



Waypoint Adventure Evidence of Impact

Waypoint Adventure challenges people with disabilities to discover their purpose, talents, and strengths through the transforming power of adventure.

We are committed to implementing systems of evaluation to understand the impact of Waypoint programs on the lives of people with disabilities and their communities.

Through collaboration with the Social Innovation Forum, Public Service Economics, and Boston University's Occupational Therapy Department, Waypoint Adventure programs are designed to make a difference for people with disabilities.

Outcomes focus on:

- *Sense of belonging* = the degree to which an individual feels like s/he fits in and matters to a group.
- *Self-esteem* = a person's perception of their inherent value and worth to the self and world.
- *Self-efficacy* = a person's belief in their ability to complete a task or reach a goal.
- *Emerging skills* = skills that an individual is "already working on" outside of a Waypoint program. These skills are meaningful and individualized to a person and are skills that support increased function such as communication, self-regulation, or problem solving.



Parents report that Waypoint programs are making an impact on their child's life and the life of their family. Here are a few of their testimonies:

"It's too infrequent that we see our son bursting with pride and a real sense of accomplishment."

"The most positive impact I see is in his growing confidence in his ability to navigate his world day-to-day."

"It was amazing to watch both of my kids enjoy the outdoors in a way I never thought possible. Our daughter was her best self today."

"This showed me that we can be much more adventurous and active as a family."

Waypoint will continue to conduct systems of evaluation to ensure that our programs are continually improving and positively impacting the lives of people with disabilities and their communities.

⁽¹⁾ Hammel, J., Magasi, S., Heinemann, A., Whiteneck, G., Bogner, J., & Rodriguez, E. (2008). What does participation mean? An insider perspective from people with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 30(19), 1445-1460.

453 Concord Avenue · Lexington, MA 02421 · 781-325-7980 · waypointadventure.org





Research has reported that people with disabilities often feel as if they don't belong, have low self-esteem, lack self-efficacy, and are working on skills that support function.⁽¹⁾

Over the past 2 years, at the end of Waypoint programs, we asked over 400 participants to complete program evaluation surveys and received a 50% response rate. Responding participants had a range of conditions, including autism spectrum disorders, visual impairments, and intellectual or physical disabilities.

These were the findings:

- 91% of participants report feeling a sense of belonging in a Waypoint group
- 85% report a feeling of high self-esteem after participating in a Waypoint program
- 83% report a feeling of high self-efficacy as a result of participating in a Waypoint program
- 90% report having developed a new skill

Common responses to open-ended questions include:

What participants valued:

Making new friendships, learning how to get back in a boat when I flip over, learning teamwork

Advice participants would give others:

Trust your abilities, challenge yourself, don't be afraid, help each other

What participants would change:

Nothing, kayak longer, bring a friend next time



Waypoint asked teachers and program directors to complete post-adventure questionnaires. They frequently report that students are:

- Remembering and transferring the lessons and strategies they learned on a Waypoint program back into the classroom
- Participating more often and more appropriately in classroom activities
- More willing to try things that they might otherwise shy away from
- Finding ways to support other classmates

School personnel attribute this growth to Waypoint experiences. Here is what they are saying:

I have seen students go from being afraid and anxious to being confident and able to take safe risks in their education and in their personal lives.

Boston Public School, MA

Going rock climbing with Waypoint provided a real life example for students of how grit is important not only in the classroom but throughout their lives. After we returned to the classroom I found that as a teacher I was able to tie the grit and determination needed to go rock climbing to grit needed to navigate academics and even peer relationships. It has become an ever present metaphor.

Arlington Public Schools, MA

This experience gave them the opportunity to truly step out of their comfort zone and consider how the strategies used to successfully climb the rocks may enable them to reach other goals they are working towards such as graduating from high school, finding roommates and housing and landing their first jobs.

LABBB Collaborative

[Female student's] growth has been huge! I think a big part of her growth, her comfort level, her ability to challenge herself, was in part due to the relationship Waypoint staff developed with her and thus challenged her... This allowed her to push herself and learn something about herself and grow in her confidence in her abilities.

Full Circle Next Wave (Somerville Public Schools, MA)