Managing groups in the outdoors - in the context of a day of hill walking

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**Build rapport!** Make an eﬀort to get to know people and create a friendly atmosphere - talking to as many people as possible in the group also naturally keeps the group together.

**Sharing knowledge** (and some things about yourself!) is a good way to stop and let the group gather - a great way to let people take a breath without making it too obvious!

**Walk deliberately in front / middle or back** to either set the pace or let the group walk at their own pace - or to manage individuals who may need your support

**Use markers** to re-gather the group; for example: “ We will all gather by the gate coming up to re- group!” - anticipate this as best as you can - this means you don’t have to shout at the people in front once they have walked ahead…

**Use short activities / discussion points** to manage group dynamics and the pace of the day - it allows you to encourage conversation between everyone but also lets you deliberately separate individuals if needed

**Time management:** have a plan for your timing from the start - have plenty of thoughts / ideas to manage your time during the day - discussion / activities to slow the day down - walk at the front and set the pace to speed up the day or avoid unnecessary breaks - if you don’t use everything that’s fine, but have things “up your sleeve”

**Deliberate route choice** depending on what the aim is for the day - is it about views? Is it about a challenge? Is it about team building? Is it about getting to the top? Who are your group members? Remember that on bigger paths / forrest trails group members will have more opportunity to have conversations comfortably and be sociable - they also lend themselves to people walking faster - and for them to overtake each other - try and anticipate what kind of day your route will give.

**Knowing a route helps** to anticipate group dynamics - for example: if there is still steep uphill, anticipate the eﬀect that may have on your group members - they may spread out more? Some people may find it harder than others? How can we manage this? What can you tell people to anticipate the diﬀerent parts to the day? Is there a stretch coming up where someone may need your physical help? Spotting etc? Anticipate this and be in the right place at the right time.

Communicate with your group what you need them to do or watch out for if needed

**Create a welcoming atmosphere** from the start - ie in your first contact emails or when you first meet people! Make an eﬀort to get to know people quickly and make them feel welcome and valued! Choose your meeting point wisely for a positive start. The more positive of a relationship / rapport you can build the easier it will be to manage people on the hill! Remember: *“They won’t care what you know until they know you care!”*

**Use language which is inclusive and welcomes ALL** - make it easy for people to share any concerns they may have about the day with you so you are aware and can support them.

**Set expectations** with everyone from the start - What is your role as a leader? What are you expecting from the group? How long will the day take? What is the route going to be like? Is there a turnaround time to ensure a safe return before a certain time? What do we need to do to make this day a success? Walk at a certain pace? Ensure we stick together? … etc.