BUILDING EVIDENCE IN SCOUTING TOGETHER

BSA **BEST** STUDY DATA USE RETREAT

November 1 & 2, 2019

Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills

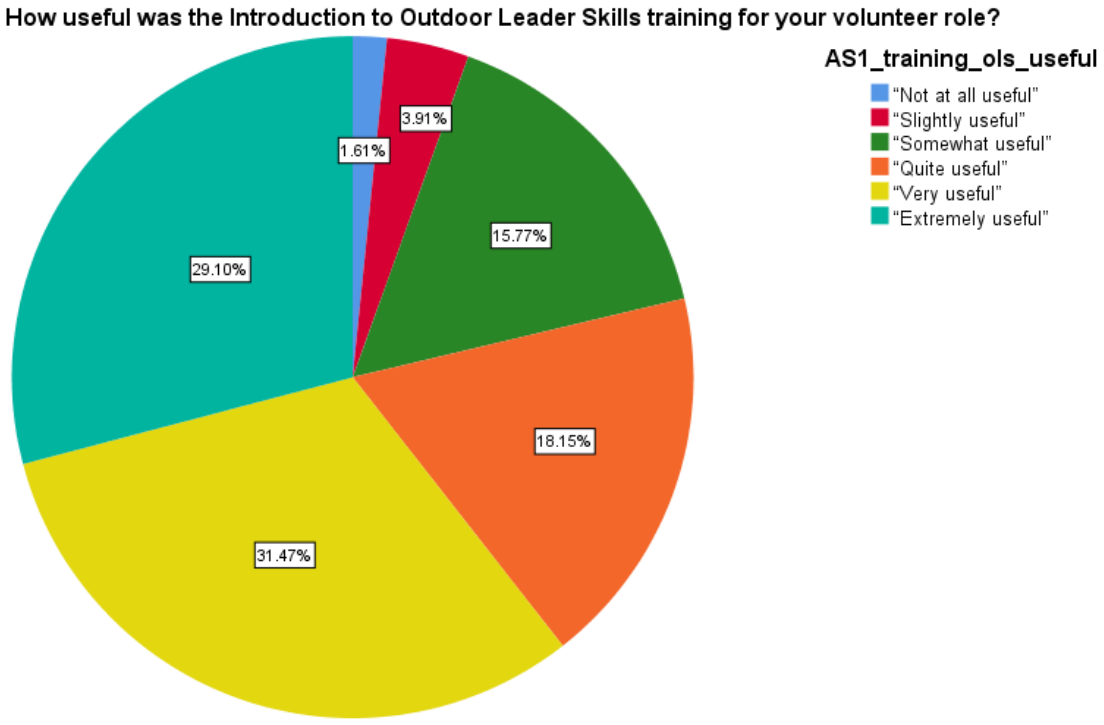
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
Institute for Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation

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Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills

Survey Findings

- **78.65%** of adult leaders took IOLS
- Scouters who thought **IOLS** was **very useful** or **extremely useful** were more likely to have **not participated in Scouting** as a youth, were **older**, and identified as **Non-white**



- **60.6%** of adult leaders said that **IOLS** was **very useful** or **extremely useful**

Role, membership in OA, and age were significant predictors of attending Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills

Table of demographic characteristics of scouters who attended Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills.

		Full sample				
		Did attend the training		Did not attend the training		
Demographic characteristic	**Group**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**Statistical significance**
Role	SM	556	93.0%	42	7.0%	
	ASM	752	70.6%	313	29.4%	< 0.001
Leaders who took IOLS were more likely to be SMs than ASMs						
Years in their current role	Average years	10.3		7.3		< 0.001
Leaders who took IOLS were more likely to in their role for longer						
Participated in scouting as a youth	Yes	1022	78.6%	278	21.4%	
	No	286	78.8%	77	21.2%	NS
Member of OA	Yes	823	84.4%	152	15.6%	
	No	485	70.5%	203	29.5%	< 0.001
Leaders who took IOLS were more likely to be a member of OA						
Gender	Male	1163	79.7%	297	20.3%	
	Female/ other	126	73.3%	46	26.7%	NS
Age	Average age	51.4		46.9		< 0.001
Leaders who took IOLS were more likely to be older						
Race/ ethnicity	White	1194	79.0%	317	21.0%	
	Non-white	98	77.8%	28	22.2%	NS
Religion	Christian	1098	79.2%	288	20.8%	
	Other	210	75.8%	67	24.2%	NS
Education	College graduate	874	80.3%	215	19.7%	
	Not a college graduate	416	77.0%	124	23.0%	NS
Employment	Employed	1125	78.5%	309	21.5%	
	Not employed	164	82.4%	35	17.6%	NS
Income	≥ $100,000	764	80.7%	183	19.3%	
	< $100,000	451	77.9%	128	22.1%	NS
Marital status	Married	1144	80.1%	284	19.9%	
	Not married	145	71.8%	57	28.2%	0.006
Leaders who took IOLS were more likely to be married						
Child in scouting	Yes	918	77.8%	262	22.2%	
	No	390	80.7%	93	19.3%	NS

Statistical significance based on $p < 0.05$; chi-squared test for categorical variables, one-way ANOVA for continuous variables. NS=not significant.

What do SMs/ASMs identify as benefits of training?

In interviews, adult leaders reported that IOLS increased their **knowledge** of the **patrol method** and **how to run a troop**, basic **outdoor skills**, and **creating and maintaining a safe environment** for troop members. Adult leaders also report that IOLS was helpful in learning **how to teach and work with youth.**

> *And then I think the other training that is real important is the outdoor skills, so making sure that everyone knows kind of the basics. Again, it comes down to safety.*

> *[IOLS] is more of a weekend outing where, again, you practice outdoor skills, first aid skills, cooking skills, all again by the patrol method.*

> *I think the Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills was pretty helpful, just because it's concepts that I already knew, but just presenting that in a way of how I should be presenting it to Scouts, or doing it with the younger people, as opposed to the way I would do it myself.*

Adult leaders emphasized the **hands-on, experiential learning** aspect of IOLS as particularly beneficial.

> *IOLS is almost purely outdoor work and hands-on stuff, so that's why I enjoyed that the most.*

> *I think things like Scoutmaster specific training and even the Webelos training, the outdoor leadership skills, I think that learning about the patrol method and things like that is very important to do hands on.*

Adult leaders also liked IOLS as it provided opportunities to **learn from other adult leaders.**

> *The quality of the volunteers that were teaching it, or that were instructing it. That made the difference. Folks that have been in the program a lot longer. They had wide and diverse backgrounds. And bringing all that to the training, you really get a good range of knowledge that's given to the students.*

What do SMs/ASMs identify as the drawbacks of training?

As with SMST, some adult leaders who had more experience in Scouting as youth reported that IOLS was **redundant** for them, as they already had experience and knowledge of the BSA organization, how troops are run and outdoor skills.

> *I had to do the Outdoor Leadership Training even though I probably should have taught it. [...] Yeah it's basic Scouting and it's very useful for someone who has never done Scouting, been a Scout or been an Adult leader, but for me there wasn't much to it.*
>
> *But outdoor leader skills, having been an Eagle Scout, it was kind of just review.*