Be careful about implicit bias about who is leading the City Kids group. Frequently White staff are assumed to be in charge, rather than the designated Black or POC Lead Staff member. Please clarify if you are unsure who is leading a program or making decisions for the group. When interacting with youth or staff of color, be thoughtful about the questions you ask and the way you ask them - as we have talked about there are many microaggressions in the forms of questions in outdoor settings.

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Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

Example:

Slide from job shadow host orientation

Cultural competency & allyship

What do we expect of hosts?

- JETs have experienced racism, microaggressions, and have had negative encounters with the public while at job shadows or internships.
- We expect that intern hosts will treat JETs with respect and advocate for their emotional and physical safety while at your site.

How to respond to a discriminatory incident:

- **Separate** the JET from the person(s) involved
- **Listen & Affirm** their perspective and experience
- **Call a City Kids staff member** as soon as possible so that we can provide additional support

Want to learn more? City Kids has trainings on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Please email meena@citykidsdc.org !

Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

Briefing: Notes/Conversations City Kids has with contractors in advance of partnership as to relay inclusive practices for programming. Briefing notes change depending on contractor and program type:

Climbing programs:

“Do not refer to a Black participant as a monkey while climbing- there is a long history of the term monkey used as an insult towards Black people.”

Risk Mitigation: Contractor Practices Subcategories

Contractor Practices

Vetting

Training

Briefing

Relationship building

City Kids strives to develop relationships with frequently visited locations to build local support & advocacy for youth and the program. We do this by:

- Clear training/briefing, resource sharing and expectation setting
- Sharing examples of past incidents and their impacts on our program at the location / partner site
- Honest conversations about our programmatic goals to ensure that we are values aligned
- Continued follow up and check-ins
- Demonstrated commitment to a reciprocal partnership

Risk Mitigation: Case Study

Risk Mitigation

Context: City Kids partners with a few organizations to offer scholarships for our JETs (high schoolers) to go on longer backcountry trips. Interested JETs apply to go on trips all over the country and are often the only CK youth on the trip and are directly supported by the partner organization staff while in the field. **Scenario:** A Black male JET is going on a backpacking & kayaking trip in Alaska where he is one of two black youth and has an all white staff team.

Organization strategic DEI work

City Kids has an explicit commitment to DEI work that informs partnerships and allows staff and youth* to respond to incidents with the confidence that the organization supports them.

Outward-facing communication

Youth have the opportunity to meet with their instructors in advance of the course.

Staff training

CK Staff are trained on how to respond to exclusion incidents at partner programs – focusing on supporting youth and maintaining youth safety.

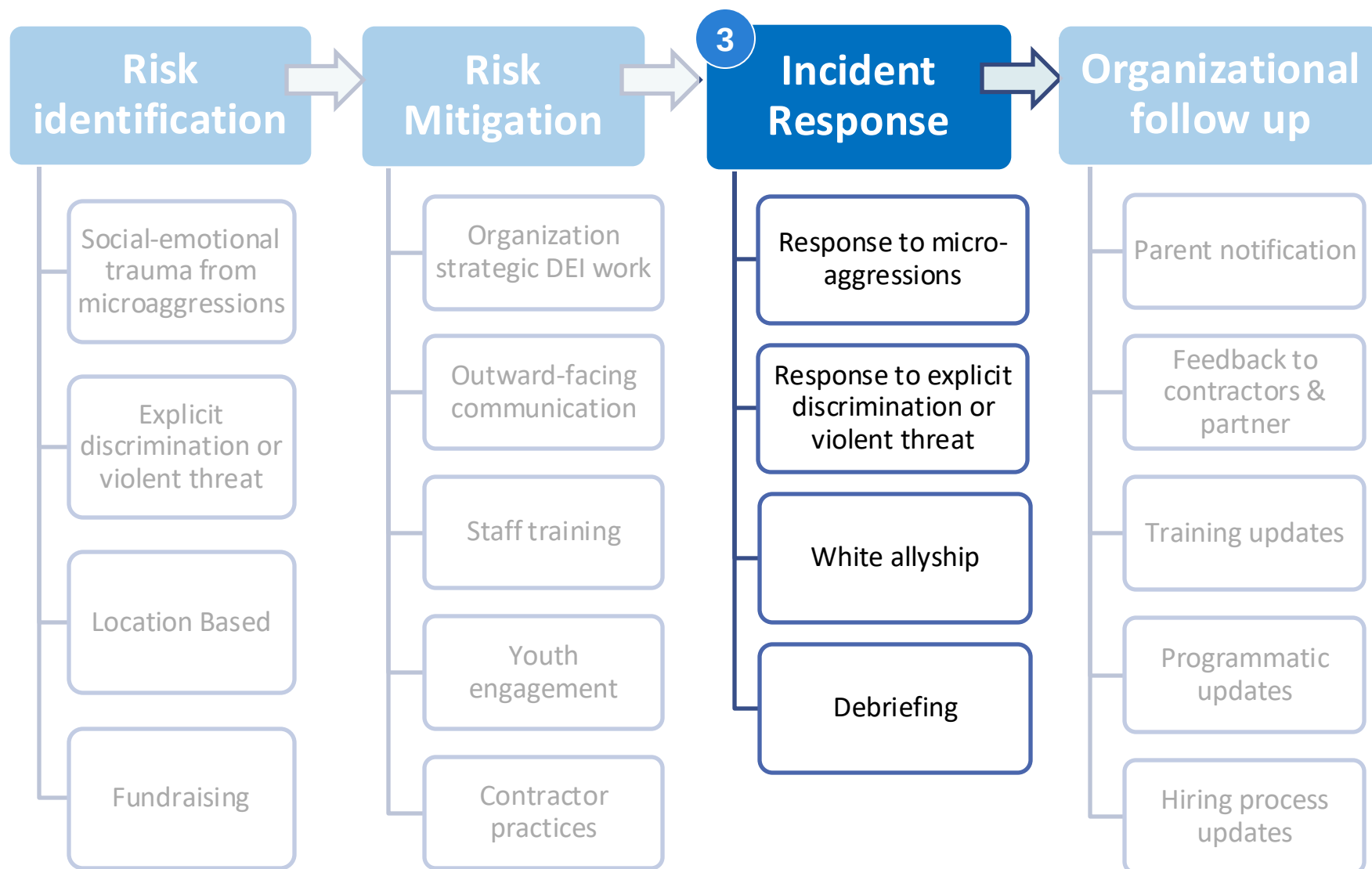
Youth engagement

Explicit conversations are had with both youth & parents in advance of the course about being on a majority-white course and the potential for exclusion incidents.

Contractor practices

This partner was vetted through our contractor vetting process and had a long standing relationship with City Kids.

Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Since 2016, City Kids defines & tracks exclusion incidents in our incident reporting system

3

EXCLUSION INCIDENT DEFINITION:

Any event that results in the marginalization or offense of a group or identity- these could be internal or external.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased reporting
- Data driven understanding of frequency & occurrence
- Resource allocation
- Trends illuminate mitigation & training areas
- Visible support creates space for conversation

Incident Response at City Kids

Incident Response

Response to micro-aggressions

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

White allyship

Debriefing

Staff are trained to disrupt microaggressions :

1. Considerations when deciding to disrupt

- Is the person (s) involved hostile and this may escalate?
- Is/has a youth or staff directly impacted?
- Do you have competing priorities (managing a group, safety concern)?
- What is the relationship between the person (s) & City Kids? What is our investment in their learning?

2. Maintain composure, embrace discomfort & assess

- Are you in the right headspace to engage in this conversation?
- Assess their ability to engage and anticipated response (defensive, angry, dismissive, etc)

3. Determine intervention type

- Return problematic questions with questions, clarify meaning
- Return statements with questions or hard lines statements or name bias
- Redirect actions directly

4. Direct the public to the website or provide next steps for further learning

Incident Response at City Kids

Incident Response

Response to micro-aggressions

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

White allyship

Debriefing

Example:

Training worksheet: Microaggression practice workshop

Microaggression	Underlying bias & problem message	Intervention options & Convo stems: <u>Conversation stems</u>	Resources to reference/share in conversation
<i>Are these troubled youth?</i>	<i>Black youth in a group are part of a program that works with "troubled youth". All black youth are bad, disruptive, a problem, or "delinquent"</i>	- I'm not sure what you mean by troubled youth? - Why would you assume these youth are troubled? - These youth are not troubled, that term can be harmful to use for any youth and here's why - I'm concerned there is bias in your question because these are black youth	Black youth-suspension rates Black girls-criminalization https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/07/racialized-anger-bias

Incident Response at City Kids

Incident Response

Response to micro-aggressions

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

White allyship

Debriefing

1. Recognize threatening individuals or areas
2. Prioritize youth safety
3. Divide staff resources to care for youth & staff to manage response
4. Validate youth emotions but work to de-escalate reactions to avoid escalating incidents
 - Remind youth there will be space to process when everyone is safe
5. Be proactive in using available resources to access support (park staff, campground hosts: assess engaging authorities for friendliness & be cautious about calling the police)
6. If police are present- limit youth interaction and always have a staff member present to act as a guardian. Designate a staff member who feels safe for police interaction.

Incident Response at City Kids

Incident Response

Response to micro-aggressions

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

White allyship

Debriefing

White staff members are trained to consider a response based on allyship principles of:

- **Stand behind:** Acknowledge they are not directly harmed by racism, and follow the lead of a youth or staff
- **Stand beside:** In solidarity with a youth or staff member in their response.
- **Stand in front:** There is a safety concern or a youth or staff requests a white staff respond to prioritize BIPOC safety.

White staff should use their privilege to prioritize youth & BIPOC staff when safety is a concern (i.e. angry or threatening individual and police interactions)

- White staff should work in coordination with BIPOC staff to determine the appropriate staff member to manage response with external people, including police.

Incident Response at City Kids

Incident Response

Response to micro-aggressions

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

White allyship

Debriefing

Debriefing occurs for both staff and youth immediately after an incident - there can be high stress for all involved.

Youth Debriefing

- Focus on validation of youth experiences & emotions
- Request & accept feedback for staff on how the incident was managed
- Request input for youth next steps or suggestions for amends or healing

Staff Debriefing- Key Points

- Focus on validation of staff experiences & emotions
- Review incident response challenges, successes & failures
- Request input for next steps or suggestions for amends or healing
- Support for staff is dependent on racial identities
 - BIPOC staff may have been directly impacted by the incident
 - White staff may need to be redirected to individual coaching if personal emotions & need for learning dominate a debrief in a way that's harmful for others

Incident Response: Case Study

Incident Response

Incident Summary: Upon the JET's return from Alaska, he shared that he felt excluded/isolated by the majority of his peers in the group because of his race, leading him to self-separate so that he wouldn't have to interact with them as much. Microaggressions that occurred included being pushed out of the car because he was "taking too long" and his peers eating his food while they were out to dinner without asking. He did not share this feedback with his counselors because he was really upset and it's hard for him to express himself when he's feeling that way.

Response to micro-aggressions

Youth did not respond to microaggressions or ask for support because he reported he did not have the language to do so and did not want to represent City Kids "badly". Youth connected with the other Black student, who was feeling similarly. CK staff who learned about what happened after the fact validated youth's experience & documented for follow up.

Response to explicit discrimination or violent threat

n/a

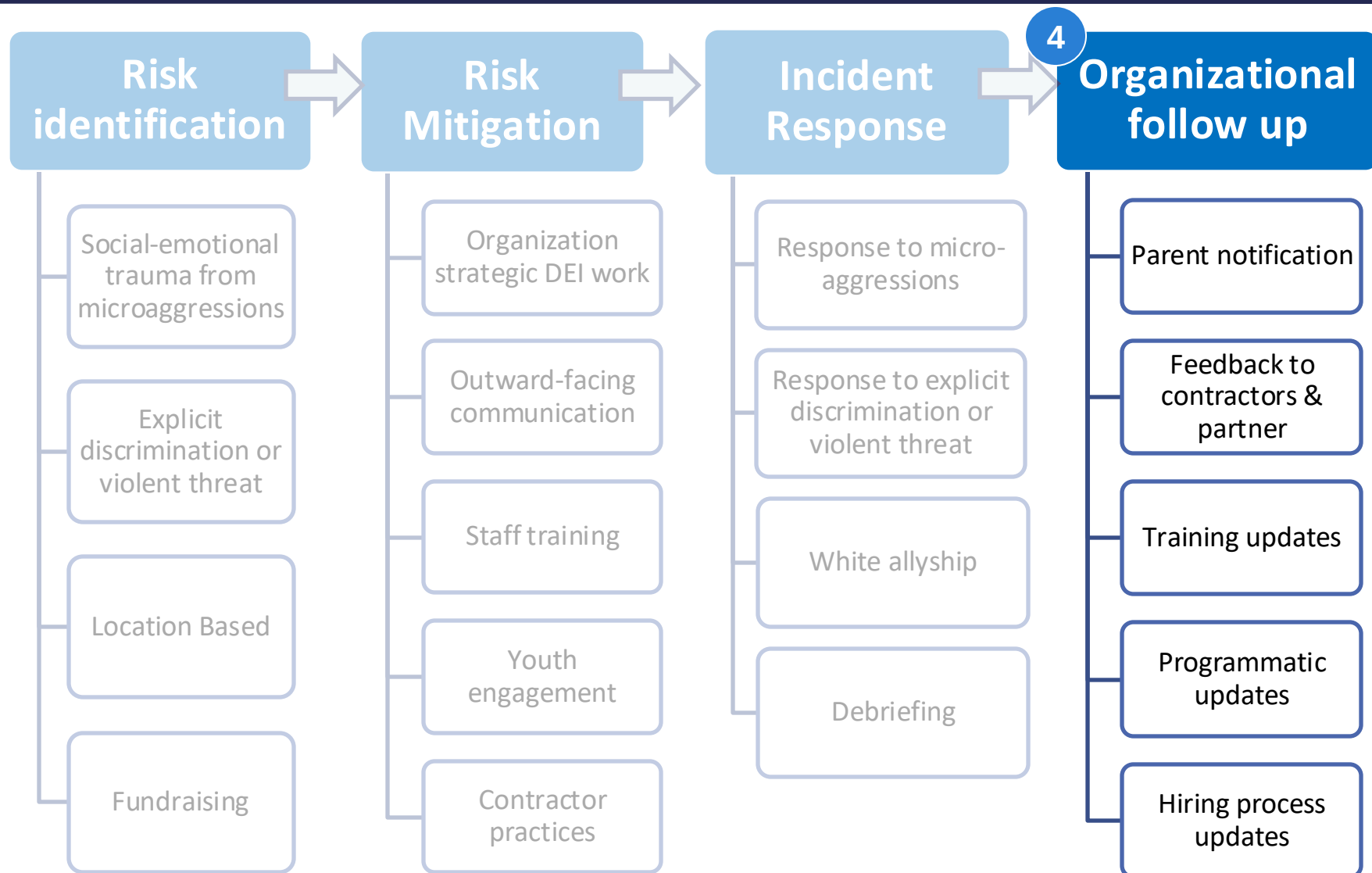
White allyship

Did not occur in the moment on the trip.

Debriefing

CK staff learned of this in the post-trip debrief. Debrief centered on youth's experience and what repairing the harm and healing would look like / feel like for him.

Exclusion Risk Management at City Kids



Organizational Follow-up at City Kids

Organizational follow up

Parent notification

Feedback to
contractors &
partner

Training updates

Programmatic
updates

Hiring process
updates

The incident review process has been beneficial to formalizing organizational next steps, follow-up and has helped shaped organizational change and risk management practices. Examples below:

- **Parent Notification:** Individual and group notification
- **Contractors:** Ending contractor relationships or deepening relationship through training
- **Training updates:** Reviewed & updated annually
- **Program updates:** Changes to activities, contractors, locations
- **Hiring:** Recruitment broadened, youth interviews, screening & scenario questions added

Organizational Follow-up at City Kids: Case Study

Organizational follow up

Incident Summary: Upon the JET's return from Alaska, he shared that he felt excluded/isolated by the majority of his peers in the group because of his race, leading him to self-separate so that he wouldn't have to interact with them as much. Microaggressions that occurred included being pushed out of the car because he was "taking too long" and his peers eating his food while they were out to dinner without asking. He did not share this feedback with his counselors because he was really upset and it's hard for him to express himself when he's feeling that way.

Parent notification

Mom was contacted while youth was still in our care to notify about what had happened and what our follow up plan was.

Feedback to contractors & partner

We met with the leadership at the partner organization and discussed the important learnings for their staff team (including recognizing microaggressions, creating a group culture where youth can self-advocate *and* recognizing power dynamics that may make it difficult for youth to self-advocate).

Training updates

See notes about partner organization staff team learnings above. City Kids created the "Outside Programs Resource" that includes training / reminders for both CK youth & partner program staff. We also updated the language about "representing City Kids" to ensure youth feel empowered to self-advocate and know that City Kids will always support them.

Programmatic updates

Our partnership continued but with the expansion of the training & resources given to youth to advocate for themselves outside of the City Kids community.

Hiring process updates

N/A

Small Group Scenario Practice



In groups of 4, use the Exclusion Risk Management framework to work through a new case study.



Thank You!



Scan for resources!

Meena Fernald (Senior Director of Programs, WY) - meena@citykidsdc.org

Montae Franklin(Camp Director) - montae@citykidsdc.org

Resources

Resources to Take with You

- Worksheet with Framework for your Org
- Case Study practice worksheet

- Articles and Books Cited:

- ***“The Story We’ve Been Told About America’s National Parks Is Incomplete”*** – Dina Gilio-Whitaker
 - <https://time.com/5562258/indigenous-environmental-justice/>
- ***“Exclusion on Public Lands: Shenandoah National Park, State Parks, and Segregation in the American South”*** – Tim Johansen, PLHC Researcher & Ariel Schnee, PLHC Project Manager
 - <https://publiclands.colostate.edu/exclusion-on-public-lands-shenandoah-national-park-state-parks-and-segregation-in-the-american-south/>
- ***“Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress: Theory, Research, and Clinical Treatment”*** – Kevin L. Nadal