

IOL NW Conference 2025 Workshops



Fostering Lifelong Participation in Outdoor Adventure: Strategies Beyond the Initial Experience

Details

This workshop will explore strategies to sustain engagement in outdoor activities after the initial experience. We will share ideas, challenges, and solutions through group discussion and develop actionable takeaways for promoting lifelong learning.

Aimed at:

- Entry level for those new to the field including students, trainees, apprentices
- Practitioner level for those with a good level of experience
- Senior level for managers, decision makers and strategic thinkers.

Presenter

Claire Bryant, The Outdoor Partnership

I have over 20 years of experience in delivering high-quality outdoor learning programs to diverse audiences. Currently, I serve as the Outdoor Activities Development Officer for the Outdoor Partnership in West Cumbria. In this role, I focus on encouraging local communities to engage in adventurous activities available in their own surroundings, fostering a deeper connection with the outdoors and promoting active lifestyles.

Engaging Learners Through Outdoor Storytelling

Details

This workshop will explore how storytelling in outdoor settings can enhance engagement, foster a deeper connection with nature, and promote interdisciplinary learning. Participants will experience hands-on activities to create and deliver their own outdoor stories, tailored to their audiences and settings. The workshop will include practical techniques, examples from diverse cultures, and strategies for integrating storytelling into outdoor learning experiences. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas and resources to implement storytelling in their own practice.

Aimed at

- Entry Level: Suitable for students, trainees, and apprentices seeking foundational skills in outdoor education.
- Practitioner Level: Ideal for experienced practitioners looking to diversify their approaches and integrate storytelling into their sessions.

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Presenter

Carol Murdoch, Love Outdoor Learning

Carol Murdoch is the founder of Love Outdoor Learning, bringing nearly two decades of teaching experience across various educational settings, including primary, severe and complex schools, and ASD bases. An award-winning educator and author, Carol has pursued extensive training in outdoor learning, holding qualifications such as a Master's in Learning for Sustainability, Lead Teacher in Outdoor Learning, and Forest School Leader certification. She is dedicated to supporting schools by providing training, advice, and resources to help educators confidently deliver curriculum-based outdoor lessons.

Linking Forest School to the Curriculum: Literacy, Maths, and Beyond

Details

This interactive workshop demonstrates how Forest School principles can be integrated into the curriculum to enhance learning in literacy, maths, and other subjects. Participants will explore creative, hands-on activities that align with curricular goals while maintaining the ethos of Forest School. Practical examples will include storytelling, natural materials for mathematical exploration, and activities that build problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Attendees will leave with a toolkit of ideas and confidence to connect Forest School learning with classroom outcomes.

Aimed at

- **Entry Level:** Suitable for students, trainees, and apprentices eager to understand how Forest School aligns with curriculum delivery.
- **Practitioner Level:** Ideal for experienced practitioners seeking innovative approaches to connect outdoor learning with curriculum requirements.
- **Senior Level:** Beneficial for managers and decision-makers interested in embedding Forest School within whole-school strategies.

Presenter

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Nordic walking for the fells

Details

Many (most?) people use poles incorrectly - however poles used properly can make a huge difference to your efficiency, the longevity of your day and enhance your fitness for the fells. The Nordic Walking technique is an artform - the art of efficient movement and power whilst staying relaxed, with free and fluid movement over the ground with 4 legs. This workshop will introduce the techniques, tools and tips to pass on to clients, helping to alleviate anxiety and enhance movement.

Aimed at

All levels

Presenter

Nicky Merrett, Hiking Highs

Nicky Merrett founded "Hiking Highs" and formerly "Nics Nordic Walks" in 2015, to deliver guided walking breaks, inspire folk in the Lake District Mountains and share her passion for hills. Using poles in the fells and also teaching their magic is Nicky's passion, alongside Navigation, to those keen to develop their skills in the hills.

As an accomplished Nordic Walking Coach, accredited with [British Nordic Walking](#), for hiking and distance events, Nicky has now taught over 1000 to use poles efficiently for the fells. Nicky found her clients were keen to explore the higher fells, so took the next step to qualify as a Mountain Leader in 2018, and guides clients onto the fells on a regular basis alongside teaching beginners to advanced navigation through the NNAS scheme.

Creating meaningful action

Details

Not sure how to respond to the climate crisis? Or where to start?

It's not just about reducing waste, going local and finding alternative solutions. It's also about your relationship with nature and how this flows through your life and work. In this workshop we will focus on your context and how you can cultivate the valuable resources in your care, whilst doing good for both people and nature. We will support you to formulate a plan of action, from strategy to practice. Starting with nature.

Aimed at

Senior level for managers, decision makers and strategic thinkers.

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Presenter

Jilly Dawes, Go Differently.

I'm an accredited coach and facilitator, and regenerative entrepreneur, blending positive psychology with nature-inspired practice to help you explore how to create meaningful change in life and at work. I have been a senior leader in education and in the learning and development sector, as well as working for charities in the third sector.

Nature-inspired Practice

Details

Want to bring nature into the design of your programmes and sessions? Not sure how to weave new practice into your day-to-day work? This workshop will help you Think and Go Differently. We will provide an experiential session that invites you to connect with nature alongside a framework and tools to play around with.

Aimed at

Entry / practitioner level

Presenter

Jilly Dawes, Go Differently.

I'm an accredited coach and facilitator, and regenerative entrepreneur, blending positive psychology with nature-inspired practice to help you explore how to create meaningful change in life and at work. I have been a senior leader in education and in the learning and development sector, as well as working for charities in the third sector.

Belonging through the lens of language

Details

This workshop will explore the relationship between the language we use and the sense of belonging practitioners and participants experience in the outdoors.

Aimed at

All levels

Presenter

Gina McCabe, Place Innovation

Gina is a leading thinker and practitioner in ways of working that help to create a more equitable and inclusive outdoors. In 2019 she founded Place Innovation, building on 20 years of experience in the private, public and voluntary outdoor, youth and charitable sector. Place Innovation works with organisations to ensure that the benefits of spending time in the outdoors can be accessed by everyone.

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Safe Spaces for All

Details

63% of young women (aged 18-24) in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work (over 80% did not report it). A total of 98 adult safeguarding cases were recorded by five sports NGBs in 2023-24 - physical abuse made up 24% of reports, and 13% were reports of general welfare concerns, such as mental health and self-harm concerns.

How can we look again at the way we work with visiting groups, with staff teams, and with all individuals we contact with and ensure that we are leading safe spaces that prevent harassment, abuse, and inter-personal violence for ALL. This practical session will look at questions raised by the participants that could include:

- When is banter actually racism, harassment, emotional abuse or hazing?
- What does it mean to be a trauma aware organisation?
- How do I instruct and coach through a trauma informed lens?
- What needs to be in place to prevent harassment and abuse?
- Is safeguarding our participants different to safeguarding our colleagues?
- How to call someone out if you see or hear something that's not right.

Aimed at

Practitioner and Senior

Presenter

Neal Anderson is the Chief Operating Officer of Safe Sport International (SSI) and a UKCP Registered Psychotherapist who represents SSI on the advisory board of the International Safeguards for Children in Sport and the advisory council of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights. He is recognised for his expertise in workforce competencies in outdoor learning and ethics in the therapeutic use of nature. He has led research and numerous projects in this field and is an associate lecturer at the University of Cumbria and was previously the Professional Standards Manager for the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL).

Getting on the mental health wave: A “How To” Guide: Tools, tips and things to stay away from!

Details

The “How To” Guide to Wilderness Therapy, Wellbeing, Mental Health and Bushcraft Mentoring!

We will address:

- TOP TIPS! Musts, maybes, and no-nos...
- IMPACT ASSESSMENT - How does WT work? Is it effective? Prove it!
- Can bushcraft really be used therapeutically?
- Designing WT sessions and programmes
- Adjusting how we work outdoors with identified individuals and groups

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- “But I’m not a therapist! What can I do?”
- The “B” word... business. How it works as a business and what fantastic projects are out there.
- What do YOU want to do?

Aimed at

All levels. Everyone welcome.

Presenter

Robin Sheehan, eQeOUTDOORS

Climatologist, Oceanographer, Environmental Scientist, Bushcraft Practitioner, Wilderness Therapist and Trainer. Robin also trained in the USA, in Death Valley, in Wilderness Vision Quest and Rites of Passage.

When delivering high quality outdoor learning takes its toll – balancing brilliance and burnout in the outdoor sector.

Details

Exploring ideas of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, Sara Murray from the Bendrigg Trust will run a workshop looking at how working with people who have experienced trauma or disability can impact our staff – and how we can increase resilience and reduce compassion fatigue and burnout in our workforce to make sure we can continue to deliver a quality service. There will be plenty of time for participants to share best practice and ask questions from fellow providers.

Aimed at

Senior level for managers, decision makers and strategic thinkers, but everyone welcome.

Presenter

Sara Murray, Training, Research and Consultancy Manager at Beyond Bendrigg, part of the Bendrigg Trust, an accessible outdoor centre catering for all ages and all abilities. Sara is an experienced trainer and coach who has worked in the NHS and charity sectors with people with long term conditions and disabilities for over 20 years and has a particular interest in vicarious trauma and resilience.

Climate and Carbon Literacy for the Outdoors

Details

During this workshop participants will reflect on their own journeys in relation to the climate emergency, engage in current scientific evidence and consider practical actions they can take in their own work settings and personal life. There will be the opportunity to hear about wider

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training from CAFS to support going forward, including Climate Fresk and Carbon Literacy training. <https://cafs.org.uk/climate-and-carbon-literacy-training/>Aimed at

Aimed at

All levels

Presenter

Gina Parker (Mullarkey), CAFS

Gina's journey in Outdoor Learning began nearly 30 years ago, her work now focuses on Global and Outdoor Learning and supporting pedagogies such as Philosophy for Children and Communities. Gina joins the IOL conference this year in her role as a climate trainer for Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS) where she supports schools, communities and businesses in responding to the climate emergency. Gina also works as a trainer for many complimentary organisations such as Learning through Landscapes through her business Little Chatters.

Cumbrian Mines - A Rich Educational Resource

Details

- Why go into an old mine?
- Where can I go?
- What should I do before taking groups?
- How can I get more sites on the list?
- An Introduction to the Cumbrian Mines Inspection Report Scheme (CMIRS)
- The legal and practical considerations of using mine visits in your outdoor repertoire.

Aimed at

Practitioner / senior

Presenter

David Hollingham, Mountain Experience

Experienced, qualified and respected local practitioner with many years experience leading groups above and below ground. Dave is well placed to explain the benefits and issues of using abandoned mines to enrich an outdoor adventure.

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Leadership and facilitation of outdoor learning: establishing high quality relationships with new groups in time constrained environments.

Details

The aim of this workshop is to provide practitioners, both new and experienced, with a basic framework for how they can consider establishing high quality relationships quickly when leading outdoor learning sessions. The workshop applies the findings of a PhD research project that evaluated the experiences of leaders working in the fields of outdoor and adventure. This session will provide a framework for consideration of your own emerging or established professional practice to enable you to critical reflect on the quality of your delivery.

Aimed at

new and experienced practitioners, students and managers who are looking to consider alternative ways to develop the quality of their professional practice in outdoor learning.

Presenter

Dr Jason King, Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Outdoor Adventure at Leeds Beckett University. Jason has been working in the outdoor industry in a number of roles for the last 25 years, with his PhD focusing on the role of leadership in unpredictable environments. As a pracademic he particularly likes looking at how practice can be developed between leaders and followers for high quality relationships and outcomes.

Head, Heart and Two Hands - Ambidexterity and organisational stewardship

Details

This session explores the concept ambidextrous stewardship. How do we work now, in a human-centric reality whilst making strategic changes towards a nature-centric future?

By unpacking management concepts of Absorptive capacity, Adaptive capacity and Ambidexterity we will reveal how OL organisations can build-in a purposeful pro-environmental strategy.

Aimed at

Practitioner to Senior Level

Presenter

Matt Healey LPIOL - Lancaster University Management School

Matt is a LPIOL with an MA in Outdoor Education. He is currently a Doctoral Researcher in Lancaster Universities Management School (Entrepreneurship and Strategy).

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Racoon Circles – a free resource to support problem solving and teambuilding

Details

This interactive outdoor session is based on a free online resource offered by Jim Cane. Find out what racoon circles are and how you can use this simple resource to enhance your problem solving and team building sessions.

Aimed at

All levels of practitioner.

Presenter

Mark Harnden, Get Outside the Classroom

I have worked in the industry for over 25 years. I started as a trainee in Australia on a gap year, spent a few years teaching in schools, ran a group of local authority centres and then setup my own business in 2016. Get Outside the Classroom runs Summer Camps from a pop-up camp in Cheshire and operates as a DofE AAP.
