

RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY GROUP MEMBER

This card offers reflections, questions and practical tips to help look after the wellbeing of those taking part in a forest walk – both emotional and physical. It supports the creation of a safe, inclusive and mindful space, where everyone feels seen, valued and cared for.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE – WHAT MATTERS:

1. Everyone is important – pay attention to all, not only to the most active or the loudest voices.
2. Everyone should feel acknowledged – even brief eye contact or asking “How are you feeling?” helps to build trust and care.
3. Everyone has the right to feel safe, both physically and emotionally – make sure all know they can speak up, pause, or express a need without fear.
4. Responsibility for the group should be agreed in advance.



PUTTING THIS INTO PRACTICE:

- Greet each person individually.
- Introduce yourself and any support staff (assistants, volunteers), and explain their roles.
- Outline the plan for the walk (e.g. how long it will last, stages, route, pace...).
- Set out clear, simple rules (e.g. “Do not walk ahead of the guide”).
- Emphasise that everyone has the right to be silent, to walk more slowly...
- Ask open questions (e.g. “What do you need today?”, “How can I support you?”).
- If someone needs help – ask first, do not assume.
- Encourage the group to look out for one another: “If you notice someone needs a break, please say so.”
- Pay attention to those who are quiet.
- Observe and respond.

QUESTIONS FOR YOURSELF:

- Do I really see everyone – including those who are quiet or withdrawn?
- What would make me feel noticed and cared for as a participant?

REFLECTION:

Safety and inclusion do not happen by themselves. They are created through attentiveness, presence and a willingness to notice and acknowledge others. These small actions build trust, closeness and a sense of mutual care – and from this comes the experience of truly being part of the forest walk.