

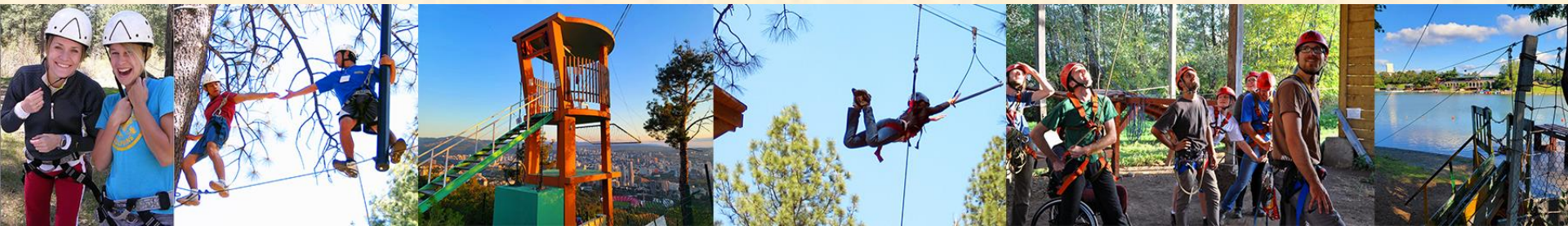
Crisis Communications for Challenge Course Programs

ACCT International Conference, Feb 21-25, 2024

Jeff Baierlein, Director,
Viristar

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Outdoor adventure firm Camelot charged over lapses that caused ACS(I) student's death during rope course

Jethro Puah Xin Yang was suspended in a loose harness after falling off the rope course and died from multi-organ failure following traumatic asphyxia.



The rope course was held at the SAFRA Adventure Sports Centre in Yishun on Feb 3, 2021.



SINGAPORE: The company behind the rope-course activity during [a school camp that led to the death of a 15-year-old boy](#) was charged in court on Tuesday (Jan 9) over workplace safety lapses.

Instructor given 6 months' jail over death of student during high-element rope course



The rope course was held at the SAFRA Adventure Sports Centre in Yishun on Feb 3, 2021.



SINGAPORE: A volunteer instructor charged over the death of a 15-year-old student who had fallen from a high-element obstacle course at SAFRA Yishun in 2021 was sentenced to six months' jail on Monday (Jan 15).

Crisis Communications for Challenge Course Programs



The News Media and You

- When significant incident occurs, news media will be interested
- The media's aim is to tell a story compelling to consumers and advertisers
- Your aim is to share facts and protect organization
- These goals don't have to conflict, but they might
- Effectively working with news media critical to protecting your organization



Media Relations

- What news media seek following incident
 - What, where, when, who, background
- Working with news media
 - Select, train messengers
 - Tell your story
 - Avoid pitfalls
 - Media channels
 - Preparation
 - Short story
 - External specialists
- State-controlled media



News Media Will Want

- Following an incident, media will want to know:
 - What happened
 - Where it happened
 - When it happened
 - Who was involved
 - Background on your organization and safety record



Working with the News Media

- Assist with responsible reporting
 - The public has a right to know
 - Provide what, where, when, who
 - Promptly research answers as needed
 - Don't guess
 - Provide all outlets with access to same information
 - Correct factual mistakes promptly
 - Be prompt, cooperative, respectful, courteous



Working with the News Media

- Select messengers
 - Tightly restrict who can speak with media
 - Articulate, charismatic individuals best
- Train messengers
 - Conferences, trainings, written guidance
 - Larger organization: career media specialists



Working with the News Media

- Tell your story
 - Timing
 - For smaller incidents, respond to media inquiries
 - For large incidents, proactively give information
 - Frame the story
 - If you do not tell your side of the story, someone else will tell theirs
 - Develop message points
 - The answer to every question you are asked is one of your three key points.
 - Project caring and concern
 - Tell the truth

Sample Pre-Established Message Points

1. Our primary concern is for our participants.
2. Our Situation Response Plan worked as designed, and participants received medical care.
3. We are working with the authorities to determine the facts and cause.



Working with the News Media

- Avoid pitfalls
 - Avoid speculation, opinion, emotional responses
 - Don't let reporters guide your language
 - Do not repeat inaccurate information, even to dispute it
 - Do not assign responsibility for incident or criticize before getting legal guidance
 - Do not provide names of victims until family members are notified
 - Do not allow yourself to be provoked



Working with the News Media

- Media channels

Press Release



Social Media



Interviews

Interview Guidelines

Interview Guidelines		
Prepare in advance	No “no comment”	Stay on message
Have multiple ways to say messaging points	No off-the-record	Provide sound bites
Key points first	Stay calm	Summarize



Working with the News Media

- Prepare in advance

Regularly distribute media



Build long-term media relationships



Prepare messaging points
in advance

1 2 3

Prepare background info in advance



- Aim for a short, one-day story
- Employ external specialists as needed



State-controlled Media

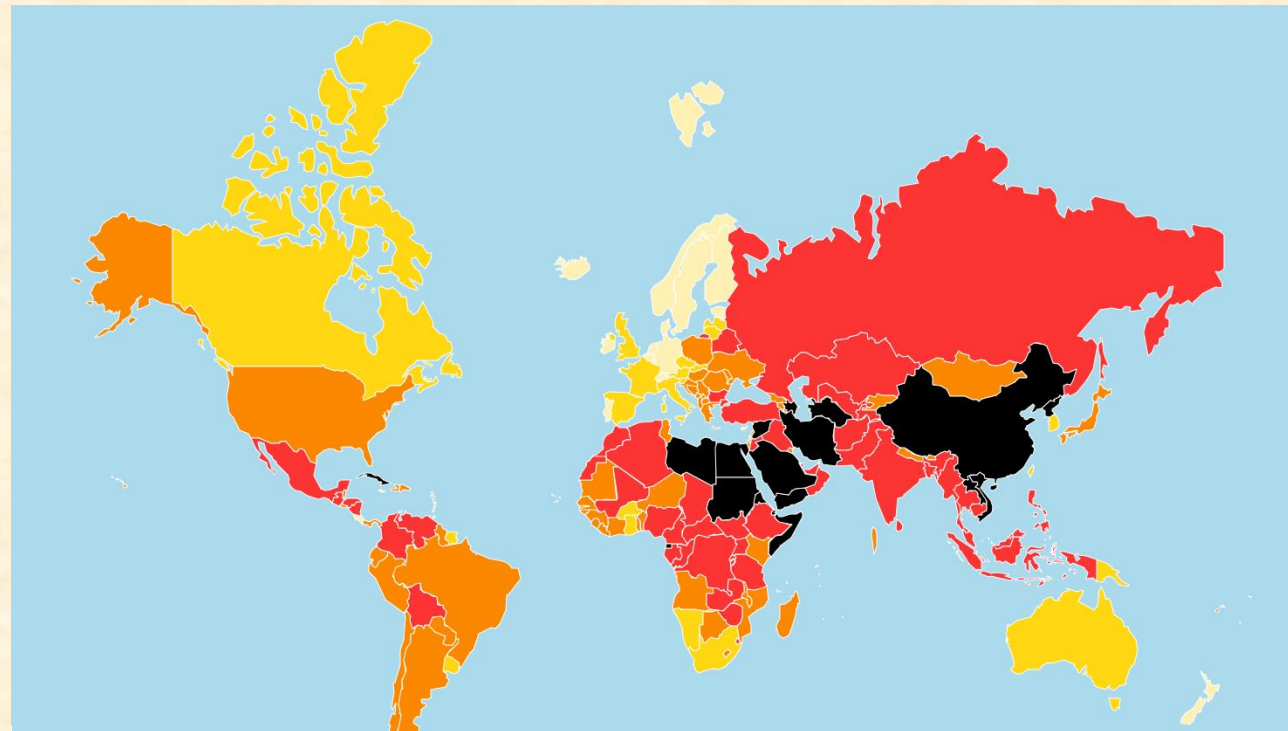
- State aims may be to promote state stability and positive perception
- Police report may reflect state priorities
- Media coverage reflects police report information
- Organization does not contact media representatives

**REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS**
FOR PRESS FREEDOM

WORD PRESS
FREEDOM INDEX



VIRISTAR



Summary

- Role of news media vs. role of your organization
- What news media seek following incident
 - What, where, when, who, background
- Working with news media
 - Select, train messengers
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 - Media channels
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 - Short story
 - External specialists
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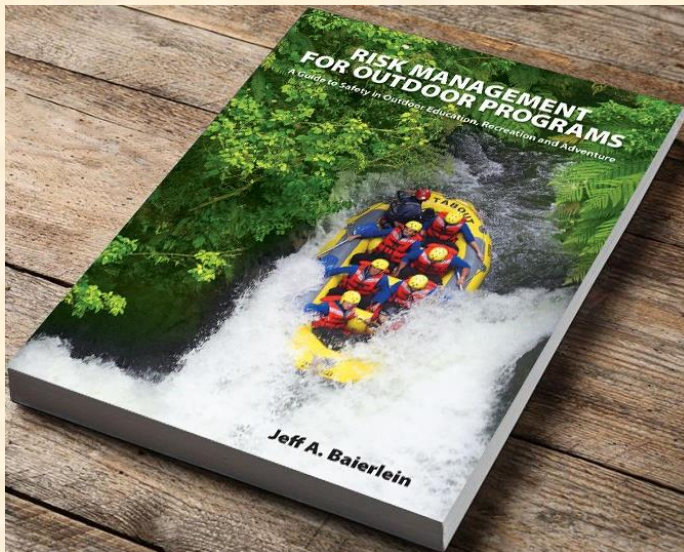
For More Information

Risk Management for Outdoor Programs: A Guide to Safety in Outdoor Education, Recreation and Adventure

Risk Management for Outdoor Programs

40 hour online training over 4 weeks

courses.viristar.com



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Two months after a challenge course program ends, a 15 year old female participant complains that she was sexually harassed by one of the facilitators, a 22-year old male. The participant claims that the facilitator made inappropriate comments, and touched her legs and back in ways that made her uncomfortable.

The participant's parents are rich, well-connected, and angry. They are threatening to sue. They demand a public apology.

The facilitator acknowledges making a possibly sexist joke at one point. They deny any inappropriate touching. The facilitator says he patted the participant on the back, and might have brushed her leg by accident when reaching for a water bottle.

The other facilitators say they did not notice any inappropriate behavior.

There is no history of complaints about the facilitator from other employers. This is the first year you employed them. You interviewed the facilitator and checked professional references before hiring him.

One of the other female participants said she felt a little uncomfortable around the male instructor, but maybe just because she wasn't used to strangers doing hands-on harness checks on someone else's body.

No other participants had concerns.

All your facilitators completed a training on working with youth. The Employee Handbook requires employees to behave professionally. The organization has no specific policy discussing sexual harassment.

Eight years ago, a facilitator working for the company complained about sexual harassment from another facilitator. That person was fired, after an investigation.

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