Managing psychological depth in adventure programmimng

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Abstract

The authors describe a model of psychological depth and present some general principles that will enable adventure practitioners to manage the psychological level in the groups for which they are responsible. These principles call for the leader to pay attention to their language and the language of group participants. In particular, attention should be paid to four main criteria.

The first of these criteria is an indication of the way in which the participant is involved in the topic under discussion. The second criterion is derived from paying attention to the nature of relationships that are embedded in the participant's conversation. The third criterion is the level of emotional arousal experienced by the participant; no involvement indicating shallow psychological levels and stronger emotional arousal indicating increasing depth. The fourth criterion for assessing psychological depth is a measure of the normal bounds of confidentiality and privacy with which the subject under discussion would normally be treated.

Imagine the following fictitious scenario: With the goal of team building and developing leadership competencies, you've introduced the warm-up activity "Have you ever...?" (Rohnke, 1994) in the first few moments of a one-day adventure experience. Your group consists of 12 student leaders for next year's freshman orientation program at the university. They are sitting in a circle of chairs asking questions of each other from a list in *Bottomless Bag, Again* (128-132). The activity requires a participant to reveal his or her answer to the question that begins "Have you ever..." to get up from their chair and find another one to sit in. Standing in the middle of the group, the person asking the question tries to get into a vacant seat, which leaves someone without a seat to ask the next question. The first few questions go as follows: *Have you ever . . . been stopped for speeding? . . . stayed up all night studying? . . . forgotten a good friend's name when introducing him or her?* During these questions, there is much laughter and movement amongst members of the group who have not previously known one another. The next question: *Have you ever . . . confronted a stranger because of something they were doing?* raises eyebrows and one group member shares the following:

> I can remember this so clearly. I was 10 years old standing in line with my mother at the grocery store when a child in front of us started picking up some gum and candy bars from the display. Their parent reached down and started slapping the child across the face. I started yelling for them to stop and was immediately scolded by my mother who told me to mind my own business. I can still feel the anger and hurt because I had always been taught that hitting was wrong.

Apparently the last question asked led the participant to get in touch with a significant incident that s/he chose to share.

The adventure group leader may now choose to probe the group member to talk more about the incident, investigating such areas as how it impacted his or her sense of identity when s/he was growing up. Probing of this nature might lead the group to resemble a counseling or psychotherapy group. But wait, the agreed-upon goal (or implied contract) with this group was to learn how to become a working team. Should adventure leaders have guidelines that can help them respond to participants who touch upon psychological levels deeper than those consistent with the agreed-upon group goal?

This article presents a psychological depth model

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and discusses guidelines for moving participants back to a psychological level consistent with the agreed-upon goal(s) of the group. The conceptual framework for this article has been developed from a synthesis of other models of psychological depth (Bugental, 1987; Greenberg & Pinsof, 1986; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Parry, 1992), from the authors' own experiences, and from feedback from hundreds of workshop participants from more than eight countries.

This article presents a psychological depth model and discusses guidelines for moving participants back to a psychological level consistent with the agreed-upon goal(s) of the group.

The diversity of responses to adventure activities arises in part because each participant has their own memories of powerful negative and positive emotional experiences that shaped their lives. When participants are reminded of one of these powerful experiences, often by an unexpected association, they may be confronted with a vivid recall that carries with it the emotional intensity that they experienced at the time of original event (Cameron-Bandler, 1985). One of the greatest challenges for adventure group facilitators is to respect the experience of every participant who encounters a powerful emotional experience associated with an adventure activity, while simultaneously assisting the group as a whole to achieve its agreed-upon purpose.

The authors wish to emphasise that the model of psychological depth presented in this paper is only one factor in many complex interrelated factors that are involved when any leader interacts with a group. The leader's training and experience in group process impacts his or her effectiveness, as does the extent of the leader's grasp of theory. These factors are also influenced by the professional ethics and psychological health of this same leader. The characteristics of group participants, such as their gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, play an enormous role in the group process, as does individual cognitive, emotional, and physical development. These factors are no less important than the group's stage of development; whether it be related to how much time they have already spent together; whether it pertains to their forming, norming, storming or performing (Tuckman, 1965); or whether it pertains to how long they expect to meet in the future.

In this presentation of a psychological depth model, we are choosing to focus on one aspect of the group experience — language. We feel that the language used by participants is one indicator of their level of psychological depth, and can provide clues as to whether the participant is functioning at a level that is consistent with the agreed-upon goals of the group. But language, especially as presented in the form of written dialogue, excludes such powerful factors as body language, tone of voice, affect, mood, attitude, and motive (conscious and unconscious), to name but a few. Nevertheless, the content of language does provide us with information that can be categorized in a way that enables adventure group leaders to decide upon actions he or she might take should a participant disclose an experience inconsistent with the agreed-upon group goal (Bugental, 1987; Greenberg & Pinsof, 1986; Greenberg & Safran, 1987; Parry, 1992).

Overall goals or purpose of adventure groups

Four broad purposes for adventure activities were described by Gillis, Gass, Clapp, Rudolph, Nadler, & Bandoroff, (1991). These titles have been slightly modified by the current authors to read *Recreation*, *Education*, *Development* and *Psychotherapy*[1] (see Table 1). The psychological levels described in this paper are seen as appropriate for all four group purposes. Working at deeper psychological levels (see Table 2) is appropriate only for groups whose agreed purpose is psychotherapy. The term "agreed purpose" implies that the adventure leader, the umbrella organization, or contact person for the group and the group participants have jointly established a shared purpose (Block,

Table 1: Goals for adventure experiences

	Recreation	Education/training	Development	Psychotherapy
Primary goal	Fun, laughter, challenge, excitement, initiative, etc.	Change in sense of identity or self concept.	Learning associated with a generic theme such as cooperation, communication, and trust.	Learning about interpersonal processes that will be applied with participants' significant others.
Distinguished features	May be therapeutic, but focus is on enjoyment.	Often associated with learning for an occupation, vocation or course of study; often used with work teams.	Associated with the desire to improve behavior in important relationships.	Often (but not always) applied to remedy personal dysfunction. Usually preceded by assessment of clients.

Table 1: Goals for adventure experiences

QUESTION / LEVEL	In what way is the speaker involved in what the speaker is saying?	Who else is involved in what the speaker is saying?	As a leader, with whom would I expect the speaker to disclose what they're saying?	As a leader, how much potential emotional arousal exists in what the speaker is saying?
Surface level	They are not.	It's about other (usually nameless or generalized) people.	Anyone, this appears to be public information.	Very little.
Personally experienced level	Only in their social or professional role.	Friend, colleagues, and workmates.	Anyone in their social setting.	Variable - from very little to intense emotion.
Current task level	Only as a member of this group right now	The people in this current group.	Members of the current group.	Usually little.
Encounter level	Only as a member of this group right now.	The people in this current group.	Members of the current group.	May involve a high level (eg. anger, joy, sadness, excitement.)
Contextual level	As a member of their current social, work or family group.	Current family, classmates, pets, workmates, friends and colleagues.	Friends and intimates.	Often involves a high level (eg. rage, ecstasy, depression, love.)
Identity formation level	Very involved. This is who they are.	Memories of family of origin. May involve recall of childhood trauma.	Trusted companions and therapists.	Usually involves a high level (eg. despair, hopelessness, helplessness, love.)
Historical/cultural level	Completely involved. "These are my people."	Ancestors and cultural heroes.	Facts can be discussed in public, but feelings are only discussed with trusted associates.	Facts can be discussed in public, but feelings are only discussed with trusted associates.
Universal level	Immersed. This is life itself.	Spiritual entities (God)	Facts can be discussed in public, but feelings are kept absolutely private.	May tap feelings so powerful as to create existential ecstasy or doubt about existence of self or life's purpose.

1981). Determining the history and future of the group in the adventure experience can help to determine the purpose and corresponding level of psychological depth that is appropriate. Questions such as: "How long have they been together prior to the adventure experience?" "Are they expected to function as a working group or have other connections in the future?" are useful for assessment of the appropriate psychological level for the group. The authors strongly believe that group leaders should be aware of their assumptions about the agreed-upon group purpose prior to the first group meeting, and the leader should state those assumptions at the beginning of the group experience to make sure they are consistent with the group's. Granted, the power of adventure activities at times touches upon deeper psychological levels, but group leaders should only work at psychological levels that match the agreed-upon purpose.

The psychological depth model presented in this paper can be applied to situations where multiple agendas exist. For instance, imagine being asked to provide an experience for a group that has not been together before, but plans to be together in the future. Here the goal is to develop the group's capacity to work together in the future. This situation is much like the imaginary team-building experience described at the beginning of this paper. That imaginary scenario may sound one dimensional, but what if several group members followed the sharing of the grocery store incident with their own stories related to disappointments with their parents while growing up? The adventure group facilitator would be challenged to keep the group at the agreed-upon level and deal with those members who kept self-disclosing at a level that was deeper than appropriate. Challenges such as these are the focus of the remainder this paper. First we'll present an outline of the eight levels of psychological depth, and secondly, we'll discuss how adventure leaders can use the model to influence the psychological depth at which the group is functioning.

The eight psychological depth levels[2]

Groups are complex dynamic human systems where participants and leaders are constantly bombarded with information. Other conceptual models

exist that provide "lenses" with which to view the group experience (Zeig & Munion, 1990). This psychological depth model is intended to present the adventure group leader with another tool to help screen information coming from the group so as to selectively focus on aspects of the leader's own language and the language of group members. The reader is cautioned to remember that this model describes a very small aspect of group functioning and that mastery of this model also requires the leader to be familiar with many other aspects of human communication and group functioning. Some of these are interpersonal communication (Bolton, 1986; Bunting, 1991; Chase & Priest, 1990; Johnson, 1990), therapeutic language (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Cameron-Bandler, 1985), conflict resolution (Fisher & Ury, 1990), the principles underlying human change (Watzlawick,, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974; Mahoney, 1991), the epistemology of "knowing" and information (Bateson, 1972), the principles of relationships (Hinton, 1993; Moreno, 1953), general principles of group work leadership (Johnson, & Johnson 1991; Raiola, 1992; Ringer, 1994; Whitaker, 1989), frameworks for group therapy (Bloch & Crouch, 1985; Corey, 1985; Yalom, 1985) and factors relating to the use of adventure in groups (Knapp, 1990; McPhee, & Gass 1993; Schoel et.al., 1988). In writing this article the authors were faced with many decisions about what to leave out. One of the sacrifices we made was to omit mention of the complex processes involved in integrating the responses and behavior of all of the members of a group into a seemingly coherent "group-as-whole" theme. Accordingly, in this article we oversimplify the dialectic between individual and group experience. Readers wishing to redress this shortfall are referred to Agazarian, 1992; Agazarian, 1994; Bion, 1961; Whitaker, 1964; Whitaker, 1989; Williams, 1991 and Yalom, 1985.

The following discussion outlines the authors' conception of the eight[3] levels of psychological depth that occur in groups. This is followed by a discussion on how to apply the model in practice.

Level 1: Surface

At the surface level, group participants enact the shallowest and sometimes the most rigid aspects of socially defined occupational roles such as "teacher" "counselor" or "social worker." Jung (1968) called these roles the persona. Interactions at this level resemble those at a social function where participants are trying to keep their distance (Bugental, 1987). Group members may be interacting freely and enjoying themselves, but they are generally not disclosing much about themselves. Group members who talk only about other people are likely to be in the surface level. Examples of statements that may lead groups to operate at this level are: "What are some of the stereotypical images of college freshmen?". . . "Let's play a game of tag in which we role play these stereotypes."

Participants at this level may be aware of strong emotional responses to questions such as those posed above, but in the authors' formulation of this model, the group is said to stay at the surface level if these strong emotional responses are kept hidden from the group. If the purpose of the group is development or psychotherapy, the challenge for the group leader in dealing with participants who are responding in the surface level is to move them to a deeper level (Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Nonetheless, even psychotherapy groups in an early stage of development (McPhee & Gass 1993). may start at the surface level, and if the leader is patient many groups at this level, while initially socializing, will naturally make a transition to a deeper level (Bonney, 1974). Whilst psychotherapy and development groups are not likely to meet their goals if they remain for long periods at the surface level, it is the opinion of the authors that many adventure recreation and adventure education groups can operate successfully at the surface level.

Level 2: Personally experienced

Group members are engaged at the personally experienced level when they act from their own experience of themselves or others in a particular social role, occupational classification or position in society. In the context of this psychological depth model, participants who describe personal experiences of currently significant relationships or from early life are said to be touching on deeper levels that are described below.

The following statement might lead group members into the personally experienced level:

"What sort of skills do you think you will need to be an effective college orientation leader?" . . . "What were your most successful strategies for dealing with the stress of being a freshman in your first year of college?"

The behavior of participants at the personally experienced level is of a more personal nature than at the surface level since participants speak from their own experience. Operating at this level requires that participants put themselves in the picture or "imagine themselves into" the perspective of the persons from whom they draw their experience.

The personally experienced level impacts less on participants' sense of self than deeper levels because the focus is on social and professional roles, not on significant relationships. Nonetheless, many professional, occupational and vocational training groups have agreed-upon goals that make it legitimate to work at this level, provided that they do not go deeper than the current task level.

Level 3: Current task

The current task level can be recognized when the focus of the group is on events in the group of which they are members at that moment. The (next) encounter level shares this focus, but is different from the current task level because the content of the current task level is about activities being conducted by the group (e.g., solving a group initiative) whereas the discussion at the encounter level is about relationships in the group (Johnson, 1990).

A statement that is likely to lead participants into the current task level is: "This next initiative (i.e., Zig-Zag, Rohnke, 1994) will require you to get everybody across this set of posts using only these planks without anyone touching the ground (other instructions are included). You have five minutes to talk about how to do it, but once you move across to the planks no one is allowed to talk until you have completed the activity."

If the group then goes about discussing how to go about completing the task they remain in the current task level as conceptualized by the authors. If the group talks later about what happened in terms of actions and tasks then it is also said to work at the level of this task. Most skills training for adventure activities occurs at the level of this task and all groups regardless of their purpose will at some time need to discuss events and tasks at this level. Many recreation and education groups operate primarily at the current task level because their focus is on learning how to perform tasks or learning specific cognitive material.

A significant increase in psychological depth occurs when a group that has been discussing practical tasks in an adventure activity moves to discussing their perception of themselves and their relationships with one another. If the goal of the group does not include development, tension can be experience by both leader and participants when some members wish to move beyond the purely descriptive level to the interactional level. In the conceptualization of this psychological depth model, the authors call the level at which group members discuss their relationships with other group members the encounter level.

Level 4: Encounter

When the group is in the encounter level, the interaction of two or more members of the current group or the behavior of one or more members is the subject of discussion. In the encounter level participants are encouraged to notice and reflect on their interaction with each other and their perception of themselves that arises from involvement in the adventure experience. The encounter level provides ample opportunity for triggering strong emotion in group participants (Greenberg & Safran, 1987). This level provides the milieu for a range of group purposes. Some aspects of Gestalt therapy occur at the encounter level but any group that discusses interpersonal tension in their current group is also working at the encounter level. Hence, this level provides a basis for work ranging from recreation to psychotherapy.

If participants are merely discussing relationships within the group so as to enable them to more effectively plan the next activity they may still be where recreation goals are appropriate, but if they are placing meaning on the events the purpose is more likely to be development. Furthermore, if intimate relationships within the group are being discussed, the process could be said to be psychotherapy. A statement that could appropriately be made in a recreation or training group that touches the encounter level is: "Hey Frank, get your butt over here. You're getting on my nerves We're trying to get through this stupid Zig-Zag and you're not helping one little bit."

Participants in a development group may be invited to the encounter level by a statement such as: "Get into pairs and tell the other person what they said of did during that last exercise that helped you to feel supported." A psychotherapy group leader might work in the encounter level by saying: "Hold eye contact with the person next to you for one minute, and then tell each other what you experienced during this experience." Whilst all of the levels described in this paper are relatively complex, the encounter level is probably the most multi-faceted. The model for understanding psychological depth that is presented in this paper provides a guide for working at the encounter level but a full understanding of working at this level can only be gained by using other models of group functioning such as those presented in Greenberg & Safran (1987), Mahoney (1991), and Yalom (1985).

The encounter level , more than any other, emphasizes the limitations inherent in the linear nature of the written word. The encounter level overlaps many of the other levels in the psychological depth model, yet the sequencing embedded in written documents, such as this paper, results in it being placed in a hierarchical sequence between other levels. Such placement is limiting and does not accurately portray the complexity of human experience. To many practitioners, the encounter level cuts across or is operating in a different dimension than the remaining levels. Given this word of caution, we move next to a level which in general terms lies deeper than the encounter level .

Level 5: Contextual

At the contextual level, the discussion involves relationships with people currently in the participants' vocational, social or familial world who are not necessarily present in the current group. Whenever group participants are thinking about or discussing relationships with people who are currently significant to them in their regular daily lives, they are working at

the contextual level. Discussions which focus on transfer of learning from experiential activities to everyday life will involve the contextual level .

Leaders of recreation groups do not generally work at the contextual level unless the contract with the group includes, say, exploring how participants might develop a set of friends who might support their participation in adventure experiences. Leaders in the area of development/education can make judicious use of this level without a breach of ethics. However, the contextual level is one of the most difficult levels to maintain because some of the people who populate the participant's current world — and hence the contextual level — may have also existed in the participant's world at the time that they were forming their identity (eg., family of origin).

An example of a statement that is aimed to move participants to the contextual level while maintaining a theme of development is:

> "What aspects of your behavior during that last exercise would be most helpful to you in being a leader in the college orientation program?"

This statement draws the thinking of participants to relationships that exist in the present moment. However, a statement like the following would be inappropriate in the college student leaders' group because it would touch on the theme of psychotherapy: "How do you think that what you've learned about yourself during this training session will help you in your relationships at home and in developing and maintaining romantic relationships?" In the model presented here, the closer and more significant the relationship under discussion, the more likely that the participant will move into the domain of psychotherapy. The next deepest level requires a step back in time from focusing on current relationships to focusing on relationships that existed at times when the participant was undergoing critical developmental processes (Meares, 1992).

Level 6: Identity formation

This is the level at which group members examine and perhaps reshape their identity, their sense of self.[4] The identity formation level is fundamental in that it should only be worked at by group members and adventure therapists with an explicit contract to be involved in psychotherapy. Members of experiential groups may inevitably touch on this level (Greenberg & Safran, 1987) but the authors of this paper maintain that deliberate probing and sustained working at this level constitutes psychotherapy and must only be done with an explicit contract of informed consent with the group.

The key indicator that a person is operating at the identity formation level is when they talk about critical memories of relationships with significant others from their childhood years (Bugental, 1987). For example, "I was so scared, when I was walking along the balance beam. I felt like a little kid again, and I wanted my Dad (or Mom) to come along and tell me that I would be safe."

This statement comes from an internal reality that is firmly rooted in the participant's family of origin. For the purposes of this paper, we include parents, teachers, siblings, best friends, and even their pets in the category of relationships that are involved in the identity formation level (Williams, 1989). Intentionally moving a person to this level creates the potential for serious disturbance as well as for wonderful opportunities for growth. This level is "high risk" in that there can be great therapeutic gains or significant setbacks from how a leader deals with a group member's reactions.

An example of a statement that could move group members into the identity formation level is:

> The last exercise was a group challenge that had to be completed in a limited time. As you tackled the challenge together you probably recognized old patterns in your responses to time pressure. Get into groups of three and talk with each other about how you learned as a kid to respond to time pressure. Who were the models from whom you learned?

Leaders of recreation and education/development programs should avoid statements that may intentionally or inadvertently work with the group at this level or probe into issues brought up within this area. Nonetheless, skilled adventure therapists may be able to do meaningful work by using language that refreshes participants' images of their formative relationships with primary care givers and family of origin members. This is a tricky and mysterious level in which all psychotherapists must proceed with caution and competence. This is a level full of temptation for many adventure psychotherapy leaders who want to "get at the real issues" a participant may be experiencing during an activity or discussion. The premise of this article is that the leader needs a specific pre-group contract to operate at or below this level as well as possessing the expertise and experience to lead groups in and out of what may occur at this level.

Whilst conventional models of psychotherapy support the view that the **identity formation** level is indeed a level at which psychotherapy can occur, the following two levels are seen by the authors to be more controversial. These two levels are seen to be "deep" in that they carry the potential for intense, powerful emotive responses, and the significant personal aspects embedded in each level are usually only discussed with very close friends. However neither the **cultural/historical level** nor the **universal level** involve significant personal relationships. Persons whose

socialization placed emphasis on relationships and on family history but not on symbolic, cultural and spiritual aspects of life, experience **cultural/historical** and **universal** levels as "shallower" than the **identity formation level.** Persons for whom culture, myth and symbol are core aspects of daily life find these levels powerful and significant. The reader is invited to reflect on his/her own response to them.

Level 7: Cultural/historical

At this level, group members identify with their culture of origin, their cultural heroes, cultural history, their gender, their race or their nationality (Elliot, 1986; Henley, 1989). The group of college student leaders described earlier in this paper would not work at the cultural/historical level because their contract did not include psychotherapy. Let us now imagine that they are all psychology students and, after the completion of the group development program described earlier, they are now explicitly seeking a therapy experience to assist their development as clinicians. The leader could invite them towards the cultural/historical level by making a statement like the following:

> In working therapeutically with people we operate from our own implicit and explicit assumptions about how people should behave. Each culture has its own customs and rituals. This exercise is intended to improve your awareness of the customs and rituals that are present in your culture. We will have a meal together. Imagine that it is a meal that marks a significant event in your culture (such as Easter in Christian tradition). Identify three rituals or rules that must be followed in the tradition of your culture.

Any ritual or ceremony that clearly originates in one culture, like the New Zealand Maori ceremonial welcome or powhiri (O'Brien, 1990) or many Native American rituals, creates a firm foundation for working at the cultural/historical level. Language and dialect can also cue groups into this level.

The impact on participants of working at this level varies widely from person to person. In our experience persons who are from cultures that represent minorities in their society and persons whose cultures have a strong and coherent spiritual basis may find this level more significant than many persons of western origin whose cultural origins are less clear and span only a few hundred years.

Conversely, programs run by persons of one culture expressly for persons of that same culture may draw much of their effectiveness from working at the cultural/historical level. The authors see this as entirely appropriate, but not to be confused with situations where persons from one culture borrow rituals and ceremonies from another culture (Horwood, 1994).

Working effectively at the cultural/historical level brings group members to an awareness of their most deeply held sense of cultural, racial, or gender identity. This is how we learn about being American, Polish, or Australian. Yet it is also where some of us learn about being red, yellow, black, white, gay, heterosexual, bi-sexual, African, Native, or Latino Americans, Aboriginal Australians, or New Zealand Maoris. Working in this level is extremely challenging because few adventure groups are made up of just one cultural, racial, or gender group and highlighting culture also highlights both similarity and difference at a core level. We are not talking here about the academic study of culture and history, we are talking about how group participants experience themselves as members of cultural groups and how they relate to the stories and rituals of their own culture. Race wars like the conflict in Bosnia arise from principles that are held at the cultural/historical level (Elliot, 1986). Working in the cultural/historical level can easily lead to the universal level, which is seen to be an even deeper psychological level.

An example of a statement that may inadvertently begin to lead our student leaders in the college orientation program to experience the power of the cultural/historical level is:

> Students on this campus come from a wide range of cultures. To close the day's activities we will sing the national anthems for as many countries as we can, given the knowledge that we have between us. Shall we start with the American national anthem?

The invitation to sing patriotic songs has the potential to arouse very powerful feelings and is unlikely to be appropriate for our example of a development group for trainee student leaders. The only level at which deeper impact may occur is the universal level which touches on universal human existential issues.

Level 8: Universal

The universal level is where participants deal with existential issues of life and death; issues of meaning and being (Bugental, 1987; Kast, 1992). Returning to the example of the group of psychotherapy students, a statement that may inadvertently begin to lead participants into this level is:

> Your course covers clinical depression, yet when you have clients who are severely depressed the risk of them committing suicide is always present. Your own attitude to suicide and to death is vital in influencing how you deal with such clients. What words and ideas do you associate with "death"?

More than at any other level, containing a group's anxiety and distress at the universal level requires the leader to be very solid. The leader must possess a level of ego strength that inoculates that leader from letting their own personal issues get in the way. Training for

group leaders to work at the universal level involves their developing a "self" (in the Jungian sense) that is durable and resilient enough to do this work. Just adding "counseling" skills to the leaders repertoire is not adequate (Mahoney, 1991; Yalom, 1985). Experience and vigilance on the part of the leader are required to navigate through the poorly charted territory of psychological depth in adventure groups, but as with all disciplines, some guidelines exist.

In the text of this paper the progression from the surface level to the universal level appears to be linear or "ladder like" yet the surface level is in some ways adjacent to the universal level, thus making a spiral rather than a ladder. We say this because the universal level and the surface level share common characteristics and may be mistaken one for the other by inexperienced practitioners. For example, the statement by a participant in a mountain first aid training course, "you can't trust people; they keep dying on you," may be a flippant comment at the surface level that is intended to keep the attention away from the speaker, yet it may also be at the surface of a deeply moving or disturbing personal experience of death that the speaker had recently encountered. In the following section we examine some practical examples of how to apply the psychological depth model during the adventure experience to stay within the agreed-upon goals of the group.

Applying the psychological depth model

Despite the best planning and facilitation possible, sometimes groups or individuals move inexorably towards psychotherapy. 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. Additionally, most carry an awareness that behavior arises in part from earlier experiences; therefore, in describing their action in a group, participants often inadvertently drop to one of the deeper levels. This action moves the group closer to psychotherapy.

When a group member makes a statement that is deeper than the agreed-upon level, it is vital that the person's statement is fully acknowledged and then the conversation must be returned to the level at which the group has negotiated to work. There are at least two types of problems that can arise in the process of acknowledging and moving back to the agreed-upon level. First, the leader's empathic response may lead a participant or the whole group into further discussion at the deeper level. Secondly, the leader—perhaps after learning only the rudiments of the model outlined in this paper—"cuts off" the participant for fear of deepening the level in the whole group. There is a need for a fine balance.

As a general rule, a leader or facilitator's first response to a statement that is deeper than the agreed-upon level needs to be in the encounter level. Later responses can link the group back to the contracted level. For an illustration of moving between levels let us return to the imaginary group of trainee student leaders that were mentioned at the beginning of this paper; they were on a one-day adventure experience with the goal of team-building and developing leadership competencies.

As a team game progresses, the leader, Fiona, notices Patty, a participant, sitting on the grass near the group with her chin on her knees and a half smile on her lips. Two group members have prompted her to join in, but she did not acknowledge them:

Fiona (leader): "Patty, are you taking time out from the action?"	A response at the current task level.
Patty: "Yeah, I'm waiting for them to get their act together."	Still at the current task level.
Fiona: "You don't want to have any more input?"	Still at the current task level.
Patty: (Angrily) "No, I know that they won't take any notice of me. Nobody ever thinks that I have anything to offer (recalling being criticized by her father)."	Moving towards identity formation level.
Fiona: "People in the group have taken no notice of you?"	Staying in the encounter level.
Patty: "No, they've been OK but I know the signs, I never manage to get my opinion across. I've always been the dunce in the family."(Patty drops her head and sighs loudly.)	Now firmly in the identity formation level.

At this time, Fiona asks Patty to relate her withdrawal from the activity to her current experience in the group, yet Patty responds with a judgment that comes from her family history—the identity formation level. Fiona maintains interaction at the encounter level, yet Patty responds in the identity formation level—which potentially moves the interaction into the domain of psychotherapy.

A normal empathic response to Patty's last statement would be something like:

"You have had a history of not being valued by your family and this seems all too familiar," potentially beginning a psychotherapy session without a contract. To avoid starting to work at a deeper level would require Fiona to remain at the encounter level and possibly move to the level of the current task:

Fiona: "I can see that you are not wanting to repeat old	Fiona acknowledged Patty's painful expe-

painful experiences, so I am happy to work with you as you experiment with this group now, to have a new kind of experience." (Pause)

Patty: "Yeah, I'm sick of feeling left out."

Patty is now ready to move to the encounter level.

Fiona: "I guess that it would be helpful for you in the role of student leader to feel included too!" (Everyone smiles.)

Fiona links Patty's need to develop a sense of inclusion with the purpose of the group: the current task level.

In the case illustrated above, Fiona demonstrated a strong grasp of the concept of psychological depth. Let us now look at how she applied diagnostic questions from Table 2 and subsidiary questions during the first part of her conversation with Patty to arrive at appropriate actions. Notice that Fiona did not ask Patty the questions from the table. As the leader, Fiona asked herself the questions and used her own answers to assist her in navigating through a tricky situation that involved multiple psychological levels. Alternatively, if Fiona was working with a co-leader they may ask each other the diagnostic questions. Let us now examine the questions in the first row of Table 2 as a way of understanding how the leader is able to determine the level from which the participant is operating.

How is the speaker involved in this? Subsidiary questions here are: "Are they talking about him/herself, or are they talking about other nebulous people?" "In what capacity are they talking about themselves?" "Are they talking about some timeless aspect of their culture, or some transient aspect of their behavior in their current social system?"

In the case above Patty was totally involved in what she was saying. Patty's experience of feeling rejected and useless was the subject of the conversation. Furthermore, Patty was talking about herself in the context of her formative years; in the context of this model, the longer the duration of the attribute that is the topic of conversation, the "deeper" the impact on the speaker. We can see then, that evidence gathered by applying the question "how is the speaker involved?" suggests that Patty was re-experiencing herself as a member of her original family. This points to the identity formation level.

Who else is involved in this person's world as s/he speaks? enables the facilitator to hypothesize about the intensity and importance of the relationships or affiliations underlying the topic. For instance, the contextual level includes relationships with persons who form a part of the participant's current social and vocational setting. If the topic of conversation is about persons with whom the speaker has strong emotional ties, such as immediate family members, then the conversation can be said to be entering the domain of psychotherapy. However, if the topic of conversation is about a transient person in the participant's workplace with whom they have no special attachment, there is less probability of psychotherapy ensuing. A conversation about a national hero who is a symbol for the fight against racial or cultural oppression may lead to the cultural/historical level. In Patty's case she was recalling memories of unpleasant aspects of relationships with original care givers or "significant others." On the criterion of "who else is involved?" Patty was in the identity formation level.

How much emotional arousal are they likely to feel? Patty became quite distressed. She appeared ashamed and depressed (although the reader cannot "see" such feeling in the dialogue). Focusing on and working with distress is often associated with psychotherapy although the presence of strong emotion is not solely associated with psychotherapy. The question "how much emotion are they likely to feel?" is at best a very subjective question that depends heavily on the leader's own perception of the significance of different emotions and different events. Nonetheless the question can help leaders who know something of a participant's life story to predict whether their responses are likely to lead the group into psychotherapy. For instance, a participant who has had a traumatic experience in jail is likely to respond to a question or statement about jails with strong emotion, whereas other participants may have a neutral reaction to the same statement. The question of emotional arousal also helps leaders to be alert for powerful responses from a group as a whole. For example, where a facilitator is working with a group of single parents, they would be unwise to run activities that created metaphors for divorce and separation (Gass, 1993). In the case of Patty (above), Fiona was alerted to the possibility of a possible move towards psychotherapy because an internalized sense of failure can lead to depression and hopelessness (Haley, 1980; O'Brien, 1990).

To whom would they normally talk about this? establishes the level of privacy normally required for a given topic. Once again, there is wide variation amongst people and cultures as to who normally talks about what to whom, but this criterion at least gives us a basis from which to work. For instance, most westerners do not talk in public about the details of their intimate relationships, but they do talk to very close friends about those same relationships. The context is important. Close friends talking one to one about their intimate relationships may not be psychotherapy, but the same people talking about the same topic in the context of a group is more likely to be viewed as psychotherapy. Patty did not talk in the whole group about early family history, but her reaction indicated clearly to group participants that she was distressed.

Most westerners do not share personal and private information with people other than their closest friends. On this criterion, Patty was in the region of the identity formation level.

From the analysis of Fiona's response to Patty we can see that she has a sound working knowledge of the concept of managing psychological depth. Such knowledge was not visible to Patty or the other participants, yet it saved the whole group from the potential of a psychotherapy session without a contract.

Managing psychological depth is a small part of the complexity of leading groups. Even when very familiar with the management of psychological depth, a leader cannot be expected to keep the diagnostic questions in her/his mind at all times. High levels of competence in managing psychological depth require sound personal functioning on the part of the group leader, including good self-management skills, sound psychological health, well developed intuition and creativity (Mahoney, 1991; Yalom, 1985). The first cue that a participant is beginning to operate at a deeper level than what the contract calls for may be little more than an intuitive sense of unease on the part of the leader. The astute group leader pays attention to the unease and uses it as a cue to assess the psychological depth at which the group is operating.

Conclusion

The ethics of adventure-based recreation, education, development, and psychotherapy require that practitioners are competent to carry out the work that they undertake in a way that respects the needs and rights of their participants. Furthermore, the authors postulate that respect for participants includes maintaining the psychological depth above or at the level of contracted agreement (explicit or implied).

The notion of psychological depth is not universal to all cultures in that it is an artifact of western thought, and may vary between regions and nations within the western world. Nonetheless, the authors have presented some general principles that will enable adventure practitioners to manage the psychological level in the groups for which they are responsible. Moreover, practitioners are urged to take this model and creatively blend it with their existing skills and understanding of adventure-based learning.

Notes

1. The current titles were modified after personal communication between Michael Gass, Simon Priest and the authors at the AEE Conference in Austin, TX (Nov 1994). We decided "development" incorporated both training and enrichment categories and "psychotherapy" incorporated both adjunctive and primary therapy.

2. The authors have distilled a synopsis of the psychological depth model with a view to providing practitioners with a practical model that can be applied by persons without in-depth knowledge of psychotherapy. Persons wishing to expand their understanding of the model are invited to contact the authors for a more extensive paper.

3. In the genesis of this model the authors have varied the number, the names, and the nature of the levels. The original model was derived from Bugental, (1987); Greenberg, (1987) and Parry, (1992) and was subsequently modified through further reading and extensive discussion with other practitioners. Persons who are interested in the genesis of the model are welcome to contact the authors.

4. For the purposes of this paper "self" is defined as a set of ideas, feelings, images, memories and fantasies that make up the inner world of the person.

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