
#GetLifelongReady LEADING ADULTS



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#GetLifelongReady aims to equip the outdoor recreation sector with information and resources to attract adults back to activity, or to encourage adults to try something new in the outdoors.

The ability of leaders of organised outdoor activities to engage and support participants will impact on the experience of adults trying something new, or returning to an activity. The outdoor recreation sector needs to ensure leaders are aware of the needs and wants of adult participants and have the skills to provide positive experiences to ensure ongoing participation.

This fact sheet highlights key considerations for leading adults who are new, or returning, to an activity, sets out learning styles and ways to respond to these, and provides suggestions for preparing and facilitating positive group experiences.

What to Consider When Leading Adults

Adults may be self-conscious about trying something new, or getting back into an activity

Design and deliver activities in a way that adults will feel comfortable and respected

Avoid drawing attention to an individual's ability - if someone is not picking something up, provide a way for them to continue participating and address the skill or technique away from the group when there is an opportunity

Avoid drawing attention to a participant's age - for instance avoid statements such as 'you are doing well for your age'

Treat participants as peers, provide genuine encouragement and avoid being condescending - using the same tones as you might with children can offend adults, with the damage being hard to repair

Be positive, encouraging and patient

Goal setting can be a useful way to help participants focus on their participation as adults and can assist adults to take control of their participation

Do not ask people to step outside their comfort zone too early in an activity

Recognise achievements made, even when they may seem small to the competent performer

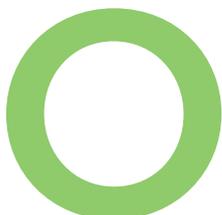
Adults may experience discomfort and negative feelings if they are unable to execute skills, or achieve fitness levels, as they may have done as a younger participant

Social connections between group members will give participants confidence to challenge themselves and step outside their comfort zone. Relationships are also important to encouraging ongoing participation.

Suggest opportunities for participants to socialise away from the activity or program - for instance, encourage participants to meet for a coffee after a class, a dinner at a point through the program, etc

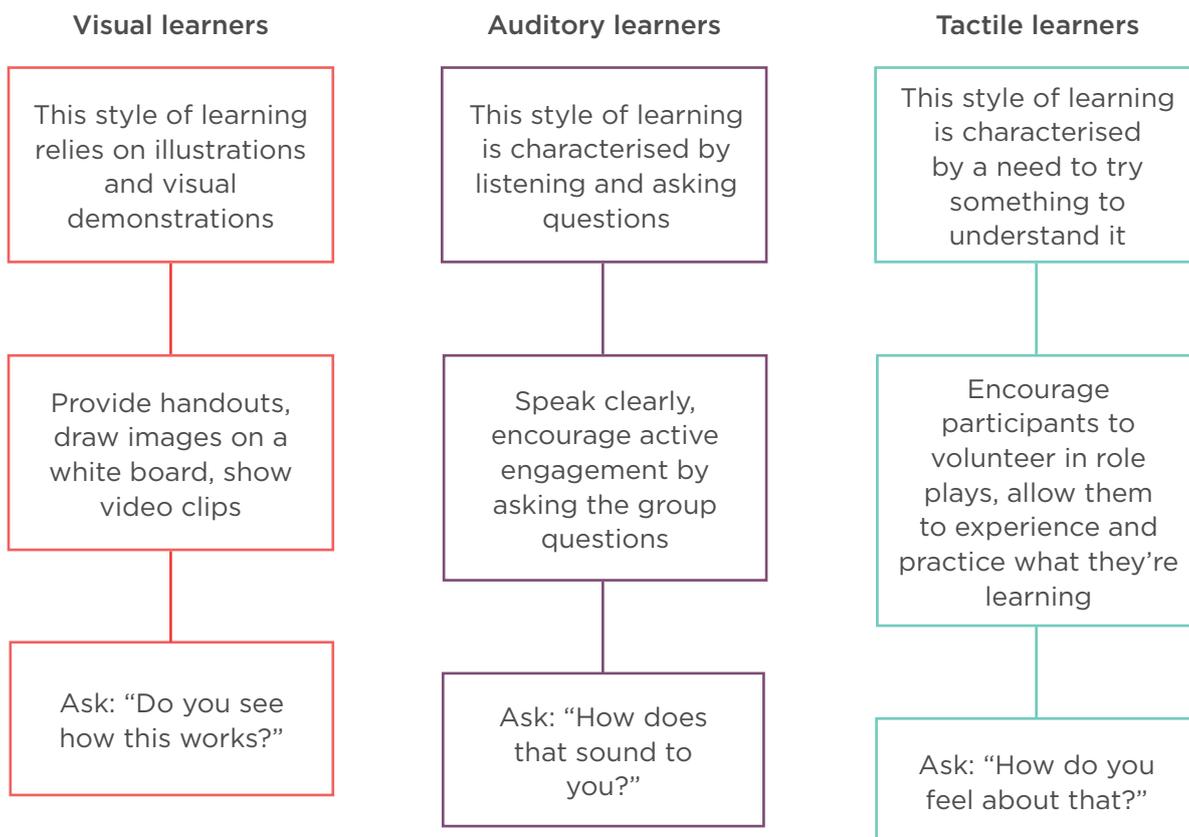
Design activities to encourage participants to connect with a range of people from the group - not the same people all the time

Ice breaking activities should be in place at commencement of programs, and followed up by opportunities for participants to connect with their group throughout programs



Adult Learning and Learning Styles

- Approach activity leading as a guide, or facilitator, rather than an instructor or director.
- Acknowledge adults in the group will have different learning styles. Three main learning styles, visual, auditory and tactile. Most people use all three styles when they are learning, but generally favour one style. As a leader, ensure you engage with the various learning styles and adjust your approach depending on participants' engagement.



- Share with adults 'why' something is important to know or do. This empowers adults with knowledge to make their own decisions in taking action and executing skill.
- Rather than trying to stick to a tightly planned agenda - be flexible and take advantage of learning opportunities as they arise.
- Encourage participants to provide and receive feedback from leaders and other participants, and to take responsibility for their skill and fitness development.



Facilitating Positive Group Experiences for Adults

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- Agree with the group on a set of rules for the conduct of the activity early on - understand participants may need flexibility to take care of obligations such as work, childcare, etc.
 - Understand participant motivations - ask participants upon registration and let this inform interactions with each participant.
 - Set clear objectives for each session so adults know what to expect, and know what is expected of them - be flexible in how these objectives are met.
 - Do not make assumptions about participant knowledge/skills, etc.
 - Do not cover skills or competencies already held by the group, unless there is a good reason for it. If there is good reason, explain that to the group.
 - Provide opportunities for participants to offer feedback on the program - acknowledge feedback and explain why feedback has, or has not, been incorporated.
 - Address unhealthy conversations and inappropriate behaviour amongst group members as soon as they occur.
 - The focus of leading adults and/or addressing group conflict should be encouraging and maintaining participation - let this guide planning and mediation.

Find Out More

This fact sheet has been developed as part of **#GetLifelongReady**. **#GetLifelongReady** is a capacity building project carried out by QORF for the Queensland outdoor recreation sector, aimed at enhancing sector engagement with people in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

#GetLifelongReady was enabled through the support of the 2015 Medibank Community Benefit Grants.

To see other fact sheets and relevant resources, visit www.qorf.org.au and search for 'getlifelongready'.

Notes

The Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF) is the peak body for outdoor recreation in Queensland. Find out more about our work at www.qorf.org.au.

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