An Assessment of Therapeutic Skills and Knowledge of Outdoor Leaders in the United States and Canada

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Abstract

Using an online survey methodology and descriptive statistics, 92 self-identified outdoor leaders, representing a spectrum of wilderness experience programs in the United States and Canada, were surveyed to ascertain their knowledge of select psychological theories and concepts relevant to outdoor leadership. This study explores personal leadership philosophies, attitudes, and practices and knowledge regarding the facilitation of trip participants' relational development with self, others, and the natural world. General findings indicate that leaders possess a range of knowledge and skills to facilitate participants' relational development. Therapeutic outdoor leadership is tripartite relational theory emerging from outdoor programming literature. This study finds that leaders are actively nurturing participant well-being through a relational framework, indicated by the 34% of respondents who agree with the author's definition of outdoor leadership, addressing relational development of intra, inter, and transpersonal domains. However, findings indicate that leaders do not necessarily have, or are being educated in content and skills to maximize their abilities to develop outdoor program participants' relational abilities. Less than 13% of outdoor leaders are familiar with the concepts of therapeutic alliance, transference, and countertransference. Nearly all outdoor leaders claim to facilitate participant-nature relationships, approximately 80% use nature based metaphors, 72% use ceremonies or rituals, and most of the benefits attributed to contact with nature were identified. Most participants are unfamiliar with conservation psychology, the biophilia hypothesis, or ecopsychology. Almost half of outdoor leaders understand what self-efficacy describes and 55% of respondents were familiar with locus of control. Additionally, this survey explores leaders' perceptions about trust factors, how they define emotional safety, relevant professional boundaries, and feedback giving strategies.

Keywords: outdoor leadership, therapeutic leadership, adventure education, relational leadership, relationship-based programming, therapeutic outdoor leadership

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

Among the many variables that exist in outdoor recreation, education, or adventure, relationships prove to be fundamental to human experience. The inherent relational aspects of outdoor and adventure education is articulated within academic literature. For example, Priest (1986) described four types of relationships relevant to outdoor education: intrapersonal, interpersonal, ecosystemic, and ekistic. Gair (1997) described outdoor education as, "an approach or a methodology by which challenging activities and the natural environment provide an arena for the personal, social and educational development" of people (p. 2). However, there is a lack of consistent emphasis upon the knowledge and skills outdoor leaders should possess and exhibit in order to support the relational development of outdoor program participants, and the importance or duty of outdoor leaders to nurture participant relationships.

The goal of this research project was to explore outdoor leaders' knowledge of select psychological theories and concepts applicable to working with participants out of doors; specifically those relevant to relationship development, as well as their practices in facilitating relationships for participants they lead. This thesis research represents a shift from studying leadership traits and practices, the application of leadership, competency models, and leadership theories, to exploring outdoor leaders' understanding of psychological theories and universal human needs when working with diverse populations across diverse wilderness experience program types.

The rationale guiding this project is that outdoor leaders have a great responsibility, and potentially a great influence on the participants they lead. Outdoor leaders can positively influence participant well-being across multiple dimensions through the development of

relationships. This thesis introduces a relational matrix that may simplify the focus and practice of outdoor leadership and highlights the need to advance applicable psychological theories and professional practices within outdoor leadership training and education. This can be accomplished when outdoor leaders are knowledgeable of relevant psychological theories and counseling psychology approaches. With this knowledge, outdoor leaders can adopt professional practices that generate improved participant outcomes in the dimension of personal well-being. This author contends that outdoor programming begins not with content, but with people, and that a fundamental purpose of outdoor leaders is to improve the well-being of those they lead. The facilitation of the three-fold relational matrix of self, community, and nature is described in this paper as *therapeutic outdoor leadership*.

Survey questions were designed to capture information about outdoor leaders' awareness and understanding of theories and constructs relevant to working with people generally, and working in nature specifically, as well as how they facilitate relationships. Psychological topics explored include rapport and trust development, self-efficacy, locus of control, transference and countertransference, professional boundaries, benefits of human connection to nature, and awareness of ecopsychology, the biophilia hypothesis, and conservation psychology. Outdoor leaders were asked about their techniques for: giving feedback and developing rapport; creating or facilitating rituals; using metaphors for personal growth; facilitating connection to the natural world for their participants; intervening with isolative participants; creating emotional safety in groups; and influences affecting their decision-making processes.

The Research Question

This thesis research is guided by the question: what therapeutic knowledge and relational skills do outdoor leaders, representing a spectrum of wilderness experience programs (WEP),

have that directly relate to modeling, facilitating, and building healthier relationships within participants, within communities, and between participants and the natural world?

Definitions of Key Terms

Adventure education: describes a field of study and body of practices that attempt to encourage personal growth through adventure-based experiences.

Adventure programming: "is the deliberate use of adventurous experiences to create learning in individuals or groups, that results in change for society and communities" (Priest, 1999, p. xiii).

Adventure therapy: specialized outdoor programming attempting to treat clinical mental health issues.

Ecopsychology: an interdisciplinary field exploring the reciprocal relationship between human health and the health of the natural world.

Locus of control: describes how individuals attribute outcomes in their lives.

Outdoor education: is an umbrella term that includes environmental education and adventure education.

Outdoor leader: a person responsible for the physical and emotional safety of outdoor participants and is responsible for implementing activities to achieve desired outcomes.

Self-efficacy: describes how someone perceives their abilities, which influences personal performances.

Relational leadership: a leadership orientation that starts with people first, as opposed to task accomplishment, and involves the conscious intention to foster relationships.

Therapeutic: describes intentional approaches and interventions that yield healing, restorative, reparative, or positive effect upon well-being.

Therapeutic alliance: in specific terms it refers to the relationship between a psychotherapist and client, in general terms it describes the nature of relationships between helpers and those being helped.

Therapeutic outdoor leadership: a relationally oriented approach to leadership that involves fostering and facilitating relationships across intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal domains.

Well-being: can be understood as a multi-dimensional construct, expressed across spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and occupational domains.

Wilderness experience programs (WEPs): the broadest label used to describe any type of program operating outdoors. Examples of WEPs might include recreation programs or outdoor ministry, among others.

Being Therapeutic Versus Doing Therapy

This paper explores how and if outdoor leaders are interacting with participants in a therapeutic manner, within their scope of practice and training, that foster the fulfillment of human relational needs. For clarity, it is important to distinguish and define therapeutic interactions from therapy (clinical psychotherapy), as these terms and roles may be confusing for some outdoor leaders. Describing the similarities between therapists and outdoor guides Bodkin and Sartor (2005) wrote,

> In some ways a [wilderness] guide is similar to a therapist. Both therapists and guides must have excellent listening skills and be able to help clients clarify important issues. Both need to assess potential participant/client risks (physical and psychological), and be capable of intervening in crisis situations. Both need to be aware of power dynamics in

> relationships with participants/clients, especially potential abuses of power with vulnerable people. (p. 46)

Despite these similarities, the differences between the processes of being therapeutic versus conducting therapy are evident. Berman and Davis-Berman (2000) help distinguish the differences of these terms. Therapeutic is

> an adjective, [and] indicates factors that may be conducive to emotional well-being and may apply to a variety of activities and programs….[Therapy], a noun, involves a process of assessment, treatment planning, the strategic use of counseling techniques…and the documentation of change. (p. 2)

To provide therapy requires professional, academic, and clinical training for addressing problematic and sometimes significant, psychologically driven life challenges. However, to be therapeutic, one needs simply to contribute to the well-being of another. In this thesis, the term therapeutic describes intentional approaches and interventions that yield healing, restorative, reparative, or positive effect upon well-being.

Research has demonstrated that relationships, and the drive to develop and maintain them, are essential to human well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Well-being can be understood as a multi-dimensional construct, expressed across spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and occupational domains (National Wellness Institute, 2014). Well-being and personal growth are used interchangeably in this paper. Hendee and Brown (1987) defined personal growth as, "a range of effects toward expanded fulfillment of one's capabilities and potential" (p. 2). Adventure and nature-based programming clearly promote well-being across multiple dimensions, such as physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and even spiritual (Bobilya,

Akey, & Mitchell, 2009). Therapeutically oriented outdoor leaders, assisting people in actualizing their relational and psychological needs, can enhance well-being.

The Author's Background and Paradigm

The author's employment history working in nature spans twenty five-years, starting at the age of 15. However, it was not until his early 30s, working in the field of wilderness therapy that he embarked and matured as an outdoor leader. This occupational pursuit initiated graduate study in counseling psychology; however, the author subsequently left this discipline to study adventure education, which felt more pertinent to his personality, interests, and professional ambitions. Initially the author was not interested in leadership, but during his adventure education studies he was struck by what he considered the minimal focus on relationship development and facilitation within outdoor leadership textbooks, particularly the human connection with nature. This thesis embodies the author's interests in both counseling psychology and adventure education.

This study's intention is to situate outdoor program participant well-being as a central focus of outdoor leadership, using a tripartite relationship development framework. It is the author's assertion and assumption that when outdoor leaders actively nurture participant relationships within the three domains of self, community, and nature that participant well-being is improved and program outcomes are positively affected. The author's ambition is to actively promote germane therapeutic practices and knowledge found in counseling psychology and ecopsychology within adventure education theory and practice.

Grounding Research Theories

This thesis is rooted in the belief that humans have an innate need for relationships: with themselves, human communities, and with the natural world, and that outdoor leaders have a

responsibility to facilitate and foster these relationships. The belongingness hypothesis (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and ecopsychology are the grounding theories of this relationship-oriented approach. The belongingness hypothesis advanced by Baumeister and Leary (1995) has been cited extensively (over 7,400 times according to http://scholar.google.com/, retrieved May 18, 2014). This theory asserts that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (p. 497), and that a lack of belongingness can cause a variety of ill effects. Baumeister and Leary (1995) asserted that the human need to belong has an evolutionary basis, stating that social bonds presumably provide survival and reproductive benefits.

Ecopsychology is "a blending of environmental philosophy, ecology, and psychology that…explores how our psychological health is related to the ecological health of the planet" (Mitten, 2009, pp. 22). Norton (2009) explained how ecopsychology focuses on human well-being in relation to the natural environment. Ecopsychology aims to transform "humankind's dissociative relationship with the other than human natural world" (Adams, 2005, p. 269). Ecopsychology research explores how the human need for belonging includes relationship with the natural world and asserts that human well-being is inextricably tied to the health of the natural world-that they are mutually dependent.

Wilson (1993) postulated that humans have an evolutionary urge to connect to nature and an innate need to affiliate with biological life and lifelike processes. Wilson (as cited in McVay, 1993) named this urge biophilia, and defined it as "the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes" (p. 4). This proposition "suggests that human identity and personal fulfillment somehow depend on our relationship to nature" (Kellert, 1993a, p. 42). Ecopsychology, along with the biophilia hypothesis, provide a philosophical framework for why

humans need connection with nature. If the ecopsychology paradigm is well-founded, it seems appropriate that outdoor leaders understand human psychology, particularly elements relevant to humans and their connection with nature. This exploratory and descriptive research examines outdoor leaders' education and training, and beliefs and practices regarding the relational development of the people they lead.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Centrality of Relationships

The literature reviewed explores the nature of relationships broadly and their role in outdoor programming specifically. Additionally, components important in relationship development and facilitation, along with select psychological theories and concepts that are relevant to outdoor programming outcomes, as well as skills outdoor leaders may use to foster relationships in their participants are examined. Referencing specific concepts acknowledged in the literature, such as self-efficacy, this paper contributes to the subject matter by ascertaining outdoor leaders' skills and knowledge of concepts that have been shown to influence outcomes in adventure and nature programming. Likewise, this author reviewed important psychological topics in the literature in order to guide the development of the survey used to assess outdoor leaders' knowledge and skills in these areas.

The idea of personal identity being formed through relationships is foundational to the ideas of well-being, adventure education, and therapeutic outdoor leadership. McLean's (2005) research found, "identity is made up of meaning-filled experiences and also of self-defining fun experiences that induce pleasure and enjoyment" (p. 689). Uhl-Bien (2006) explained that self-concept is "constructed in the context of interpersonal relationships and larger social systems" (p. 664). Thus, personal identity is constructed through meaning making and personal narrative, and the resulting insights are definitional to intrapersonal relationships. Relationships, including their quality, are a cornerstone of self-concept. Burke, Nolan, & Rheingold (2012) summarized Noddings' contention "that humans are relational beings who construct meaning out of encounters with other people, objects, and environments and then use these encounters both to define ourselves and to be defined by them" (p. 6). Relational-ontology is the perspective that

the self is always a self in relationships, or as Slife (2004) succinctly wrote, "Each thing, including each person, is first and always a nexus of relations" (p. 159). Furthermore, Slife (2004) explained a relationalist ontology "assumes we are always and already community" (p. 168), and that differences between members of a community are essential and serve as a strength within communities, and conflict is perceived as opportunities for "learning, growth, and intimacy" (p. 173). Another relevant concept is the term holon. This describes how an entity is both autonomous, yet simultaneously a component of other systems. For example, each person is imbedded in a network of co-occurring and interrelated relationships, while also being self-sufficient. Humans often refer to the self, forgetting that the self is bound within larger systems. Conn (1995) cautioned us about how we establish boundaries between systems. If the boundary around self is too rigid, we separate ourselves from larger systems, and if they are too diffuse, we may lose our perspective and get lost in the larger whole. When we consider all the relationships we as humans are part of, it is the collection of these relationships, perennially changing through time that informs our personal identity.

The Need for Relationships

Relationships, including their presence, absence, and strength, figure prominently in human experience, human well-being and development, and outdoor programming. Baumeister and Leary (1995) postulated that humans have a pervasive drive to form a minimum quantity of lasting interpersonal relationships that involve mutual caring for one another. In essence, humans need relationships. Relationships can be discerned on a continuum from mindful, intentional connection, to connection by happenstance, and by looking at relationship development and maintenance in both temporal and environmental contexts. Mitten (1995) distinguished two types of relationships: those that are based on healthy bonds, leading to

trusting and secure relationships, and those based on reactionary bonding leading to potentially unhealthy relationships. Unhealthy relationship formation may be rooted in a person's family of origin. Healthy relationships are based upon "mutual respect, trust, and experience with one another" (Mitten, 1995, p. 83).

Two pervasive human motivational theories widely cited in psychology and outdoor related literature are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory. Both address the principle need for caring relationships. Maslow's hierarchy highlighted the human need for belongingness and love, relationships and friends. Glasser also identified love and belonging as one of our five essential needs. Subsequent research substantiates the belief that relationships are essential to well-being, from a physiological standpoint. Allan, McKenna, and Hind (2012) wrote, "evidence supports the notion that relationships and their inherent qualities are brain rewiring agents which protect and provide potential for growth" (p. 8).

In addition to intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, there are an increasing number of professionals and nonprofessionals advocating for human well-being by promoting the human-nature relationship. Newer lines of inquiry, such as ecopsychology, are expanding the prominence of human relationships with the larger than human world. Traditional perspectives of psychotherapy are being critiqued because of the lack of prominence given to the human-nature relationship. Beringer (2004) stated that traditional psychology views the relational self as a human-to-human relationship, and emphasizes an atomistic reduction of the individual. Beringer identified social psychology's lens for viewing humans in a contextual perspective, acknowledging humans are defined by their relationships. He advocated for the acknowledgement of the "ecological self." Norton (2009) encouraged social workers to include the natural world in their systems approach to mental health. Watkins, (2009) in critiquing

psychotherapy wrote, "Euro-American psychotherapeutic practices have largely left out the relational web among person, community, and natural and built environments" (p. 224).

Psychopathology Characterized by a Lack of Relationships

But what are the potential consequences of unhealthy relationships, or a lack of relationships? Adams (2005) explained, "psychopathology involves merely part of a person relating with part of the world" (p. 277). Chalquist (2009) wrote, "Disconnection from the natural world...produces a variety of psychological symptoms that include anxiety, frustration, and depression" (p. 70). A focus on autonomy, or self, begins the process of psychopathology. "The illusion of separateness we create in order to utter the words 'I am' is part of our problem in the modern world" (Christie, as cited in Roszak, 1995, p. 12). Ecopsychologists voice the need for humans to have relationships with nature in order to enhance well-being. "As human beings we have a need for place-where we can be connected to a community of people, plants, animals, and the land. Without this, we feel lost, alone, and alienated" (Robinson, 2009, p. 29). And in popular culture, Louv (2005) introduced the term *nature deficit disorder* to the general public's vocabulary and consciousness, clearly highlighting the fact that a lack of connection with nature negatively affects mental health.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) articulated that the human need to belong is so strong, it explains why individuals maintain relationships with people who abuse them.

> Many of the emotional problems for which people seek professional help (anxiety, depression, grief, loneliness, relationship problems, and the like) result from people's failure to meet their belongingness needs. Furthermore, a great deal of neurotic, maladaptive, and destructive behavior seems to reflect either desperate attempts to establish or maintain relationships with other people or sheer frustration and

> purposelessness when one's need to belong goes unmet. (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 521)

Teo, Choi, and Valenstein (2013) note empirical evidence that "social isolation and negative social interactions are associated with depression and suicide" (p.1). Robinson (2009) described one source of psychopathology:

> Most people in our culture have been treated like objects all their lives. This is the source of the wound to the soul underlying most of the human misery that therapists encounter. Because people have come to experience themselves as objects, they in turn objectify other people and commodify the world. They feel alienated, isolated, and empty, believing their lives hold no meaning. (p. 25)

Relationships are a human need. Ryan and Deci (2000), wrote about needs and explained, "whether it be a physiological need or a psychological need, is an energized state that, if satisfied, conduces toward health and well-being but, if not satisfied, contributes to pathology and ill-being" (p. 74). In summation, insignificant relationships, or the absence of meaningful relationships-with self, others, or nature, can result in detrimental mental and physical issues, which compromise personal well-being. One framework to prevent psychopathology in others is relational leadership.

Relational Leadership

Uhl-Bien (2006) defined relational leadership "as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (i.e., new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, ideologies, etc.) are constructed and produced" (p. 668). She conceived relational leadership theory, which "sees leadership as the process by which social systems change through the structuring of roles and relationships" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 668). However, in

this paper the term *relational leadership* is not intended to refer to any specific theory, rather it should be interpreted as simply describing a framework of leadership emphasizing relationships. Universal among all leadership encounters is the human element, and as Reiman and Rollenhagen (2011) pointed out, "human behavior is always contextual" (p. 1265). Similarly, human growth is also contextual. Human behavior can be observed in our relationship networks, and our relationships are contextual to our physical, as well as psychic environments. Ringer (1999) wrote, "leadership of groups is one of the most complex tasks that human beings can undertake" (p. 19). Part of this complexity is due to the multifaceted relationships each outdoor participant is a part of.

Relational leadership is the perspective that the function of leadership is to develop relationships in those being led. Uhl-Bien (2006) identified two relational leadership perspectives that may enhance our conceptual understanding: entity and relational. An entity perspective frames leadership at the individual level, whereas a relational perspective holds that social reality is a nexus of relationships. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) wrote that relational leaders are responsive to the present moment and problem solving and are able to anticipate what matters in people's relational nexuses. "Relational leadership requires a way of engaging with the world in which the leader holds herself/himself as always in relation with, and therefore morally accountable to others" (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011, p. 1425). Supporting this statement, Fox and Lautt (1996) wrote, "Moral practice...encompasses relational characteristics: love, friendship, compassion, caring, passion, and intuition" (p. 22). Relational leadership links leadership to morality, to the practical elements of relationship formation and effective leader attributes. However, moral frameworks should not be limited to just interpersonal ethics. Fox and Lautt (1996) asserted that ethical leaders must "attend to personal development and change"

(p. 25), and expressed the need to foster relationships between humans and the natural world, as well as "an urgent need to articulate ethical frameworks and moral practices that respect the Earth" (p. 23). Supporting this, Burke et al. (2012) wrote, "by fostering positive relationships between and among students, outdoor programs become a means of *moral* education, helping students learn how to be a better person in the world through the group experience" (p. 4). Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) stated, "moral responsibility is embedded within relational integrity" (p. 1439) and explained that relational integrity "encompasses being attuned to the situation, knowing what to question and how to maintain one's integrity" (p. 1440). Relational integrity involves "respecting and being responsive to differences, being accountable to others, acting in ways that others can count on us, and being able to explain our decisions and actions to others and ourselves" (Cunliffe, & Eriksen, 2011, p. 1444).

A well-known type of leadership is transformational leadership. "Transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals...challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 4). There are four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Influence is attributed to the leader's behavior and followers' perceived attributes of the leader. Hayashi and Ewert (2006) found that outdoor leaders, when compared to the general population, "demonstrated a more transformational leadership style" (p. 230). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), "Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge" (p. 6). Transformational leaders do not publically criticize their followers, they "pay special attention to each individual follower's needs for achievement

and growth by acting as a coach or mentor" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7). Leaders accept individual differences and listen effectively. "Transformational leaders gain follower trust by maintaining their integrity and dedication, by being fair in their treatment of followers, and by demonstrating their faith in followers by empowering them" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 43). This author considers transformational leadership to be closely related to relational leadership. Emphasizes a shared commonality, Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) acknowledge that risk and trust are central elements to relational leadership. "A leader who is concerned but calm, who is decisive but not impulsive, and who is clearly in charge can inspired the confidence and trust of followers" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 57). Important to this study, Bass and Riggio (2006) noted, "Transformational leaders enhance the self-concept and sense of self-efficacy of followers" (p. 50).

Hayashi and Ewert (2006) posited that intrapersonal and emotional elements of leadership have been less acknowledged. When leaders are relationally oriented, emotional elements of leadership are critical to effectiveness. Knowledge informs human decision-making and actions. It seems logical then that greater knowledge can improve the effectiveness of leading others and facilitating personal growth. Various fields in psychology are dedicated to exploring human behaviors, relationships, well-being, and needs. Operating from the perspective that humans have universal needs, as well as individual needs, leaders should have an understanding of basic relational needs, and how best to allow those they lead to achieve these. Relational leaders can utilize knowledge from counseling psychology and relevant psychological constructs when attempting to foster personal growth, as well as addressing general intrapersonal and interpersonal issues.

Therapeutic Alliance and Influences

One of the most intentional human relationships focused on well-being and developing intrapersonal relationships is professional psychotherapy. This type of relationship can inform our opinions about the essential need for relationships, relational quality, and their therapeutic power. The interpersonal connection between a therapist and client is referred to as therapeutic alliance. Psychological research has shown that the variable most likely to positively affect clinical treatment progress and therapy outcomes is the therapeutic alliance between therapist and client (Green, 2009; Flückiger, Del Re, Wampold, & Horvath, 2011; Homrich, 2009). Therapeutic "alliance is portrayed as the most consistent in-treatment predictor of outcomes and possessing significant explanatory power in treatment research across numerous psychotherapeutic approaches and client populations" (Harper, 2009, p. 46). Just as therapeutic alliance exists between therapists and clients, alliance elements are often present between outdoor leaders and those they lead.

The determinants of alliance are still being researched, but there are three elements clearly prominent in therapeutic alliance: mutually agreed upon goals, mutually agreed upon tasks, and the quality of the attachment between client and therapist (Harper, 2009). Several therapist qualities have been identified as positively contributing to therapeutic alliance: empathy and genuineness (Mitten, 1995), caring and openness (Gass, Gillis, and Russell, 2012), and warmth (Mitten, 1995; Gass et al., 2012). Therapeutic alliance in the medical field is also critical to patient outcomes. Freshwater and Stickley (2006) found that the most common complaint regarding medical services is poor communication by medical providers. Affirming these findings, Baumeister and Leary (1995) asserted that human belongingness needs can only be fulfilled when the bonds between people are marked by caring and positive concern. The take

away from this research is that the most important thing a healing person can do is to establish a meaningful, ethical and caring interpersonal connection with others.

Knapp (1999) believed that outdoor leadership entails facilitating outdoor activities safely and skillfully, but also involves facilitating "the process of making sense from what is learned" (p. 219). A purpose of meaning making, is to shift personal narratives, which can inform intrapersonal relationships. Thus, it is logical that outdoor leaders must understand the value, purpose, and development of therapeutic alliance with participants in order to foster well-being through facilitating participating relationships with self, community, and nature, which can positively affect individual and program outcomes.

Transference and countertransference are two concepts that can influence psychotherapy and therapeutic alliance and are pertinent to outdoor leadership. Transference, in a therapy context, describes the "unconscious transferring of experiences from one interpersonal situation to another. It is concerned with revisiting past relations in existing circumstances. Thoughts [attitudes] and feelings about significant others from one's past are projected onto a therapist (or others) and influence the therapeutic relationship" (Jones, 2004, p. 14). Countertransference is the opposite experience, in which a therapist is unable to remain unbiased and reacts to the client as someone from her or his own life. Sources of transference involve people in roles of power, such as parents, teachers, spouses, or other authority figures. In remote and challenging environments, amidst foreign and intimate social environments, where there are potential safety risks, leaders are responsible for making decisions and processing experiences that affect participants. These dynamic factors influence how participants perceive and relate to their leaders, both positively and negatively. Through being mindful of these dynamics, and self-

aware, outdoor leaders can forge more therapeutic relationships when they are familiar with the concepts of therapeutic alliance, transference, and countertransference.

Ethical Leadership

> Ethical leadership is a complex set of relationships and interactions among elements such as power, empowerment, ethical decision-making, self-awareness, reflection, role of followers and leaders, connection with the natural environment and an ability to laugh, all directed toward achieving a specific task. (Fox & McAvoy, 1995, p. 21)

This definition underscores the dynamics of leadership, but does not reference a specific or general goal, or end point. Fox and Lautt (1996) stated that when outdoor educators focus on relationships, they may "discover invisible connections that structure moral practice in the outdoors" (p. 23). The assertion that relational leadership is inherently a moral process supports the idea that outdoor leadership focusing on participant well-being is therapeutic.

Understanding that there is profound intimacy and vulnerability (and hierarchy) in professional counseling relationship, reviewing the ethical code for counselors may improve the competence level of ethical leaders. The American Counseling Association's (ACA) (2014) Code of Ethics presents guidelines and practices that are also relevant to outdoor leaders, particularly those that are relationally oriented. "Counselors encourage client growth and development in ways that foster the interest and welfare of clients and promote formation of healthy relationships" (p. 4). This is aligned with adventure education's purpose of fostering personal growth. "Counselors interact appropriately with clients in both developmental and cultural contexts" (p. 5). They "avoid harming others, are self-aware of their own values and avoid imposing such values on clients" (p. 5). Awareness of one's values is central to leadership effectiveness. "Counselors are prohibited from sexual or romantic "interactions or relationships

with current clients, their romantic partners, or their family members" (p. 5) for at least five years from their last professional contact. This speaks to the importance of professional boundaries held by outdoor leaders. Professional responsibilities for counselors include open and honest communication, to "practice in a nondiscriminatory manner within the boundaries of professional and personal competency" (p. 8). Non-discrimination includes the areas of "age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status/partnership, language preference, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law" (p. 9). Outdoor programming involves individuals from all walks of life; therefore outdoor leaders should be impartial with those they work with. "Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience" (p. 8) and counselors are expected to behave "in an ethical, and legal manner" (p. 18). These points parallel the responsibility of outdoor leaders to operate within legal requirements, standards, industry common practices, and employer policies and procedures. Lastly, counselors are expected to address ethical dilemmas with the parties involved, and through supervisors and professional colleagues. Ethical issues are often addressed in the field with co-workers, or with management as needed.

The ACA code of ethics exclusively addresses interpersonal dynamics and boundaries between therapists and clients. A code of ethics for outdoor leaders also needs to address the ethical issues involved when working in the natural world. Berger (2008) forwarded his ideas germane to a code of ethics for nature therapy. Berger highlighted issues of physical safety, appropriate physical challenges, the ethical responsibility for the care of the land, and promoting ecological stewardship and respect among clients.

An Ethic of Care

Outdoor leadership theory and outdoor leaders need to be critical examiners of underlying theories and assumptions that drive practice. A component of healthy relationships is compassion. Relevant to both the human need for belonging and relational and ethical leadership, there is an additional theory that may guide how leaders act towards participants to foster growth: Noddings' (2002) ethic of care. Articles by McKenzie and Blenkinsop (2006) and Burke et al. (2012) assert that an ethic of care has an important role in both the theory and practice of outdoor and adventure education, and can serve as a theoretical foundation for WEPs to assess the role of care and compassion in programs. Noddings (2002) describes four conditions that define a caring relationship: one person demonstrates conscious attention and directed energy towards serving another (needs, goals); this person acts on his or her awareness; the recipient recognizes the actions as demonstrating care; and the caring person is "consistently present."

An ethic of care can guide leaders in how they foster and facilitate relationship formation and highlights elements present in caring relationships, as well as affirming the best in others (McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006). According to Burke et al. (2012), "An ethic based on care is one that puts relations and the needs of the other at the center of any moral decision-making" (p. 13). Relationships positively affected by an ethic of care include intrapersonal and interpersonal. Quay, Dickinson, and Nettleton (2000) wrote, "Caring provides a strategy for meeting our need for recognition as individuals as well as our need to belong within a community" (p. 7), and that caring for others meets the human need for belonging to community. "With care theory as a foundation, caring for individuals is never set aside or secondary in effective leadership" (Burke

et al., 2012, p. 10). This perspective acknowledges the human need for relationships and situates caring as central to effective leadership.

Caring is acknowledged as a crucial element of leadership. Burke et al. (2012) wrote, "The purpose of the caring relation is to promote growth, prevent harm, and meet the needs of the other" (p. 5). Expanding the notion of the "other", McKenzie and Blenkinsop (2006) described how teaching low impact camping techniques and environmental ethics demonstrates an ethic of care towards the natural world. One element of moral education is *confirmation*, which "involves looking for the best in the acts of an individual and affirming and encouraging that part of their actions which one believes is good and has good intentions" (Quay et al., 2000, p. 10). This is akin to positive psychology, which is a growth-oriented therapy model where individual strengths and positive traits are emphasized rather than focusing on individual problems and deficits (Berman and Davis-Berman, 2005). Positive psychology asserts human development is best facilitated through "leveraging natural talents rather than merely remediating his or her weaknesses" (Passarelli, Hall, & Mallory, 2010).

Care can be applied across a broad spectrum of intentions. A leader can care about and emphasize the physical safety of those he or she leads. A leader can care about and emphasize the learning of those he or she leads. Or, a leader can care about the overall well-being and personal development of those he or she leads. A caring outdoor leader encourages personal development through adventure and nature-based experiences and teaching environmental ethics, philosophy, and nature dominated psychological theories to build relationships within people, between people, and with nature. McKenzie and Blenkinsop (2006) acknowledged that adventure education curricula often addresses issues of interpersonal communication, group process issues and development, and environmental stewardship. They conclude that an ethic of

care should address care for self, others, and the natural world. This conclusion embodies the values and practices of therapeutically oriented outdoor leaders. Thus, a tripartite relational matrix is already integrated in adventure education, but the domains of these three relationships may not be explicit identified or addressed in relevant literature.

Emotional Intelligence

Outdoor leadership education, research, and competencies often address concepts such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, judgment, and decision-making. A more integrated, and possibly more useful construct is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a wholistic construct that has more recently been explored in the context of leadership generally, and outdoor leadership specifically. Mayer and Salovey (as cited in Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) define emotional intelligence as:

> the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (p. 197)

Hayashi and Ewert's (2006) research found that higher levels of emotional intelligence were positively related to the level of the leader's outdoor experience. Because the concept of emotional intelligence includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and situational elements, Hayashi and Ewert (2006) suggested it is a useful framework for researching outdoor leaders. Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, and Breunig (2006) affirmed this point, when they stated that emotional intelligence is "important to outdoor leaders in understanding the motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of program participants" (p. 127). Hayashi and Ewert (2006) explained that research suggests there is a relationship between transformational leaders and emotional intelligence,

while Palmer, Walls, Burgess, and Stough (2001) found preliminary evidence that there is a relationship between effective leadership and the emotional intelligence of leaders. Mayer et al. (2004) explained, "emotional information processing is an evolved area of communication among mammals…[which] involves understanding of relationships among people and, to a lesser extent, animals" (p. 199). Individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence have a greater ability for relatedness, to communicate motivating messages, to better perceive emotions and understand their meaning, and manage emotions, which result in openness and agreeableness yielding higher levels of cooperation (Mayer et al., 2004). Considering the research that links emotional intelligence to effective and transformational leadership, it seems logical to emphasize emotional intelligence within a relational framework of outdoor leadership.

Self-Awareness and Values

Self-awareness is required for leaders to effectively foster well-being and relationships. Connecting self-awareness to emotional intelligence, Sosik and Megerian (1999) stated that self-awareness is the theoretical foundation of emotional intelligence. Referencing the work of renowned psychologist, Carl Rogers, Thomas (2008) extrapolated the importance of self-reflection by person-centered therapists, to facilitators, and makes a covert reference to countertransference. He wrote, "facilitators must be aware of, understand, and be able to manage their internal reactions to their participants, especially in challenging situations" (p. 180). For Thomas, an effective outdoor leader is one who is educated in what he described as person-centered outdoor leadership education. He described person-centered leadership education as "content focused on the attitudes, personal qualities, or self-awareness of the outdoor leader" (Thomas, 2011, p. 6). In an earlier paper, Thomas (2008) described person-centered facilitator education approaches as being intentional, emphasizing "the attitudes, personal qualities, or

presence of the facilitator" (p. 170) as well as being "focus[ed] on… the interpersonal relationships between the facilitator and group" (p. 170). Thomas' (2008) research into skills needed by facilitator educators include "high levels of self-awareness and self-management" (p. 184) as well as "better understand[ing] their relationships with groups and their presence in the group" (p. 184). Passarelli et al. (2010) highlighted the critical element of self-reflection by outdoor leaders when they suggested instructors "would benefit from a deep understanding of the patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that their own unique strengths produce" (p. 131). Fox and McAvoy (1995) declared that self-awareness and self-assessment are aspects of ethical outdoor leadership, while Sosik and Megerian (1999) found in their corporate research that leaders with high levels of self-awareness exhibited higher levels of "personal efficacy, interpersonal control, and social self-confidence" (p. 384).

Values are an important focus area of self-awareness. Each outdoor leader brings to her or his facilitation underlying assumptions and work related experiences that shape the leader's intentions. It is essential for outdoor leaders to be cognizant of their values, filters, and held paradigms, for leaders consciously and subconsciously teach these perspectives to others. Values research within the field of psychotherapy has found that "therapists hold important values in actual practice, but they also inevitably seek to persuade their clients to hold them" (Slife, 2004, pp. 172-173). This supports the assertion that leadership is inherently a process of influence. Fox and McAvoy (1995) wrote, "It is important for the outdoor leader to understand her or his values or ethics and how those ethics shape his or her decisions and behavior" (p. 21). Slife (2004) and Fox and McAvoy (1995) have highlighted the reality that we are subconsciously, yet actively persuading those around us to adopt, in some form, our own values or to mimic our decision making processes. Schumann et al. (2009) explored instructor

influences on transfer of learning, and found that expressed leader behaviors could not be separated from who the instructor is. Hamachek (1999) provided an illuminating quote regarding self-awareness and leadership: "Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are" (p. 209). This notion of "teaching who we are" is topically explored in this thesis survey.

Besides instructor values, there are values inherent within outdoor programming goals. Fox and Lautt (1996) stated that "the common ground between outdoor recreation, outdoor education, environmental education, and experiential education can be found in a value base of respect, social responsibility, self-actualization, justice, and freedom for all living beings and the Earth" (p. 19). Raiola (1997) asserted that adventure educator academic curricula should cover the topic of values including care and respect for oneself, respect and acceptance of others, and respect for nature. The points outlined in this section situate self-awareness, including values awareness, as necessary for relational leaders.

Outdoor Leadership and Relationships

Competency Approaches to Outdoor Leadership

Outdoor leadership theories and practices have been defined, and are continually refined, as research provides information that can improve leadership efficacy, better facilitate desired outcomes, and enhance the training of leaders. Past discussions and research on outdoor leadership have often focused on models of competency. Often cited works by Buell (1981), Swiderski (1981), and Priest (1984) among others, attempted to name and categorize skills essential to outdoor leadership. Competency models imply a level of objectivity and consistency across WEPs, that outdoor leaders approach their duties and responsibilities with similar perspectives. In contrast, Thomas (2008) highlighted the subjective nature of group facilitators,

stating that a leader's interpretation and assessment of their group is rooted in the subjectivity of perception, stemming from differences in feelings, thoughts, and intuitions, but does not mention that values also influence a leader's perceptions. Shooter, Sibthorp, and Paisley (2009) reviewed multiply outdoor leadership competency models and concluded, "there is not a universal set of outdoor leadership competencies that is valued across all outdoor settings, with all client groups, and for all programs" (p. 2). Regrettably, Shooter, Sibthorp, and Paisley (2009) did not acknowledge that regardless of outdoor settings, client groups, or program type, there is one consistent variable: participants. All leaders can contribute to the well-being of others, yet the ability to be therapeutically oriented is not discussed. One competency model that emphasizes relational awareness is Ringer's (1999), who included relational awareness as one of six group leadership competencies. Shooter et al.'s assertion, along with Ringer's identification of a relational awareness competency, inspires this author to ask, is there a universal skillset that leaders can possess that supports relationship development?

Contemporary outdoor leadership literature and textbooks (Prouty, Panicucci, & Collinson, 2007; Martin et al., 2006; Priest & Gass, 2005; Priest, 1994) continue to emphasize and promote models of leadership competency, including skills and processes related to decision-making, risk management, group safety, and communication among others. Thomas (2011) criticizes four often-utilized textbooks on outdoor leadership: *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* (Priest & Gass, 2005), *Outdoor Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Martin et al., 2006), *Adventure Education: Theory and Practice* (Prouty et al., 2007), and *Teaching Adventure Education Theory: Best Practices* (Stremba & Bisson, 2009). He wrote, "I am not convinced that the choice of content in the texts analysed [sic] has been based on careful research to ensure that they focus on the skills, knowledge, and experience that are essential to

effective outdoor leadership practice" (Thomas, 2011, p. 6). Thomas' assertion supports this author's perspective that leadership cannot begin with the transfer of content; it must begin with an outdoor leader, conscious of her or himself, leading from a place of conscious intent, to enhance participants' well-being.

Several authors have distinguished between different WEPs based on programmatic goals. Priest and Gass (2005) identified four: recreation, education, development, and therapy. Ringer (1999) developed a more detailed categorical framework. He identified recreation, development, enrichment, adjunctive therapy, and primary therapy as different types of outdoor programs. Ringer elaborated on the roles of outdoor leaders for each program type: safety supervisors/limit setters (recreation), enthusiastic adventurers and instructors/coaches (development and enrichment programs), expert communicator (adjunctive therapy), and human behavior experts/clinicians (primary therapy programs). The notion of different programmatic goals implies that outdoor leaders have different skills to fulfill programmatic goals. However, a vital universal element in outdoor programming, regardless of outdoor program type, is relationships, specifically the relationship between leaders and participants.

The field's focus on leader competencies and skills development has potentially distracted discussions and research from exploring the intentional processes and purpose of outdoor leadership. This being said, emphasis on outdoor leadership competencies have yielded significant contributions to the topics of communication and group management, which are repeatedly identified as essential outdoor leadership skills. However, these competencies are not commonly described or organized around the concept or intent of being therapeutic, nor are they situated within a relational framework. For example, what is communication used for, and how does it benefit outdoor participants? In other words, communication is valued as part of a model

of leadership, but the desired outcome is not identified as being therapeutic in nature. Note the following quote as an example: "the primary task of the group establishes the reason for its existence" (Ringer, 1999, p. 7). By addressing a group task, without simultaneously addressing a process or underlying intention, is to ignore both the participants and critical elements of interpersonal facilitation. Also, therapeutic opportunities can present themselves at any time, regardless of some pre-decided outcome. People are the foundational element for all group activities and tasks. This paper specifically focuses on the manner in which outdoor leaders interact relationally with their participants, and explores their philosophies of the relational needs of their participants.

Relationship Driven Outdoor Leadership

The emphasis of outdoor leadership literature has predominantly focused on what leaders do (ex. decision-making), rather than why they perform these actions (ex. towards what desired outcome?), focusing on the transactional elements of outdoor leadership, not the transformational process that is co-occurring. "Transformational leaders…are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3), as well as "inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for… [a group], challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 4). Transformational leadership processes and experiences are best understood through understanding and viewing leadership as a relational dynamic, especially considering the nuanced roles outdoor leaders manifest, such as instructor, teacher, coach, leader, mentor, guide, facilitator, and counselor. The type of leader relationship varies depending on program type, desired program outcomes, and a leader's personal values and intentions.

The relational nature of outdoor programming is clearly described in the literature. Within outdoor programming and leadership literature, Mitten (1999), Mitten and Clement (2007), and Graham (1997) have promoted a relational leadership emphasis. Raiola (1997) described effective leadership as focusing on "cognitive, communication, and social skills" (p. 9), while Sibthorp, Paisley, and Gookin (2007), after studying factors leading to trip participant development outcomes, asserted that outdoor leaders "should be working to establish personal relationships and strong connections with their students" (p. 15), so that outdoor programs may become more worthwhile for participants. Priest (1986) stated that adventure education is primarily focused on the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationship capabilities. Priest (1986) forwarded at that time a new definition of outdoor education. He wrote, "*In outdoor education the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on RELATIONSHIPS, relationships concerning people and natural resources*" (p. 13). Fox and Lautt (1996) wrote that outdoor education is fundamentally "about connecting humans with the natural world and each other" (p. 23). Distinguishing outdoor education from adventure education, Priest and Gass (2005) declared that outdoor education focuses on relationships between participants and natural resources, whereas adventure education addresses intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. Martin (2004) observed, "in recent years, outdoor education's contribution to curriculum has shifted from personal and group development towards seeking to understand humans and their relationship with the non-human natural world" (p. 20).

Social constructionism is the theory and belief that reality and meaning are socially constructed, and that personal identity is renegotiated through relationships (Richert, 2002). Leadership and outdoor programming are married to relationship cultivation, and therefore the onus of outdoor leaders is to foster relationships for their participants. Critical constructionism

asserts that meaning is not wholly socially created, but is also constructed by individuals (Richert, 2002). When physical or psychological challenges are presented to participants, and leaders actively coach engagement and the triumph of both perceived and projected challenges, they are in effect supporting the change of a person's patterned, limiting, self-narrative. Richert advocated combining critical constructionist views with narrative based therapy as a means for counseling individuals. This approach seems analogous with the goals of outdoor programs fostering therapeutic growth.

Outdoor programming occurring in small groups creates a unique social system that can transform individuals' lives through a nexus of relationships: with self, community, and nature. Priest (1986) described four categories of relationships relevant to outdoor education: intrapersonal, interpersonal, ekistic, and ecosystemic. A relationally oriented outdoor leader is mindful of these categories, and actively creates and facilitates relationships accordingly. Raiola (2003) claimed "Leadership is an interactive process, requiring us to be actively engaged in dynamic situations" (p. 54). What are more dynamic phenomena than intrapersonal dissonance, interpersonal conflict, immersion in nature, and personal growth? Outdoor leaders are constantly monitoring and managing issues pertinent to all of these characteristics. Therefore, leadership should begin with an understanding of emotional safety, psychological depth, and human relational needs—including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal.

Emotional Safety

Emotional safety is one concept useful for gaging participant stress levels, for facilitating authentic self-expression, and is an area of managed concern. Stress, fear and emotional safety amongst outdoor participants have been explored for at least the past several decades. Ewert (1989), while researching fear in Outward Bound participants, found that psychological or

sociological issues were more prevalent and more concerning than physical fears. A topic widespread in adventure education literature is the role of stress and anxiety in outdoor programs as a contributor to personal growth; where it has been assumed that stress is good and growth inducing (Kimball & Bacon, 1993). The idea of eustress (or healthy stress) is often married with the conceptual pairing of perceived risk and actual risk, and this is tied to the concept of a personal "comfort zone." Some authors have advocated that stress is a source of personal growth and that the intentional creation of stressful situations can facilitate personal growth.

The perspective of stress being beneficial for participants has been critiqued as being detrimental (Estrellas, 1996). Research has shown that the historical emphasis on intentional stress induction as a means for providing growth through challenge has been overstated. Brown (2008) stated that the value of using disequilibrium/dissonance is not well supported in educational literature. Berman and Davis-Berman (2005) argued that "moving participants out of their comfort zones is in need of more examination" (p. 21). They are critical of outdoor education programming that focus on disequilibrium as an intentional foci because one, increased "exposure to perceived risk and anxiety can become debilitating for people" and two, "anxiety and perception of risk are very subjective experiences" (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2005, p. 20). Corresponding with Berman and Davis'Berman's claims, Bandura (1997) found people perform optimally under moderate levels of stress. Ewert (1989) asked, "can instructors be sure…that the level of stress and anxiety that their students experience is both appropriate and beneficial?" (p. 19). This question clearly highlights the need to examine outdoor leaders' motivations driving their leadership decisions.

Important when thinking about emotional safety is an understanding that this is an individually based, subjective perception. Thus, a relationally oriented outdoor leader must

ascertain each participant's level of emotional safety. Vincent (as cited in Vincent, 1995) defines emotional safety

> as the perceived freedom from psychological harm that can be measured on a continuum from feeling threatened to feeling safe. An individual's position on the continuum at any given moment is dependent on the amount of trust he/she has in herself/himself and in the group members. (p.76)

Of course, this raises the question, what is "psychological harm?" Is this an infliction of harm that lasts a mere ten minutes, or an entire lifetime? Also pertinent in this definition, and to this research project, is the recognition that trusting relationships are essential for participants to experience emotional safety. In general, emotional safety levels increase as the group focus advances from recreational programming to therapeutic. However, when outdoor leaders consciously operate within a relational framework of intention, awareness, and actions, they consequently create safer environments. This thesis research attempts to shift the personal growth paradigm from emphasizing stress to facilitating relationships. Personal growth comes from healthy relationships within a relational matrix. Psychology is showing that growth actually requires supportive communities (Mitten, 1999; Warren, 1999) as well as safety and security in order to occur, which is antithetical to intentionally inducing experiences outside individuals' comfort zones (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2005).

Psychological Depth

Psychological depth describes a level of emotional inquiry and disclosure that is occurring within a group environment. Ringer and Gillis (1995, 1998) presented an eight-step model for managing psychological depth (including a concept they refer to as emotional arousal) for outdoor trip participants. These levels include; surface, personally experienced, current task,

encounter, contextual, identity formation, historic/cultural, and universal. They attempt to coordinate the elicitation of psychological depth with types of adventure programming: recreation, education/training, development, and psychotherapy. Ringer and Gillis (1995) claimed that an appropriate level of psychological depth is contingent on agreed upon group goals preceding group experiences. Furthermore, they asserted the language occurring in groups can indicate the level of psychological depth of a group. A concern with this regulated approach is that it precludes ephemeral and unanticipated opportunities that may arise that can foster deeper relationships and well-being. Enforcing some type of mutual agreement among group members assumes that all possible goals are articulated before commencing a therapeutic process. In the course of psychotherapy, issues often emerge naturally, sometimes unexpectedly. To limit depth exploration to a priori understanding of issues seems to limit a leader's therapeutic effectiveness. Another problem with favoring group consensus over a leader's skill set, competency, and initiative, is that a group might chose minimal challenge or depth, either due to lack of trust in the outdoor leader, or due to feelings of discomfort, thereby underutilizing a leader's knowledge and skills. In a more recent article on psychological depth (Ringer & Gillis, 1998), the relationship between psychological depth and emotional safety is clearly summarized. For instance, a group can address deep and profound psychological issues in a safe environment. However, emotional safety may be compromised when group members explore psychological issues deeper than those agreed upon by the group. This model serves as a reminder of an important boundary for outdoor leaders when interacting with participants: outdoor leaders need to operate within their scope of training, education, grasp of theory (Ringer & Gillis, 1995), certifications, and licenses. It is important to emphasize the relationship between facilitating psychological depth and the role of a leader's training, experience,

assumptions, and comfort in leading individuals in emotional and personal growth realms. As a new wilderness therapy field staff, one of the author's mentors gave him the following advice when working therapeutically with people: "you have to know when to push, when to stop, and when to process."

A Tripartite Relational Model for Outdoor Leaders

A primary agent of change in human experience is relationships, (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and relationships are elementary to human well-being. Due to the unique nature and program structure of outdoor programming, such as small group dynamics, immersion in nature, and opportunities for personal reflection, a unique nexus of potentially healthy relationships for fostering outdoor participants' well-being exists. One simplified tripartite relational lens is to observe a *person's relationship with the self, with others, and with the natural world*. This tripartite lens is particularly salient since adventure education is a field attempting to develop whole persons (Medrick & Mitten, n.d.). The power and influence of outdoor leaders, working in diversified wilderness experience programs, to foster participant relationship with themselves, their peers, and with the natural world are remarkable to the out of doors working and living environment and the contingent social milieu, while being germane to the explicit purpose of adventure education. When leaders are able to facilitate these relationships, program outcomes can be improved, and with improved skills, leaders can be more efficacious in facilitating intra, inter, and transpersonal relationships for those they lead.

This survey research endorses Mitten's (1999) assertion that outdoor leaders have incredible power, responsibility, and capacity to foster well-being through relational development, and that core human needs can be met (or hindered) through outdoor leadership. To inspire participants requires an understanding of human motivations, perceived limitations,

influences to task accomplishment, and beliefs about such activities. If an outdoor leader has an understanding of core human needs, particularly human relationship needs, they can improve participant well-being through facilitating activities that improve relationship with self, community, and nature. Based on these assertions, it seems important that outdoor leaders possess the knowledge of humans' need for belonging, the skills to foster participant growth in their relational capacities, and acquisition of skills relevant to a relational matrix involving self, community, and nature.

As mentioned, we are always in a nexus of co-occurring relationships across intra, inter, and transpersonal domains. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to wholly isolate the three relationships included in the author's tripartite model. For example, Ringer and Gillis (1995) highlighted one cross-domain interdependence: "the interpersonal world is intimately connected with the internal world, so many persons respond to interpersonal challenges by describing an aspect of their internal experience" (p. 48). Also, Ringer and Gillis (1995) noted that intrapsychic issues can be intensified by small group dynamics and adventure activities, which manifest in the totality of one's relational world. Nevertheless, the three relationships identified in this thesis provide a relational framework for outdoor leaders.

Relationship with the self.

Quinn (1999), in a brief yet perceptive quote wrote, "self-knowledge is always an outcome of adventure" (p. 151). Experiential learning is nearly synonymous with personal reflection, and experiential learning is quintessential to outdoor programming. Personal insight can be considered the embodiment of a relationship with oneself. McKenzie (2000) reviewed outdoor program outcome literature to ascertain how specific outcomes are obtained. She discussed literature that found personal autonomy and the process of self-reflection made

significant contributions to personal development. Similarly, studies have shown that "teachers who are autonomy supportive...catalyze in their students greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and desire for challenge" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). Other elements found in outdoor programs that encourage personal growth include physical exercise, self-care skills, healthy diet, and removal from potentially detrimental social environments/milieu (Russell, 2001). Locus of control and self-efficacy are two theories of self-concept that are pervasive in outdoor programming literature, and are elements of this thesis research.

Locus of control.

Locus of control has been a theoretical moderator of personal change in adventure programming (Priest & Gass, 2005; Hans, 2000). Locus of control describes one's perceptions of the influences affecting their own successes and failures. An internal locus of control describes a person attributing outcomes to their intrinsic selves. As an example, an athlete believes they succeed because they have innate natural abilities. A person who has an external locus of control attributes success and failure to external phenomena. Continuing with the athlete example, they might ascribe their success to their coach or supporters. Adventure programming explicitly and implicitly attempts to assist individuals in increasing personal challenges, self-awareness, personal accountability, and informed decision-making, and improved personal narratives. In a meta-analysis by Hans (2000), she found that participants' locus of control became more internal as a result of participating in an adventure program. The concept of locus of control can inform and educate outdoor leaders about how their leadership may affect participants and the attribution of their successes.

Self-efficacy.

The theory of self-efficacy is the brainchild of psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), and is a component of his social learning theory. Self-efficacy describes one's perceptions of one's own abilities, "and has provided a conceptual framework utilized by many fields to understand behavior and to explain success and/or continued participation in a variety of domains" (Propst & Koesler, 1998, p. 321). Self-efficacy is found throughout adventure programming literature as a personal growth concept (Klint, 1999; Martin, 1999; Stremba & Bisson, 2009, Propst & Koesler, 1998). Priest and Gass (2005) discussed self-efficacy briefly in a chapter on individual behavior and motivation. They wrote, "To deliver your adventure program more effectively, it helps to understand individual behavior during adventure experiences" (Priest & Gass, 2005, p. 46). Hans (2000) concluded that studies of moderators of personal growth during adventure programming may be more fruitful and more useful if they focus more on self-efficacy than on locus of control. Thus, outdoor leaders who possess an understanding of self-efficacy and how it influences participants' behaviors, will be more effective at meeting course goals. Because self-efficacy is enhanced when goals are achieved (Propst & Koesler, 1998), this fact supports the practice of sequencing activities from less to more challenging through time, to improve self-efficacy beliefs overall by expanding participants' past mastery experiences.

Facilitating a sense of self.

Self-concept, self-efficacy, and perceived competence are directly addressed in adventure programming literature (Klint, 1999). Because many programs seek to improve individuals' perceptions of their abilities, the conceptual understanding of self-efficacy and locus of control can inform and educate outdoor leaders about how their leadership is affecting participants. Intrapersonal relationships are fostered when leaders facilitate and help process experiences that instigate reflection. Regarding processing and intrapersonal insight, relational leaders view

communication "as a way of working out what is meaningful and possible" (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011, p. 1434). In other words, leaders help participants make sense of their experiences. Outdoor leaders may use a variety of skills to nurture intrapersonal relationships in their participants. A widely referenced and facilitated adventure experience is the wilderness solo. This experience can serve to deepen a person's relationship with herself or himself (McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006), as well as develop a connection with the natural world.

Relationship with others.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) assert that humans need "regular social contact with those to whom one feels connected" (p. 501). Interpersonal relationships are quintessential to the leader-participant dynamic, and in peer-to-peer relationships. An important aspect of peer relationships is that they can provide a milieu in which people can explore and learn about relationships, about morality, about caring, about community, about what it means to be interdependent with others" (Quay et al., 2000, p. 9). The group experience archetypal to outdoor programming has been described as a manner of "forced intimacy" (Vogel, 1991, p. 666). Halamova (2001) provided a succinct definition for a *sense of community*: "the feeling an individual has about belonging to a group and involves the strength of the attachment people feel for their communities or group" (p. 137). Quay et al. (2000), in a review of literature, used a slightly different definition of community: community describes a psychological sense of we-ness. Quay et al. (2000) wrote, "interdependence is the essence of any concept of community" (p. 5), while Burke et al. (2012) asserted that fostering a community of caring individuals is essential for participants and leaders to care for one another. Healthy peer interactions can contribute to participants learning to take personal accountability and accept social responsibility (Russell, 2001). Contributing to feeling a sense of community is the element of *group*

cohesiveness (Wilson, 2005). Facilitating group cohesion results in feeling a sense of belonging, which is considered a basic human need (Kimball & Bacon, as cited in McKenzie, 2000). From this citation, readers can see that adventure education literature has acknowledged the need for belonging for at least the past 20 years. Todd et al. (2008) stated that, "leaders who are more focused on the relationship function of the group would have a greater impact on sense of community and cohesion than those with a focus on the task function of the group" (p. 29). When people feel a sense of security and relatedness, intrinsic motivation is more likely to flourish (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Important to this process, Knapp (1999) identified behaviors and actions that are contrary to building a supportive community: "dishonesty, competition, rigidity, mistrust, avoidance of conflict, defensiveness, pessimism, and criticism" (p. 221). Summing up the findings about the role of groups in personal growth, Ewert and Heywood (1991) wrote, " Theory and empirical literature suggest that achieving personal goals is optimized when members operate within a supportive and well-functioning social group" (p. 613).

Facilitating relationships with others.

In order for an outdoor leader to foster community, and substantiate some of the points made about the benefits of groups, they must understand the human need for belongingness, and possess skills that facilitate interdependence amongst participants. Ringer (1999) believed a key leadership competency is recognizing unconscious group processes and being able to interpret and intervene at symbolic levels. Similar to assisting individuals with meaning making, Ringer described how leaders also assist meaning making at the group level. Thus, social bonding can be manipulated through an outdoor leader's choice and sequence of activities, challenge levels, and the way they use communication to process. This is why group facilitation and relationship building skills of a leader are critical to effective outdoor leadership. McAvoy et al. (1996)

shared earlier research that identified four influences contributing to team building and socialization: "identifying as a group, making personal contributions, recognizing the symbiotic nature of the relationships, and acknowledging the temporal aspects of team building and socialization" (p. 54). If outdoor leaders are cognizant of these contributing factors, they could emphasize these points through activities and discussions, which may subsequently facilitate group cohesion. When leaders facilitate interpersonal relationships, they both develop one-on-one relationships between others, but also a nexus of interpersonal relationships, which collectively create the social milieu. Goldenberg and Pronsolino (2008) utilized means-end theory to research outdoor program outcomes for participants of Outward Bound and National Outdoor Leadership School courses. They found that group activities that were challenging resulted in group bonding. They wrote, "the most important aspect of programming is fostering the group experience through group challenges" (Goldenberg and Pronsolino, 2008, p. 273). Relatedly, Baumeister and Leary (1995) asserted that relationships take time to develop, requiring shared, sometimes intimate, experiences to flourish, and that "positive bonding will occur even under adverse circumstances" (p. 502). Adverse circumstances and physical challenges, along with higher than normal levels of intimacy, are prototypical of outdoor programming, which provide rich opportunities for relationships to be developed, and supports the contention that challenge can build stronger communities.

An essential primary skill used to develop relationships between outdoor leaders and their participants is rapport building. Raiola (2003) cited Carl Roger's person-centered therapy approach as essential to establishing and maintaining an environment of trust, safety, and care for clients. Conditions essential for developing rapport include being authentic, acceptance, caring, and deep understanding, tone of voice (supportive, not sarcastic) and language use (respectful

and supportive) (Mitten, 1995). Raiola (2003) identified the techniques of active listening, rephrasing, and reinforcing positive behaviors as all contributing to rapport, while Mitten (1995) adds affirmations (of being, doing, and improving), which are "messages that are supportive and nurturing" (p. 86). Related to a leader's skill at group management, Ringer (1999) wrote, "the group leader's own emotional state is inextricably linked with the emotional 'field' that exists in the group" (p. 16). Implied in this statement is the belief that outdoor leaders should be cognizant of their own intrapersonal states and processes.

Relationship with nature.

Embedded in outdoor programming literature is the persistent description of nature as a "novel environment." The idea that wilderness serves as a novel environment, and that personal development and adventure programming efficacy are dependent upon it, permeates outdoor programming literature and can be traced back to the seminal work of Walsh and Golins (1976). Outdoor programming does not occur in urban warehouses, which can also be described as a novel environment. Criticism regarding the lack of recognition of nature's role in outdoor leadership is increasing. For example, Beringer (2004) criticized Gillis and Ringer's (1999) definition of adventure therapy because it lacks acknowledgement of the environmental setting for adventure programming. Beringer (2004) asserted, "The role of nature as a force in human development needs to be considered" (p. 51). What is clearly limited by describing nature as a novel environment is the appreciation and acknowledgement that nature is not simply a new or unusual environment; it is the source of human evolutionary development, and possesses intrinsic benefits for human well-being.

Priest's (1986) exploration of relationships in outdoor education discussed two that are relevant to the human-nature connection. Ecosystemic relationships basically describe

ecological knowledge at a systemic level. Ekistic relationships "refers to the interaction between people and their surroundings; how humans impact on natural resources and how threats might have a reciprocal effect, with the quality of the land influencing the quality of society's life" (Priest, 1986, p. 14). Priest does not mention the term ecopsychology, but his definition of ekistic relationships is synonymous with ecopsychology's primary assertion. In addition to ecopsychology, there are several fields of psychology that are especially pertinent to outdoor adventure and nature programming, which can inform leaders' framework for leading.

Several academic fields and theories investigate and describe the environment as a context for human growth and develop. Environmental psychology, an interdisciplinary field, investigates the influences of natural and human-created physical environments upon psyches and behaviors (Bell, Greene, Fisher, & Baum, 2001). Conservation psychology explores how human well-being is related to relationships with ecological systems. This ethically driven branch of psychology takes a proactive stance toward understanding the relationships between humans and nature (Scull, 2008). Conservation psychology actively promotes healthy and sustainable relationships, including conservation strategies (Scull, 2008) and asks the questions, "What is the human place in nature, and what is nature's place in the human being?" (Clayton & Myers, 2009, p. 4). The biophilia hypothesis is one theory attempting to explain relational bonds between humans and their ecological context. Kellert (1993b) identified five reasons for human biophilic inclinations: they are biologically based, part of Homo sapiens' evolutionary heritage, connected to genetic fitness and competitive advantages, and increases the potential for creating individual meaning and personal fulfillment. Confirming the human-nature bond, Kahn (1999) wrote, "Research suggests…that people often prefer natural environments to built environments,

and built environments with water, trees, and other vegetation to built environments without such features. These preferences may fit patterns laid down deep in human history" (p. 22).

Facilitating a relationship with nature.

Fox and McAvoy (1995) articulated the need for outdoor leaders to foster relationships among participants and the natural world. Harper (2009) mentioned the role of the natural environment in mediating therapeutic alliance. This idea supports the need for outdoor leaders to have skills in facilitating relationships between the natural world and participants as a way of advancing the therapeutic alliance between outdoor leaders and participants.

When outdoor leaders actively foster relationships for those they lead, they are explicitly addressing the theoretical perspectives of ecopsychology and the human need for belonging. Of course adventures occurring in nature do not necessarily mean outdoor leaders fully understand the role of nature as a contributor in adventure experiences. One approach to fostering connection between people and place is using the *landfull framework*, described by Baker (2005). It consists of four levels of awareness and relationship to place. First, one must be deeply aware of their surroundings and location. Second, a person should have knowledge of the natural and cultural history of a place. Third, a person should understand a place in the present moment in time. Last, one uses the knowledge she or he has of a place to connect and relate it to other landscapes and places. Supplementing knowledge of place, Martin (2004) discussed the acquisition of language and skills as benefiting students in his outdoor education program. Specifically, students learned a language that allowed them to discuss relationships in nature, and skills that fostered comfort and competency in the out of doors. However, he found that the language taught in environmental sciences was inadequate for students to describe their feelings about nature. One assumption held by some outdoor leaders is that simply being in nature

fosters connection and concern for it. However, Martin (2004) found "that more skill focused activit[ies], essential to develop[ing] living and travelling skills for comfort in the outdoors, did not in itself develop a more caring nature relationship, and may sometimes work against such relationship development" (p. 23). He described this as a paradox, the tension between learning technical skills and developing relationship with nature. Importantly, Martin (2004) found that being safe and comfortable outdoors was a precursor to developing a relationship with nature.

Benefits of nature.

The out of doors might be a new environment for outdoor program participants, but the natural environment is a specific environment, which humans have evolved from, and for which we have a natural affinity (Kellert &Wilson, 1993). Nature also possesses intrinsic properties that support and facilitate human well-being and growth. Research has highlighted and measured the benefits people experience through contact, immersion, and relationships with nature across physiological and psychometric improvements. For outdoor leaders to successfully facilitate relationships between participants and nature, they need to be aware of research findings that validate benefits derived from nature. This allows leaders to consciously lead individuals and facilitate activities to reap such benefits. Benefits to humans can be grouped into several broad categories: attentional improvements, stress reduction, affective improvements, cognitive improvements, transcendent experiences, and other benefits.

Attentional improvements.

Rachel and Stephen Kaplan have studied natural landscapes positive effects on humans for several decades. Their findings culminated with their attention restoration theory (ART). Explicit to this theory are two types of human attentional experiences: *fascination* where paying attention to something is natural; unforced, requiring little effort; and *directed attention*, which

involves forcing oneself to pay attention to something. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) suggested that fatigue is the result of prolonged directed attention, that it compromises effectiveness (Kaplan, 1995), and they described this condition as directed attention fatigue (DAF). Restorative environments can instigate the resolution and avoidance of DAF. Kaplan and Kaplan asserted, "Restorative environments offer a concrete and available means of reducing suffering and enhancing effectiveness" (1989, p. 176). Kaplan (1995) claimed that restorative experiences increase human effectiveness, specifically the ability to maintain attention. Elements of restorative environments include fascination-inducing effortless attention, being away, extent-or a sense of grand landscapes, and compatibility-or resonance between the natural setting and human inclinations.

Taylor, Kuo, and Sullivan (2001) showed that attention deficit disorder symptoms were milder for children with greener play settings, and attentional abilities were significantly improved after a twenty-minute walk in a park (Taylor & Kuo, 2009). In a longitudinal study, Wells (2000) explored how nearby nature affected children's attentional abilities. She found that the *directed attention capacity* (DAC) of children growing up in urban housing projects was increased as natural elements in their home-life increased. Thus, if outdoor leaders understand that nature improves people's attentional abilities (Kaplan, 1995), then that leader may intentionally facilitate activities in restorative environments to improve participants' attentional abilities.

Stress reduction.

"Findings from over 100 studies… have shown that stress reduction is one of the key perceived benefits of spending time in a wilderness area" (Kahn, 1999, p. 13). People become calmer and less hurried (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Ulrich et al. (1991) discussed previous

experimental research that demonstrated that outdoor recreational experiences induce stress recovery, derived, in part, from the "strong attention holding abilities of natural phenomenon" (Ulrich et al., 1991, p. 206). Ulrich and colleagues (1991) found that exposure to outdoor videotapes after stress-inducing experiments reduced arousal rates faster than videotapes of urban scenes. Research has demonstrated that visiting nature, as well as simply viewing images of nature result in restorative effects (Bell et al., 2001). Parsons, Tassinary, Ulrich, Hebl, and Grossman-Alexander (1998) found that when research participants watched films of driving through outdoor environments, immediately after a stressful experience, that stress recovery is quicker and greater than those viewing films of "artifact-dominated drives" (p. 113). Transferring the benefits of wilderness environments, Clayton and Myers (2009) discussed that in domestic living situations, "Companion animals have been found to reduce anxiety, increase reported happiness, and buffer stressful periods" (p. 98). Thus, natural elements, even out of context from the natural world, still possess benefits to humans.

Affective improvements.

"Improved mood, enhanced concentration and self-discipline" (Clayton & Myers, 2009, p. 86) are benefits derived from natural environments and views of nature from one's home. Shin, Shin, Yeoun, and Kim (2011) found positive improvements in moods in participants who participated in just a 50-minute walk in a forested urban park. Berman et al. (2012) researched the effects of walking in nature on adults diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and found affective improvements in their research participants.

Cognitive improvements.

Shin et al. (2011) conducted research comparing cognitive functioning differences between walking in a forested urban park and an urban downtown area. They found that

cognitive functioning, as measured by the Trail Making Test Part B and the Profile of Mood States, improved. Berman et al. (2012) found that walking in nature improved cognitive functioning in adults diagnosed with major depressive disorder. And Berman, Jonides, and Kaplan (2008) found that nature can improve cognitive functioning, not only through immersive experiences, but also simply by viewing images of nature.

Transcendent experiences.

Nature experiences can also benefit peoples' spiritual development (Terhaar, 2009). Transcendent experiences, where one feels a connection or belonging to something greater than themselves, are characterized by a "sense of union and timelessness" (Williams & Harvey, 2001, p. 249) and appear to be fostered in natural environments (Williams & Harvey, 2001). These researchers found "evidence of close relationships between transcendence and both aesthetic and restorative functions of nature" (Williams & Harvey, 2001, p. 256). Tuan (1977) asserts that man-made things cannot equal nature and natural objects in their "cosmic or transcendental significance" (p. 114).

Other benefits.

In a meta-analysis of 24 articles addressing human health and nature, Bowler, Buyung-Ali, Knight, & Pullin (2010) found beneficial changes in energy, anxiety and anger reduction, as well as improvements in fatigue and sadness upon exposure to natural environments. Self-reflection and self-knowledge are increased (Clayton & Myers, 2009), physical well-being improves (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989), and privacy can be experienced (Clayton & Myers, 2009). Clayton and Myers (2009) wrote, "A natural environment can enhance autonomy because social regulations, oversight, and consequences are fewer" (p. 60). Exercising self-sufficiency and physical skills in the outdoors can result in feelings of competency and increased self-efficacy

(Clayton & Myers, 2009). Brown and Bell (2007) discussed how nature is being promoted as a space where people can "perform techniques of self-care" (p. 1351). Kaplan and Kaplan (1989), in discussing human satisfaction, wrote, "The longer-term, indirect impacts [of access to nearby nature] also include increased levels of satisfaction with one's home, one's job, and with life in general" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989, p. 173). (Hansen-Ketchum, Marck, & Reutter (2009) noted that feeling a sense of community, and accelerated recovery from illnesses are benefits of nature.

Relationship Influences Upon Outdoor Programming Outcomes

Research continues to dissect variables affecting participant outcomes of outdoor programming. Sibthorp et al. (2007) explored participant and course-level predictors that may affect participant development, defined as gains in the areas of leadership, communication, small group behavior, environmental awareness, judgment, and outdoor skills. "Consciously and actively fostering and attending to the group's cohesion [i.e. interpersonal relationships] seems to be a valuable and viable way that instructors can make adventure programs more beneficial to participants" (Sibthorp et. al, 2007, p. 15). Breunig et al. (2008) conducted a study to ascertain elements contributing to group cohesiveness. They found that leadership styles and group composition, among others, were factors that led to feelings of community. Breunig et al. furthermore asserted that their results indicated the importance of shared emotional connections, and the fulfillment of human needs as determinants for developing a psychological sense of community. These findings enforce the idea that relationally oriented leaders can directly influence program outcomes by fostering interpersonal relationships in outdoor groups.

Research by Schumann, Paisley, Sibthorp, and Gookin (2009) investigated the influences of instructors on student perceived learning at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). They categorized these influences into leader characteristics, such as patience, knowledge,

empathy, being inspirational, and being fun; and leader behaviors, such as providing feedback, role modeling, direct instructing/coaching, creating a supportive learning environment, managing risk, providing formal curricula, and using a personal quote or phrase. Another research project found that "Overall, clients perceived their relationship to the [wilderness treatment program] leader as the most important contribution to their treatment process" (Harper, 2009, p. 49), even more important than group cohesion or relationships with other group members. Harper (2009) cited research in which *paraprofessional staff* (non-clinically trained wilderness leaders at therapeutic wilderness programs) may have a stronger influence upon client outcomes than trained therapists working alone. Bocarro and Witt (2003) studied after school recreation programs, and found that it was not activities themselves that helped youth, but the relationships that developed between recreation leaders and participants. Shooter, Paisley, and Sibthorp (2009) found that the relationships between outdoor leaders and participants are both important and influential in affecting program outcomes. Schumann et al. (2009) wrote, "an instructor who exhibits an ethic of care may, indeed, influence student outcomes" (p. 17). Understanding that therapeutic alliance positively affects outcomes in psychotherapy, it seems logical to assume that positive adventure programming outcomes are more likely to be attributed to the interpersonal connection between leaders and participants than the actual activities they facilitate.

Techniques of Relational Leaders

Kosseff (2010) declared that outdoor leadership is taxing: physically, intellectually, and psychologically. These statements underscore the importance of skills and knowledge pertinent to nurturing well-being and facilitating relationships. Fostering relationships across intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal domains requires specific skills.

Communication.

Discussions and articles about interpersonal and communication skills have been embedded in outdoor leadership literature for decades.

> Communication permeates virtually all facets of adventure education and yet is one of the soft skills often overlooked in leadership development programs and in our profession as a whole…. Communication is a leadership skill, which acts as a catalyst for participants' growth by reflection on experience. (Chase & Priest, 1990, p. 7)

"Communication can be thought of as [a] process of exchange, directed toward conveying meaning and understanding between two [or more] people" (Chase & Priest, 1990, p. 7). Chase and Priest (1990) articulated four basic elements of communication: sender, message, receiver, and channel or pathway. Outdoor leaders, therefore, should understand both these elements of communication, but also barriers to effective communication. Barriers include different types of *noise*, such as semantic, internal, external, as well as issues of overload, distractions, barriers, mental blocks, personal values, selective perception, and social and environmental norms (Chase & Priest, 1990). Because outdoor leaders are tasked with helping individuals and groups with extracting meaning from their experiences, it is critical that leaders are proficient communicators.

Chase and Priest (1990) claimed that effective communication accomplishes four core tasks in adventure education: it establishes leadership through influence and persuasion, it "enhances the socialization process by strengthening intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships" (p. 7), it empowers teaching through effective dissemination of material, and it facilitates learning via reflection. Furthermore, effective communication has been identified as an important leadership competency (Priest & Gass, 2005; Phipps & Swiderski, 1990) for

outdoor leaders and as a significant tool for establishing rapport, fostering relationships, and building therapeutic alliances. Stickley and Freshwater (2006) contended that communication skills "enable reflective and empathetic relationships to be formed" (p. 13). Equating adventure education with improving participant well-being, it seems essential that therapeutic outdoor leaders be competent in communication. Chase and Priest (1990) stated that communication is improved when a speaker serves as "a trustworthy and credible sender" (Chase & Priest, 1990, p. 4). Stickley and Freshwater (2006) state that individuals with fewer ego needs make better listeners. This distinction could be applied to outdoor leaders, when comparing ego needs of new outdoor leaders versus those with significant outdoor and leadership experiences.

Communication is a process that is ubiquitous in daily life, yet this thesis research examines a specific dimension of communication, communication in the realm of healing and wellness. Stickley and Freshwater (2006) distinguish between normal conversations and therapeutic conversations. Therapeutic communication is focused on predetermined goals, attention is primarily given to the client, and a code of conduct is required of the listener. Furthermore, it involves an imbalance in needs satisfaction, professional boundaries are present, there is restricted disclosure by the listener, and non-judgmental listening occurs. Therapeutic exchanges involve the identification of a problem and an identified goal; attention is focused on the client (not mutually focused) and their needs; professional boundaries exist for conduct; the helper is non-judgmental and restricts personal disclosure and emotional and cognitive expression; and the helpers' actions are conveyed from the position of being a so-called "expert," informed by training, theory, and practice. This type of non-reciprocal communication is intrinsic to the hierarchical relationships between outdoor leaders and their participants.

Trust and rapport development.

Because relationships are fundamental to outdoor programming, it is important to explore trust development. "Trust is often a crucial and influential feature of good, beneficial, and satisfying relationships…[and it] depends heavily on mutuality, especially the mutual recognition of reciprocal concern and attachment" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, pp. 514). Believing that the purpose of adventure education, and much of outdoor programming, is to contribute to the growth and well-being of people, it seems clear that trust is a critical issue for outdoor leaders to be aware of, and to foster. Trust is described as a psychological state and attitude of willingness to be vulnerable to others (Brower et al., 2000; Shooter Paisley, & Sibthorp, 2010). According to trust level theory, trust is formed through "repeated interpersonal interactions" (Shooter Paisley, & Sibthorp, 2010, p. 192). Trust originates in dyadic relationships (Brower et al., 2000). Trust perception between leaders and participants is bi-directional: a leader perceives the trustworthiness of the participant, while the participant perceives the trustworthiness of the leader (Brower et al. 2000). Mitten (1995) highlighted the significant power differential between outdoor leaders and participants. In relationships with a power differential, such as with outdoor leadership, both members in a dyadic relationship do not equally trust one another, nor do they perceive the relationship the same (Brower et al., 2000). As defined, trust involves vulnerability. An essential risk outdoor leaders must monitor and address are psychological issues related to emotional expression and social vulnerability of those they lead. This can be accomplished through forming therapeutic bonds.

In order for a leader to foster relationships for participants, he or she must be able to foster trust in her or himself. Research has demonstrated that positive therapeutic alliances foster positive therapy outcomes (Homrich, 2009). Thomas (2011) wrote, "Carl Rogers considered the

personal qualities and attitudes of the facilitator to be more important than any methods they employ" (p. 4). Thus, we can extrapolate that trust is foundational to therapeutic alliance, as well as to positive and healthy relationships between leader and participants. But what are the elements of therapeutic communication and alliance? Skills involved in listening to others involve non-judging language, not prioritizing problem solving, asking open questions, the use of silence, honesty, para-verbals, eye contact, mirroring body language, open gestures, smiling, nodding, being attentive and focused, appropriate use of touch, and congruence (Stickley & Freshwater, 2006). Green (2009) writes that the skills fostering therapeutic alliance "are probably the time-honoured [sic] ones of respectful awareness, patient centeredness, and informed active listening coupled with accurate empathy" (p. 300). Shooter, Sibthorp, and Gookin (2010) have also supported a person-centered approach to outdoor leadership practices for fostering participant trust in leaders. Thus, in order for an outdoor leader to effectively facilitate relationships for her or his participants, it is more important that leaders be authentic and genuine. This approach is more influential than using any specific methodology, for leaders to effectively foster relationships. Mitten (1995) maintained that for participants to learn healthy relationship skills and develop self-esteem there must be acceptance and trust between the outdoor leader and participant, and in fact high participant trust in outdoor leader appears to have positive influential outcomes (Shooter, Paisley, & Sibthorp, 2009).

Feedback.

Feedback is foundational to outdoor leadership and education. Feedback has been defined as "a response to a person's behavior that influences the continuance of that behavior" (Claiborn & Goodyear, 2005, p. 210). Leaders provide feedback to participants so that they can improve their skills and performance and encourage insight during outdoor programming.

Paisley, Furman, Sibthorp, and Gookin (2008) found that instructor feedback and coaching were methods by which students reported learning communication skills. Propst and Koesler (1998) discussed how feedback can improve self-efficacy, especially when people are unable to accurately judge their own performance. Propst and Koesler (1998) found "positive feedback was more important for females and immediate feedback more important for males in raising levels of short-term self-efficacy" (p. 340). These finding are important to more detailed discussions about gender factors affecting leadership practice, but this falls outside the scope and focus of this thesis research. In psychotherapeutic relationships, Claiborn and Goodyear (2005) asserted that an essential task of a therapist is "building and maintaining a relationship of open inquiry, within which feedback can be requested by the client, delivered by the therapist, and processed by the two of them to a productive end, whether that means acceptance or rejection of the feedback" (p. 213).

Providing feedback to participants is fundamental to outdoor education, therefore understanding ways to provide effective feedback is essential to ensure it is of value and received appropriately by the participant. Priest and Gass (2005) wrote, "appropriate feedback is descriptive, specific, well-intended, directed toward change, solicited, well-timed, checked out with the sender, and checked out with the group" (p.238). Claiborn and Goodyear (2005) identify four features of deliberate and effective feedback: descriptive (observational, not inferential), evaluative (assess behavior in relation to a performance criteria), emotionally disclosing instead of behaviorally descriptive (avoid causality), and interpretive (brings a new perspective). Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick (2006) discuss seven principles of good feedback for facilitating self-regulation in learners: it clarifies what good performance is, provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance, facilitates the

development of self-assessment in learning, delivers information to students about their learning, encourages dialogue around learning, encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem, and provides information to teachers that may improve their teaching abilities. In psychotherapy relationships, Chesley, Gillett, and Wagner (2008) cautioned therapists to consider child clients' receptivity to feedback, but this caution is applicable to anyone providing feedback to another, regardless of context.

Ceremonies and rituals.

An important skillset to assess in outdoor leaders is their knowledge of the importance and utility of ceremonies. Metzner (2009) identified two purposes for rituals: healing and problem solving, and seeking guidance or a vision. Identifying one difference between therapists and life coaches, Metzner (2009) stated coaches are more focused on helping clients articulate a vision of their future, whereas therapy often explores the past. The use of rituals, ceremonies, or rites of passage are techniques outdoor leaders use to foster deeper intrapersonal connections and insight for participants (Russell, 2001). Metzner (2009) defined a ritual as: "the purposeful, conscious, arrangement of time, space, and action, according to specific intentions" (p. 257). Human culture is both a process and construction that reinforces community, social norms, and informs one's sense of personal identity. Cultures, using the element of language and the practice of ceremonies, have evolved significantly over the eons of human existence on earth. There is power in symbolic action and symbolic language. According to Harper (2009), "The use of experiential initiatives, metaphor, story, ritual and rites of passage are also commonly employed in the wilderness treatment milieu" (p. 51), with the goal being personal growth. Lertzman (2002) references several researchers who have asserted that various western social pathologies are rooted in the loss of rites of passage within mainstream culture. Instead of

healthy, safe, and facilitated rites, contemporary western youth in particular engage in "pseudo-rites," which are often unhealthy, dangerous, and unfacilitated by experienced elders. The power of ceremonies or rites of passage may lie in their ability to transfer learning from one experience to another, and to transcend strictly cognitive dimensions of being. Bodkin and Sartor (2005) assert that, "enacting or symbolizing a situation or problem has a greater impact than just thinking about it" (p.37). There is a human need for reflection, contemplation, introspection, meaning-making, and a connection with the natural world through symbolic ceremonial practice. Lertzman (2002) articulated an insightful reason why rites of passage are so transformative; "Isolation in a wilderness setting also has a disarming effect that can make people emotionally vulnerable and open to life-changing experiences" (p.7).

Use of metaphors.

Using adventure and/or nature to facilitate personal growth and improve well-being is a common rationale given for outdoor programming. The use of metaphors by outdoor leaders can be directly used towards this end. Individuals, along with cultures, construct personal mythologies. These mythologies are composed of patterns of metaphors that create meaning and identity for the individual (Kopp, 1995). Metaphors are ultimately a method of communication, and by definition are symbolic or abstract representations of objects and/or actions. Metaphors can be expressed in both verbal and non-verbal ways, such as play, music, and other creative acts (Chesley et al., 2008), and can convey a multitude of thoughts and feelings in a relatively simple expression. Evans (1988) stated it is the ambiguity of metaphors that makes them so transformative, while Kopp (1995) asserted the power of metaphors is in their combination of both images and words, and this combination creates new ideas and experiences.

Understanding environmental specific metaphors, such as the power of water and wind to transform landscapes, or the foraging styles of specific animals, ensures outdoor leaders can maximize the unique elements of the natural environment towards personal insight, a precursor to personal change. Chesley et al. (2008) use the example of a book: *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, as a metaphorical story drawn from nature that can be used in clinical psychotherapy. Chesley et al. (2008) claimed that when counseling children, "there are three important creators of therapeutically useful metaphors: the child, the counselor, and the family" (p. 405). In outdoor programming, the sources of metaphors are slightly different, and may include the participant, the outdoor leader, the social group, and the natural environment. Metaphoric language can be a tool utilized for the betterment of self-esteem, personal growth, and stories for personal reflection. Foster and Little (1989) help bridge the gap between ceremony and metaphor when they write, "The wilderness quest is the briefest of metaphors for the candidate's visionary journey" (p.182). Thus, a physical undertaking serves as a metaphor for intrapsychic experiences. This truly is the embodiment of adventure programming.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This survey research project was descriptive in nature, cross-sectional, non-experimental, and basic, which utilized a self-administered, Internet-based survey methodology. SurveyMonkey, a private online survey service company, was used for hosting the questionnaire, storing and collecting data, and for some data analysis. Due to the nature of web-based surveys, nonprobability sampling methods were used. W. Trochim (Retrieved February 29, 2012, http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampnon.php) separates non-probability sampling methods into two categories: accidental and purposive. Because participants were actively solicited for this research, purposive sampling was used, and due to the nature of the web-based survey, survey efforts utilized convenience and referral/snowball sampling techniques. The questionnaire gathered all three types of survey data that Rea and Parker (1997) identify: descriptive, behavioral, and opinion. The survey generated both quantitative data (such as age, years worked in field) and qualitative data (such as reasons for becoming an outdoor leader, and how outdoor leaders facilitate relationships between participants and the natural world).

An attempt was made to measure outdoor leaders' knowledge levels of therapeutic concepts and skills related to fostering and facilitating relationships deemed important by existing literature. Quantitative survey data is presented in the form of descriptive statistics. No formal statistical analysis of this data was done for this thesis, which this author recognizes as a limitation. However, qualitative survey data was analyzed using a coding system based upon the framework proposed by Ryan and Bernard (2003): "(1) discovering themes and subthemes, (2) winnowing themes to a manageable few (i.e. deciding which themes are important in any project, (3) building hierarchies of themes or code books, and (4) linking themes into theoretical models"

(p. 85). This method works in conjunction with what Willis (2007) describes as the constant comparative method.

Survey Characteristics

The survey questionnaire contained fifty-one questions, using both closed and open, multiple choice, ranking, and short answer question formats. Only four questions did not require an answer. The author created the survey without utilizing existing measures or instruments, as none were found to be comprehensive enough. The questionnaire used in this study was composed of questions probing self-reported knowledge and skills pertinent to human development, psychology, and forming and fostering therapeutic relationships. The institutional review board of Prescott College approved this survey. See the appendix for a complete listing of survey questions, including answer choice options.

Sampling Procedure

Internet searches were conducted using the terms adventure programs, adventure outings, mountain guides, wilderness therapy, adventure expeditions, outdoor leadership, outdoor leadership+Canada, outdoor education, adventure education, adventure education+Canada, and outdoor experiential education. Internet search responses were then reviewed for programs that would either employ outdoor leaders, or that might provide referral sources for disseminating the Internet link for the survey, such as colleges and universities.

Research participants were solicited through their employers, academic institutions, relevant professional organizations and associations, participation at professional conferences the researcher attended while attending Prescott College, personal referrals, and through various Internet websites, including social media sites pertinent to outdoor leadership. This resulted in contacting more than 150 individual businesses or organizations, 80 colleges and universities

providing undergraduate and graduate degrees in outdoor leadership or related disciplines. Schools such as Prescott College, Radford University, Central Oregon Community College, Fort Lewis College, and Mt. Hood Community College were contacted, along with Wilderness Education Association affiliated schools. Contacts were made with organizations such as the Association of Experiential Education, the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Research Cooperative, the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, the National Association of Therapeutic Wilderness Camping, the American Mountain Guide Association, Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, and The Wilderness Guides Council. Large and well-established institutions such as Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) were solicited to have field staff participate. Administrators, field directors, executive directors, among other potential titles at the programs mentioned were initially contacted to assess interest and willingness to partake in this research project. It was hoped that they would make reference to this survey and ask field staff to participate.

Programs were contacted exclusively via email. Depending on website designs and layout, if specific email addresses were provided, a survey solicitation was emailed directly to individuals. Some websites only provided a general information email address, and the survey solicitation was emailed to these general inboxes in hopes it would be forwarded to potential survey respondents. Additional efforts were made to post web links to the survey on related websites, blogs, and in social media outlets relevant to outdoor leadership (such as the Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group's Facebook page and the adventure therapy listserv at UGA). The survey was posted on 20 various social media sites. In addition to Internet searching, the researcher shared the survey solicitation with his professional network, and asked

those contacted to pass on the survey web link to their professional networks as well. The survey collected data for 85 days.

Of the 151 private organizations contacted, 18 confirmed they would disseminate the survey, as well as three of the 11 professional organizations, plus 16 of 82 colleges and universities contacted. The two largest outdoor programs in the United States, NOLS and Outward Bound, have formal processes to approve research projects before disseminating them to employees. This study did not receive approval in the time frame needed by these organizations.

Survey participants meeting the stated outdoor leadership eligibility criteria voluntarily completed the online survey. Eligibility criteria required participants to be at least 18 years of age, currently employed either part-time or full-time, work in the United States or Canada in a paid outdoor leadership capacity, and work out of doors. Research participants needed to primarily work in the field leading adventure and nature-based activities, such as hiking, camping, boating, climbing, ecotherapy activities, etc. These activities could occur in recreational, therapeutic, educational, therapy, and mentoring contexts. Persons primarily working in logistical or administrative roles were ineligible for participating. By limiting participation to staff actively working in the field, the therapeutic knowledge and relational abilities of outdoor leaders who work directly with participants was assessed, not the skills and knowledge of administrative, managerial, or training staff. Due to the nature of an anonymous online survey methodology, participants self-selected themselves as being eligible. The researcher is unable to verify that all participants met all eligibility criteria. Due to the nature of web-based surveys, non-probability sampling methods were used. Because participants were actively solicited for this research, sampling was primarily purposeful, but convenience and

referral/snowball sampling techniques were also utilized. No compensation, of any kind, was provided to survey respondents.

Participant Characteristics

Ninety-two responses yielded 91 identified ages. Survey respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 63, with a mean age of 33.5. Categorizing respondents into age categories, 12 respondents (13.0%) were aged 18-24, 46 (50.0%) between the ages of 25-34, 23 (25.0%) between the ages of 35-44, 7 (7.6%) between the ages 45-54, and three (3.3%) over the age of 55. Male respondents numbered 48 (52.2%), female 41 (44.6%), plus three transgender respondents (3.3%). Eighty-eight outdoor leaders self-identified as white (95.7%), two as American Indian or Alaska Native, (2.2%) one as Middle Eastern (1.1%), and one as Asian (1.1%). Eighty-three respondents were American (90.2%), while nine were Canadian (9.8%). Respondents worked in three Canadian provinces, with British Columbia most represented, and in 32 different states, with the four most represented states being California, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado. Participants were employed by 43 different programs/organizations, in addition 19 different colleges and universities employ survey participants.

Survey respondents answered two questions about their academic backgrounds. The most achieved degree was the bachelor's, which 81 respondents possess (88.0%), followed by 38 respondents possessing a master's degree (41.3%), 13 pursuing their master's degree (14.1%), 11 respondents are pursuing a bachelor's degree (12.0%), seven possess an associate's degree (7.6%), six hold a doctorate degree (6.5%), four are pursuing a doctorate degree (4.3%), two have no degree (2.2%), and one is pursuing an associates (1.1%). Additional questions asked about specific academic training in the areas of outdoor leadership, psychology, and biology. Fifty-five respondents (59.8%) have studied outdoor leadership academically, 57 respondents

(62.0%) have studied psychology or related subjects (ex. social work), and 67 (72.8%) have studied biology or a related field.

The mean number of years working as an outdoor leader is 5.5 years (for 90 respondents). Seventy-five of the 92 survey respondents (81.5%) indicated having supervisory experience. The mean number of years in a supervisory/training role is 4.4. The minimum amount of participant field experience was one month while the most experienced outdoor leader has worked outdoors for over 500 months. Fifty-eight responding outdoor leaders work full-time (63.0%), while 34 work part-time (37.0%). Survey respondents possess a variety of job titles, from academic faculty, executive and program directors, to guides and instructors with varied titles. Seventy discrete employers are represented, plus several respondents identified as self-employed. Twenty-two respondents are employed by a college or university.

Several questions asked outdoor leaders about the programs they work at and the participants they work with. Respondents were allowed to select multiple descriptors for the program type for which they worked. The four most identified programs they work for are adventure education (57.6%), education (55.4%), recreation (52.2%), and leadership education programs (46.7%). Therapeutic (21.7%), wilderness therapy (13%) and adventure therapy programs (8.7%) represent a smaller percentage of employer program type. Other program types described by respondents included outdoor orientation programs (1), outdoor ministry (1), and equine assisted therapy (1). Additionally, one respondent specified his work as mountain guiding, another as using character-based curriculum, and another as environmental restoration. The survey asked respondents to select the length of their programs from a list of options; however, they could select all that were applicable. The greatest response rate (66) was for day programs (including one day only, and daily programming that recurs weekly). The second most

common format was weeklong courses (45), followed by one to three week courses (36), three-week to two months (17), two months or longer-including semester courses (16), two to seven day courses (8). Respondents were asked about the gender and ages of the participants with whom they work. Eighty-two outdoor leaders worked primarily with mixed gender groups (89.1%), while six worked exclusively with males (6.5%) and four worked exclusively with females (4.3%). Leaders selected as many age ranges as applicable for the outdoor participants they work with. The most common ages of participants were adolescents (58) and young adults (50), with fewer young participants age 10-14 (33), and even fewer children under age 10 (15). Adult participation in outdoor programming decreases with age. Twenty-seven outdoor leaders worked with people 25-34, 23 leaders worked with 35-45 year olds, 21 indicated they work with 45-55 year olds, 17 lead 55-65 olds, and only 10 leaders indicated they work with participants over age 65.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Training and Beliefs of Outdoor Leaders

Ninety-two individuals completed the online survey. Table 1 is an overview of respondent characteristics. Survey respondents were asked several questions about their motives for being outdoor leaders, how they define outdoor leadership, and factors that influence their decision-making processes.

Table 1

Characteristics of Outdoor Leaders

Age	(Years)	Gender	#/%	Nationality	#/%	Race	#/%
Mean	33.5	Male	48/52.2	American	83/90.2	White	88/95.7
Range	18-63	Female	41/44.6	Canadian	9/9.8	American Indian/Alaska Native	2/2.2
		Transgender	3/3.3			Middle Eastern	1/1.1
						Asian	1/1.1
Field Experience	(Avg.)	Employment Status				Program Type	
As leader	5.5	Full-time	58/63.0	Adventure education	57.6%	Therapeutic	21.7%
As supervisor	4.4	Part-time	34/37.0	Education	55.4%	Wilderness therapy	13.0%
				Recreation	52.2%	Adventure therapy	8.7%
				Leadership education	46.7%		

Note: Program types are only represented by percentages, as leaders could select multiple employer program types.

Motives for Working Outdoors

Leaders were asked, "Why have you chosen the career of an outdoor leader?" Responses from this open-ended question were qualitatively analyzed and categorized. Non-relational motives, including sub-categories, for working as outdoor leaders are listed in Table 2. Responses exploring relational motives for working outdoors are shown in Table 3.

Table 2

Reasons for Working as an Outdoor Leader (non-relational)

Major Category	Subcategory	Rate
Personal satisfaction Reasons	Enjoy being outside	27
	Sharing the outdoors	13
	Love of teaching and education	7
	Rewarding and meaningful work	7
	Witnessing growth in others	6
	Desire to play, have fun	5
	Opportunities to travel the world	2
	Lifestyle/outdoor culture	1
Personal occupational reasons	Best personal and professional fit	13
	Enjoy work related challenges (from environment to participants)	7
	Happenstance	5
	It chose me/a calling	3
	The outdoors are more effective for the work done	3
	Desired career change/improvement	2
	Prefer non-traditional work environment, doesn't feel like work	2
	Provide world-class outdoor experiences	1
	Pay rate	1
Personal well-being and life experience reasons	Source of personal and professional growth and learning	12
	Personal experiences in early life	8
	Personal mentors	2
	Influence of outdoor related academic program	2
	Learning about own relationships with self, others, nature	1
	Spiritually connected when out-of-doors	1
	Attracted to a way of being	1
	Healthy active lifestyle	1
	Fosters personal opportunities for stewardship	1
Philosophical/ theoretical perspectives	Being outside/in nature is therapeutic	3
	Experiential education and AE are important, effective, and serve as personal growth catalysts	3

Table 3

Relational Motives for Working as an Outdoor Leader

Self	Rate	Fostering Relationships With: Community	Rate	Nature	Rate
Fostering/facilitating growth in others	13	Work and/or connecting with people (nonspecific)	10	Connect people to nature for conservation reasons	8
Creating opportunities for person reflection	2	Developing resilient communities	1	Connect people to nature (nonspecific)	4
Empowering others, assist decision making choices	2			Connect people to nature for human well-being	4
Increase self-efficacy	1			Provide access to nature	3
Foster lifetime of physical activity	1			Connecting people to God in Creation	1

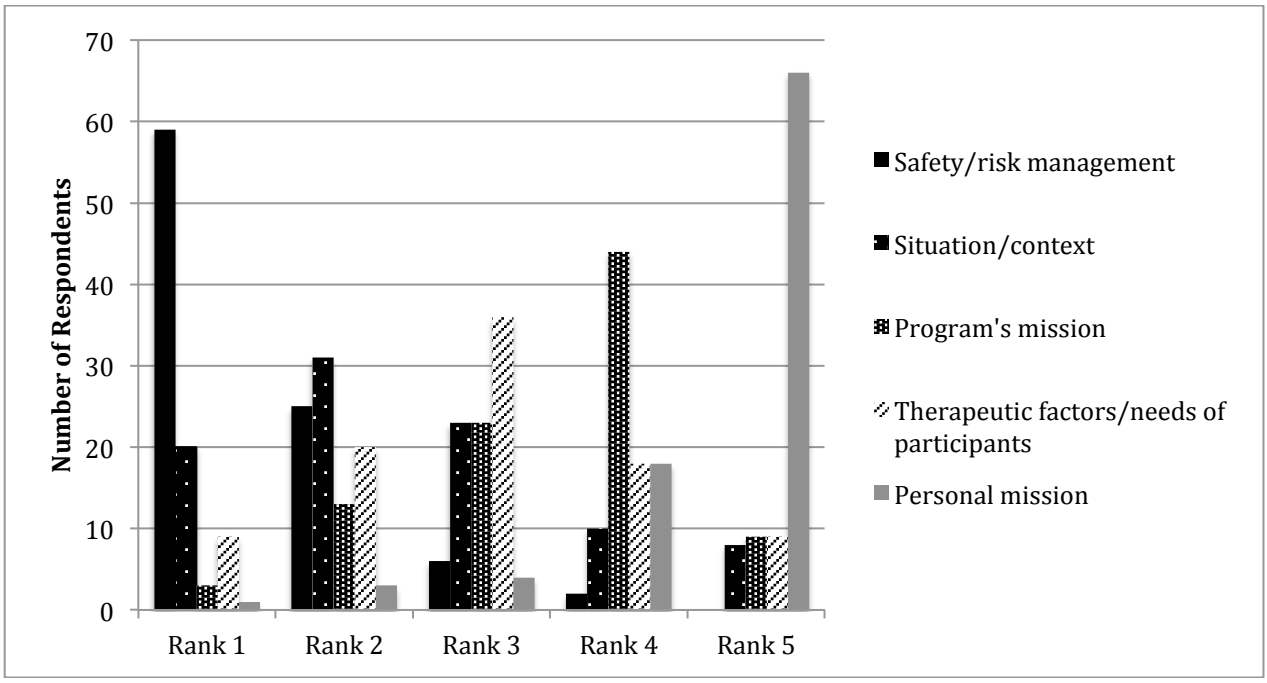
Survey respondents were asked to define outdoor leadership by selecting one of seven provided definitions. Six definitions were culled from adventure programming literature plus one crafted by the author. (Refer to question 22 in the appendix for a listing of all seven provided leadership definitions.) A combination of two definitions captured nearly 70% of total selections, each garnering 31 selections (33.7%). None of the remaining five definitions individually garnered more than nine percent. The first definition read, "Outdoor leadership involves 'purposefully taking individuals/groups into the outdoors for: recreation or education; teaching skills; problem-solving; ensuring group/individual safety; judgment making; and facilitating the philosophical ethical, and aesthetic growth of participants'" (Ewert, as cited in Hayashi & Ewert, 2006, p. 222). The author's definition read, "Outdoor leadership involves fostering relationships within participants, between participants, and between participants and the natural world through the deliberate use of activities and guided by a process of personal reflection." When looking at outdoor leadership definitions based on whether participants had

studied psychology academically, differences appear. Forty-two percent of respondents who had studied psychology selected the author's relationship-based definition, compared to only 20% for non-psychology educated respondents. Ewert's definition was selected only 26.3% by psychology trained respondents, but 45.7% of non-trained leaders selected his definition. Though these differences exist, descriptive statistics do not permit an analysis to determine if this difference is statistically significant. The author realizes this is a limitation of this study and suggests exploring these variances in future research.

Decision-Making Influences

Participants were asked to rank in order of importance five factors that influence outdoor leaders' decision-making processes, from most important (Rank 1) to least (Rank 5). Rankings of categories are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Ranking of Factors Affecting Outdoor Leaders' Decision-Making Processes



Outdoor leaders were asked about on-the-job training (OTJ). Leaders selected amongst 18 training subjects, which are ranked in descending order (Table 4).

Table 4

Employer Provided Training

Content/Subject Matter	Rate	% of Respondents	Content/Subject Matter	Rate	% of Respondents
Technical skills	64	69.6	Rituals/ceremonies	28	30.4
Group dynamics	63	68.5	Traditional/primitive skills	26	28.3
Leadership	63	68.5	Self-efficacy	23	25.0
Communication	54	58.7	Environmental philosophy	22	23.9
Group development	54	58.7	Psychology	20	21.7
Personal development	51	55.4	Motivational interviewing	15	16.3
Cultural sensitivity	44	47.8	None of the above	11	12.0
Environmental ethics	44	47.8	Ecopsychology	10	10.9
Rapport/trust development	44	47.8	Not applicable	2	2.2
Personal ethics/values	33	35.9			

Characteristics of Outdoor Program Participants

Respondents were asked about the mental health and life experiences of the participants they lead (Table 5). Nineteen conditions were listed as possible selections, plus respondents could identify additional conditions.

Table 5

Mental Health and Life Issues of Outdoor Program Participants

Condition or Issue	Rate	% of Respondents	Condition or Issue	Rate	% of Respondents
ADHD	71	77.2	Developmental challenges	35	38.0
Depression	64	69.6	Self-harm/mutilation	34	37.0
Anxiety disorders	58	63.0	Conduct disorder	33	35.8
Drug and alcohol issues	48	52.2	Mood disorder (other than depression)	32	34.8
Involved in juvenile or criminal justice system	45	48.9	Physically disabled	30	32.6
Marginalized population	41	44.6	Veterans	22	23.9
Eating disorder	41	44.6	Personality disorder	18	19.6
Taking psychiatric medications	40	43.5	Psychotic disorder	15	16.3
Traumatic experiences (other than physical or sexual)	38	41.3	Unsure	10	10.9
Physical or sexual abuse	37	40.2	Not applicable	8	8.7
Autism spectrum disorders	36	39.1	Educationally at risk (respondent category)	1	1.2

Participant Needs: Motivational and Relational

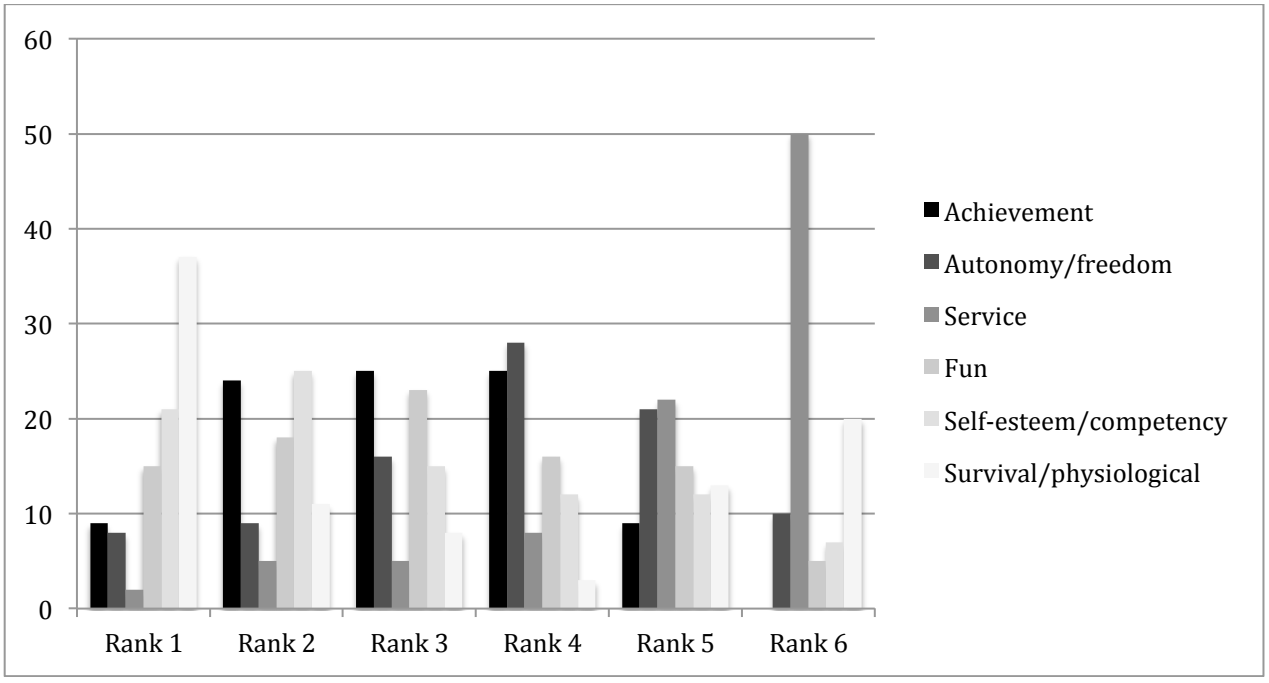
Respondents were asked several questions exploring their beliefs about the perceived needs of the people they lead out of doors. First they were asked if they believed allowing outdoor trip participants time for introspection was important. A five-point Likert scale was used; answers ranged from *definitely not important* to *very important*. Sixty-eight respondents (73.9%) believe that introspective time in the outdoors is very important. Twenty-two (23.9%) believe it is important, while only two (2.2%), remain neutral.

Outdoor leaders were polled about their perceptions of the relational needs of their participants. The survey asked respondents to rank the need for relationships with self, community and nature. Intrapersonal relationships were believed to be the greatest need (58 respondents, 63.0%), followed by relationship with community (43 respondents, 46.7%), while

relationships with nature was believed to be the least important (58 respondents, 63.0%). This data represents the highest selection rate per rank.

Respondents were also asked to rank six needs that are important for people: achievement, autonomy/freedom, fun, self-esteem/competency, service, and survival/ physiological needs. These needs are elements of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Glasser's Choice Theory (1998); both theories speculate about influences to human motivations (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Assumed Motivational Needs of Participants in Outdoor Programming



Relational Leadership

Therapeutic Alliance

Respondents were asked, "What is the strongest predictor (element of therapy) of positive psychotherapy outcomes?" There was a binary answer choice, where respondents could select "I don't know" or provide an answer. Single responses that included multiple answers were separated by content. Answers were coded as correct (i.e. therapeutic alliance/relationship

between client and therapist), or incorrect. Fifty-four respondents (58.7%) indicated they did not know. Of the 38 (41.3%) who answered assuming they knew the most influential factor to successful therapy, only seven identified therapeutic alliance. This means that only 7.6% of all survey takers are aware of the paramount importance of the therapeutic relationship in determining successful therapy outcomes. The most commonly stated incorrect beliefs involved the willingness and motivation for personal change (7), followed by personal readiness (2), participant involvement (2), and a supportive environment post therapy (2).

One of the few questions that respondents could skip asked respondents to define the psychotherapy terms transference and countertransference. Sixty respondents (65.2% of total respondents) believed they could define transference. Answers were sorted into three categories: correct, partially correct, or incorrect. Twelve of the 60 responses (20.0% of respondents answering question, 13.0% of all 92 survey takers) were coded as correct if the respondent described the pattern of transferring feelings about someone in their past life to either a therapist or instructor/leader (i.e. a person in which there is a positional power hierarchy difference). An example coded as correct was: "To place feelings or emotions, normally directed toward a person or type of person, onto a leader or therapist." Sixteen partially correct answers (26.7% of submitted answers) referenced the transfer of feelings for one person to another, but were non-specific, such as "transferring feelings about one thing or person onto another." Thirty responses (50.0%) were coded as incorrect. A majority of incorrect answers (86.2%) referred to the experiential education concept of transfer of learning, exemplified by this answer: "Transferring new knowledge or skills from one context to another." Another incorrect example is: "displacing emotional issues of self on another." Fewer respondents were familiar with the concept of countertransference. Only 23 respondents (25.0%) submitted codable definitions,

nine of which were correct (39.1% answering question, 9.8% of total survey takers). The correct definition was exemplified by the response, "A therapist projects a person or feelings onto a client." Ten answers (43.5%) received partial credit, for answers such as, "when a leader puts their values/judgment on a participant." Lastly, five definitions were coded incorrect (21.7%), such as, "two people taking on each other's feelings/issues."

Professional boundaries.

Outdoor leaders were asked to identify three boundaries they are mindful of when working with participants. The open-ended question, which allowed subjective interpretations of the term "boundaries," generated numerous responses (59 total) that were either difficult to code or too obscure to ascertain meaning or intent. Codable data is found in Table 6.

Table 6

Work Related Boundaries Outdoor Leaders are Mindful of

Major Category	Rate	Subcategory	Rate
Physical	51	General	22
		Personal space	14
		Touch	10
		Sexual	5
Personal disclosure or inquiry	26		
Emotional	18		
Safety	14	General	12
		Physical only	1
		Physical and emotional	1
Professional relationships/professionalism	13		
Confidentiality	7		
Appropriate depth and topics of conversation	6		
Culture	5		
Personal	4		
Respect	4		
Risk related	4		
Language usage	3		
Triggers	3		
Gender	2		
Ethical	2		

There may be some overlap of implied meaning between the categories "personal," and "personal disclosure or inquiry." Due to the nature of brief responses, respondent meaning might have been inadvertently miscategorized. Examples of identified boundaries that were unclear were all referenced only once, except program structure, which was referenced twice. Examples of responses difficult to interpret include, education level, "being in thirds," parental, and dependence among others.

Emotional disclosure.

Regarding outdoor leaders showing emotion in front of participants, 83 respondents (90.2%) believe it is appropriate for outdoor leaders to show their emotions. Only one respondent (1.1%) thought it was inappropriate for outdoor leaders to show emotions to their participants, while eight respondents (8.7%) were unsure.

Managing Acting Out Participants

Outdoor leaders were asked how they would address the situation of an isolating participant in a group they led. Eighty-nine respondents provided categorizable answers. Two dominant interventions were identified. Fifty-seven outdoor leaders (62.0%) stated they would inquire about the isolation; however, responses varied in specifics. Some leaders specified they would talk to the isolating participant one-on-one, some would identify their reasons for isolating, help problem-solve issues, determine if needs were being met, and some indicated they would co-create an action plan. The second dominant intervention was to utilize interpersonal relationships and the group dynamic to address isolation. Forty-nine respondents (53.3%) indicated they would use this approach. Interventions mentioned included peer encouragement, creating group inclusivity or opportunities for an isolating participant to contribute to their group and therefore feel of value, or discussing isolation with group. Five survey respondents stated

they would allow alone time. Four respondents specifically stated they would intentionally develop rapport and a therapeutic alliance.

Respondents were asked when they would refer a participant to a professional therapist. The most often cited motive involved potential harm to self or others (25, plus 6 respondents who only identified harm to self). Sixteen respondents indicated they would refer a participant to a therapist when the issues exceeded their scope of training or practice, eight would refer if they suspected or if abuse was disclosed, another eight indicated that general (unspecified) mental issues would initiate a referral, seven would refer if a participant's behavior negatively affected the group (process, dynamics, or safety), five respondents indicated they would not make a referral as it is beyond the scope of their responsibilities, while two indicated they would address concerns with a supervisor or participant guardian. Four respondents indicated if either the therapy or therapeutic work was ineffective. Specific mental health conditions were mentioned as a reason for making a referral: depression (5), violence/aggression (4), suicide ideation (2), drug use/abuse (2), self-destructive behavior (2), and an eating disorder. Personality disorders, psychotic disorders, need for coping skills, and to initiate personal change were all identified once. Four respondents would make a referral based on participant initiation. Two respondents were unsure about when they would make a referral, and another two (both therapists) indicated they would make a referral due to countertransference.

Relationship with Self

Outdoor leaders were asked about their knowledge regarding two self-concept psychological constructs pertinent to outdoor leadership: self-efficacy and locus of control.

Self-efficacy.

Respondents were asked two questions about self-efficacy. The first asked to select the best definition among four provided definitions or acknowledge they lack term familiarity. Twelve individuals (13.0%) admitted to not knowing the definition. The most accurate definition provided read, "self-efficacy describes one's perception of their capabilities." Forty-three people (46.7%) selected this definition. The next most selected response, "self-efficacy describes personal effectiveness," was selected by 21 people (22.8%). When analyzing responses based on whether respondents had studied psychology academically, the results are insignificantly different. Only 49% of the 57 respondents who have studied psychology selected the best definition of self-efficacy. Another question asked respondents to select from among eight sequences ranking the four factors that influence self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) from most to least influential: past mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, and verbal persuasion. Results indicate 56 respondents (62.9%) selected one of two sequences that correctly listed past performance accomplishments as the most influential of the four factors. The intent of this question was to have respondents select the correct sequence of influential power each factor possessed. Upon subsequent research, it was determined that this question was poorly constructed, as there is no consistent ranking of factors beyond past mastery. However, in her research on education and self-efficacy, E.L. Usher (personal communication, May 7, 2013) has found the influence of each source varies upon the individual and contextual situation in which people evaluate their capabilities.

Locus of control.

The question about locus of control (LOC) asked respondents to select between three provided definitions, or acknowledge they did not know what LOC was. Nineteen respondents (20.7%) were unfamiliar with LOC. Fifty-one respondents (55.4%) selected the most accurate

locus of control definition: "locus of control describes if a person believes they can influence events in their life." Nineteen people (21.7%) believe LOC "describes influences for how one makes decisions." The familiarity of locus of control varied minimally between the 57 respondents who have studied psychology academically (54.4% selected the correct answer), and the 35 who have not (51.4% selected the correct answer).

Interpersonal Relationships

Respondents were asked to subjectively describe emotional safety. Three dominant categories emerged from 91 categorized responses. The most often referenced description of emotional safety was typified by safe self-expression (25 responses), which was distinguished from safe emotional expression (20 responses). Self-expression includes thoughts, ideas, and physical expression in addition to emotional expression, whereas responses categorized as safe emotional expression only made reference to emotions. Another 20 responses described group inclusivity and support as indicative of emotional safety. Responses included in this category were language use boundaries, mutual respect, anti-bullying management practices, non-judging or coercive social environment, and participation encouragement. Another category was respectful/emotionally non-injurious. Seventeen responses were included in this category, such as "psychological well-being," respect and openness, and participants' emotional needs being met. Eleven responses described emotional safety as indicated by participants feeling comfortable and/or staying within their comfort zones.

A related question asked how leaders create safe environments for their participants. Eighty-five respondents provided categorizable responses. Safety embodied in planning, preparation, and teaching was indicated in 11 responses. Specific practices included familiarity with intake forms, educating participants about potential risks, and orienting participants to the

physical environment. Eleven respondents described modeling desired behavior as a way to create a safe environment. Risk management practices were identified by 29 respondents; from following employer policies, re-conning activity areas, challenge-by-choice, to emphasizing safety. The most popular way outdoor leaders create a safe environment is through shaping and establishing group culture. Forty-one respondents identified practices related to this, including setting tone, norms, and boundaries, creating group inclusivity, fostering respect for one another, being supportive and facilitating an open group culture, conducting check-ins with participants, and open communication. Lastly, eight survey respondents specifically identified relationship development, which involves rapport development, processing experiences, ongoing check-ins and acceptance.

Relationship with Nature

Nearly all outdoor leaders (84 respondents, 91.3%) claimed to actively facilitate relationships between outdoor program participants and nature. Those who do were asked to elaborate on how this was accomplished. Coded results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

How Outdoor Leaders Facilitate Relationships Between Participants and the Natural Environment

Rate	Method	Example
	Conceptual methods	
23	Environmental education/natural history	Education on environmental awareness, impacts, relationships
16	Solo/solitude experiences	
11	Leave No Trace	Use Leave No Trace to foster respect for nature
10	Observational/awareness related activities	Nature sit spot, have participants get close to ground, or use magnifying glasses
9	Journaling/reflection activities	Readings, specific writing exercises, provide time for quiet reflection
5	Hiking	Silent walks, solo hikes
	Reference to specific activities	
13	Specific activities (not otherwise categorized)	Photography, teaching natural consequences, tasting wild edibles, using metaphors, art in nature, teaching survival skills, bow drill fires
12	Non-specific lessons or activities	Team building on ropes course, nature specific meditation activities

Nature-based psychological theories.

Survey respondents were asked about specific psychology disciplines and theories and benefits related to working outdoors. Fifty-three respondents (57.6%) indicated familiarity with the concept of ecopsychology. This question was not refined enough to ascertain depth of understanding. For those acknowledging familiarity, the question did allow respondents to elaborate on their responses. Answers varied from mere term familiarity, several acknowledged in-depth academic training, and several respondents stated their employer's programs are based upon ecopsychology. A separate question asked if human health and well-being are related to the integrity and health of the natural environment. Eighty-seven respondents (94.6%) agreed, two disagreed (2.2%), and three were unsure (3.3%). This data indicates that regardless of a

theoretical or conceptual understand of ecopsychology, the vast majority of outdoor leaders believe a fundamental tenant of ecopsychology. Two other concepts related to ecopsychology were assessed for understanding. Significantly fewer respondents were familiar with the biophilia hypothesis and conservation psychology. Only 26 responding outdoor leaders (28.3%) were familiar with the biophilia hypothesis. Elaborated responses varied from vague understanding, to accurate descriptions of Wilson's (1984) hypothesis. Even fewer respondents, 13 respondents (14.1%), were familiar with the discipline of conservation psychology.

Benefits of nature.

One survey question asked how humans benefit through contact with the natural world. Respondents were asked to list no more than three benefits. Eighty-two respondents shared what they believe are the benefits of being in nature. Responses were textually categorized based on themes (Table 8). Because individuals identified one or more benefits, numbers indicate the number of times a benefit was indicated, not the number of different respondents.

Table 8

Assumed Human Benefits From Exposure/Immersion in Nature

Category	Rate	Category	Rate
Physical fitness related	28	Spirituality	7
Personal insight/growth	27	Personal accomplishment	6
Connection with something larger than self	22	Respect for natural world	6
Social benefits	16	Increased creativity	5
Stress reduction	14	Opportunities for learning	4
Reduced mental distractions/mental clarity	12	Mindfulness related/being present	4
Relaxation/calming effect	10	Fights anxiety	4
Personal reflection	9	Awe inspiring	3
Encourages conservation attitudes	7	Fights depression	3
General emotional benefits	7	Improves ADHD	1

When recategorizing the data in Table 8 into the tripartite model of fostering relationships, 36 responses referenced intrapersonal development, 16 responses indicated social benefits, and 35 responses referenced connecting with nature.

Techniques of Relational Leaders

Trust and rapport development.

Trust within relationships is essential to positive outcomes and healthy interpersonal dynamics. The survey provided 34 factors that may contribute to trust development, and respondents were asked to select what they believe are the 10 most important factors from this list that foster participant trust in their leaders (Table 9). Results for all 34 traits are listed in descending order.

Table 9

The Most Important Traits Fostering Trust in Outdoor Leaders

Trait	Rate	%	Trait	Rate	%
Effective communicator	61	66.3	Flexibility	29	31.5
Authenticity	54	58.7	Fun/entertaining	28	30.4
Competency	52	56.5	Fairness	23	25.0
Patience	50	54.3	Inspiring	23	25.0
Non-judgmental	44	47.8	Transparent intentions	21	22.8
Accepting	44	47.8	Maturity	18	19.6
Good listener	43	46.7	Unconditional positive regard	16	17.4
Compassionate	41	44.6	Vulnerability	14	15.2
Genuineness	39	42.4	Inquisitive	13	14.1
Honesty	36	39.1	Likeability	13	14.1
Intelligence/knowledgeable	35	38.0	Appropriate self-expression	8	8.7
Encouraging	32	34.8	Non-defensive	8	8.7
Self-aware	32	34.8	Nurturing	8	8.7
Calmness	31	33.7	Tolerant	8	8.7
Technical abilities	31	33.7	Equanimity	3	3.3
Empathetic	30	32.6	Benevolence	1	1.1
Positivity	30	32.6	Similar values/lifestyle	1	1.1

Respondents could also identify traits that foster trust that were not listed. The following themes were only referenced once: selflessness, willingness to participate, esprit de corps, humor, anticipate participant needs, firm and consistent, adaptability, and one respondent wrote "all of the above."

Respondents were asked to select three strategies, from a list of seven, they use most often to develop rapport with others. The ranking order of their selections are in Table 10.

Table 10

Rapport Development Strategies Used by Outdoor Leaders

Strategy	Rate	%	Strategy	Rate	%
Effective communication	67	72.8	Model imperfection/humanness	16	17.4
Demonstrate Respect	63	68.5	Share personal information	14	15.2
Positive support and encouragement	63	68.5	Demonstrate technical skills and abilities	13	14.1
Use of humor	37	40.2	Share limits of confidentiality	3	3.3

Respondents also identified additional strategies they use. These include getting participants to talk about themselves, demonstrating interest in participants, showing trust in others, demonstrating willingness to participate, demonstrating authenticity, curiosity, and conducting end-of-day debriefs.

Feedback strategies.

Outdoor leaders were asked about their feedback giving strategies. Nine feedback strategies for giving feedback to others were provided. Respondents were asked to select the three strategies they most use (Table 11).

Table 11

Feedback Strategies Used by Outdoor Leaders

Strategy	Response Rate	% of Leaders
Non-judgmental (based on observation)	48	52.2
Pairing supportive with critical feedback	46	50.0
Address issues person can change	44	47.8
Provide feedback 1-on-1, not in group setting	42	45.7
As soon as possible after incident	26	28.3
Frequent, or ongoing nature	25	27.2
Considerate	23	25.0
Accurate	16	17.4
Non-coercive	6	6.5

Ceremonies and rituals.

Sixty-six outdoor leaders (72.0%) created or facilitated rituals or ceremonies for their participants. Their answers are categorized and described in Table 12.

Table 12

Types of Ceremonies and Rituals Outdoor Leaders Facilitate

Category	Rate	Examples
Rituals as part of programming and/or daily routine	39	• Many ropes course elements are fairly ritualized (pamper pole especially), but outside of that context, no. • Every night of our program we have council fire which has a variety of different ceremonial aspects • feedback circles have a specific progression and are a type of ritual.
Solo experiences/ rites of passage	15	• Our program is based upon rites of passage work. There is also a culminating Solo Journey that symbolizes the rite of passage into adulthood.
Closing/graduation	13	• I now do a bracelet ceremony at the conclusion of our 26 day leadership trips to serve as a reflection and debrief technique. • Our last day of camp we have a closing ceremony and spread positive energy among the campers before they return home, they pass compliments to each other as well as receiving them from staff too.
Program transition/level progression	9	• Between phases students move through a ceremonial rite of passage into the next phase • On longer courses every phase completion is marked by a large intentional ceremony marking our achievement and our challenges to come
Honor participant insight, growth, and skill acquisition	5	• A variety of rituals to mark growth areas, milestones, emotional moments, etc. • A student comes to a realization about something in their life that is important to them. Ritual marks a special moment and helps participants to have an anchor this moment and carry it for themselves in the future.
Season related	3	• Moon, fires, seasonal changes

Note: Programming based rituals include: miscellaneous 11, campfires 5, meals 5, bead ceremonies 4, talking circles 4, rose, bud, thorn 3, sweats 3 make participants comfortable 2, stretching 2.

In addition to categorizing rituals by description, rituals were also examined through the tripartite relational framework referenced throughout this thesis (Table 13).

Table 13

Rituals Fostering Relationship in Three Domains

Type of relationship	Rate	Survey Examples
Intrapersonal	23	• When I worked wilderness therapy, we had 'hallowed ground' ceremonies where we incorporated Native American traditions into our therapy. We also had heart pouches that we used as a reflection and reward system for our weeks.
Interpersonal	19	• Ceremonies of initiation and inclusion. • We have an opening ceremony at camp each year and we also facilitate a counsel once each surf camp session. It's an opportunity for girls to connect in more meaningful ways and share important life lessons together.
With nature	17	• Have participants write letters to nature

Note. Solo experiences, due to their multi-relational dynamics, are included in both intrapersonal and with nature relationship rate numbers. Rituals involving graduation or closing ceremonies are included in interpersonal relationships.

Use of metaphors.

Respondents were asked, "Do you use metaphors involving the natural world with your participants?" Twelve respondents (13.0%) said they do not, eight respondents (8.7%) answered that they did not understand the question, while 71 outdoor leaders (78.3%) acknowledged using nature-based metaphors with their participants. Outdoor leaders who answered yes were asked to elaborate. Most descriptions comprise two categories: nature based metaphors (referenced 21 times) and activity based metaphors (referenced 12 times). Another five respondents mentioned that they cater their metaphors specifically to their participants, and two mentioned metaphors referencing mythology and stories.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this Internet-based survey was to ascertain working outdoor leaders' knowledge and skills that are pertinent to fostering outdoor program participant well-being, and present these via a descriptive (non-analytic) methodology. This was accomplished through asking outdoor leaders about their philosophies, beliefs, knowledge, and skills. The summation of these factors manifest directly in their outdoor leadership practices. Several characteristics of survey respondents may help interpret the findings of this survey. Table 1 is a general overview of respondent characteristics. Table 14 shows the years of experience of both working outdoors (with no supervisory responsibilities) and as a supervisor or training.

Table 14

Outdoor Leadership Experience

Years of Experience	As an outdoor leader	As a supervisory
1-1.5	33	33
1.5-3	19	8
3-5	13	10
5+	26	22

Note. Two respondents did not provide data.

The average age of respondents was 33.5. Nearly all the respondents identified their race as white (95.7%). Participants are quite educated with 88% of respondents possessing a bachelor's degree, and 41% possessing a master's degree (refer to Table 15 for more detailed information). Fifty-eight percent of respondents describe their employer's program as adventure education, 55% as education, 52% as recreation, 47% as leadership education, 22% as therapeutic, 13% as wilderness therapy, and 9% as adventure therapy. Nearly three quarters of respondents have studied biology or a related field, 60% have studied outdoor leadership, and 62% have studied psychology or a related field. Sixty-three percent of respondents work full time, and most either work at day or weeklong programs.

Outdoor Leadership

Why People Work as Outdoor Leaders

Leadership involves intention, and leaders' intentions are driven by their values, knowledge, and awareness. All of these influences inform practice. Understanding the reasons individuals work as outdoor leaders is informative as to their beliefs and values, desired outcomes for outdoor program participants, and how these may manifest in a leader's method of decision-making. Research has demonstrated that outdoor leaders influence the participants they lead, as well as programming outcomes.

Identifying specific values of outdoor leaders is beyond the scope of this thesis, but some fundamental values of outdoor leaders are explored when examining why people work as outdoor leaders (Table 2). Survey respondents provided many reasons for why they work as outdoor leaders. Some reasons are self-oriented, such as leaders simply enjoying the outdoors, or the outdoors being a good professional fit, as well as a more preferable career. Other reasons are more altruistic in nature. In examining outdoor leaders' rationales through the tripartite relational leadership lens referenced in this thesis, leaders shared motives supporting intrapersonal, interpersonal, and human-nature relationship development.

Leaders identified their desires to foster, facilitate, and witness growth in others, enjoying working with and connecting to others, and providing access and connecting people to nature. For example, respondents' motives for leading people outdoors included encouraging participant stewardship and conservation values, fostering personal growth, and connecting people. Leaders' motives for working outdoors are intrinsic to what they perceive outdoor leadership entails, and what they believe outdoor leaders do.

What is Outdoor Leadership?

A critical aspect of outdoor leadership are the assumptions leaders make about their role and responsibilities. How do they define their job and what expectations do they have of themselves? The two most selected definitions of outdoor leadership explicitly describe a goal of contributing to the personal growth of participants. Ewert (as cited in Hayashi & Ewert, 2006) mentions "facilitating the philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic growth of participants," while the author's definition described fostering relationships across the three domains discussed in the tripartite relational model. Interestingly, definitions that described leadership as a process of influence or based on an ethic of care garnered less than 6% selection individually, and definitions that mentioned safety or risk management were selected by fewer than 8% of survey respondents. Underlying outdoor leaders' practices is their rationale for working as a leader, as well as leaders' personal understanding of the scope and practice of outdoor leadership. These two influences affect leaders' decision-making processes.

This study advocates reframing outdoor leadership practice through a tripartite relational perspective. If relationships are situated as the primary focus of outdoor leadership, then participants can experience greater levels of well-being through a transformational leadership experience. This belief is reinforced by a significant number of survey respondents who also believe that outdoor leadership is a relationally driven occupation. In fact 33.7% of sampled outdoor leaders agreed with the author's definition of outdoor leadership: "Outdoor leadership involves fostering relationships within participants, between participants, and between participants and the natural world through the deliberate use of activities and guided by a process of personal reflection." The other definition also selected by 33.7% of respondents, attributed to Ewert (as cited in Hayashi & Ewert, 2006), references participant growth. This is a significant

finding, as it moves beyond what leaders do (task oriented perspective) to how they do it (transformatively).

Graham (1997) recommended leaders find opportunities to "develop caring relationships with one another" (p. 73). However, this emphasis is not well-supported by this survey, considering less than 6% of outdoor leaders define outdoor leadership as involving an ethic of care.

Influences to Decision-Making

Examining influences to leadership practice, respondents were asked about the influences affecting their decision-making processes (Figure 1). Respondents were asked to rank five factors that influence their decision-making processes as outdoor leaders: situation/context, personal mission or intention, their program's mission/curricula, safety/risk management, and therapeutic factors and needs of participants. These terms were not explained further, thus interpretation of these ranking factors may not be consistent among survey respondents. The reason for exploring decision-making influences was to see how or if leaders' intentions, or their operational definitions of outdoor leadership, influence their decision-making processes.

Kosseff (2010) wrote, "at its simplest, leadership can be thought of as the activity of influencing others in order to set and achieve group objectives" (p. 84). But don't leaders have agendas? Kosseff's explanation of leadership seems inadequate. Decision-making and judgment are frequently emphasized as outdoor leadership skills and competencies; however, in discussing these skills the intentions and influences guiding leaders' decision-making and judgment processes are typically not addressed. For example, Martin et al. (2006) include decision-making and judgment as one of eight outdoor leadership competencies. What is striking is that there is not a single mention of the word "intention." Rather Martin et al.'s (2006) discussion of

decision-making is focused on desired outcomes and variables, which is at odds with their assertion that leadership is both intentional and interactional. There is always a potential disconnect between a leader's intention and actual outcomes. Furthermore, when decision-making models are situationally influenced, such as conditional outdoor leadership theory (Priest & Chase, 1989), there is no acknowledgement that a leader's intention is foundational to each situation, and therefore decision-making is in fact contingent on intentions. One striking finding was that leaders' personal mission was ranked the least influential factor, by 72.0% of respondents. This seems in discord with the reasons individuals work as outdoor leaders. It is the author's assertion that outdoor leaders' motives for working outdoors influences decision-making processes, potentially at a subconscious level.

Risk-management as primary influence.

Knowing that only eight respondents (8.7%) selected a definition of outdoor leadership that explicitly references risk management (physical and emotional), and that not a single motive for working as an outdoor leader explicitly identified keeping people safe or minimizing risk, it is noteworthy that safety and risk management are the greatest influences to outdoor leaders' decision-making processes. Risk management is a huge responsibility of outdoor leaders; however, this author contends that leadership begins with participants, and that effective risk management requires an understanding of participants' therapeutic needs. Furthermore, it is the participants' needs that inform situational contexts. How can one manage emotional risk without comprehending an individual's mental state or history, or therapeutic and relational needs? Similarly, if 33.7% of respondents believe that outdoor leadership involves the facilitation of relationships, which are necessary according to the belongingness hypothesis, it seems odd that the therapeutic needs of participants is ranked lower than safety and risk management and

situational contexts. This may be analogous to the chicken and the egg conundrum, which came first, the chicken or the egg? Considering influences to decision-making, do therapeutic factors dictate a situational context, or do situations dictate therapeutic factors?

Need for therapeutic emphasis in decision-making.

Martin et al. (2006) described decision-making and judgment as a core competency, and describe several decision-making models. However, throughout their discussion, they do not identify participant well-being as a major justification for making decisions. When discussing decision-making models, NOLS (Gookin & Leach, 2009) also omits any reference to why decisions are made. It appears an emphasis on leadership skills and competencies development has sidetracked leadership training, and neglects to acknowledge human well-being as a central factor in outdoor leadership facilitation.

When why they work as outdoor leaders, respondents identified connecting people to nature and fostering participant personal growth as reasons. It seems logical then, that these motivations should and do influence outdoor leaders' decision making processes, albeit, subconsciously. Therapeutic factors were ranked as the third strongest influence to outdoor leadership, after risk management and situational factors. There appears to be a discrepancy between outdoor leaders motives for leading others outdoors and a knowledge base that would increase their ability to fulfill their leadership intentions. The author's research is rooted in ecopsychology and the belongingness hypothesis. Both of these articulate the human need for relationships with nature and with other people. Assuming these needs are essential, then should not the primary influence guiding decision-making be the assessment of therapeutic factors and participant needs? This is particularly relevant when looking at Table 5, which lists the presumed mental health and life experiences of outdoor program participants. A strikingly high

percentage of participants exhibit a variety of mental health conditions or have had significant life experiences that affect how they interact in the world. These experiences or conditions should inform effective risk management practices (which include emotional elements). Supporting the author's advocacy for decision-making based upon therapeutic factors, Burke et al. (2012) asked, do outdoor programs emphasis decision-making based on programmatic policies or care for participants?

Factors Influencing Relationship Development

Therapeutic alliance.

It is clear from multiple studies of psychotherapy relationships that the quality of the relationship between therapist and client is the major influence upon positive therapeutic outcomes (Homrich, 2009; Flückiger et al., 2011), yet less than 10% of outdoor leaders knew this. Therapeutic alliance is highlighted in this thesis because it serves as a reminder of how important relationships are to well-being and personal growth, as well as being an important element in professional relationships. Gass et al. (2012) identified warmth, caring and openness as being critical characteristics for developing therapeutic alliance. These characteristics are inherent in a relationally oriented leadership approach. Alliance is also forged through transparency and honesty. In fact, Outward Bound believes this approach creates a "culture of sharing and emotional risk taking" (Raynolds, 2007, p. 78). Nearly all outdoor leaders believe it is appropriate to express emotions. This aligns with Dasborough and Ashkanasy's (2002) assertion that leadership is inherently emotional, where a leader's display of emotions evokes emotional reactions of others. This is particularly relevant in transformational leadership where inspirational motivation is used to encourage followers.

In contrast to the author's assertion that therapeutic alliance should be central to outdoor leadership, Harper (2008) questions the applicability of therapeutic alliance to outdoor leaders. Harper writes, "the majority of alliance literature is from community and institutional treatment settings, its relationship to wilderness treatment is questionable" (p. 49). Harper (2008) found that adolescent outcomes in wilderness treatment were not predicted by the quality of therapeutic alliance (which did not distinguish between therapists and paraprofessionals). Harper and this author both believe the issue of therapeutic alliance between participants and non-clinically trained outdoor leaders is a topic for future research.

Transference and countertransference.

This thesis research asked outdoor leaders about their familiarity with two related relational concepts foundational to psychotherapy training and professional relationships: transference and countertransference. This optional question was asked to ascertain outdoor leaders awareness of how participant behaviors, and their own, can be triggered and rooted in past relational experiences-particularly in hierarchical relationships. Transference was correctly explained by 13% of all 92 respondents, while only 10% of survey respondents were familiar with the psychotherapy term countertransference. Responses indicated that many respondents were unclear or unable to distinguish between the psychotherapeutic concept of transference and the adventure education term transfer, or transfer of learning. It is possible that knowledge of the psychotherapy definition of transference may better prepare therapeutic outdoor leaders by providing an understanding of the origins and patterns of interpersonal behaviors. It appears that referring to learning experiences specifically as "transfer of learning" could clarify that this concept is educational in nature, and allow the psychotherapeutic concept of transference to be included within outdoor leadership writings.

Professional boundaries.

Ringer (1999) stated that effective leaders are able to manage professional boundaries. An important aspect of leading others is the inherent nature of hierarchical relationships, which Mitten (1999) believes is sometimes minimized. Relationships entail boundaries, particularly hierarchical relationships, and respondents were asked to identify work-related boundaries (Table 6). Five predominant types of boundaries emerged: physical, personal disclosure or inquiry, emotional, safety, and professionalism/professional relationships.

Looking at the boundaries professional counselors are held to can help identify specific boundaries pertinent to nurturing well-being in outdoor participants. The 2014 ACA Code of Ethics cautions therapists about sexual/romantic relationships, avoiding nonprofessional relationships, and to work within the boundaries of professional competence. Respondents definitely are mindful of physical, sexual, and touch boundaries, as well as the nature of professional relationships, including appropriate personal disclosure. Potentially at odds with personal disclosure, ninety percent of outdoor leaders think it is appropriate for leaders to show their emotions. When it comes to group management: boundaries involving confidentiality, conversation topics, acceptable use of language, and culture were identified. Unique to the outdoor milieu, safety and risk management and the physical abilities of participants were identified as important boundaries. Appropriate physical challenges is a ethical boundary identified by Berger (2008). Three leaders identified triggers. Their responses were not detailed enough to ascertain an exact meaning, but it could be that they are referencing the idea of transference. A critical component of counselor education is the importance of detachment. A therapist should not be attached to outcomes and/or behaviors of their clients. Mitten and Clement (2007) advocated for such detachment in leaders. Over investment in participant

performance was not identified by any survey respondents as a professional boundary to be mindful of.

Trust and rapport development.

Shooter, Paisley, and Sibthorp (2010) studied trust development in two different studies, and concluded "a leaders' ability and a leader's character can influence participants' trust" (p. 201). Furthermore, trust development is a critical component of effective leadership, and is critical to cooperative and constructive interpersonal relationships (Shooter, Paisley, & Sibthorp, 2010). In this survey, outdoor leaders were asked to select the 10 (from a list of 34 choices) most important traits fostering trust (Table 9). They selected (in descending order) effective communication, authenticity, competence, patience, acceptance, non-judgmental, good listener, compassionate, genuineness, and honesty.

Schumann et al. (2009) found several instructor characteristics that are positively associated with student learning: patience, knowledgeable, empathy, inspiring, and being fun/entertaining. Survey results indicate that patience is the fourth most important trait in fostering trust (54% of respondents), being knowledgeable is 11th (38%), empathy is 16th (32%), fun/entertaining is 19th (30%), and inspiring 21st (25%). Interestingly, Schumann et al. (2009) reported that patience has not been mentioned in AE empirical research. Considering patience was ranked fourth in this survey, the author believes this attribute should be further studied.

Shooter, Paisley, and Sibthorp (2010) found that honesty, calmness in crisis, knowing itinerary, showing respect, and effective communication were the most positive influences to developing trust. Their study and this one are unable to be exactly compared due to differences in language use and factor selection criteria. Despite this fact, some comparisons can still be made. In this survey, the top five traits (in descending order) selected in this survey were

effective communication, authenticity, competence, patience, and accepting. The only factor common to both studies is effective communication. However, two other factors from Shooter et al. (2010), including honesty, was ranked 10th (39% of respondents selected this as one of the ten most important traits) while calmness was ranked 14th (34%).

Shooter et al. (2012) found "technical ability was the most influential predictor of trust, followed by benevolence, interpersonal skills, and integrity" (p. 231). Based on their finding of the most influential trust factor, they believe outdoor leaders

> might consider the value of making overt displays of their technical ability; they might focus considerable effort on practicing and implementing effective communication skills; they should treat group members with equity and fairness; and they should make authentic, outward displays of their investment in the participants' experiences. (Shooter et al., 2012, pp. 233-234)

In this survey, 33.7% of respondents believed a leader's technical abilities inspires participant trust in them, while only 14.1% of outdoor leaders believe that demonstrating technical competence is a method for building rapport. It seems prudent that Shooter et al.'s (2012) findings be strongly promoted in outdoor leadership curriculum.

Contrary to Shooter et al.'s (2012) findings that benevolence is the second most influential predictor of trust, in this survey this concept was tied for the least influential factor. This finding may indicate a lack of knowledge regarding factors of therapeutic relationships. For example, relational concepts intrinsic to person-centered psychotherapy such as benevolence, equanimity, and unconditional positive regard, were only selected 1.1%, 3.3%, and 17.0% respectively. This data can be interpreted three different ways. One, the low selection rate may reflect leaders' beliefs that these concepts are not important for trust development. Two, outdoor

leaders may lack knowledge of techniques used in building therapeutic rapport. Or three, the low response rate may simply indicate outdoor leaders are unfamiliar with these terms.

Sibthorp et al. (2007) found at NOLS that, "rapport with the instructors was a significant predictor for gains in communication" (p. 13), while Outward Bound asserted that good communication enables a leader to: develop rapport, establish trust, motivate and inspire, help in meaning making, convey information, and act up on decisions (Raynolds, 2007). Sixty-one outdoor leaders (66.3%) identified effective communication as the number one trait that fosters trust. Additionally, nearly 60% of the employers represented in this survey train outdoor leaders in communication skills. Relating communication skills to a relational model of outdoor leadership, Priest and Gass (2005) wrote, effective communication "enhances socialization by strengthening intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships" (p. 254).

Feedback strategies.

Supporting this thesis' assertion that leadership is relational and should be oriented towards participant growth, Claiborn and Goodyear (2005) wrote, "relationship is centrally important to feedback exchange" (p.213) and that "feedback promotes change through interpersonal influence" (p. 212). Outdoor leaders were allowed to select their three most used feedback strategies from a list of nine (See Table 11). The top four strategies were, observational (non-judgmental), pairing constructive with positive feedback, addressing issues a person can change, and providing feedback one on one (not in front of a group). Bass and Riggio (2006) assert that transformational leaders do not publically criticize those they lead. People are more likely to accept positive than negative feedback. A strategy to use when giving negative feedback is to pair it with positive feedback; one can either provide positive feedback before negative feedback, or sandwich negative feedback between two positive feedback pieces

(Claiborn & Goodyear, 2005). One of the most beneficial outcomes of feedback is on the self-concept construct of self-efficacy. McKenzie (2003) studied course outcomes of participants with Outward Bound Western Canada. She found "instructors' expectations, feedback, and personalities can increase students' self-concept, motivation, and interpersonal skills" (p. 18). According to Propst & Koesler (1998), "Feedback can significantly enhance self-efficacy, particularly in situations where students are unable to judge their own performance" (p. 322). Furthermore, "Positive feedback was more important for females and immediate feedback more important for males in raising levels of short-term self-efficacy" (Propst & Koesler, 1998, p. 342). Noteworthy, and especially relevant to self-concept ideas, "receivers who have high self-esteem tend to consider positive feedback as more accurate than negative" (p. 214), yet this type of feedback may be more desirable as a source of growth, and it is not perceived as threatening, because of their high self-esteem. Additionally, low moods increase the reception of negative feedback (Claiborn & Goodyear, 2005). This collective research helps highlight the significant effect feedback can have on participants, and how judicious feedback is a therapeutic process and tool.

Implications for Practice: Education and Training Needs for Relationally Oriented Outdoor Leaders

Academic Training

One comparison of the level of education outdoor leaders possess can be made between this survey and Medina (2001) (Table 15). Medina (2001) surveyed attendees at the 2000 International Conference of the Association of Experiential Education who identified as "someone who uses indoor and outdoor adventure activities in a variety of settings for the

purpose of promoting individual growth and group development" (p. 152). Her inclusion criteria is similar enough to this survey's that it may be of value to compare results.

Table 15

Education of Outdoor Leaders: Comparing Medina (2001) and McCarty (2014)

	Study	
Degrees Earned	Medina (2001) -203 responses	McCarty (2014)-92 responses
None	29.1%	2.2%
Associates	1.5%	7.6%
Bachelor's	32.5%	88.0%
Master's	31.5%	41.3%
Doctorate	5.4%	6.5%
Pursuing Degrees		
Associates	0%	1.1%
Bachelor's	8.8%	12.0%
Master's	8.8%	14.1%
Doctorate	2.5%	4.3%

Although the survey participants cannot be compared precisely, the results do indicate a significant increase in education at the Bachelor level of outdoor leaders, with minor increases in masters and associate degrees. When asked whether leaders have academic training in outdoor leadership, psychology, and biology and related fields respondents report significant educational training in these subjects: 60%, 62%, and 73% respectively.

Beringer (2004) asserted that many adventure therapy practitioners are trained in psychology related disciplines rather than being trained in the environmental sciences. Survey finding indicate this is not entirely accurate. Reviewing the academic backgrounds of the 92 outdoor leaders in the three domains of psychology, outdoor leadership, and environmental studies, the majority of survey participants have studied these subjects. A more accurate assessment of counseling psychology/social work studies appears when examining outdoor leaders' achieved or pursued degrees. Twenty-one outdoor leaders (23% of all respondents) are pursuing or have achieved a degree in counseling fields (most degrees are bachelor's and

master's). Thirteen (14.1%) possess a natural science degree. A more in-depth analysis of the three highlighted subjects studied academically reveals seven participants (7.6%) studied leadership and psychology, 13 (14.1%) studied leadership and biology/related fields, 12 (13.0%) studied psych and biology/related fields, and 32 (35.0%) studied all three subjects. Because the survey only collected information on whether respondents had studied the three specific subjects academically, and did not probe the depth of studies, this data should be regarded merely as exploratory. Other required subject training for outdoor leaders voiced by Raiola (1997) included communication and group dynamics, and the topic of values including care and respect for oneself, respect and acceptance of others, and respect for nature. By advocating for this three-fold values education, he is describing the foci of therapeutic outdoor leadership.

Employer Provided Training

When looking at on the job (OTJ) training for outdoor leaders (Table 4) through the tripartite relationship model of self, others, and nature, training subjects can be attributed to each of these domains. Outdoor leaders received the least training in subject matter relevant to fostering relationships between participants and the natural world. This includes ecopsychology (11%), environmental philosophy (24%), however nearly half (48%) of leaders are trained in environmental ethics. Content relevant to working with groups and individuals are some of the most common OTJ training subjects. Topics relevant to working with groups: group dynamics (69%), communication (59%), and group development (59%) are commonly taught. Participant trust in a leader appears to positively influence program outcomes (Shooter, Paisley, & Sibthorp 2009) and yet less than half of outdoor leaders' (48%) employers train in the area of rapport and trust development. Training material relevant to fostering participant intrapersonal relationships was not easily separated into discrete categories. For example, the content of personal

ethics/values (36%) is applicable to both leaders and participants developing these skills. Twenty-two percent of outdoor leaders are trained in the broad subject matter of psychology. Similarly, only 25% of outdoor leaders are trained in self-efficacy. Rituals and ceremonies can be used to foster relationships in all three domains, yet only 30% of outdoor leaders are on being trained in this area. Furthermore, professional training should be relevant to issues experienced by participants. This is a particular concern given the mental health issues exhibited by outdoor programming participants (Table 5). It is assumed that outdoor programs specifically focused on mental health issues would dedicate more training time to these topics. However, the high percentage of participants across WEPs who have mental issues highlights the value and need for psychology trainings to address current and pervasive outdoor program participant issues.

Data infers that outdoor leaders are receiving notable training in group leadership knowledge and skills. This, in combination with outdoor leaders acknowledging the value of interpersonal relationships as a definition of outdoor leadership, indicate outdoor leaders believe one of their tasks is interpersonal development and that they are receiving commensurate OTJ training to foster interpersonal relationships.

A limitation of this survey was its inability to determine the prevalence of OTJ conservation psychology or biophilia training. These topics may be addressed within larger training subjects such as environmental ethics, environmental philosophy, or the broader category of psychology. Future studies could expand or refine the training subject categories to better understand training germane to fostering human-nature connections.

Training Needs in Psychological Constructs

Sibthorp and Arthur-Banning (2004) wrote, “research needs to continue dissecting adventure-based experiential education programs to better ascertain which programmatic

variables are most related to developmental outcomes" (p. 47). Their assertion bolsters this researcher's perspective that outdoor leaders need more training regarding psychological elements affected by adventure programming in general, and specific training and education to enhance their leadership abilities to foster relationships and the well-being of participants they lead within the three domains of self, community, and nature.

A shortcoming within outdoor leadership literature is the cursory treatment of the discipline of psychology in general, and counseling psychology and environmental psychologies specifically. While issues related to psychology are sometimes explicitly discussed, rarely are leadership competencies, skills, or decision-making models framed as therapeutic interventions. Outdoor education literature frequently appears self-referential, in that contributions from relevant and related disciplines are not adequately referenced or even critiqued. Specific therapeutic skills and psychological theories taught within the discipline of counseling psychology are predominately omitted and/or not acknowledge as such in adventure programming writings. This study has emphasized the importance of understanding psychological concepts germane to outdoor programing and fostering participant well-being. Supporting this assertion, Russell, Gillis, and Lewis (2008) advocated that therapeutic field staff should have specific academic training in the disciplines of "psychology, social work, outdoor education, outdoor recreation, or education programs" (p. 71), while Richardson and Simmons (1996) maintained that outdoor leadership training should include childhood development.

Harper (2009) identified several therapeutic orientations common in wilderness treatment programs: "structural family, family systems, humanistic, narrative, cognitive behavioural, and existential psychotherapy" (p. 51). It seems fitting then that outdoor leaders working specifically at therapeutic programs should have some knowledge of these different approaches, experiential

techniques, and practices. This knowledge can also serve leaders working in other types of WEPs. Another therapy orientation is group practice. Priest (1984) identified group counseling skills as one of five competencies for effective outdoor leadership, which he describes as the ability

> to assess and facilitate personal development and group growth during the adventure experience. Leaders must structure the activities and tasks, process the feelings and emotions that result, and apply a closure to the entire experience in a manner that leads to positive group dynamics and the participants' realization of their abilities and limitations. (p. 34)

Ryan and Deci (2000) discuss another theory that may prove fruitful in future training and education of outdoor leaders who are committed to participant well-being: self-determination theory (SDT). "SDT aims to specify factors that nurture the innate human potentials entailed in growth, integration, and well-being, and to explore the processes and conditions that foster the healthy development and effective functioning of individuals, groups, and communities" (p. 74).

It is likely outdoor leaders will work with people who are experiencing a variety of mental and physical conditions, or have life experiences that influence their ability to develop working relationships and to communicate in appropriate manners. Survey respondents indicated a high level of mental health issues among outdoor participants (Table 5). Obviously, outdoor leaders should have a functional understanding of mental health and life issues of those they lead. When looking at estimated rates of mental health issues of participants, these rates grossly exaggerate rates among Americans as reported by the National Institute of Mental Health (retrieved May 5, 2014, http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-numbers-count-mental-disorders-in-america/index.shtml). The author is unable to determine if this discrepancy is due

to gross overestimation by outdoor leaders, or if these figures demonstrate that outdoor programming is overly representative of people possessing mental health issues. The prevalence of, and potential for, mental health issues in the United States is a solid justification for why outdoor leaders need sufficient psychology training.

Taylor, Segal, and Harper (2010) in their critique of adventure therapy and the relative lack of reference to the natural world in the therapy process, introduced the term holon. The term, borrowed from Koestler (as cited in Taylor et al., 2010) may be very useful in outdoor programming, particularly when there's a focus on relationships and an individuals' sense of self. Holon describes the intricacies that are present in systems, where one part of a system is concurrently unique and separate, but also a component functioning within interconnected systems. For example, an outdoor participant is both independent as a person, yet interdependent with their social group. Increasing in system complexity and scale, they are also part of the natural world. Holon, may be term ripe for inclusion in outdoor leadership programming literature to stimulate leaders to think about the multitude of roles their participants express and live.

Self-efficacy.

Because adventure education aims to foster personal growth in participants, it seems evident that understanding internal influences that affect participant behaviors, performances, and beliefs about their abilities are critical to both effective and therapeutic leadership. Self-efficacy is a cornerstone of personal growth and adventure programming. It is a central concept of therapeutic outdoor leadership. A noteworthy finding from this survey is that only 49% of the 57 respondents who have studied psychology selected the best definition of self-efficacy. Extrapolating this finding, this leads the author to believe that this concept is not adequately

understood among outdoor leaders, regardless of training in psychology. Referring back to the historic outdoor programming emphasis on healthy stress, high levels of anxiety can undermine self-efficacy, and generally speaking, "increasing students' physical and emotional well-being and negative emotional states strengthens self-efficacy" (Usher & Pajares, 2008, p. 754). Therefore, more outdoor leaders need to become cognizant of self-efficacy—its meaning, influences, and centrality to the concept of personal growth.

A second question asked respondents to rank, in order of influence, the four influences of self-efficacy: past mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological state, and verbal persuasion. All of these influences are incredibly influential in outdoor participants' ability to excel, learn, and attempt new activities. Unfortunately, this question was poorly constructed. Bandura (1997) specifies that past mastery experiences is the single most influential of the four factors; however, he does not rank the remaining three in terms of their influence on self-efficacy. Anderson and Betz (2001) conducted research in the context of career development, and found that sources of self-efficacy concentrated in two dimensions, direct (past mastery experiences, physiological states, and social persuasion) and indirect (vicarious learning), but again they did not find a hierarchy of influential power. If a leader understands that the greatest influence in one's perception of their abilities is having past mastery experiences, it makes sense that sequencing activities to facilitate success (i.e. past mastery experiences) is foundational to personal growth and positive outdoor activity experiences.

Locus of control.

Locus of control (LOC) is another influence affecting participants' actions and behaviors. Hans (2000) found that participants' LOC became more internal as a result of participating in an adventure program. Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) wrote, "one of the most often discussed

changes participants experience as a result of outdoor adventure pursuits is an increase feeling of responsibility of the events in their lives" (p. 118). This is an explicit description of locus of control. Understanding this concept, along with self-efficacy, may affect how outdoor leaders use verbal persuasion, as well as utilizing the group to influence individuals. Only half of the survey respondents understood that LOC describes a person's belief about the influences to events in their life, while 20% were completely unfamiliar with the concept. Outdoor leaders could benefit from understanding that locus of control is a continuum between an internal state (a person has a direct influence in life events) and external state (outside influences, such as life circumstance, have a greater influence on one's life than their direct actions).

Environmental psychologies.

Beringer and Martin (2003) argued that it is time for adventure programming to shift from an anthropomorphic paradigm to an ecocentric one, where there is explicit acknowledgement of nature's "curative relationship."

> The psychological image of the person, and, to a considerable extent, the experience of personhood, are today based on a reduced form of the self—one largely shorn of intuition, spirituality, and relatedness to natural context. Overwhelmingly, psychology has adopted, with little critical reflection, the same anthropocentric, individualistic ideology that, I have argued, has resulted in the current environmental crisis. (Kidner, 1994, p. 372)

Familiarity of three psychological constructs and fields especially relevant to outdoor programming, and pertinent to Kidner's quote, were assessed. Crucial knowledge for fostering participant relationships with nature is found in the fields of ecopsychology and conservation psychology. Nearly all survey respondents believe that the health of humans and the natural

world are intertwined, yet knowledge of psychological concepts germane to fostering this type of relationship is limited amongst survey respondents (Table 16).

Table 16

Outdoor Leaders' Familiarity with Environmental Psychology Constructs

Subject	Rate	% of respondents	Subject Relevance
Ecopsychology	39	42.2	Human-nature relationship
Conservation psychology	13	14.1	Stewardship/ecological conservation
Biophilia hypothesis	26	28.3	Human-nature relationship
Familiar with all 3 concepts	*9*	*9.8*	
Ecopsychology and conservation psychology	3	3.3	
Ecopsychology and biophilia hypothesis	11	12.0	
Ecopsychology (only)	16	17.4	
Biophilia hypothesis (only)	6	6.5	
Conservation psychology (only)	1	1.1	

Only 14% of respondents were familiar with conservation psychology. This disparity is noteworthy when reviewing respondents reasons for working outdoors, namely to connect people to nature, especially for conservation reasons. This goal appears hard to actualize considering many of the responding outdoor leaders are unfamiliar with fields of knowledge that could directly improve their effectiveness of connecting participants to the natural world. Furthermore, Clayton and Myers (2009) state that understanding influences to behaviors can promote positive human-nature relationships. Ultimately "nature and the natural environment are social constructs" (Clayton & Myers, 2009, p. 15). Outdoor leaders are a critical element to helping define and describe the natural world.

Human needs.

Awareness and acknowledgement of the human need for belonging is critical for outdoor leaders to understand. How can one effectively lead people without understanding and

facilitating their needs? Also of concern is whether outdoor leaders factor participant needs into their decision-making processes. The human need to belong must be explicitly explained within adventure education and textbooks devoted to outdoor leadership. Supporting this assertion, Raiola (2003) wrote, "One of the most critical tasks of a leader in adventure education is to assist the individual and group in defining needs, and encourage people to make choices about those needs" (p. 51). Raiola (2003) did not explicitly state what these needs are, but for a therapeutic outdoor leader, the human need for intrapersonal insight, belongingness, and for a relationship with nature should be at the forefront. Because these needs are central to human life, outdoor leaders need to recognize, attend to, and devote time and activities for facilitating participant relationships with the natural world in addition to themselves and their social community.

It would be prudent for outdoor leaders to be cognizant of human needs and motivations, particularly those addressable by outdoor programming. This is the first step in facilitating and supporting well-being. A therapeutic outdoor leader initiates her or his leadership from this knowledge along with a commitment to the relational development of their participants. Kosseff (2010) noted that participant willingness and motivation for task accomplishment is influenced by "the extent to which their needs are being met" (p. 88), and that people usually focus on their unmet needs. The identification of humans' relational needs is central to this thesis. Survey respondents were asked to speculate about the needs of the people they lead, in relationships specifically, and motivational needs in general (Figure 2). In order of highest perceived relational need, outdoor leaders believe participants need relationships with themselves, with others, and then with nature. Because the two grounding theories of this paper are ecopsychology and the belongingness hypothesis, it appears that this subject matter is

underrepresented in leadership training as reflected in these two needs being of secondary and tertiary importance.

Fulfilling human needs is elemental to facilitating personal growth. Therefore, if outdoor leaders are committed to supporting the well-being of participants they lead, they must be knowledgeable of universal human needs, able to assess the changing needs of those they lead, and proactively facilitate activities and discussions, while using their knowledge and skills to help individuals meet needs that will strengthen their self-concept. It is imperative that outdoor leaders be cognizant of basic (and some advanced) knowledge related to addressing issues of human development and well-being and possess the skills to manage group dynamics, regulate their own emotions, effectively communicate, and proficiently facilitate. Noteworthy among various theories, and keenly relevant to outdoor programming are universal human needs, which have been postulated in numerous motivational/psychological theories of human behavior. Additionally, Ryan and Deci's (2000) SDT identifies three needs essential to human well-being: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. All three of these can and are addressed by outdoor programming.

Emotional Risk Management

Risk management skills are acquired through training, education, and previous experiences. If outdoor leaders receive training or education about factors relevant to psychological well-being, they will be better able to manage risk in several arenas of human experience. Prouty et al. (2007) explained that risk includes the potential exposure to physical and/or emotional trauma. Linking this definition to relational leadership, they believe "physical and emotional safety...depends very much on relationships" (p. 58). Supporting the ideas of Ringer and Gillis (1995, 1998), Raynolds (2007) cautions leaders to avoid forcing conversations or eliciting deep emotions, as these can actually alienate leaders from their participants.

Outdoor leaders, responding to this survey, manage emotional risk in their groups through their development and shaping of group culture, through setting norms, setting behavioral expectations, building group unity and support, and encouraging open and honest communication. Leaders model desired behaviors such as communication and appropriate emotional expression. One scenario used to assess leaders' emotional risk management skills involved the question, "under what circumstances would you refer a participant to a therapist?" Responses indicate a clear awareness of the seriousness of participants being a danger to themselves and others, as well as making referrals when presenting issues exceed the leaders' skillset. Additionally, leaders stated that when an individual negatively affects a group, or safety is compromised, that it's time to take action.

Regarding activities intended to transfer learning or acknowledge personal growth, Levine (1994) wrote, "it is not helpful to provide a major transformative event for someone and then send her back to her life without adequate processing" (p. 181). Her assertion accentuates the need for leaders to be therapeutic in intent and practice when using metaphors and/or trying to transfer learning from adventure programming to their home lives. Paralleling Levine's contention, Bell (2003) discusses the limitations of wilderness-based rites of passage when participants' home communities do not honor or acknowledge their transition and growth. These two thoughts should remind leaders that emotional safety endures after outdoor experiences end.

Table 5 shows the perceived rates of outdoor program participants with mental health issues. This survey is unable to overlay specific training (academic or OTJ) with the mental health and life issues that outdoor program participants possess. Knowledge about specific psychological conditions is necessary to effectively manage emotional risks. Future studies should refine training topics into narrower subjects to investigate if outdoor leaders are receiving

training to address emotional or behavioral issues actually exhibited by outdoor program participants they serve. This may be most effective when looking at characteristics of program participants based upon WEP type.

Self-Awareness

The concept of self-awareness was not specifically examined in this survey, however, this topic is integral to effective and therapeutic outdoor leadership. Bunting (1991) believed leaders should be introduced to the concept of self-examination. Supporting the underpinnings of therapeutic outdoor leadership, Kosseff (2010) identified three realms leaders should be aware of: themselves, their group, and the environment.

Ringer (1999) described the essential role of leader self-awareness as it pertains to leading others:

> awareness of what is happening in the group is derived directly from the group leader's awareness of his or her own emotional/intuitive state because that provides the information about what is occurring at an unconscious level in the group. In other words, the group leader's own emotional state is inextricably linked with the emotional 'field' that exists in the group. (p. 16)

Through self-reflection, facilitators can exhibit authenticity, presence, and manage their own reactions to participants (Thomas, 2008). Kosseff (2010) identified two foci for leader self-awareness: one's emotional and physical state-in the moment-which is ever in flux, and one's "competencies, weaknesses, fears, motivations, and biases" (p. 55). Additionally, he discussed how self-awareness can reinforce or undermine participant trust in their leaders, as well as potentially put participants of risk, such as when a leader is physically or mentally exhausted. In other words, self-awareness can lead to self-care. Ringer (1999) noted that due to the subjective element of leaders making assessments based upon their own "implicit patterns of perceiving and

making meaning from life events" (p. 2), a leader's subjective assessment of a group may be flawed. Kosseff (2010) highlighed an important reality in outdoor programming, "never forget that many people are not comfortable in the outdoors and don't know how they should feel or behave" (p. 55). Simply considering participants' motivational and relational needs can guide a leader's implementation of programming, which then influences their decision-making towards supporting the therapeutic needs of participants, instead of a steadfast emphasis on risk management. These assertions requires outdoor leaders to be cognizant of individual perceptions and experiences, which ultimately better prepare outdoor leaders in nurturing participant well-being.

Advancing Outdoor Leaders' Personal Growth

Conger (as cited in Sadri, 2012) identified four approaches to leadership development "personal development, conceptual understanding, feedback and skill building" (p. 541). Sadri (2012) stated that activities emphasizing personal growth help people reconnect with their values, talents, and passions. The author believes that when outdoor leaders engage in their own personal growth they are better able to facilitate growth in others. Bunting (1991) believed that "interpersonal effectiveness" should be integral to training outdoor leaders. Thomas (2008) believed that in order for facilitators to be fully aware of group processes they need to do their own "innerwork." Just as outdoor leaders' career paths most likely started with being a participant, Thomas (2011) suggested that outdoor leaders may advance their developmental journey by engaging in personal psychotherapeutic sessions with qualified practitioners. Additionally, tools that help outdoor leaders develop professionally, particularly with a relational framework of leadership, could advance the field of outdoor leadership.

Technical Training Needs for Relational Leaders

Sequencing activities.

The concept of sequencing activities, which is a mainstay of experiential education, is well-rooted in outdoor programming. Bisson (1999) conducted doctoral research into activity sequencing for groups. He identified a sequence of eight categories of adventure activities. Four are relevant to working relationally as a therapeutic leader: acquaintance activities, de-inhibitizer activities, communication activities, and trust activities. This activity sequence establishes a framework for building trust and rapport with participants, resulting in well-being, and is congruent with discussions of managing psychological depth. Prouty et al. (2007) stated that "personal growth most commonly occurs through a skillfully designed adventure education curriculum with trained and experienced leaders" (p. 29). Relating outdoor education practices to therapy, Tucker and Norton (2009) claimed that successful adventure therapy involves a clinician selecting and processing activities participants engage in, plus the ability to manage physical and emotional safety. They concluded that successful outcomes are contingent on activity selection and processing. Exploring this topic is beyond the intention of this survey; however, this research has explored and emphasized the concepts of self-efficacy and locus of control. Knowledge of these concepts should inform therapeutic practice: including activity selection, foundations for processing, and providing feedback to participants.

Ceremonies and rituals.

This study asserts that participants' needs can be met, or undermined, by outdoor leaders, and one method for meeting their needs is through the use of rituals. Respondents were asked if they facilitated ceremonies or rituals for their participants. The 66 leaders (71.7%) who answered yes were asked to elaborate, however the majority of their responses only yielded basic information, and were not answered or worded in a way to allow a comprehensive examination

of contemporary field practice. Despite a lack of detail, several specific rituals were identified in Table 12. The most commonly referenced rituals involve solo experiences or rites of passage, closing/graduation ceremonies, program transitions, honoring participant growth, and a variety of rituals that are inherent to daily routines or programming routine. When sharing why they facilitate rituals, one respondent wrote, "The intention in each of these is to connect the campers more directly into their outdoor experience." Another theme is ceremony used to affirm participants, both during programs and also at their conclusion (such as graduations). Rituals were reviewed to determine if they foster relationship development across intra, inter, and transpersonal domains (Table 13).

Wilderness solos.

Because solos and rites of passage were the most frequently facilitated ceremony, it is worthwhile to elaborate on this. Angell (1994) described several types of wilderness solos: the Vision Quest, the reflective solo, the survival skills solo, and self-imposed isolation in wilderness. Of relevance to this paper are leader-facilitated solos. However, Bobilya (2005) pointed out that solos that are voluntarily chosen have prove to be more productive than those mandated upon people. Knapp (2005) discussed several roles of a solo facilitator: briefing and debriefing solo experiences and helping participants with meaning making. The process of meaning-making can be enhanced when leaders are cognizant of concepts relevant to relationship development as outlined in this thesis. One rationale for using solo experiences is the reality that people in industrial cultures spend very little time alone, where distractions from self are ever present. McKenzie (2003), researching outcomes for Outward Bound Western Canada found that solo opportunities provide participants with time for reflection. Additionally, a "solo provides individuals the opportunity to break away from the intensity of group dynamics

and the constant influence of participant attitudes and moods. This allows the individual to change his/her personal attitude and mood" (Quinn, 2005, p. 193). Participants of solo experiences acknowledge benefits such as increased trust in one's self, self-acceptance, improved sense of purpose, increased self-reliance and self-confidence, increased maturity, an increase in caring and acceptance, and a sense of responsibility to care for others and the larger community (Bodkin & Sartor, 2005). Thus, judiciously facilitating ceremonies or rituals can foster participant well-being.

The use of metaphors.

Metaphor use in adventure programming has been addressed in the literature for many decades. Outdoor leaders were asked about a specific framing of metaphors: those that involve the natural world. This number of outdoor leaders who craft such metaphors was very high (71 respondents, 78.3% of all leaders). The percentage is very close to the number of outdoor leaders who have studied biology or a related field (67 respondents, 72.8% of leaders). The author believes that outdoor leaders with greater knowledge of the natural world would be better able to craft appropriate and meaningful nature-based metaphors to foster personal growth. In agreement is Shapiro (1995) who asserted, "A skilled facilitator can increase metaphorical learning through weaving relevant scientific information into stories" (p. 234). The elements of metaphors help individuals find meaning, and these insights contribute to a rewriting of one's personal narrative. Tying the use of metaphors to leadership, Cunliffe and Erikson (2011) wrote, "Relational leaders see communication...as a way of working out what is meaningful and possible" (p. 1434). Baker (2005) discussed how outdoor gear and gadgets and even maps can distract participants from an engagement and awareness of the land. These moments of distractibility can prove timely to introduce metaphors that actually connect participants with the

natural world. Using natural consequences for teaching lessons in outdoor programming is common practice. The author wonders if the use of natural and logical consequences by outdoor leaders is a basis for metaphoric transfer of learning.

Implications for Practice: Developing Relationships with Self, Community, and the Natural World

This thesis frames outdoor leadership in relational terms, comprised of three interrelated, yet equally important relationships intrinsic to outdoor programming: with self, with community, and with nature.

To be Therapeutic

Relationships meet the human need for belonging, whether they are inspiring and supportive, or destructive. When outdoor leaders actively facilitation relationships for their participants, they are in fact being therapeutic. Why then does a program such as Outward Bound claim that their programming is not therapeutic? They assert that because their instructors are not trained counselors, their programming is not therapeutic (Raynolds, 2007). Yet this contradicts Chase (1981), who identified the following Outward Bound goals (which this author considers therapeutic): increase in self-esteem, movement toward an internal locus of control, compassion, cooperation and independence, increased sense of responsibility for self, others and society, improved awareness of dysfunctional behaviors, appropriate expression of human reactions, and increase in trust. Again, there seems to be confusion about the distinction between therapy and being therapeutic, even at one of the best known outdoor programs in the United States. Even Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) muddy this point when they describe "therapeutic wilderness programming" when meaning to discuss wilderness-based therapy programming. And again they wrote, "Despite the fact that these [early 20th century] camps

were not decidedly therapeutic, they did attempt to facilitate personal growth among their campers" (p. 194). Again, to be therapeutic simply means to contribute to the well-being or personal growth of others.

Fostering Relationships with Self

Communicating via metaphors, providing time for introspection, perceiving participants' needs, and helping participants make meaning from their experiences are essential to nurturing intrapersonal relationships. Ryan and Deci (2000) found, "contexts supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were found to foster greater internalization and integration than context that thwart satisfaction of these needs" (p. 76), which "is of great significance for individuals who wish to motivate others in a way the engenders commitment, effort, and high-quality performance" (p. 76). Ninety-eight percent of outdoor leaders believe it is either very important or important to allow participants time for introspection. Introspection is useful in the prediction, control, and modification of future behaviors (Lieberman, 1979), and Jäkel and Schreiber (2013) link introspective processes to successful problem solving. Supporting the importance and need for personal introspection, 63% of outdoor leaders believe the most important relationship for participants is an intrapersonal one. Combined together, these two ideas reinforce the idea that adventure programming is person-centered in its emphasis upon the individual experience. The question then arises, what skills and knowledge do outdoor leaders possess to foster intrapersonal relationships?

Ringer (1999) stated leaders help "group members in the process of managing their internal/emotional worlds" (p. 15). As mentioned when discussing solos, Knapp (2005) made reference to the role of outdoor leaders to help participants make meaning out of their experiences. Martin et al. (2006) stated that learning is transferred when leaders bring attention

to similarities and/or differences. This provides a rationale for using metaphors as a tool to link outdoor experiences with front country lives. Seventy-eight percent of outdoor leaders acknowledged using metaphors that involve the natural world with their participants. Five respondents indicated the metaphors they use are participant specific, and several acknowledged they use metaphors as a tool in learning transfer.

Gass et al. (2012) discussed the philosophical orientation of a wilderness therapy program, Soltreks. This program's primary intention is fostering personal growth and change by: limiting distractions, separating individuals from familiar/habitual environments and negative influences, providing a structured daily routine that require accountability, operating in small groups, progressively moving through phases, individual and group therapy, providing skills and tools for effective relationships, and a focusing on relationship with self and family. In reviewing these key practices, the goal of fostering intrapersonal development and insight is achieved by placing individuals in nature for an extended time with less distractions (physically and socially). The development of an intrapersonal relationship, occurring in nature, is an overt goal of therapeutic outdoor leadership.

Not all research has demonstrated that outdoor programming has positive effects upon self-concept. Sheard and Golby (2007) studied the effects of outdoor adventure education on positive psychological developments, including self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive affectivity, mental toughness, hardiness, and dispositional optimism. They write, "contrary to hypothesized expectations, activities with an OAE curriculum, conducted over a three-month timeframe, failed to significantly raise participants' levels of measured positive psychological constructs" (p. 203). This finding supports the ongoing need to ascertain outdoor programming influences upon self-

concept constructs, as well as the need to identify which program components influence self-concept.

Fostering Relationships with Community

Baumeister and Leary (1995) proposed that "people need frequent personal contacts or interactions with…other people," and that "people need to perceive…stability [and] affective concern" in the context of long-term interpersonal relationships (p. 500). Outdoor leaders caring for participants, and creating caring group cultures, can fulfill a basic human need. Survey respondents indicated they encourage emotional safety by creating positive and accepting group cultures. McKenzie (2003) found, "working as a group, interacting with [and]...relying on other group members, taking care of others, and trying new behaviors in the group setting can increase students' self-awareness, self-confidence, motivation, interpersonal skills, concern for others, and concern for the environment" (p.19). When asked what outdoor leaders would do with an isolating participant, a number of leaders described how they would get group members involved. This action is fortified by Teo et al. (2013), who found that quality social relationships can mitigate risks of major depression episodes in adults.

"Leadership...must focus on benefitting the group" (Kosseff, 2010, p. 85). Outdoor programming begins with a group, working in nature, which produces individual experiences. Some leaders indicated that working with, and connecting with people is a reason they work as outdoor leaders. When considering the relational needs of program participants, outdoor leaders believed that interpersonal relationships is secondary to intrapersonal relationships, but more important than human-nature relationships.

The concept of group and emotional safety is elementary to outdoor programming. Prouty et al. (2007) stated, "Building a community is a personal matter because we must trust

others with our personal and psychological safety" (p. 5). Discussing the benefits of a safe group environment, Priest and Gass (2005) wrote, "Client investment in the group and willingness to change stem from a safe and supportive atmosphere" (p. 198). In this survey, outdoor leaders primarily defined emotional safety as safe self-expression (including emotions) and inclusivity/group support. This indicates that leaders are attuned to interpersonal relationships. Additionally when leaders were asked how they create a safe environment for participants, result demonstrated that they primarily do this by shaping group culture. Plante, Lackey, and Hwang (2009) found that college students participating in an immersive community-based learning experience increased the level of empathy of students. This finding hints that a course framed around learning, and well facilitated by leaders, can increase empathy abilities of participants. And, "when conditions of empathy are met, change is more likely to occur" (Gass et al., 2012, p. 86). Thus, therapeutic outdoor leaders foster growth through their management of group dynamics, a topic that nearly 70% of leaders are trained in on the job. Breunig et al. (2005) wrote, "the importance of shared emotional connections, as well as the integration and fulfillment of needs [are] key determinants of psychological sense of community" (p. 260). This statement is aligned with therapeutic outdoor leaderships' emphasis on meeting core human needs.

Eys, Ritchie, Little, Slade, and Oddson (2008) explored how participants' status (including assessment of one's own within a group, and by being assessed by fellow participants) is associated with perceptions of group cohesion. They found that there is a relationship between group cohesion perceptions and status perceptions. Also, when group members with a higher status were in formal leadership positions, there was a perception of greater group cohesion (Eys et al., 2008). Furthermore, outdoor leaders can facilitate greater group cohesion by educating

participants about the determinants of group status and an awareness of leadership status (Eys et al., 2008). Also, trust levels may be undermined when an individual's assessment of their status in a group is higher than their peers perceive it to be. "Consciously and actively fostering and attending to the group's cohesion seems to be a valuable and viable way that instructors can make adventure programs more beneficial to participants" (Sibthorp et al., 2007, p. 15).

One finding of this study is that rituals are specifically used to foster interpersonal relationships. The most common examples of community building types of rituals are graduation/closing ceremonies, which were described by 15 leaders (16.3%). Other rituals that may be used to build group culture have been categorized as rituals as part of the routine or daily programming, but their descriptions were not specific enough to determine leader intentions.

Breunig et al. (2008) highlighted the value of leaders encouraging community building through group social structures. These researchers identified several primary factors in increasing a sense of community: leadership styles, a variety of factors (group activities, physical challenge, food, debriefs, etc.), the post-trip experience, group composition, and each participant's individual contributions.

Fostering Relationships with Nature

Clayton and Myers (2009) described how conservation psychology actively seeks to promote a sustainable and healthy relationship between nature and humans, and that "promoting human welfare requires awareness of how intimately connected it is to the natural environment" (p. 3). The goal of conservation psychology is aligned with the explicit goals of outdoor education, and some of the personal intentions of outdoor leaders taking this survey. In addition, outdoor leaders, when explaining why they work as such, identified a desire to connect people with nature, for conservation, and less specific reasons. Richardson and Simmons (1996)

asserted, "outdoor leaders should have the knowledge and skills they need to awaken in students an environmental sensitivity or appreciation" (p.4). The desires by outdoor leaders to connect outdoor program participants to nature require specific skills and knowledge. The question is, do they have the knowledge and skills to foster participants' relationship with nature?

This survey found that nearly 95% of respondents believe that human health is related to the integrity of the natural world, 91% claim to actively facilitate relationships between participants and the natural environment, and nearly 78% state they use metaphors involving the natural world, yet leaders' lack of knowledge of pertinent environmental psychology constructs is noteworthy (refer to Table 16). When survey respondents were asked why they chose to work as outdoor leaders, some indicated it was to connect people to the natural world in general, while some identified their desire to develop conservation and stewardship minded participants. Three conceptual indices: ecopsychology, conservation psychology, and the biophilia hypothesis, indicate knowledge limitations that may inhibit outdoor leaders from effectively nurturing human-nature relationships. Berns and Simpson (2009) analyzed studies researching the connection between participation and environmental concern and found conflicting data; however, when looking at the sum of the research there does appear to be a link between outdoor recreation and environmental attitudes, but "the aspects of the recreation experience that are specifically linked to environmental concern remain unclear" (p. 88).

Martin et al. (2006) stated the goal of environmental education addresses the relationship between humans and the natural world by highlighting interdependencies by increasing awareness and sensitivity to them. Martin (2004) has noticed that outdoor education is changing from an emphasis on individual and group development to exploring the relationships between

humans and nature. Kahn (1999) describes how the human-nature relationship requires self-awareness:

> In fostering the human relationship with nature we need to pay attention not only to nature but to human nature—and it is deeply within our nature to use our intellects to construct increasingly sophisticated ideas, and to depend on them, physically and psychologically. (Kahn, 1999, p. 226)

When outdoor leaders are knowledgeable about the benefits of human-nature relationships, they can share this knowledge and facilitate various activities to intentionally foster this relationship. Mitten (2009) proposed a blending of environmental education and outdoor leadership in which leaders learn about contributions to human well-being from the natural world. Sharing knowledge about the benefits of nature is one way to transfer learning from the backcountry to participants' home lives. Table 17 is a comparison between empirical findings of benefits derived from nature, and the benefits survey participants believe it provides.

Table 17

Comparison of Substantiated and Assumed Benefits of Nature

Authors	Empirical benefits	Assumed benefits by outdoor leaders
Kaplan, 1995; Wells, 2000, Berto, 2005; Taylor & Kuo, 2009	Attentional improvements	Reduced mental distractions-12 Mindfulness related/being present-4 Improves ADHD-1
Kahn, 1999; Ulrich, 1991; Parsons et al., 1998; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989	Stress reduction	Stress reduction-14 Relaxation/calming effect-10 Fights anxiety-4
Shin et al., 2011; Berman et al., 2012	Affective improvements	General emotional benefits-7 Fights depression-3
Shin et al., 2011; Berman et al., 2008; Berman et al., 2012	Cognitive improvements	increased creativity-5 Opportunities for learning-4
Williams & Harvey, 2001; Terhaar, 2009; D'Amato, L.G. & Krasny, M.E., 2011	Transcendent experiences	Connection with something larger than self-22 Spirituality-7 Personal accomplishment-6 Awe Inspiring-3
Hansen-Ketchum et al., 2009	Sense of community	Social benefits-16
Herzog, T.R., Black, A.M, Fountaine, K.A., & Knotts D.J. (1997)	Self-reflection and self-knowledge	Personal insight/growth-27 Personal reflection-9
Bowler et al. 2010	Environment as setting for physical activity	Physical fitness related-28
D'Amato, L.G. & Krasny, M.E., 2011	Development of pro-environmental attitudes	Conservation related-7 Respect for natural world-6

Reviewing the mental health and life characteristics of outdoor program participants (Table 5), it is clear that many suffer from conditions that can be ameliorated through contact with nature, especially the most prevalent conditions: ADHD, depression, and anxiety. Consistent with research findings, survey respondents believe nature can improve attentional abilities, improve depression and anxiety issues.

Not only is knowledge of the benefits of the human-nature relationship important for outdoor leaders, but so are the skills required to facilitate this relationship. Various techniques are used to foster a closer bond with the natural world. A limitation of this study is that skills

and activities used to stimulate human-nature relationships were not assessed in any depth. Gass et al. (2012) reported that adventure therapy programs and therapists prohibit the possession of watches, in order for clients to practice being present in the moment. The author's experience in wilderness therapy found this to be a common practice. However, it was part of a larger concept of not providing future information. There is value in facilitating a more basic relationship with biorhythms, sans technology, but success is more likely to be achieved by how such practices are framed. Reducing dependence on technology, and increasing an emphasis on an individual's own perceptions, is one method to facilitating intrapersonal relationships. In this example, the natural environment may catalyzes intrapersonal insight.

The lack of emphasis upon the human-nature relationship in outdoor programming literature has been increasingly criticized (Beringer & Martin, 2003; Taylor et al., 2010). Results from this thesis research have noted a discrepancy between the believed intention of outdoor leaders and their education and training. For example, 91% of respondents claim they actively facilitate relationships between participants and nature, yet only 33.7% of outdoor leaders selected the author's definition of outdoor leadership that includes fostering participant relationships with the natural world. A strong majority of respondents (72.8%) have studied biology or a related field, yet only 42% of respondents were familiar with ecopsychology, and only 11% of respondents receive employer training in ecopsychology. Only 24% receive training in environmental philosophy, while twice as many (48%) receive training in environmental ethics. Yet, outdoor leaders are still fostering human-nature relationships, consistent with Sibthorp, Furman, Paisley, Gookin, and Schumann (2011) who found that instructors were very influential in fostering appreciation of nature in NOLS students. In this thesis survey, the two most consistent methods and rituals leaders use include teaching

environmental education and natural history, and providing opportunities for solitude and facilitating solos.

Leave No Trace (LNT) is a widely known and taught outdoor practice, and eleven respondents (12%) indicated they use leave LNT to promote participant-nature relationships. However, is this an effective way to foster relationships between people and nature? Moskowitz and Ottey (2006) critique LNT on several accounts. Relevant to this thesis, they asserted LNT "encourages wilderness visitors to view the natural world as an environment in which humans do not belong, disconnecting them from the landscape" (p. 16). This author agrees that the LNT pedagogy may hinder the human-nature relationship. Primarily, when immersion in nature is relegated to the visual realm, and people are prohibited from touching or harvesting wild materials, the human-nature connection may be compromised, disconnecting humans from their evolutionary dependence on the natural world. Some wilderness experience programs, particularly wilderness therapy and survival schools, foster relationships with nature through the application of primitive technology via harvested materials from nature. Commenting on the disconnection that LNT may encourage, Kahn (1999) writes,

> In our relationship with nature, let us not drive a wedge between the intellect and experience. Rather, by embracing both...let us affirm what it means to be human in a world, if we choose wisely, of human goodness and natural splendor. (p. 227)

Finally, a shift is needed in viewing nature, as more than just a therapeutic context and as a therapeutic variable in and of itself. Only more recently has the discussion of experiential environments moved away from the generic label, "novel environment," and is now acknowledging the role of nature in adventure programming (Baker, 2005; Beringer, 2004; Mitten, 2004). The principle milieu for adventure education is land most often described as

wilderness. However, some authors, such as Baker (2005), are challenging this homogenous way of thinking about the land in which adventure education occurs. The natural environment is not simply a backdrop, but has the potential for profound connection and relationship development for participants. Baker (2005) forwarded a *landfull framework* for integrating wholistic environmental education into adventure-based programming. Although the particular elements are not totally relevant to this thesis project, the valuation of fostering relationship with the natural world is quite relevant. In essence, outdoor adventuring and learning are inseparable from the tenets of ecopsychology. It may be that contact and immersion in nature is paramount to human livelihood. A body of research supports the assertion that nature's power of influence is not due to its so-called "novel" characteristics; rather, it is due to intrinsic benefits and values for humans. Mitten (2009) states that many outdoor practitioners focus more on adventure and challenge, subsequently underestimating the intrinsic benefits of nature. Mitten claims that outdoor programming has substituted doing things in nature for being in nature. This distinction supports the author's belief that outdoor programming needs to clearly delineate (as much as possible) adventure-based programming from nature-based programming. The first category includes an orientation towards challenge and physical embodiment, while the latter type of programming is more specific to emotional, cognitive, and possibly spiritual embodiment.

Relating the human need for fun and the value of human-nature relationships, Martin (2004) wrote:

> Outdoor education, which seeks to promote a positive relationship with nature needs to carefully monitor student learning and ensure that students are coping with the demands imposed by the activity and/or environment. Enjoying a relationship, or having fun,

> remains as important a part of a human/nature relationship as it is in a human-to-human relationship. (p. 26)

Wilderness solos are an activity that can foster dual relationships with self and nature, and survey answers indicated this is a widespread practice. "Allowing participants quiet time to engage in 'mindfulness' of their own thoughts and sensations and just experiencing nature without focus may be a vital and underutilized component of processing and integrating change following disequilibrium" (Taylor, Segal, & Harper, 2010, p. 81). Participants in solo experiences acknowledge benefits such as increased connection with the natural world, conservation desires, a desire to spend more time in nature, and in interest in healing the natural world (Bodkin & Sartor, 2005), which some outdoor leaders also believe. Intention is an important consideration when facilitating solos. Benefits included intrapersonal growth, but also connection with nature. How leaders frontload a solo may affect the outcomes of the experience.

Martin (2004) found that in the undergraduate outdoor education courses he taught in Australia, students' connection to and care for nature increased. He found two notable influences for this: language abilities and comfort and competence in outdoor settings. However, he noted that science-based language did not contribute to students' abilities to communicate their feelings about nature. Furthermore, it is direct experiences in nature that are foundational to developing a relationship with nature. Martin asks if technical outdoor activities, such as rock climbing, foster relationships with nature? He found that adventurous activities build relationships with nature. As an example, he found participants who engaged in rock climbing repeatedly visited the same location-which developed connections over time. Martin (2004) argued "adventure activities are a powerful medium to elicit emotional connections to the natural world" (p. 27).

An Emerging Model: Therapeutic Outdoor Leadership

Priest and Gass (2005) explained that outdoor education emphasizes relationships between people and natural resources, while adventure education is primarily concerned with intra and interpersonal relationships. More specifically, adventure education addresses intrapersonal relationships, including self-concept, self-efficacy, spirituality, and confidence (Priest, 1999), while "adventure programming is the deliberate use of adventurous experiences to create learning in individuals or groups, that results in change for society and communities" (Priest, 1999, p. xiii). Martin et al. (2006) wrote, "one of the primary goals of outdoor leadership is to serve as a source of transformation in the lives of people" (p. xiv), moreover they asserted, "the fundamental premise for providing adventure services is the fact that participants grow and become better people as a result of participation" (p. 128). In summarizing the definitions of outdoor education and adventure education, it is clear that the intent of these endeavors is to improve the well-being of individuals through a group process, operating in nature, which produce outcomes at the individual level. This author believes these statements can be framed by the concept: therapeutic outdoor leadership. When one describes therapeutic outdoor leadership, the end goal is specified: healing and improved well-being conducted in both an ethical and professional manner. Not only does outdoor leadership literature describes therapeutic functions and goals, but outdoor leaders taking this survey define outdoor leadership to be relationally oriented to personal growth of program participants.

The literature review in Chapter 2 clearly recognizes humans' need for relationships, how this need can be meet in adventure programming, and the correlation between positive leader-participant relationships with positive outdoor programming outcomes. When leadership is preceded by the term outdoor, it is clear where the leadership occurs. When the word therapeutic

precedes both of these terms, the primary intention of the outdoor leader is clear. Therapeutic outdoor leadership promotes mindfulness amongst outdoor leaders towards an understanding of the essential human need for relationships, and the intentionality of fostering and creating relationships for participants, with themselves, with others, and with nature, towards the goal of improving participant well-being. Participant well-being and personal growth can be enhanced through knowledge of therapeutic and psychological concepts, along with the implementation of non-clinical therapeutic skills involved in fostering therapeutic, healthy, and affirming relationships. It seems clear that therapeutic outdoor leaders can work in a variety of WEPs, but that their level of depth, areas of focus, or depth of impact will vary depending on their program type. As an example, one could function as a therapeutic outdoor leader at a recreation program, but what manifests as therapeutic leadership will look and feel different than a therapeutic leader working with the same participants for 50 consecutive days.

After accepting the concept of therapeutic outdoor leadership, the next question is, how do outdoor leaders foster well-being in those they lead? It seems imperative that outdoor leaders be cognizant of factors that may influence behaviors during outdoor programming activities and processing, as well as responding appropriately and professionally to varied participant behaviors. Effective leaders mobilize and connect with those they lead. Leadership education and training needs to move away from content and instead emphasize intention: from teaching lessons, to addressing human needs. However, the intentional task of nurturing well-being in outdoor participants could benefit through the distinction of using adventure versus nature focused programming, even those these orientations are wholly indivisible. Therapeutic outdoor leadership begins with an intention: to support the well-being of those being lead. The intention to foster well-being in others, through relationship formation in three realms, is a conscious

influence upon leaders' decision-making processes. They are cognizant of the therapeutic benefits of people having relationships with themselves, with others, and with the natural world, and they have the skills and knowledge to both initiate these therapeutic relationships as well as build them, resulting in improved well-being.

Priest and Gass (2005) highlighted seven ethical guidelines outlined by the Association for Experiential Education: concern, integrity, respect, competence, objectivity, recognition, and responsibility. These ethical guidelines can inform the practice of therapeutic outdoor leadership. Priest and Gass (2005) explained how outdoor leaders should be sensitive to client needs and conduct activities and experiences while regarding participant well-being. Martin et al. (2006) wrote, "the goals of outdoor education are twofold: to create opportunities for personal and interpersonal growth and to create opportunities for people to learn about the natural environment" (p. 12).

There are numerous definitions that distinguish between "doing" therapy and "being" therapeutic. This professional distinction may need better clarification in outdoor education programs. This would fit well when discussing outdoor leaders' scope of practice. This author contends that any program (or leader) that seeks to build character, improve self-concept, or encourages personal growth or reflection, is fundamentally being therapeutic. Relational leadership is inherently a moral process, further supporting the construct of therapeutic outdoor leadership, where leaders focus on participants' well-being. Results from this survey suggest that outdoor leaders, even those who would not describe themselves as therapeutic, are committed to, and contributing to, the well-being of those they lead, through the nurturance of intra, inter, and transpersonal relationships. In essence, therapeutic outdoor leaders are already working across the WEP spectrum. Furthermore, when asked to select a definition of outdoor

leader, leaders define leadership to be therapeutic and relationally oriented. It is time that this philosophical orientation be named and acknowledged.

As Graham (1997) pointed out, leadership is not reserved for a select few, rather "it's a continuum of abilities, with all of us leaders-in-training" (p. 12). Relating this to being therapeutic, the depth of healing can range from creating group inclusivity to addressing significant maladaptive behaviors, and the ability to serve others is contingent on training, education, and abilities. This thesis asserts that outdoor leaderships training and education should focus on an intention of serving outdoor participants by actively fostering and facilitating their well-being through the meeting of fundamental human needs, which is accomplished through relationship development with self, others, and the natural world. Brown (2008) wrote, "we [in adventure education] tend to draw on some foundational texts that have not been critically examined, are repeatedly referenced, and through which the field continues to perpetuate taken-for-granted assumptions as defining principles of adventure education theory and practice" (p. 10).

This thesis adds to a growing number of voices that maintain outdoor leadership needs to be person-centered, relationally oriented, and intentional about connecting participants to the natural world. The reality of outdoor programming is that individual experiences are rooted in both social and natural environments. To truly maximize the transfer of learning and gaining of experiences, outdoor leaders need to foster intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal relationships. More specifically, the results of this research indicate that outdoor leaders do not have sufficient knowledge to maximize activities in nature to manifest known benefits from contact and immersion in nature, nor do leaders understand the ideas of self-efficacy and locus of

control, which are foundational to actually influence personal insight and growth in participants, which is the basic definition of adventure education.

The most obvious application of the findings in this survey is for employers and outdoor programs. Program managers and staff trainers can look at their programmatic goals and mission, and then ascertain if their field staff have the requisite knowledge and skills required to meet their programmatic goals.

Limitations

Unfortunately, the survey utilized in this study was not comprehensive enough to survey respondents regarding all the knowledge and techniques authors and researchers have suggested outdoor leaders possess for nurturing outdoor program participant's personal growth. Also, open ended questions did not elicit a significant amount of descriptive answers for many questions. The major limitation of this survey is the descriptive methodology that does not include an analytic analysis of survey data. This prevents a calculation of effect size, statistical significance of findings, and generalizability of the findings. Also, a survey such as this would yield more substantive results if participant numbers were significantly greater.

Other limitations pertain to specific question wording and formats. Several questions were poorly worded, not explicit enough, or allowed the selection of more than one answer, and therefore did not yield discrete or useable data. For example, when asking outdoor leaders to identify the type of WEP they work for, respondents could select more than one. This meant answers from leaders working for different types of programs could not be compared. Furthermore, the representation of outdoor leaders working in therapeutic, wilderness, or adventure therapy programs is probably underrepresented, and had more such outdoor leaders been surveyed, the aggregate results may prove different. Respondents were asked to identify

boundaries outdoor leaders should be mindful of when working with participants. In reviewing the answers to this question, it appears this question could have been better worded. Many answers were unable to be coded and/or their meaning was unascertainable. One question asked respondents to select the correct sequences of the four factors contributing to self-efficacy in order of their influence. Of the options presented, there were only two answers that correctly sequenced past performance accomplishments first. Self-efficacy research has been unable to determine a universal ranking of influences affecting self-efficacy beliefs, therefore this was a poor question. Several questions asked respondents about their familiarity with terms such as the biophilia hypothesis, ecopsychology, and conservation psychology. Respondents could elaborate, but due to these vague instructions, narrative responses were not very informative. Therefore the depth and accuracy of conceptual understanding could not be determined. Additionally, two questions asked about the use of metaphors and rituals. These questions elicited a spectrum of answers, from descriptive to unintelligible. Answers to these questions could provide useful information about the specifics of how outdoor leaders create relationships between participants and the natural world. There has been much research into the general use of metaphors in outdoor programming, but fewer references to the execution of rituals and metaphors.

Another challenging aspect of this survey is its broad, yet topical exploration of therapeutic knowledge and skills. This study could have been broken into fewer research projects, better able to probe the extent of knowledge and application of therapeutic skills. Lastly, the high number of questions may have deterred respondents from providing more information to open ended questions. Several responses, on multiple questions reported the respondent was too tired to elaborate.

Areas for Future Research

This thesis was a very broad and topical investigation of the knowledge and skills outdoor leaders have and use that might foster well-being and relationship development for outdoor participants. Because of its breadth, most topics could be studied more in-depth by future research, particularly through observational research in the field, as opposed to self-reporting surveys.

The issue of program duration as a factor in outdoor programming affecting program outcomes has been voiced. Sibthorp et al.'s (2007) study supported previous research, which found that longer course lengths can have a greater impact on participant development. From a relational leadership perspective, course duration could be studied to ascertain how it effects relationship development, particularly across the domains of self, others, and the natural world. Future research could investigate how specific biogeographic locations affect humans' relational development. For example, how might deserts, high alpine, temperate rain forests, or aquatic environments affect intrapersonal development?

More research needs to delve into actual practices (skills) outdoor leaders use to facilitate relationships across intra, inter, and transpersonal domains. What facilitation strategies do therapeutic outdoor leaders use? This could include the use of specific language, metaphors, and rituals. Self-reported use of metaphors was not descriptive enough to determine outdoor leaders' intentions for using metaphors, beyond a general tool for facilitating transfer of learning. The use of metaphors is firmly engrained in outdoor programming literature, but how are metaphors used specifically for relational development? Future studies could explore how outdoor leaders' academic and professional training and life experience influence their creation and use of metaphors. Outdoor leaders described many non-specific activities, including various rituals

they use to foster relationships between people and the natural world. Future research may want to explore these activities in-depth to ascertain empirical outcomes and activity effectiveness for relational development. The survey question about feedback giving strategies was not comprehensive enough to examine outdoor leaders on all the variables and techniques authors and researchers have suggested they use when providing feedback. Future studies should attempt to reference other feedback components and elements when surveying this subject. When looking at trust development between outdoor leaders and participants, how can leaders build trust either faster or deeper by intentionally creating specific experiences? Do adventures deemed to have greater adversity advance trust development faster?

A large topic of exploration is the training and education of outdoor leaders. Future studies could look at college and university curriculum, and explore courses pertinent to relational leadership across intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal development. Similarly, employer provided training could be examined.

Finally, future research should determine what outdoor leadership training is most effective for working therapeutically with participants. Does training in ecopsychology or ecotherapy improve leaders' abilities to foster relationships between participants and nature? What training content can be borrowed from counselor education to develop rapport and facilitate groups? Referring back to Table 5, we see that a high number of outdoor program participants are perceived to have potentially life devitalizing issues. This may prove a fruitful line of inquiry into leader training programs. What are the actual mental health issues of outdoor participants and are outdoor leaders adequately trained to address and comfort the people they serve?

It is the author's hope that the data generated in this thesis can become fodder for more involved research looking at leader philosophies and skills and participant learning and therapeutic outcomes. The influences of outdoor leaders' values and rationales for working as outdoor leaders has been underexplored, particularly as it pertains to programmatic outcomes. As highlighted in this thesis, decision-making research and models have avoided exploring how leaders' values and intentions affect decision-making. Additionally, the influence of participants' therapeutic needs in decision-making has also been inadequately discussed or researched within outdoor programming.

When studying trust factors related to outdoor leaders, it may prove useful if future studies use the same traits or statements to allow direct study comparisons, i.e. instruments.

Noteworthy research has explored competencies and traits of effective leaders, but not from a therapeutic orientation. Future research could explore the traits and characteristics of leaders who are exemplars in nurturing relationships for their participants, including an examination of what can be learned from investigating therapeutic alliance.

Researching therapeutic outdoor leadership concepts and approaches should be examined across the wilderness experience program continuum, not just in therapeutic or wilderness or adventure therapy programs. But first the language used to describe WEP categories must be both sufficiently descriptive and consistently used. Relatedly, the fact that respondents listed multiple employer program types (i.e. adventure education, therapeutic, etc.) indicates that program missions may not align perfectly with WEP descriptors found in the literature. A common description of adventure program types includes recreational, educational, developmental, and therapeutic (Priest, 1999). Berman & Davis-Berman (2000) described other types of WEPs such as therapy, rehabilitation, leadership, growth, organizational development,

adventure therapy, personal growth, college orientation, and camping programs. Other program labels include enrichment and adjunctive. This author believes the descriptor "developmental program" may be misleading. As Miles and Priest (1999) described it, development "involves processes of growth like self-esteem and self-concept, and enhancement of group and team effectiveness" (p. 1). But in the context of psychology, human development is a specific construct pertaining to the physical, cognitive, and emotional-social development through the human lifespan. The author proposes a spectrum described by the following program types: entertainment, recreation, education (emphasizing the transfer of knowledge), therapeutic, and clinical. In reality, these titles primarily describe intended program outcomes. Therapeutic programs would include religious-based programs, equine assisted therapy, and "character-based curriculum." Prior to soliciting survey respondents, this author was unaware of the significant number of Christian colleges that offer outdoor leadership degrees. One respondent described their program type as Outdoor Ministry. This type of programming may be inadequately described in outdoor education literature and outdoor programming textbooks, and may be unique enough to distinguish as its own WEP type. In summation, whether WEPs intentionally or incidentally address personal growth issues, the facilitation of well-being and personal growth is a unifying thread that connects all WEPs (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2000).

Research is always conducted through a particular lens. An important distinction, and one not regularly made in outdoor programming research, is the difference between adventure-based programming and nature-based programming. The author believes this is a necessary endeavor to improve the specificity and quality of research related to outdoor programming. Of course there can be no comprehensive separation, but outdoor activities need to be better

described in order to better understand factors influencing program outcomes and those contributing to participant well-being.

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Appendix

An Assessment of Therapeutic Skills and Knowledge of Outdoor Leaders in the United States and Canada

1. What country do you work in?
2. What state or province do you work in?
3. What is your sex?:
    - Male
    - Female
    - Transgender
    - I prefer the following identifier:
4. What year were you born?
5. What is your ethnicity?
    - White
    - African American
    - Asian
    - Hispanic
    - Middle Eastern
    - Pacific Islander
    - Multiple races, other
6. In your outdoor leadership role, do you work:
    - Full-time
    - part-time
7. How many months have you worked out-of-doors, leading or guiding

participants? (A month includes both time you work in the field, plus your time off. For example, if you work 15 days at a time, with 13 days off, record this as one month.)

_____months

8. How many months have you served as supervisory outdoor staff? (This means you have primary responsibility for participants and co-staff, and also facilitate on-the-job training for newer staff.)
9. What is your current job title?
10. Who is your current employer. (When responding to subsequent questions, please answer in regards to this employer.)
11. Please identify the type of program you work for. (Select all applicable labels.)
    - Recreation ["Aimed at having fun, learning new activities, or becoming reenergized through adventure" (Priest & Gass, 2005).]
    - Education [These programs focus on teaching concepts, "enriching the knowledge of old concepts, or generating an awareness of previously unknown needs through adventure" (Priest & Gass, 2005).]
    - Adventure Education ["is a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary field that serves a variety of ends and audiences. These range from the simplest form of self-discovery learning...[to] corporate teambuilding, or therapeutic treatments. AE is a process-oriented approach to learning and discovering...among humans and between humans and the more-than-human world (Medrick & Mitten, 2011).]
    - Leadership Education [Educational programming that emphasizes teaching leadership skills, teaching skills, and coaching (Gookin & Leach, 2009).]
    - Therapeutic [Programs that focus on improving participant well-being in a general

sense, which do not focus on specific client issues or diagnoses. Programs may or may not have professionally trained therapists as staff (Williams, 2004).]

- Adventure Therapy ["The prescriptive use of adventure experiences provided by mental health professionals, often conducted in natural settings that kinesthetically engage clients on cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels" (Gass, Gillis, & Russell, 2012). Furthermore, treatment focuses on addressing specific psychological or behavioral disorders, guided by specific theoretical frameworks (Williams, 2004).]
- Wilderness Therapy ["The use of traditional therapy techniques [by trained mental health professionals], especially those for group therapy, in outdoor settings, utilizing outdoor adventure pursuits and other activities to enhance growth. Wilderness therapy is a methodical, planned approach to working with troubled youth" (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994).]

12. What is your programming format? Are your courses: (check all that apply)
    - Day program (one day only)
    - Day program (recurs weekly)
    - Week-long
    - Between 1-3 weeks
    - Three-week
    - Between 3 weeks and 2 months
    - Two months or longer
    - Other duration
13. What is the average age range of the participants you work with?
    - <10, 10-14, 14-18,18-24,25-35,35-45,45-55,55-65, >65, other range

14. What is the sex of the participants you work with? (Answer according to who you work most with. If your outings are mostly co-ed, select mixed. If you work most of the time with males, select males.)
    - Female
    - Male
    - Mixed
15. Have you worked with participants who have the following conditions or experiences? (Please select all that apply.)
    - Anxiety, ADHD, Autism spectrum, Depression, developmental challenges, drug and alcohol issues, eating disorder, conduct disorder, mood disorder (other than depression), personality disorder, psychotic disorder, involved in juvenile or criminal justice system, physically disabled, self-harm/mutilation, taking psychiatric medications, Veterans, physical or sexual abuse, traumatic experiences (other than physical), marginalized populations, not applicable, unsure, other
16. Please indicate the subject matter of training your current employer provides. (Select all that apply.)
    - Communication, cultural sensitivity, ecopsychology, environmental ethics, environmental philosophy, group development, group dynamics, leadership, motivational interviewing, personal development, personal ethics/values, psychology, rapport/trust development, rituals/ceremony, self-efficacy, technical skills, traditional/primitive skills, none of the above, not applicable, other
17. Please select your level of academic training. Select degrees you either possess or are pursuing. (For example, if you possess a B.A., and are currently pursuing a master's

degree, you would select both the bachelors and masters buttons.)

- No degree
- pursuing associates
- associates
- Pursuing bachelors
- Bachelors
- Pursuing masters
- Masters
- Pursuing doctorate
- doctorate

18. Please identify the subject you studied, or are studying, for each degree you selected in the previous question.
19. Have you studied outdoor leadership in an academic setting?
20. Have you studied psychology or related fields (Ex. Social work) in an academic setting?
21. Have you studied biology or related fields in an academic setting? (Ex. Ecology, environmental studies, etc.)
22. Which of the following outdoor leadership definitions is closest to your own?
    - "Leadership is intentional, aiming toward the accomplishment of particular goals and outcomes….[It also] is interactional, involving relationships between two or more individuals in a particular situation" (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff & Breunig, 2006).
    - Outdoor leadership involves fostering relationships within participants, between participants, and between participants and the natural world through the deliberate use of activities and guided by a process of personal reflection.

- Outdoor leadership involves minimizing risks (physical and emotional) to participants, minimizing impacts on the natural environment, maximizing participant enjoyment and learning (Kosseff, 2010).
- “Outdoor leadership is the practice of leading individuals and groups into natural settings via a variety of modes of transportation", ensuring participant safety, environmental protection, and enhanced outdoor experiences (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff & Breunig, 2006).
- Leadership is a process of influence in the creation, identification, and achievement of "mutually acceptable goals" (Priest, 1999).
- Leadership is relational in nature, involving the teaching about and facilitation of relationships based upon an ethic of caring for others (Mitten, 1999.)
- Outdoor leadership involves “purposefully taking individuals/groups into the outdoors for: recreation or education; teaching skills; problem-solving; ensuring group/individual safety; judgment making; and facilitating the philosophical ethical, and aesthetic growth of participants (Ewert, 1983).

23. Why have you chosen the career of an outdoor leader?
24. What does it mean to you to be a therapeutic outdoor leader?
25. Please select the 10 most important traits [from the list below] you believe foster participant trust in their leader(s).
    - Accepting, appropriate self-expression, authenticity, benevolence, calmness, compassionate, competent, effective communicator, empathetic, encouraging, equanimity, fairness, flexibility, fun/entertaining, genuineness, good listener, honest, inquisitive, inspiring, intelligence/knowledge, likeable, maturity, non-defensive, non-

judgmental, nurturing, patient, positivity, self-awareness, technical abilities, tolerant, transparent intentions, unconditional positive regard, vulnerability, other traits

26. Please think about the factors that affect your decision-making process when working as an outdoor leader. Please rank the following options: (1=most important, 5=least important).
    - Situation/context
    - My personal mission/intention
    - My program's mission/curriculum
    - Safety/risk-management
    - Therapeutic factors/needs
    - Other (please specify)
27. Do you believe it is appropriate for outdoor leaders to show their emotions to their participants?
    - No
    - Unsure
    - Yes (if answered no or yes, please elaborate)
28. Is it important for outdoor leaders to allow participants time for introspection?
    - Very important
    - Important
    - Neutral
    - Not important
    - Definitely not important
29. Please select the best definition of self-efficacy.

- Self-efficacy describes how someone thinks of themselves.
- Self-efficacy describes one's ability to make choices.
- Self-efficacy describes one's perception of their capabilities.
- Self-efficacy describes personal effectiveness.
- I don't know what self-efficacy means.

30. What does "locus of control" describe?
    - It describes how one makes decisions.
    - It describes influences to how one makes decisions.
    - It describes if a person believes they can influence events in their life.
    - I don't know what locus of control means.
31. Please explain the following psychoanalytic terms: (If you do not know, skip this question.)
    - Transference
    - Countertransference
32. There are several factors that influence people's perception of their abilities. Please select the answer with the best sequence of responses, where the first factor listed is the most influential and the last factor is the least influential. (Term definitions: physiological arousal describes moods, stress levels, etc. Vicarious experiences includes observing other people's successes or failures. Verbal persuasion describes coaching or support by other people.)
    - Physiological arousal, past performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion.
    - Physiological arousal, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, past performance

accomplishments.

- Verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, past performance accomplishments.
- Vicarious experiences, past performance accomplishments, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal.
- Past performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, verbal persuasion.
- Past performance accomplishments, physiological arousal, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences.
- Vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, verbal persuasion, past performance accomplishments.
- Verbal persuasion, past performance accomplishments, physiological arousal, vicarious experiences.

33. Thinking about the majority of participants you lead on trips, please rank participant needs in order of what you think they need most. (From highest need to less important need.)
    - Achievement
    - Autonomy/Freedom
    - Service
    - Fun
    - Self-esteem/competency
    - Survival/physiological needs

34. Thinking about the majority of participants you lead on trips, please rank participant relational needs in order of what you think they need most. (From highest need to less important need.)
    - Relationship with community
    - Relationship with self
    - Relationship with nature
35. What is the strongest predictor (element of therapy) of positive psychotherapy outcomes?
36. Please select the 3 most common strategies you use to develop rapport with others (co-workers and participants).
37. Please identify three boundaries that you (as an outdoor leader) need to be mindful of when working with participants.
38. There are multiple styles for providing feedback to others. Please select the three most used aspects you use when giving feedback.
39. Are you familiar with ecopsychology?
    - No
    - Yes (please elaborate)
40. Are you familiar with the field of conservation psychology?
    - No
    - Yes (please elaborate)
41. Are you familiar with the theory of biophilia?
    - No
    - Yes (please elaborate)

42. Do you believe that human health and well-being is related to the integrity and health of the natural environment?
43. Research has demonstrated humans benefit through their contact with the natural world. Please list up to three benefits, and why you think exposure/immersion in nature provides these benefits.
44. How do you, as a group leader, create a safe environment for your participants?
45. When you hear the term "emotional safety," what do you think this describes?
46. What would you do if you had a participant consistently isolating themselves from a group you are leading?
47. Under what circumstances would you refer a trip participant to a professional psychotherapist? (If you are an outdoor leader and a therapist, when would you refer a client to another therapist?)
48. Do you actively facilitate relationships between participants and the natural environment?
49. Do you use metaphors involving the natural world with your participants?
    - No
    - I don't understand this question
    - Yes (please elaborate)
50. Have you ever created or facilitated a ritual or ceremony for participants?
    - No
    - Yes (please elaborate)
51. Is there anything else you would like to share in the context of outdoor leadership and therapeutic knowledge or relational skills?