

**GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION THROUGH  
ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES FOR  
YOUTH-AT-RISK**

BY

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**TO:**

the person (my mother),

the place (Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake),

the process (my Calling), and

the people (my friends)

who inspires me to be and to become.

## **SUMMARY**

Adventure-based programmes are one of the most exciting and effective intervention strategies that can influence youth-at-risk to make the right choices, guiding their development while simultaneously exposing them to positive values modeled by excellent people.

Although adventure-based programmes are not a recent phenomenon in South Africa, very few research studies have been undertaken regarding this phenomenon. The aim of this research was to explore and describe the nature, requirements and limitations of adventure-based programmes to youth-at-risk. The main goal of the research was to develop guidelines for intervention through adventure-based programmes for youth-at-risk, based on a literature study and empirical research that was undertaken.

Adolescents are becoming increasingly involved in high-risk behaviour, compromising their health, future and lives. Multi-professional interventions are necessary to address the issues and problems children and youth experience. Adventure-based programmes offers a solution and many skills necessary for successful living appear to be inherent to adventure-based learning: self-esteem, communication, problem-solving, group living, responsibility, spirituality, confidence.

Facilitating adventure-based experiences to youth-at-risk is no simple task and the outdoor leader needs to be trained to deal with many forms of anti-social and other negative behaviour that could include aggression, disobedience, hyperactivity smoking, etc.

It is clear from the research results that adventure-based programmes encompasses much more than simply offering activities in the outdoors to participants. Adventure-based activities can only be optimized to the level of an educational tool through purposeful planning, debriefing, follow up and evaluation. Many different terms are used to describe essentially similar outdoor programmes: adventure education,

environmental education, experiential education, wilderness therapy, organized camping, outdoor education.

Social workers, because of their broad, value based approaches and extensive training, is well equipped, if not best equipped of all professions, to play an active role in the development of adventure-based programmes to youth-at-risk; be it in developing and offering programmes, training staff to work with youth-at-risk or as staff member during an adventure-based programme. Adventure-based programmes as model of experiential education, offers the social worker an alternative intervention strategy to achieve psycho-social and competency outcomes with youth-at-risk.

**KEYWORDS:** adventure-based programme, outdoor leader, intervention, youth-at-risk, adolescence, child and youth development, outdoor education, environmental education, experiential learning, wilderness therapy.

## **OPSOMMING**

Avontuurgebaseerde programme is een van die opwindendste en mees effektiewe intervensiestrategieë wat die riskante jeug kan help om die regte keuses te maak, hul ontwikkeling te rig en hul gelyktydig bloot te stel aan positiewe waardes wat deur uitstaande mense gemodelleer word.

Alhoewel avontuurgebaseerde-programme nie 'n onlangse verskynsel in Suid-Afrika is nie, is daar nog maar weinig navorsing oor die verskynsel onderneem. Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die aard, vereistes en leemtes van avontuurgebaseerde-programme te verken en te beskryf. Die hoofdoelwit van die navorsing was die ontwikkeling van riglyne vir avontuurgebaseerde-programme vir die riskante jeug, gebaseer op 'n literatuurstudie en empiriese navorsing wat onderneem is.

Adolesseente neem toenemend risiko's met hul gesondheid, hul lewens en hul toekoms. Multi-professionele intervensies is nodig om die probleme wat adolessente ondervind, aan te spreek. Avontuurgebaseerde-programme bied 'n oplossing, en talle vaardighede wat nodig blyk te wees vir 'n suksesvolle lewe is inherent tot hierdie programme: eie-waarde, kommunikasie, probleem-oplossing, verantwoordelikheid, spiritualiteit, selfvertroue, ens.

Die fasilitering van avontuurgebaseerde-programme vir die riskante jeug is geen eenvoudige taak nie en die buitlugleier benodig spesiale opleiding om die talle vorme van antisosiale en ander negatiewe gedrag, bv. aggressie, ongehoorsaamheid, hiperaktiwiteit, rook, ens. te hanteer.

Die navorsingsresultate toon duidelik dat avontuurgebaseerde-programme meer behels as net die blote aanbieding van aktiwiteite in die buitlug. Avontuurgebaseerde aktiwiteite kan slegs geoptimaliseer word tot die vlak van opvoedkundige hulpmiddel deur doelgerigte beplanning, reflektoring ("debriefing"), opvolging en evaluasie. Verskillende terme word gebruik om soortgelyke buitlugprogramme te beskryf, naamlik avontuuronderrig, omgewingsopvoeding, ervaringsgebaseerde onderrig, georganiseerde kampering en buitlugonderrig.

Maatskaplike werkers is weens hul breë waarde-gebaseerde benadering en uitgebreide opleiding goed toegerus, indien nie die beste toegerus van alle professies nie, om 'n aktiewe rol te speel in die ontwikkeling van avontuur-gebaseerde-programme vir die riskante jeug, hetsy by die organisering en aanbieding van programme, opleiding van personeel of as personeellid tydens 'n program. Avontuurgebaseerde programme as model van ervaringsgebaseerde onderrig bied aan die maatskaplike werker, 'n alternatiewe intervensiestrategie om psigo-sosiale en vaardigheidsresultate met die riskante jeug te bereik.

**SLEUTELWOORDE:** avontuurgebaseerde-program, buitlug-leier, intervensie, riskante jeug, adolessensie, kinder- en jeugontwikkeling, buitlugonderrig, omgewingsopvoeding, ervaringsgebaseerde onderrig, wildernisterapie.

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**“I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his  
righteousness,  
and sing praises to the name of the Lord, the Most High”.  
(Psalm 7:17)**

**Glory be to God !**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	ii
OPSOMMING	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
ABBREVIATIONS	xviii

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM-FORMULATION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC	3
1.2.1.1	The Need for Youth Development	3
1.2.1.2	Adventure-based Programmes is an Answer	3
1.2.1.3	Adventure-based Programmes are Grounded in Sound Practise Principles	4
1.3	PROBLEM-FORMULATION	4
1.3.1	Demographic Profile of Children in South Africa	5
1.3.2	Social Profile of Children in South Africa	5
1.3.3	Children with Disabilities	6
1.4	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	7
1.4.1	Goal	7
1.4.2	Objectives	7
1.5	RESEARCH QUESTION	7
1.6	RESEARCH APPROACH	8
1.7	TYPE OF RESEARCH	8
1.8	RESEARCH DESIGN	8
1.9	RESEARCH PROCEDURES	9
1.9.1	Data Collection Methods	9
1.9.2	Organizational Plan	11
1.9.3	Data Analysis	11



1.10	THE PILOT STUDY	13
1.10.1	Literature Review	13
1.10.2	Consultation with Experts	14
1.10.3	Feasibility of the Research	15
1.10.4	Testing the Measuring Instruments	17
1.11	SAMPLING	18
1.11.1	Defining the Research Population	18
1.11.2	Defining the Research Sample	18
1.11.3	Method of Sampling	19
1.12	DEFINITION OF MAJOR CONCEPTS	20
1.12.1	Intervention	20
1.12.2	Adventure-based Programme	21
1.12.3	Outdoor Leader	24
1.12.4	Adolescence	25
1.12.5	Youth-at-risk	25

## **CHAPTER 2: A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

2.1	INTRODUCTION	27
2.2	OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA	28
2.2.1	Past Developments	28
2.2.2	Present Developments	30
2.2.3	Future Developments	30
2.3	THE NATURE AND REQUIREMENTS OF AN ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMME	33
2.3.1	The Process	33
2.3.2	The Participant	42
2.3.3	The Programme	48
2.3.4	The Personnel	51
2.3.5	The Place	56

2.4	ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES AND THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION	59
2.4.1	The Social Work Profession	59
2.4.2	Adventure-based Programs and the Child and Youth Care System of South Africa	62
2.4.3	Adventure-based Programmes and the “Circle of Courage”	63
2.4.3	The role of a Social Worker as Staff Member at an Adventure-based Programme	66
2.5	SUMMARY	68
<b>CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH-AT-RISK</b>		71
3.1	INTRODUCTION	71
3.2	AGE DISTRIBUTION OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	72
3.3	GENDER COMPOSITION OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	74
3.4	REPRESENTATION OF POPULATION GROUPS	75
3.5	HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL TRAINING OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	76
3.6	BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT OR INVOLVEMENT IN ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	78
3.7	SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE OUTDOOR LEADER	79
3.7.1	Skills and Qualities of the Outdoor Leader	80
3.7.2	Career Challenges facing Outdoor Leaders	83
3.8	BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY YOUTH-AT-RISK	84
3.8.1	Behaviour Management	85
3.9	DURATION OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	87
3.10	PROVISION FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS	88

3.11	ACTIVITIES PRESENTED DURING ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	89
	3.11.1 Activities	90
	3.11.2 Guidelines for Programming	90
	3.11.3 Factors and Trends that Influence Programming	93
3.12	TERMINOLOGY FOR ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	94
3.13	AIMS OF THE ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMME	98
	3.13.1 Aims of Adventure-based Programmes	99
	3.13.2 Challenges in Achieving Aims	100
3.14	GENERAL STATEMENTS ON ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	102
	3.14.1 Training of Outdoor Leaders to Work with Youth-at-Risk	102
	3.14.2 Cost-effectiveness of Adventure-based Programmes	104
	3.14.3 Benefit of Adventure-based Programme for all Youth-at-Risk	105
	3.14.4 Obtaining sponsorships for Adventure-based Programmes for Youth-at-Risk	105
	3.14.5 The Role of a Social Worker as Member of Staff	106
3.15	GENERAL STATEMENTS	108
3.16	SUMMARY	108
	<b>CHAPTER 4: GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES ON ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH-AT-RISK</b>	110
4.1	INTRODUCTION	110
4.2	AGE OF THE OUTDOOR LEADER	110
	4.2.1 Summary and Conclusions	110
	4.2.2 Recommendations	111
	4.2.3 Guidelines	111
4.3	GENDER OF THE OUTDOOR LEADER	111
	4.3.1 Summary and Conclusions	111
	4.3.2 Recommendations	112
	4.3.3 Guidelines	112
4.4	REPRESENTATION OF POPULATION GROUPS AMONGST OUTDOOR LEADERS	112
	4.4.1 Summary and Conclusions	112

4.4.2	Recommendations	113
4.4.3	Guidelines	113
4.5	HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL TRAINING OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	113
4.5.1	Summary and Conclusions	113
4.5.2	Recommendations	114
4.5.3	Guidelines	114
4.6	BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT	114
4.6.1	Summary and Conclusions	114
4.6.2	Recommendations	114
4.6.3	Guidelines	115
4.7	SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	115
4.7.1	Summary and Conclusions	115
4.7.2	Recommendations	116
4.7.3	Guidelines	117
4.8	BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY YOUTH-AT-RISK	117
4.8.1	Summary and Conclusions	117
4.8.2	Recommendations	118
4.8.3	Guidelines	118
4.9	DURATION OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	119
4.9.1	Summary and Conclusions	119
4.9.2	Recommendations	120
4.9.3	Guidelines	120
4.10	PROVISION FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS	120
4.10.1	Summary and Conclusions	120
4.10.2	Recommendations	121
4.10.3	Guidelines	121
4.11	ACTIVITIES PRESENTED DURING ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	122
4.11.1	Summary and Conclusions	122
4.11.2	Recommendations	123
4.11.3	Guidelines	124

4.12	TERMINOLOGY	125
	4.12.1 Summary and Conclusions	125
	4.12.2 Recommendations	126
	4.12.3 Guidelines	127
4.13	AIMS OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	127
	4.13.1 Summary and Conclusions	127
	4.13.2 Recommendations	128
	4.13.3 Guidelines	128
4.14	TRAINING OF OUTDOOR LEADERS	129
	4.14.1 Summary and Conclusions	129
	4.14.2 Recommendations	129
	4.14.3 Guidelines	130
4.15	COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	132
	4.15.1 Summary and Conclusions	132
	4.15.2 Recommendations	132
	4.15.3 Guidelines	132
4.16	BENEFITS OF ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH-AT-RISK	
	4.16.1 Summary and Conclusions	133
	4.16.2 Recommendations	133
	4.16.3 Guidelines	134
4.17	OBTAINING SPONSORSHIPS FOR ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES	
	4.17.1 Summary and Conclusions	134
	4.17.2 Recommendations	135
	4.17.3 Guidelines	135
4.18	ROLE OF A SOCIAL WORKER	135
	4.18.1 Summary and Conclusions	135
	4.18.2 Recommendations	136
	4.18.3 Guidelines	136
4.19	TESTING THE RESEARCH GOAL	137
4.20	TESTING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	138
4.21	RESEARCH QUESTION	138
4.22	FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES	139

4.23	CLOSING STATEMENTS	140
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	142
	ADDENDUM “A” : RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE	
	ADDENDUM “B” : LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	

## **TABLES**

<b>NR.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Table 1.</b>	Skills and Personal Qualities	79
<b>Table 2.</b>	Behavioural Challenges presented by Youth-at-Risk	84
<b>Table 3.</b>	Provision for Special Populations	88
<b>Table 4.</b>	Activities	89
<b>Table 5.</b>	Aims of Adventure-based Programmes	98
<b>Table 6.</b>	General Statements on Adventure-based Programmes	102

## GRAPHIC PRESENTATIONS

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Figure 1.</b>	Components of an Adventure-based Programme	33
<b>Figure 2.</b>	Experiential Learning Model by Pfeifer & Jones	39
<b>Figure 3.</b>	Age Distribution	72
<b>Figure 4.</b>	Gender Composition	74
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Representation of Population Groups	75
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Highest Educational Training	76
<b>Figure 7.</b>	Basis of Employment	78
<b>Figure 8.</b>	Duration of Adventure-based Programmes	87
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Terminology	94



## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACA</b>	: American Camping Association
<b>AE</b>	: Adventure Education
<b>CCISA</b>	: Christian Camping International South Africa
<b>CYCS</b>	: Child and Youth Care System of South Africa
<b>EE</b>	: Environmental education
<b>ExE</b>	: Experiential Education
<b>IMC</b>	: Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk
<b>NPA</b>	: National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa
<b>NQF</b>	: National Qualifications Framework
<b>OAA</b>	: Outdoor Adventure Association
<b>OC</b>	: Organized Camping
<b>OE</b>	: Outdoor Education
<b>POA</b>	: “Power of Adventure”- Conference
<b>SA</b>	: South Africa
<b>SAQA</b>	: South African Qualifications Authority
<b>THETA</b>	: Hospitality Education and Training Authority
<b>UP</b>	: University of Pretoria
<b>USA</b>	: United States of America
<b>WT</b>	: Wilderness Therapy