

# HAZING PREVENTION TOOLKIT

*for Student Organization Advisors*



SEWANEE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

STUDENT LIFE

# WHAT IS HAZING?

“Hazing is any activity expected of someone seeking or maintaining membership in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person’s willingness to participate.”

## HAZING INCLUDES THREE COMPONENTS

- It occurs in a group context
- It can be humiliating, degrading, or endangering behavior
- It happens regardless of an individual’s willingness to participate

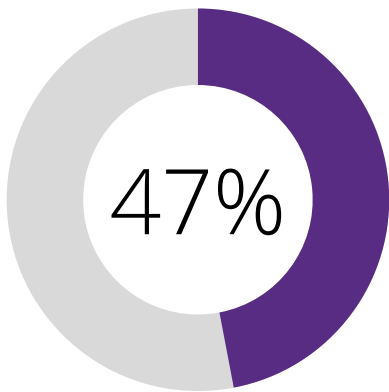
(Allan & Madden, 2008; Hoover, 1999)

Hazing can happen in any group or student organization, including athletic teams, performing arts groups, faith-based organizations, and fraternities and sororities, etc.

The fact that a person consents to be hazed is not a defense. Peer pressure and the desire to belong can create a coercive environment that impedes true consent. In general, behaviors that are considered hazing adversely affect the emotional, mental, and physical health and safety of the person and span across a spectrum. A list of examples of hazing behaviors can be found at [hazing.sewanee.edu](http://hazing.sewanee.edu). Ultimately, hazing takes place in environments where power dynamics within a group are emphasized.

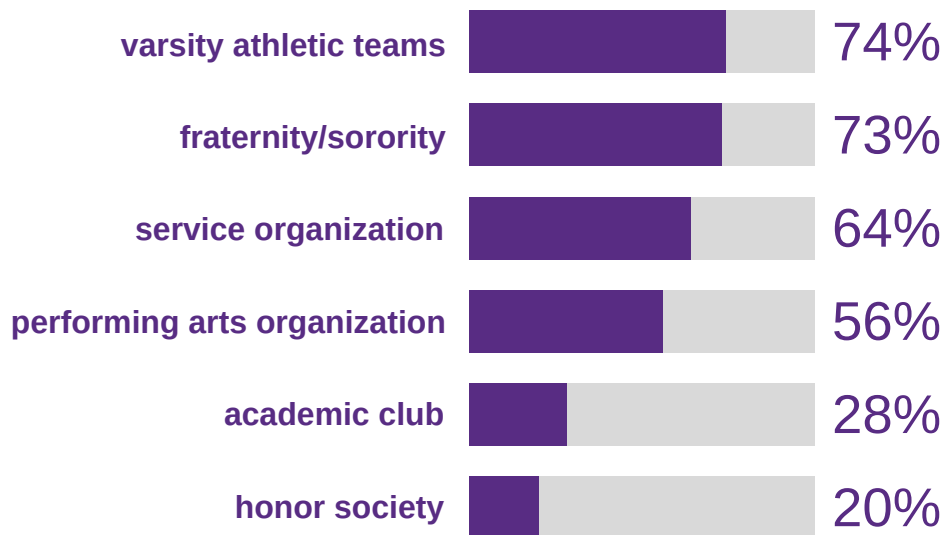
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Student organization advisors can be the first people outside the organization's membership that many student leaders will talk to about possible hazing. This toolkit includes tools to help advisors recognize hazing, understand their responsibilities as an advisor, and offer resources for reporting and support.

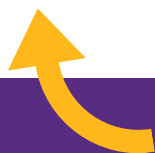


of students are hazed before coming to college

55% of college students experience hazing.

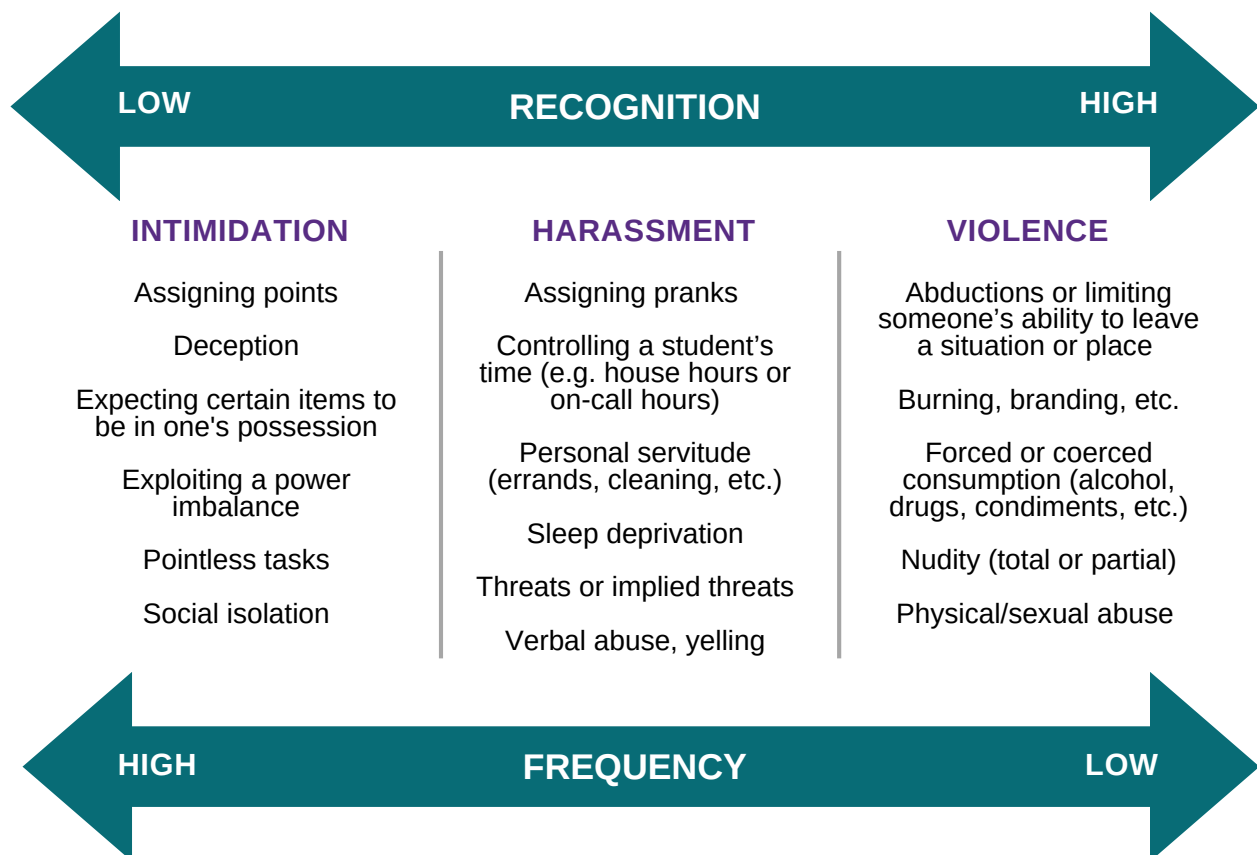


Allan, E., & Madden, M. (2008). *Hazing in view: College students at risk. Initial findings from the National Study of Student Hazing.* Retrieved from <http://www.hazingstudy.org>.



The figure below depicts the spectrum of hazing. It distinguishes forms of hazing and levels of harm that involve intimidation and humiliation from those that constitute harassment and those that involve violence. Each type of hazing also falls on a continuum based on how readily people recognize the behavior as hazing and how frequently it occurs. This visual portrays how intimidation forms of hazing (e.g., social isolation, demeaning names, expecting items to always be in one's possession) are hazing behaviors least recognized as hazing, yet they may occur most frequently. This is in contrast to violence forms of hazing (e.g., beating, paddling, or other forms of assault; branding; forced consumption of alcohol or other drugs), which are likely to be recognized as hazing, but may occur less frequently.

## THE SPECTRUM OF HAZING



(Allan, 2015; Allan & Kerschner, 2020; Adapted from Bringing in the Bystander®)

# WHAT HAZING CAN LOOK LIKE

Activities meant to 'prove' an individual's worth within an organization or team  
Asking a subset of members to wear conforming, silly, or humiliating attire  
Assigning pranks such as stealing, painting, or harassing others  
Burning, branding, or tattooing  
Controlling a student's time (e.g. house hours or on-call hours)  
Expecting abuse or mistreatment of animals  
Expecting certain items to be in one's possession  
Exploiting a power imbalance between new members and the rest of the group  
Forced or coerced consumption of substances including, but not limited to, alcohol or other drugs  
Intimidation  
Line-ups or drills  
Personal servitude (e.g. errands, buying food, cleaning, doing laundry, etc.)  
Physical or mental exhaustion  
Pointless tasks  
Provoking anxiety or intimidation about future events/requirements  
Public nudity  
Sleep deprivation  
Social isolation (e.g. not allowed to be around certain people)  
Stunt or skit nights with degrading, crude, or humiliating acts  
Threats or implied threats  
Verbal abuse

Hazing isn't simply about the activity... it's also about the process—the ways in which power and control are exercised among group members and how new members or rookies are made to feel about their place in the group.  
(Allan, 2004)

## RECOGNIZING HAZING

While the definition of hazing provides context, sometimes having the confidence to recognize hazing when it is being planned or taking place can be challenging. There are some patterns that can help you recognize hazing in order to prevent it from taking place.

The first step in preventing, interrupting, or reporting hazing is to recognize it.

### CONSIDER PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION AND ASKING THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS AT THESE TIMES:

- The first six weeks of the semester, when students are joining organizations
- Student organization or new member retreats
- Overnight events
- Roadtrips
- New member meetings (planned or informal gatherings)
- Initiation week events
- Big Sibling/Little Sibling reveals

### ADVISORS SHOULD ALSO KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS THAT HAZING MAY BE TAKING PLACE. EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Changes in behavior and communication
- Disrupted patterns of behavior (such as not attending classes, changes in grades)
- Becoming difficult to reach, changes in personal hygiene, clothing, etc.
- Chronic fatigue
- Symptoms of depression
- Unusual physical injuries
- Being dismissive of concerns expressed about changes in behavior

## EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Another critical component of being a student organization advisor is empowering and supporting students to be ethical leaders of values-based student organizations.

**In order to get to a place of empowering leaders, advisors must first be “in the loop.”**

This means engaging in challenging conversations with students and providing support and guidance around events in advance to prevent possible hazing or other problematic behaviors.

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**HELPFUL:** “We can achieve a stronger sense of connection among our members by...”

**LESS HELPFUL:** “If you mess up by hazing, then \_\_\_\_\_ is going to happen to you.”

## ASK THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE DETAILS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING:

- What time does the event start and end? Is it an overnight event?
- What is the location?
- What are the driving/transportation arrangements?
- What is the goal of the event/activity?
- Are there any elements of surprise? What are those?
- Who is required to attend/participate?
  - If it's not everyone– why?
- What is happening before/after the event?

## EMPOWER STUDENTS TO LEAD IN ALIGNMENT WITH THEIR ORGANIZATIONS' VALUES AND TO CHALLENGE UNHEALTHY TRADITIONS OR NORMS

- How does this support or contradict your stated values as an organization?
- Just because we have “always” done this, who is it serving and should we continue it?
- Based off what your organization is doing now, are you setting the organization up for success in the long-term?
- How can I support you in getting buy-in or explaining these changes to the members?

*These can be challenging conversations that need to happen regularly, and sometimes students may need to hear the same message from someone else.*

*Consider how you can point your students towards resources to make change within their organization.*

## YOUR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimately your responsibility as an advisor is to mentor, support, and coach students **and** to look out for student safety. There are many approaches to addressing safety and wellbeing within student organizations, including:

- Advocating for ongoing prevention-based education
- Following safety policies applicable to student organizations
- Knowing about campus resources and reporting concerns



# RESPONDING TO HAZING

## ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Be direct and ask. Don't automatically assume something is hazing. Instead, ask clarifying questions to help determine if a behavior is hazing or someone has been hazed. Approaching these conversations is situational, and it's essential to build rapport with the individual.

"How have you been recently?"

"I've noticed \_\_\_\_\_ - can we talk about that?"

- Your assignments have been turned in late
- You've missed meetings (or classes)
- Your appearance has changed
- You look tired

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Even if someone says they don't consider their experience to be hazing, follow your instincts and move forward with responding. Responding to potential hazing isn't about getting an individual or group in trouble, it's about student safety and well-being.

Also, remember that hazing often occurs even if a person willingly participates.

## REPORT

If you believe someone is being hazed, report the behavior in as much detail as possible. Lack of detail severely limits the University's ability to respond to an allegation.

Important details include the following:

- Organization/group name
- When and where the event(s) or behavior(s) occurred
- You can upload videos, screenshots, or pictures in the reporting form
- Names of individuals involved (if known)
- How you became aware of the information

## [CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT A REPORT](#)

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS SUBMITTED?

1. Preliminary fact-finding (if additional information is needed)
2. Decision (move forward or keep as information only)
3. Formal fact-finding process (a duty of care/to respond exists based on the current information)
4. Analyze Findings (all information is compiled into an fact-finding report to provide a comprehensive story)

When the University receives allegations of alleged misconduct, the information will be reviewed by a conduct officer or appropriate staff member to determine the next steps. It is important to note that the reports are reviewed not to determine probability but to analyze the information provided and to determine if there is enough information to move forward.

Visit [hazing.sewanee.edu](https://hazing.sewanee.edu)  
for more information.