



# We Don't Haze

## COMPANION GUIDE

*We Don't Haze* is intended to help viewers gain a better understanding of hazing, its harmful consequences, and how groups, teams, and organizations can build bonds and traditions without hazing. Hazing is a complex phenomenon and while there are no simple solutions, there is much we can do to prevent hazing and its associated harm. *We Don't Haze* can be used as one tool among many to broaden understanding of hazing and propel widespread hazing prevention.



HAZING  
PREVENTION  
CONSORTIUM

*WE DON'T HAZE* COMPANION GUIDE

# Prevention Brief



# Why Should You Care About Hazing?

As portrayed in the film and underscored by countless news reports, hazing can have far-reaching and negative consequences for individuals, their families, student organizations, teams, schools, colleges, and universities. Ultimately, hazing is a community issue with ripple effects beyond the walls of the school, college, or university campus. It is critical that more young people and adults recognize hazing as a form of interpersonal violence—a type of abuse—that undermines the educational climates we need for all individuals to thrive (Srabstein, 2008; Srabstein et al., 2008).

**We all have a responsibility to make a difference by being informed about hazing and committing to hazing prevention.**

The co-curricular activities in which students experience hazing (e.g., athletics teams, performing arts groups, social clubs, honor societies) are living-learning laboratories for leadership development, shaping what people think about membership in groups. When students experience hazing in these settings, what are they learning about leadership? Hazing hinders the ability of budding community leaders to develop safe and healthy practices for engaging with and inspiring their peers—whether during their time in school, college, or later in their lives.

Hazing prevention is about working toward the kind of world in which we want to live—with the kinds of leaders we want to guide our future—strong leaders who have the skills to build cohesive groups with members who are engaged, feel empowered, and challenged to be the best they can be without having to subject peers to abuse in the name of “tradition,” or “bonding.”

As a community issue with far-reaching effects, we all have a responsibility to make a difference by being informed about hazing and committing to hazing prevention.

As a prevention tool, *We Don't Haze* can serve as a springboard for vital discussion among students, families, educators, and community members about hazing and its prevention. This companion guide is a resource for individuals who seek to understand and communicate effectively about hazing and to develop strategies to prevent hazing in educational contexts. We all have a role to play in preventing hazing—the efforts of students, family members, alumni, campus professionals, faculty, and other community members are vital to the prevention of hazing. As a product of institutional culture, hazing both reflects and is shaped by the communities in which it occurs. As such, everyone has a responsibility and unique opportunity to help transform a hazing culture.

Toward that end, this resource guide provides a research-based overview of hazing and an in-depth look at promising approaches to hazing prevention. It describes the importance of a comprehensive approach that addresses the problem at multiple levels and in multiple ways, and how this principle can be applied to hazing prevention in a school, college, or university context. This guide can help individuals in their efforts to understand hazing at their own institutions, to draw attention to the problem, and to work toward promoting effective, comprehensive approaches to prevention that are research-based and sustainable.

# Getting Started

Acknowledging that hazing occurs and that it can cause harm is an important first step for hazing prevention. All too often, hazing is misunderstood or minimized as simply pranks and antics. The tragic stories of loss shared in *We Don't Haze* by the DeVercelly family, Pamela and Robert Champion, and Marie Andre remind us that hazing can indeed be lethal. The personal accounts provided in the film illustrate humiliating, degrading, and abusive aspects of hazing. While the film aims to improve viewers' understanding of hazing, its ultimate goal is to be a resource for hazing prevention. Accounts provided by college students in the film highlight how positive non-hazing traditions and healthy group norms are possible. As one student, Chelsea, says in the film, *"It's on us to make a difference in the generation we are and to not think that hazing is a good tradition to keep going."*

One of the first steps in prevention is recognizing hazing when it occurs. To accomplish this, it is important to have a clear understanding of what hazing is—and isn't—and to acquire the skills needed to develop and sustain non-hazing activities in groups. Given this, the following section defines hazing and provides an in-depth discussion about factors that contribute to hazing and non-hazing environments.

## What is Hazing?

While hazing is reported in the news, headlines rarely tell the full story and often provide only a limited view of who was involved and the chain of events that led to the often tragic outcomes. Limited and distorted views of hazing impede effective communication and prevention. All individuals in a school or campus community have an important role to play in helping colleagues, students, and their families gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of what constitutes hazing and why.

**Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person's willingness to participate.**

Allan & Madden, 2008

When does an activity cross the line into hazing? The following three components (Allan, 2014) are key to understanding hazing:

1. **Group context:** Associated with the process for joining and maintaining membership in a group.
2. **Abusive behavior:** Activities that are potentially humiliating and degrading, with potential to cause physical, psychological and/or emotional harm.
3. **Regardless of an individual's willingness to participate:** The "choice" to participate may be offset by the peer pressure and coercive/power dynamics that often exist in the context of gaining membership in a group.

While most individuals tend to associate hazing with a group context (first component) and particular kinds of behaviors associated with being part of a peer group (second component), students often rationalize a particular behavior or fail to see it as hazing because "we gave people a choice of whether or not to do it." The issue of consent (third component) may thus require more explanation.

Relational power via peer pressure is a driving variable in all forms of hazing, whether it involves explicitly abusive or physically harmful behavior, or seemingly moderate or low risk forms of hazing that appear to be a practical aspect of initiating new members or to focus on harmless fun, humor, or pranks. The power of peer pressure coupled with a student's strong desire to belong to a group can create a coercive environment—and coercion limits free consent. Thus, while it may seem as though a person went along with an activity “willingly,” appearances can be deceiving when students perceive the activity as a “tradition” or “bonding” event connected to their ability to gain membership or maintain social standing in the group. So, let's be clear: Circumstances in which pressure or coercion exist impede true consent.

The degree of potential harm from hazing may be measured relative to particular behaviors and coercive elements, but relates just as importantly to the “hidden harm” of hazing (Apgar, 2013). Each individual comes to an incident of hazing with pre-existing personal experiences and varied capacities for dealing with stress. Over 20% of all adults and nearly 30% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 report dealing with some form of mental illness (e.g., depression, eating disorders, suicidal tendencies) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2021). A significant number of students arrive at college with a history of trauma, interpersonal violence, substance use, and other mental health issues (Langford, 2009). Whether apparent on the surface or known by others involved, these prior experiences influence the impact of hazing as well as the inclination to haze. How one person copes with and manages hazing or being hazed may be very different than for another person. And while physical harm may be observable to others, the emotional and psychological impact of hazing is often hidden or at least not readily observable.

### NATIONAL STUDY OF STUDENT HAZING

11,000+ survey responses

Survey responses from **53**  
college campuses nationwide.

**300+** personal interviews

Interviews conducted at **20+**  
colleges and universities in all  
regions of the United States

(Allan & Madden, 2008)

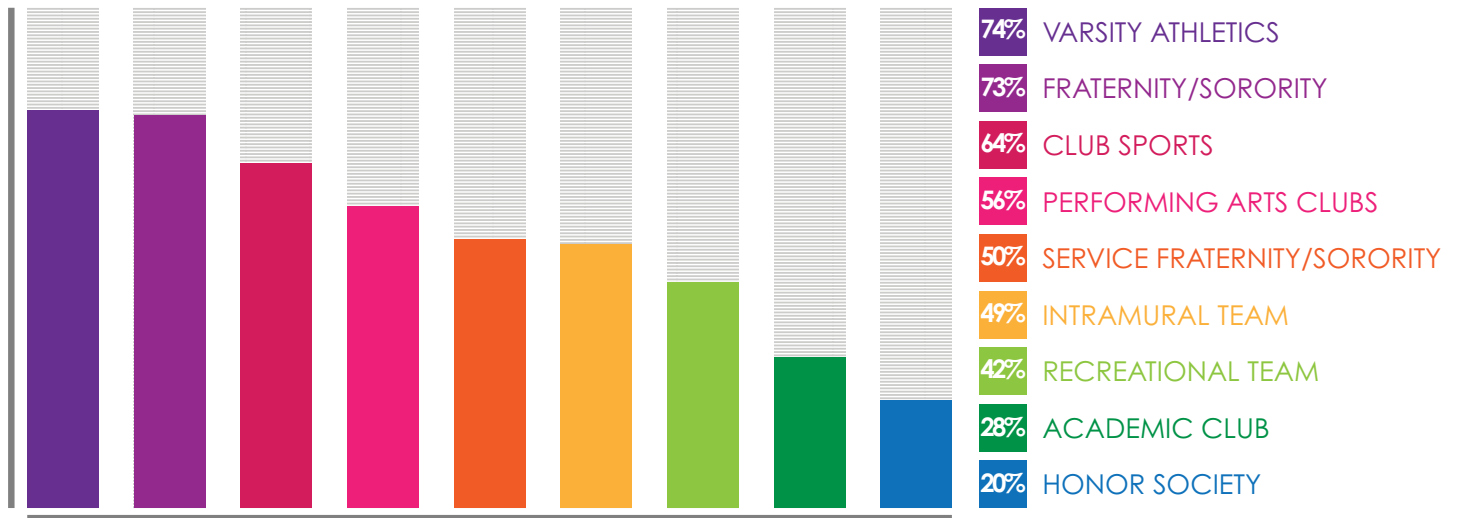
## What Do We Know from Research About the Nature & Extent of Hazing?

What comes to mind when you think of hazing?

When asked this question, people often cite prominent examples of hazing from popular culture or media. Many refer to the 1978 movie *Animal House* and associate hazing with only specific types of organizations such as fraternities, sororities, and athletic teams. Others may consider hazing to be atypical, inferring that it's not an issue within their community because they can point to high profile accounts portrayed in headlines that haven't occurred on their campus or at their school. We know from research, however, that these portraits don't tell the full story.

In actuality, hazing behaviors are not exceptional in the least, but are rather a part of campus and school culture that extends across many types of student organizations, not just those associated with Fraternity and Sorority Life and athletics. And experiences and cultural norms around hazing do not begin when students enter college. With just under 50% of students indicating they experienced hazing in high school (Allan & Madden, 2008; Hoover & Pollard, 2000), many college students arrive on their campuses with predispositions towards hazing and/or pre-existing challenges coping with being hazed. This conditioning may set the stage for what takes place during college.

# PERCENT OF STUDENTS THAT EXPERIENCE HAZING



Allan & Madden, 2008

## Findings from the National Study of Student Hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012):

- Approximately half of college (55%) and high school (47%) students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations report experiencing activities that meet the definition of hazing.
- Knowledge of hazing extends beyond the individuals participating in the behavior, with nearly seven out of ten students indicating that they were aware of groups hazing on their campus.
- Hazing cuts across racial identities and gender identities, meaning all students on campus are at risk for experiencing hazing.
- Hazing occurs across student groups:
  - » Varsity athletic teams (74%) and fraternities and sororities (73%) haze at the highest rates, but they are far from the only domains on campus where hazing is common.
  - » Groups such as club sports (64%), performing arts organizations (56%), service organizations (50%), intramural teams (49%), and recreation clubs (42%) all commonly engage in hazing behaviors.

Instances of hazing are often far from innocuous and research suggests that students are participating in high-risk and sometimes illegal behaviors to belong to student groups or teams. Troublingly, alcohol use, sexual harassment, and assault are frequently reported in hazing incidents. And while the physical harm entailed in these forms of hazing is highly visible and problematic, hazing also involves forms of psychological and emotional harm that are not necessarily apparent on the surface and that can be exceptionally complex to treat or address.

Across all types of college student groups, the most frequently reported hazing behaviors include:

## MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED HAZING BEHAVIORS



Allan & Madden, 2008

## Hazing: A Community Issue

Given the severe nature of many hazing activities, the physical, psychological, and emotional harm they can cause, and their prevalence throughout a wide-range of organizations, higher education and school communities would be well served by committing to efforts to prevent hazing. Hazing does not align with institutional missions and can result in outcomes such as death, damaged relationships, anger, resentment, and mistrust that can undermine the transformational benefits of participating in a group, team, or organization, as well as an educational community. From a practical standpoint, hazing response can also consume a significant portion of staff time and resources and stretch already thin budgets. Often, despite a willingness to address the issue of hazing, community members and educational practitioners believe that hazing occurs in areas shrouded in secrecy and isolation and they are unsure of how and where to begin addressing the problem.

Hazing, however, is not nearly as underground as many might think. Students indicated they were most likely to talk to their friends (48%), other group members (41%), and family members (26%) about participating in hazing behaviors (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). 25 percent of students surveyed perceived their coach or advisor to be aware of hazing, with some indicating that their coach or advisor was present and participated in the hazing activity. 25 percent of students also report that alumni were present during their hazing experiences and 36% indicate that some hazing behaviors occurred in a public space. Many students recognize that hazing is occurring on their campus, with 69% of students indicating that they had heard of campus organizations participating in hazing and 24% indicating they had witnessed hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012).

Taken together, these statistics indicate environments where students and other community members are seeing, expecting, and normalizing hazing. Students who wish to speak out against

and/or report hazing might lack the skills to do so, be unsure of where to go, or face considerable barriers such as retribution from their peers and becoming an outsider, amongst other negative consequences. Therefore, it is important that educational practitioners implement prevention initiatives that provide students, advisors, coaches, alumni, and general community members with the necessary knowledge and skills to recognize hazing and intervene.

## Key Challenges

The individuals profiled in *We Don't Haze*—including students and families—discuss the complex elements at play in hazing, highlight common misconceptions about hazing that may impede hazing prevention efforts, and outline why all members of educational communities must take responsibility for hazing prevention.

Prevention specialists know that the first step to preventing a problem like hazing is to recognize the behavior (Cornell Health, 2021). Doing so is especially difficult for hazing because of strong evidence that a gap exists between students' experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as such. 55% of students belonging to clubs, organizations, and teams experience hazing, yet only 9% say they were hazed (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). In other words, when asked directly, approximately nine out of ten students who experienced hazing do not consider themselves to have been hazed. Furthermore, of those students who identified their experience as hazing, the vast majority (95%) did not report it. This disconnect reflects a number of challenges related to hazing, including:

- Individuals may be more likely to recognize an activity as hazing if it involves physical harm. Emotional and psychological harm that can result from hazing is often hidden, minimized, or overlooked entirely. (See “The Spectrum of Hazing” on following page.)
- Hazing is commonly perceived as a positive part of group bonding rather than as a form of interpersonal violence.
- Students tend to overlook the problematic aspects of hazing if they perceive that the activity had a positive intent or outcome for themselves or the group.
- Hazing is often normalized as an inherent part of organizational culture that is accepted by the majority as related to tradition, initiation, rites of passage, group bonding, and youthful antics, pranks, and stunts.
- There is a lack of clarity around hazing, consent, and factors that create a coercive environment. Common perceptions include that if an individual goes along with a hazing activity or is given the choice whether or not to participate in a hazing activity, then the activity is not hazing.
- Students are challenged to reconcile the cognitive dissonance between their positive notions of group participation (i.e., cohesion, unity, and belonging mean that “my group wouldn't do anything to harm me”) and the negative concept that “hazing is harmful.” If hazing is the group norm but overall they believe their experience in the group is positive, how can hazing be harmful?

**Approximately nine out of ten students who experienced hazing do not consider themselves to have been hazed.**

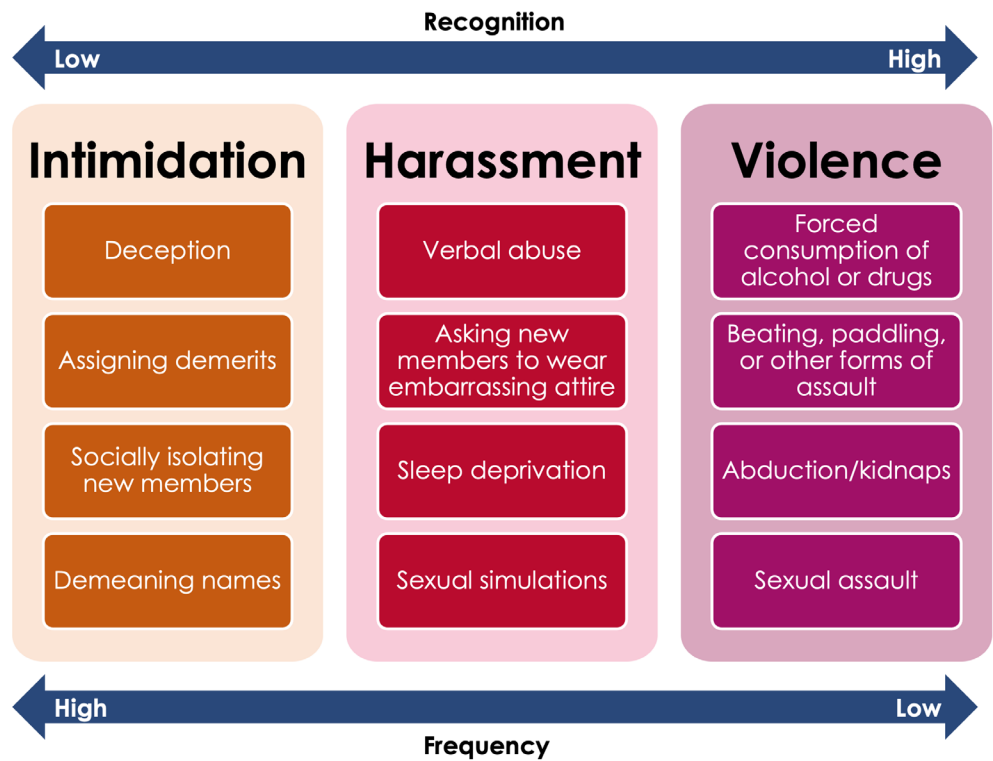
(Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012)



# The Spectrum of Hazing

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

View additional examples at <https://stophazing.org/issue>



Getting students, staff, faculty, guardians, family members, alumni, and community members to become more skilled at recognizing hazing involves sharpening their awareness to notice the full range of hazing behaviors. The figure above 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.

Theoretically, if we can increase recognition of the high frequency intimidation hazing behaviors that tend to be minimized as normal aspects of group culture, we can increase opportunities for intervention and group development of healthy norms and team-building activities. First, we must educate all community members about what hazing is (see the three-prong definition presented previously on page 5). Once they are able to identify hazing, we are then able to help them notice the forms of hazing that occur with greater frequency at a particular institution or school and help them intervene to put a stop to these types of behaviors. In doing so, we interrupt and begin to change group cultures. When intimidation forms of hazing are less accepted as an appropriate norm, extreme and high-risk forms of hazing become even more recognizable and unacceptable.

Hazing is a complex problem, embedded in campus and school culture and resistant to change (Allan et al., 2018). Since hazing occurs in—but is not limited to—activities associated with schools, colleges, and universities, educators and all members of educational communities have a key role to play in leading the way for hazing prevention.

# What Does a Comprehensive Approach to Hazing Prevention Look Like?

As a relatively new area of research and practice, hazing prevention builds off of established fields that address prevention of sexual assault, violence, and substance abuse, among other phenomena, as public health issues. This public health approach is informed by prevention science, in which strategies to intervene and prevent behaviors are grounded in theory and research. A foundational principle from prevention science is that effective and significant changes are generated by comprehensive prevention efforts that address the issue at multiple levels and through diverse strategies. Because hazing is a complex issue that reflects campus culture, there is no “one size fits all” solution.

A framework—a set of interrelated concepts or processes—is useful relative to public health issues like hazing in providing a guide or roadmap for research and practice. The Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF) (Allan et al., 2018) is based on key principles of prevention science such as the [Strategic Prevention Framework](#) (SAMHSA, 2019) and research findings from the [Hazing Prevention Consortium](#), a research-to-practice initiative to develop an evidence base for hazing prevention in a postsecondary context. The HPF visual depicts the eight components of the framework: Commitment, Capacity, Assessment, Planning, Evaluation, Cultural Competence, Sustainability, and Implementation. These components of the HPF should be carried out in conjunction with one another. Campuses and schools may place greater emphasis on certain components at a given time, but to be comprehensive, hazing prevention requires coordinated work on each of the components over time. As such, the HPF represents hazing prevention as an ongoing, iterative process.

- **Commitment:** Investment of human, financial, and structural resources and public endorsement of actions to foster a campus climate that is inhospitable to hazing.
- **Capacity:** Development of human and structural resources needed to effectively implement comprehensive, campus-wide hazing prevention in a college or university setting.
- **Assessment:** Use of multiple methods and sources to measure and characterize campus hazing within a given context.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The most effective violence prevention programs result from systematic planning efforts that involve multiple campus and community partners working together in a task force or coalition. Initial planning steps include assessing local assets, problems, and existing programs; reviewing national research; and collecting local data. The planning group then uses this information to guide the development of a strategic plan that is tailored to the needs and assets of the local campus community. Because a comprehensive plan will include multiple components, it is helpful to specify both immediate and longer-term goals to guide program implementation. In addition, it is important to build in a plan for evaluating program success. Finally, a key task of the strategic planning process is ensuring that all of the programs, policies, and services in the plan are coordinated and mutually reinforcing. (Langford, 2008)

**For planning tools, see the Campus Commitment Planning Resource in the [Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide](#).**



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- **Planning:** Use of assessment data to develop data driven, intentional, and measurable prevention goals, including the development of prevention strategies tailored to specific populations in a given context.
- **Evaluation:** Formal documentation of the process and impact of prevention strategies as a means to measure and promote strategies with evidence of efficacy.
- **Cultural Competence:** Understanding sociopolitical and other identity-based characteristics of students and student organizations, groups, and teams, and of the institutions and societal contexts in which they are situated.
- **Sustainability:** A process of maintaining commitment and momentum through persistent cultivation of programs, relationships, resources, and communication.
- **Implementation:** Use of specific strategies and approaches considered particularly promising for hazing prevention.

Along with the HPF, hazing prevention efforts should build on findings from prevention science research and focus on designing and testing varied prevention strategies, using rigorous evaluation efforts to measure what works most effectively for particular target audiences and institutional and school settings. The following section describes some of the principles that should guide hazing prevention work.

### COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION IS A MULTI-STEP PROCESS

As described previously, hazing prevention efforts should unfold through a combination of interrelated and integrated activities outlined in the Hazing Prevention

Framework. As with the Strategic Prevention Framework, no one element of the HPF is more important than another. Rather, each builds upon, supports, and enhances the others (SAMHSA, 2019). Unlike the Strategic Prevention Framework, however, a defining component of the HPF is commitment (Allan et al., 2018). More information on the HPF and the defining component of commitment can be found in the [Hazing Prevention Toolkit for Campus Professionals](#) and the [Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide](#).

Hazing prevention efforts should unfold through a combination of interrelated and integrated activities, as outlined in the HPF. Each element of the HPF builds up, supports, and enhances the others. Campus **commitment** to hazing prevention is reflected through visible messaging from campus and school leaders, transparency about hazing incident accountability, and the allocation of resources for hazing prevention. Hazing prevention guided by the HPF requires rigorous knowledge and staff time and effort, often requiring ongoing training to build **capacity** among key stakeholders so they have the necessary understanding and skills to work on hazing prevention. Some institutions hire consultants to conduct surveys and focus groups to **assess** the nature and extent of hazing at the institution or the campus hazing climate; provide guidance for managing a hazing prevention coalition, task force, or working group; and engage in a **planning** process

### Key characteristics of effective prevention identified for other public health issues likely apply to hazing as well, including:

- Varied teaching methods using multiple formats, content, and curricula
- Multiple and sustained dosage of prevention efforts over time (e.g. reliance on one-time programs is insufficient)
- Theory driven programs that build on tested principles
- Emphasis on positive relationships and outcomes (instead of negative focus)
- Programs that are matched to characteristics of a target population
- Appropriately timed interventions have maximal impact
- Socioculturally relevant to cultural characteristics of institution and target populations
- Outcome evaluation used to measure impact and improve
- Well-trained staff with knowledge and skill to address and prevent hazing

(Nation et al., 2003)

to design customized hazing prevention strategies. Campus staff often oversee **implementation** of prevention activities, though some bring in facilitators to provide trainings and programs. **Evaluation** is a critical part of designing prevention efforts and measuring their impact—institutions and schools may utilize members of their faculty and staff or receive help from external evaluation experts to develop and conduct rigorous evaluations.

**Cultural competency** in hazing prevention relates not only to understanding campus culture, but to the ways in which race, ethnicity, gender, and other socioeconomic indicators shape the culture, values and expectations of individuals, groups, and institutions. Finally, focused attention to strategies to ensure prevention efforts are **sustainable** becomes essential with regard to allocation of staff time and resources and the financial aspects of maintaining comprehensive prevention programs.

Each element of the HPF is a building block for effective prevention. And given the complexity of each element in terms of knowledge, time, and resources, the HPF process is a long-term endeavor. Hazing prevention is multi-layered, multi-dimensional and necessarily unfolds differently from one organization to another.

#### **HAZING IS A PART OF INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE**

Efforts to prevent hazing that engage and resonate with institutional culture will be most effective. And since contributing factors that feed into hazing vary from one institution to another, there is no “one-size fits all” solution. Collection of data to assess campus climate and culture is critical. The culture of an institution can both reinforce and protect against hazing – meaning that some aspects of institutional culture are assets to build upon for prevention, while others present barriers to achieving a hazing-free campus. For instance, students on one campus may value a high level of participation and leadership in student-led organizations, or in another, students may value maintenance of long-held campus traditions. Participation in anti-hazing activities can be incentivized as a unique opportunity for student leadership or a chance to establish and uphold healthy campus traditions.

Often, however, institutional assets may also feed into a climate that supports hazing. For example, emphasis on student-led organizations may lead to less involvement by professional staff in the organization's activities, increasing the likelihood that hazing may take place. Emphasis on tradition may incline campus stakeholders to more readily normalize hazing as “part of tradition.” Prevention efforts must therefore also engage these aspects of the culture. For instance, staff presence might be boosted for some student organizations or more focus could be placed on mentoring and conducting trainings to promote ethical leadership skills for student leaders of organizations. Institutional messaging could explicitly reframe the meanings of tradition in ways that protect against hazing by emphasizing traditions of ethical decision-making, positive group bonding, and student engagement in campus safety. Prevention strategies that build off of rigorous assessments of campus culture and institutional hazing climate and respond in nuanced ways to the complex cultural values and perceptions at play in any community work best.

#### **WHO IS INCLUDED ON THE CAMPUS HAZING PREVENTION TEAM?**

As a starting point, we recommend representatives (campus staff, students, and others) from the following stakeholder groups:

- Athletics
- Fraternities/Sororities
- Performing Arts groups
- Student Activities
- Recreation Sports & Intramurals
- Residence Life
- ROTC
- Counseling Centers
- Health & Student Wellness
- Student Conduct Office
- Faculty (especially those who may have research or content expertise, e.g., sociology, psychology, organizational behavior)
- Parents
- Alumni
- Local community members
- Campus & community law enforcement

**It takes multiple stakeholders to establish effective hazing prevention initiatives.** No one person, agency, or division can single handedly change a community or institutional culture. Lessons learned through efforts to prevent violence and high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse have shown that in order to be relevant, effective, and comprehensive, prevention must involve multiple stakeholders. Engagement by broad sectors of an educational community—including educational leaders, senior administrators, faculty, staff from varied departments, students, family members, and alumni—ensures that efforts reach across multiple organizational levels and divisions in the institution. Inclusion of these stakeholders in hazing prevention coalitions means that people with diverse roles and insights have a central part in developing and implementing hazing prevention. Widespread participation increases the likelihood that efforts to address hazing utilize a combination of strategies and target a range of audiences and aspects of the problem. Engagement by stakeholders—especially students—who are targeted in prevention efforts is a critical step in ensuring the relevance of tone, format, content, and delivery used in prevention efforts.

**Engage stakeholders in problem analysis.** Comprehensive prevention requires a systematic analysis of the problem of hazing and a rigorous method of defining intervention responses. Prevention practitioners use a “social ecological model” to guide planning of prevention activities targeted to the multiple levels at which hazing occurs—from the individual level, to the group, the wider institution, the community surrounding the institution, and the larger society of which the institution is a part. Institutions commonly focus efforts on one level only, for instance by establishing anti-hazing policies for student groups but not providing educational resources to individual members or communicating clearly or getting buy-in from alumni and family members in the broader community. By contrast, in a comprehensive approach, hazing is understood and prevention strategies are targeted at all levels after conducting a problem analysis.

## Social Ecological Model

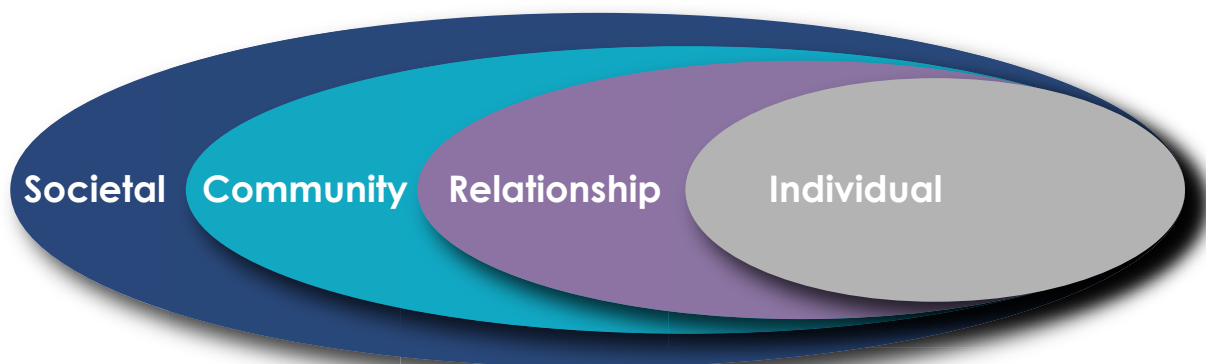


Image: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. (2021, March 8). [The Social-Ecological Model](#). Violence Prevention. (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002)

A problem analysis involves mining available assessment data for each level of the social ecological model to identify the contributing “risk factors” that increase the likelihood of hazing and the “protective factors” that reduce the likelihood of hazing. Prevention efforts focus on intervening in the chain of events that lead to hazing, with the aim of reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors at each level of the model. Hazing is most likely to occur in settings where a convergence of factors is at play, for example, where there is a combination of high alcohol use, attitudes that tolerate hierarchies among students, and minimal supervision by professional staff. With a clear understanding of the interplay among risk and protective factors, practitioners can more readily design strategies that address the multiple contributing factors for hazing. **For planning tools, see the Campus Commitment Planning Resource in the [Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide](#).**

## Examples of Hazing Risk and Protective Factors

Social Ecological Level	Protective Factors	Risk Factors
<b>Individuals</b> Attitudes, beliefs, prior experiences, and behaviors among individuals within the institution (e.g., students, staff, faculty, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that hazing is abusive and unnecessary for group bonding</li> <li>• Belief that you should treat others as you wish to be treated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that hazing is a positive way to create group bonding</li> <li>• Belief that, "If I've been hazed, then I get to haze others."</li> </ul>
<b>Group/Peer</b> Perceived norms, structures, and activities that establish group bonding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that most group members disapprove of hazing</li> <li>• Group emphasis on safe socializing without alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that most group members approve of hazing</li> <li>• Group emphasis and valorization of socializing and high-risk drinking</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional</b> Campus systems, climate, leadership, programs, policies, resources, and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communication and consistent enforcement of hazing policies</li> <li>• Strong staff mentoring and oversight of student groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disjointed communication and inconsistent enforcement of hazing policies</li> <li>• Minimal or inconsistent staff mentoring and oversight of all student groups</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b> Structures and norms in larger institutional community, including alumni, family members, and local community institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominent alumni and community members speak out against hazing</li> <li>• Parent engagement in and awareness of campus-based anti-hazing activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominent alumni and community members condone hazing</li> <li>• Lack of parent participation and awareness of campus-based anti-hazing activities</li> </ul>
<b>Policy/Society</b> Laws and policies at larger societal level that govern social structures and norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong state hazing law and enforcement</li> <li>• Federally mandated assessment, policy, and enforcement of campus hazing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of state hazing laws and enforcement</li> <li>• Lack of federal mandates and attention on campus hazing</li> </ul>

(see also Langford, 2009).

By reaching across varied levels of an institution in a systematic way, this approach promotes hazing prevention initiatives that are integrated and synergistic—where interventions in one area reinforce and are reinforced by those in another. For instance, educating students about healthy, non-hazing ways to build group cohesion (individual level) may help to reinforce team or organization norms that are not supportive of hazing (group level), which is also strengthened by strong institutional leadership statements and protocols to address hazing incidents and enforce anti-hazing policies (institutional level).

### GATHER DATA AND FACILITATE A PROBLEM ANALYSIS PROCESS WITH YOUR HAZING PREVENTION COALITION

Not everyone in campus stakeholder groups or hazing prevention coalitions will be knowledgeable about hazing so it is important to provide them with accurate information about the nature and extent of hazing among students, the Hazing Prevention Framework, and a general foundation in prevention science (see resource list on page 24). Once group members have a clear understanding of what hazing is and why it needs to be prevented, it is important to gather and examine available local data about hazing in the context of an institution.

While it is increasingly common for colleges and universities to use surveys and interviews to gather information about student hazing experiences, these kinds of data are not always available at the outset and coalition groups may need to rely on other sources initially. Institutions can begin by gathering information about the number of formal and informal reports of hazing, talking with Student Conduct staff about characteristics of recent incidents, and brainstorming with coalition members and members of the broader community about aspects of the campus culture that may be connected to hazing. We know from research in other fields that certain kinds of campus environments are associated with increased likelihood of violence or high-risk alcohol use, so we can hypothesize that certain types of campus environments are more prone to hazing as well. A key question then is how do we change the environments that promote and support hazing?

## A key question is, “How do we change the environments that promote and support hazing?”

As stakeholder groups engage in the problem analysis process, it is vital for members to envision the chain of events that likely leads to hazing at their institution. There may be multiple pathways depending on the type of groups involved in hazing, however, articulating the chain of events will help maintain a focus on primary prevention (changing the underlying conditions that lead to hazing) rather than simply intervention and response. The latter are important, but because they take place when hazing has or may have already occurred, they are tertiary prevention strategies.

Traditionally, most campus and school hazing prevention efforts have been activity-based (e.g., bringing a speaker to campus or hosting a program) rather than strategic and targeted (Langford, 2009). To be more effective, we need to help stakeholder groups begin by asking, “What are we trying to change?” rather than “What are we going to do?” The latter question will be best answered when there is enhanced understanding of the chain of events, including the risk and protective factors, that are likely involved in hazing. In summary, it is vital to engage a stakeholder group to complete the following preliminary tasks:

- Review available campus data related to hazing;
- Conduct an environmental scan by discussing local problems and resources related to hazing and its prevention and identify changes needed;
- Analyze chain of events that likely leads to hazing; and
- Identify risk and protective factors at multiple levels (individual, relational/group, institutional, community, society).

As institutions commit to moving forward, hazing prevention efforts gain greater momentum when rigorous assessments of campus climate for hazing take place. Surveys on student experiences and perceptions of hazing and hazing norms allow for precise and targeted problem analysis. Interviews and focus groups with students, staff and faculty provide nuanced insight into institutional values and culture associated with hazing.

There are multiple creative ways for campuses to approach the assessment of their hazing culture, whether with minimal or extensive resources. However some form of targeted assessment is essential if campuses are committed to addressing the underlying causes of hazing.

# Emerging Evidence-Driven Strategies for Hazing Prevention

In an effort to contribute to building an evidence base for hazing prevention, beginning in 2013, StopHazing partnered with eight universities (Cornell University, Lehigh University, Texas A&M University, University of Arizona, University of Central Florida, University of Kentucky, University of Maine, and the University of Virginia), to form the first cohort of the [Hazing Prevention Consortium \(HPC\)](#). In the HPC, university staff receive expert consultations to develop comprehensive hazing prevention initiatives tailored to their unique campus culture. The HPC serves as a testing ground for design and evaluation of effective prevention strategies and informed the development of the Hazing Prevention Framework. Members receive training in all aspects of the HPF and use the social ecological model to develop integrated initiatives using a combination of core prevention strategies that have been tested in other prevention fields, including:

**Visible campus ethical leadership statement:** Development and widespread dissemination of statements from campus leaders articulating positive campus values and encouragement of student attitudes and behaviors inhospitable to hazing while supporting ethical leadership and positive group experiences.

**Example:** The President of the college or university provides a public statement to make it clear that hazing is not an acceptable practice, is not in alignment with the mission of the institution, and that ethical leadership from student leaders is expected, encouraged, and developed at the institution. The statement is presented as part of new student orientation and included on the campus website along with hazing policies and procedures for reporting and enforcement. **For an example of this type of public statement, see the Sample Letter from Campus Leadership in the Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide.**

**Coalition-building:** Establishment of a hazing prevention coalition or team with stakeholders from across multiple divisions and levels of the organization (including students) with a mandate to lead institutional efforts in hazing prevention. Coalitions meet regularly and gain expertise in hazing prevention. Coalitions also oversee campus hazing assessments; the stages of planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of prevention strategies; and work to bolster sustainability of hazing prevention efforts.

**Example:** A campus hazing prevention coalition is established, with members appointed by and a charge from the institution's President or executive level leadership. Meetings are held on a monthly basis of the entire group, with additional meetings for subgroups focused on assessment and evaluation, commitment and capacity building, policy and procedure review, educational program design and implementation, and sustainability.

**Policy and protocol reviews:** Regular review and refinement of institutional policies on hazing and procedures for addressing hazing incidents, with an emphasis on widespread dissemination and accessibility, confidential reporting, consistent response protocols, referral systems, professional staff roles, and transparency.

**Example:** Based on a review of hazing incidents, interviews with Student Conduct staff, and a search of other campus resources, campus stakeholders collaborate on revising a hazing policy and their institutional website to include a clear definition of hazing; a statement of the hazing policy; resources on prevention; information on reporting; protocols for enforcement, response, and accountability; and a list of staff contacts for referrals and questions.



**Training for student organization advisors, athletic coaches, residence life staff, student leaders, etc.:** Programs, presentations, workshops, and activities to educate and engage stakeholders in building knowledge and awareness of hazing and developing skills to prevent hazing and intervene effectively when it occurs.

**Example:** A campus with a strong student leadership tradition includes trainings on ethical leadership and hazing prevention for all incoming students, with regular supplemental trainings for students in group leadership positions that emphasize strategies for identifying group values, developing positive group bonding activities, and strengthening bystander intervention.

**Social norms messaging:** Dissemination of research-based information regarding institutional or campus hazing norms, addressing misperceptions regarding prevalence of values, beliefs and engagement related to hazing, with focus on positive norms that counteract and are alternatives to hazing.

**Example:** Based on survey data, a campus stakeholder group that includes students develops a [social norms poster campaign](#) reporting on the percentage of students who believe it is not cool to use coercion or abusive behavior to initiate new members, with posters placed in residence halls, on digital screens, in cafeteria table settings, and on bookstore bookmarks, and complementary sessions run jointly by staff and student leaders about positive group norms.

**Bystander Intervention:** [Education, training programs](#), and social norms messaging supporting students, staff, family members, and other community members in developing skills to intervene as bystanders to prevent hazing.

**Example:** As part of student organization and athletic team orientation activities, student leaders are trained to facilitate discussion on the five stages of bystander intervention—1) Notice behavior, 2) Interpret behavior as a problem, 3) Recognize one's responsibility to intervene, 4) Develop skills needed to intervene safely, and 5) Take action—and engage group members in role-play exercises and follow-up discussions about their roles as bystanders.

**Communication to broader campus community:** Development and dissemination of information on hazing and hazing prevention efforts to stakeholders outside of the immediate institution, including online resources, newsletters, trainings and other programs targeted to alumni, family and guardians, and other people and organizations in the local community.

**For more information on how to communicate with the broader campus community, see the Strategies for Engaging Families and Strategies for Engaging Students in the Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide.**

**Example:** Drawing upon available campus resources and data, student affairs staff and senior administrators host and circulate a bi-monthly online newsletter to families regarding hazing and hazing prevention activities, including the definition of hazing, explanation of hazing policies and reporting procedures, information on how to be a bystander, and ways to be involved in campus prevention efforts.

Members of the HPC continue to identify numerous lessons learned through the prevention efforts on their campuses. Some of these lessons learned include:

- **Role of senior administrators.** Having high level support and engagement from administrative leaders is essential to generating institutional will, momentum, legitimacy and sustainability of hazing prevention initiatives.
- **Prevention staff positions.** Campuses that create permanent staff positions to oversee hazing prevention efforts and/or have multiple staff members with hazing prevention as part of their job descriptions have greater capacity to leverage momentum and make progress. Staff on campuses where hazing is folded into other initiatives and prevention efforts (such as those for sexual assault and substance use) may lack sufficient time to address hazing in a comprehensive way because of competing demands on their time.
- **Building a hazing prevention coalition.** Creating an effective coalition and generating buy-in from key stakeholders takes time, relationship-building, clear incentives and a strong mandate from leadership. Effective coalitions establish regular, frequent and sustained meeting schedules and typically create subcommittees to lead various aspects of a comprehensive approach. Irregular schedules and infrequent attendance of members at meetings slows momentum and focus. Incorporating shared leadership (e.g., co-chairs or tri-chairs) representing different functional units on campus has shown more promise for sustaining momentum of the coalition.
- **Relationship-building and collaboration.** Staff leading hazing prevention efforts who build strong relations with executive leaders as well as with directors of divisions where hazing takes place—e.g., residential life divisions, Fraternity and Sorority life, athletics—have greater success getting buy-in and collaborating with key staff leaders to communicate clearly and regularly with students about hazing. Strong joint engagement among leaders conveys institutional commitment and deepens messaging and potential impact of hazing prevention efforts while also elevating visibility of staff who can be resources for students when incidents of hazing occur.
- **Widespread and diverse staff engagement.** Maintaining momentum on hazing is challenging when campus stakeholders who need to be involved are already devoting time and energy to other pressing demands and health issues (e.g., sexual violence, alcohol, and mental health). Synergy among campus prevention efforts and careful planning around staff responsibilities is essential to maintaining strong, consistent and well-rounded representation across stakeholder groups.
- **Development of hazing prevention evaluation.** Establishing a rigorously conducted evidence base is a long-term process. Most evaluation approaches—such as surveys, focus group protocols, and use of experimental and control groups to assess impact—take multiple iterations to test and refine. Evaluation may thus best be thought of as an ongoing process to inform continual improvement and impact assessment. Incremental growth of knowledge about hazing and hazing prevention efforts on a campus is an instrumental part of capturing high-level buy-in and support for the comprehensive prevention.

### What key ingredients should inform campus public statements & social messaging on hazing?

Here are 10 principles of effective messaging:

- Reflect the language of the target audience
- Speak to the audience's core values
- State facts and statistics
- Use a positive message
- Be action oriented and offer solutions
- Tell a story
- Promote positive social norms
- Highlight power dynamics and abuse of power hazing
- Present hazing as a community problem, not an individual problem
- Don't underestimate the power of social media

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2015

- **Focus on proactive trainings that are skill-based.** Engaging students in analyzing their culture, traditions, and practices in a low-pressure environment (i.e., one separate from intensive efforts to react to hazing incidents) is best for helping them think about and generate buy-in for reducing risk factors and boosting protective factors in their organizations, groups, and teams. It is vital to create space and provide support for students to lead the development of healthy traditions and non-hazing alternatives to building group cohesion. It is also essential for professional staff to work with students to ensure they acquire and practice new skills that will help them to be change agents.
- **Balance of focus on both high and low risk student groups.** Hazing prevention focused on high-risk groups such as varsity athletics, Fraternity and Sorority life, and club sports is necessary and strategic initially, but is insufficient for building sustained and comprehensive prevention. Building on data about where hazing occurs, initiatives need to grow to target a broader spectrum of groups as well as the general population of students.
- **Documentation of the hazing prevention process.** Because hazing prevention is a long-term commitment, documentation of the process is essential to learning and improvement—including identification of lessons learned, establishment of best practices, and measurement of impact. Engaging key stakeholders to reflect on accomplishments and how the process has progressed is essential for identifying next steps and assessing how goals are being met in order to sustain momentum.
- **The prevention process is not linear.** Comprehensive hazing prevention is an iterative and synergistic process, one that is neither linear nor predictable. A prevention strategy may be piloted and, based on evaluation data, revised, but then reformulated again based on a change in staffing or organizational structure. Evaluation tools may be tested and go through numerous refinements before they seem to work effectively. And by then, new data may call for new tools. With so many variables at play impacting hazing, tracking lessons learned and maintaining flexibility to adapt to changes in response, circumstance, staffing, and climate is essential.
- **The starting point is wherever you are.** Every institution has to assess where they can begin and who should be involved to initiate concerted efforts to address hazing. And just as hazing is a reflection of campus culture, the hazing prevention process will likewise be a reflection of institutional assets as well as barriers. Real movement forward requires solid grounding in the realities and character of each campus.
- **Comprehensive prevention is the goal but emergent prevention is the norm.** Despite the many guidelines presented here for broad-based and far-reaching hazing prevention, in reality, most campuses move forward on multiple fronts, but do so unevenly and with constant awareness that there is more that could and should be done. None of the campuses that have been or are currently a part of the Hazing Prevention Consortium moved forward with all core strategies, evaluated every prevention strategy, or worked across all levels of the social ecology. Rather, each HPC member deals with complex contingencies, establishes priorities that necessitate holding off on addressing certain domains, and moves forward as best they can. So while a synergistic, integrated and systematic approach on all levels of the social ecology, utilizing all elements of the Hazing Prevention Framework is an ideal, the institutional norm entails staff working with limited resources to move hazing prevention forward as effectively as possible while tracking lessons learned along the way.

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- **Clearly defined milestones, structures, and timeframes help institutions stay on track and move forward.** Because it is easy for staff who oversee hazing prevention efforts to get sidetracked by other demands on their time, being responsible to complete and report out on a progression of predefined tasks helps them maintain focus and a steadier pace than might otherwise be possible. Some campuses generate their own plans, while others work with outside organizations to get assistance defining and meeting milestones. Whichever approach an institution chooses to take, the importance of establishing a plan of hazing prevention activities and timeframes for delivery, evaluation, and reporting cannot be underestimated. In addition to defining a trajectory for moving forward, clearly defined plans allow those involved to measure how and when they are reaching stated goals, to be clear about when goals need to shift, and to mark hard-won accomplishments along the way. **For planning tools, see the Campus Commitment Planning Resource in the Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention Action Guide.**

## Next Steps for *We Don't Haze*

The objective of this companion guide is to provide educators, students, family members, and community members with a basic background in hazing and hazing prevention that will deepen their understanding of *We Don't Haze*. How can you use the film and the information we have provided to help students, family members, alumni, and other stakeholders on your campus or at your school understand and address hazing?

The *We Don't Haze* Discussion and Activity Guides provide a starting point for building off of the film to instigate meaningful dialogue and reflection about hazing. Finding ways to help student groups—especially those at risk for hazing—engage in ongoing conversations about the themes from the film is essential. Working with established student leadership and governance groups is an obvious place to begin. While each campus and school has its own unique culture, some of these groups include: captains of athletic teams and other athlete leadership groups, presidents of fraternities and sororities and other governance councils associated with Fraternity and Sorority life, ROTC, and presidents and leaders of honor and performing arts groups. At the same time, student groups who have some training as peer facilitators (e.g., RAs, orientation leaders, peer educators) can be vital in assisting or leading these conversations with peers. In addition to learning about hazing, these conversations can provide an opportunity to explore individual and group motivations for participating in and maintaining hazing traditions. Establishing trust and a non-judgmental atmosphere are paramount for honest conversations about hazing.

As students gain more clarity about their own motivations to participate in hazing, and how they believe hazing helps to achieve particular goals, facilitators can help them to reflect on the extent to which hazing aligns with their own values, the values and purpose of their group, and the mission of their college or university. Once the motivations and goals for hazing are drawn out, facilitators can guide students in brainstorming non-hazing strategies for achieving the same goals. In the process, the group can discuss the relative merits of each proposed strategy and rank them in terms of their feasibility. If there is positive energy around one or more strategies, the facilitator can guide the group in discussing an action plan for testing the new activity.

Similar activities can be developed for use with staff, teachers, faculty, and alumni who interface regularly with students in environments where hazing might occur. For these constituents, discussion on the film might focus on definitions of hazing and possible contributing factors for hazing on your campus or at your school. But the film might also be used as a platform for conversation about incidents of hazing at your institution as well as the policies and procedures that are in place to address incidents of hazing.

**The creation of living and learning environments free of hazing and other forms of interpersonal violence is the ultimate goal. This vision requires a cultural shift that moves beyond intervention and towards shaping communities where healthy group bonding and traditions are the norm and where civility, honor, respect, honesty, and nonviolence are cornerstones of student decision-making.**

# Wrapping Up & Moving Forward

Hazing is an emerging field of research and prevention practice. Those of us invested in hazing prevention still have a great deal to learn about the nature of hazing, challenges in hazing prevention, building healthy groups and teams, and promising strategies for substantial transformation away from a culture of hazing. We've underscored here how important it is to counter prevalent misunderstanding of hazing with clear communication and discussion about the definition and power dynamics of hazing. We've provided information about the prevalence of hazing on college campuses and high schools and suggested that as a phenomenon that affects entire campus and school communities, hazing is a community issue and we all have a role to play in preventing it. Knowledge gained from ongoing research-to-practice efforts in the HPC point to numerous overarching principles and models for prevention, including the Hazing Prevention Framework and the social ecological model, which provide guidelines and structures for how to proceed. The lessons learned are offered as insights for others wishing to engage in a committed approach to hazing prevention, with the knowledge that each institution will inevitably find their own lessons along the way.

The urgency to address hazing, so powerfully captured by family members, students, and scholars presented in *We Don't Haze*, means that wherever an institution is in the process of establishing awareness and response to the issue, the time is now to begin the essential work of ensuring that students can participate in educational environments that are free of hazing.

## Author Information

This second edition PDF is adapted from the original *We Don't Haze* Companion Brief for Campus Professionals (2015) authored by:

Elizabeth Allan, Ph.D. | Principal of StopHazing and Professor of Higher Education at the University of Maine

Jessica Payne, Ph.D. | Founder and lead researcher of Jessica Payne Consulting

David Kerschner, Ph.D. | Post-Doctoral Fellow for Research and Evaluation at StopHazing

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## Additional Prevention Resources

- [Hazing Prevention Framework \(HPF\) Toolkit for Campus Professionals](#)
- [Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention: Action Guide](#)
- [Hazing Prevention Workshop Facilitator Guides](#)
- [Cornell Hazing Social Norms Campaign](#)
- [Cornell "Intervene" Bystander Campaign](#)
- [A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework](#)
- [Connecting The Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence](#)
- [What Works in Prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs](#)
- [Strategic Planning for Prevention Professionals on Campus](#)
- [Building Healthy Groups & Teams](#)
- [A Grassroots Guide to Fostering Healthy Norms to Reduce Violence in our Communities: Social Norms Toolkit](#)

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# Get the full *We Don't Haze Companion Guide*!

Updated in 2022, the *We Don't Haze Companion Guide* provides you with the tools to educate yourself and your community about campus hazing and facilitate programming for students, staff, and faculty using the short documentary film, *We Don't Haze*.

The *We Don't Haze Companion Guide* includes:

- A **Prevention Brief** highlighting what research teaches us about hazing on campus and emerging evidence-driven strategies for hazing prevention;
- A **Discussion Guide for Students** and a **Discussion Guide for Faculty/Staff** to use in tandem with *We Don't Haze*;
- A **Bystander Intervention Guide** with strategies for intervening against hazing; and
- A **Workshop and Activity Guide** for optional activities to incorporate into *We Don't Haze* programming.

You can download the rest of the *Companion Guide* a la carte or as a whole at [clerycenter.org/hazing](https://clerycenter.org/hazing) or [stophazing.org/we-dont-haze](https://stophazing.org/we-dont-haze).

## *We Don't Haze*

*We Don't Haze* is a short documentary film created by Clery Center and StopHazing, which helps identify hazing behaviors and offers organization leaders alternative traditions that promote a safer, more positive team-building experience. Learn more about the film and get the supplemental resources at [clerycenter.org/initiatives/hazing-project](https://clerycenter.org/initiatives/hazing-project).

## Use of Materials

StopHazing and Clery Center strive to make many of its resources free of cost and available to the public. If you would like to use or share any of these resources, please use the citations to properly credit our work and please read Clery Center's [Usage Guidelines](#).



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