

my sister  
my responsibility



a program by zeta tau alpha  
teaching social responsibility

# The Blame Game: A Question of Accountability

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## **Learning Objectives:**



1. To decide the level of responsibility for each person in a situation involving alcohol
2. To apply the values of the organization to real-life actions
3. To engage in debate around the topic of accountability
4. To identify and list applicable campus and community resources

## **Technical Requirements:**



Flip chart and markers

## **Handouts:**



One scenario handout for each group member

## **Time Needed:**

45 minutes

## **Group Size:**

Any group size will work. The large group will be divided up into three smaller groups for an activity.

## **Physical Setting:**

Make sure there is a large enough space to break the participants in smaller groups where they can discuss the activity together.

## **Preparation:**

There are three scenarios associated with this activity. Each scenario is the same, except for the description of Sarah. It is important that the groups do not make this realization until the discussion/reflection part of the activity.

## **INTRODUCTION (25 minutes)**

*The facilitator should introduce himself/herself, welcome and thank everyone for attending the session.*



In a moment, I am going to distribute a scenario to your group. This is a fictitious story about a sister named Sarah. Take a moment to read the scenario to yourself. After reading, take a moment to rank the characters based on how responsible you think they are for what occurred in the scenario. This process should take less than 10 minutes.



When everyone in your group has finished this step, take the next 15 minutes to come up with a group ranking for all the characters.

*As the groups discuss their ranking, walk around the room and make notes about what you hear to use during the reflection/discussion time. Give time prompts for the groups to let them know how much time remains at five minutes, two minutes, and a wrap up discussion warning.*



*Before the discussion is over, prepare the whiteboard/flip chart by writing each character's name on the board. By each name, there should be a column for each group's rank for that character. After the discussion has concluded, one person from each group will report to the entire chapter.*

Now that each group has ranked each character, let's see how everyone ended up. Will one person from each group let me know what rank you assigned each character?

*Start with the first group and go around the room to record the ranking order for each group. This should not involve any reasoning/explanation from the reporter, just the listing of the order. Chart these on the flip chart.*

*At some point in the discussion, it will become evident to the groups that Sarah is described differently in the scenarios. Once this realization comes to light, you may begin to engage the audience in the reflection/discussion questions listed "after discovery." Before the "after discovery" reflection/discussion begins, have one group member from each group read their description of Sarah.*

## **REFLECTION & DISCUSSION (15 minutes)**



*Ask the following questions to help participants process the activity:*

### **Before and/or After Discovery**

- Why did your group assign the ranking that it did?
- What information grabbed your attention in this scenario?
- Is there anything that someone in this scenario could have done to be of better assistance to Sarah?
- Where could you have intervened in this scenario? What would you say to Sarah when you did intervene?
- How did you feel about the comments around alcohol? What would you do if you heard a sister described like this?
- Should this be a chapter concern (Judicial Committee)? If so, at what point?
- What could be done to prevent this from becoming a chapter concern?

### **In preparation:**

- Divide the participants into three equal groups before beginning the workshop.
- If the groups are larger than 10 members, divide each group into smaller, equal sub-groups.
- Make sure the groups are far enough from each other so that they cannot hear the discussion from the other groups.

- Have you or someone you know been involved in a similar situation? What did you do for yourself or your friend in that situation?
- What are the campus resources to which you could have directed Sarah? Community resources?



### **After Discovery**

- Should the different Sarahs be treated differently? Why or why not?
- How does the interaction with Catherine change based on the different Sarahs?
- How do you feel about what happened in the scenario?
- What values of our organization are being compromised in the scenario? *(If only initiated members are present, bring in the aspect of living the values taught in the Ritual. If new members are presented, discuss living the values in The Creed.)*

### **WRAP UP (5 minutes)**



It is important for each of us to realize that we are ultimately responsible for our actions, but we should never feel alone. There are resources available to us at multiple levels (individuals, the chapter, the university, the community).



What are some of these resources that we can use for help?

Also, we should be aware of how our actions reflect upon us as individuals and us as members of our organization. While Sarah's scenario may seem extreme, it is completely plausible and avoidable. There were several times when multiple people could have intervened to potentially help Sarah avoid the outcome. We should all remember it's our individual and collective responsibility to help another person in need. Each one of us could make the difference.

## The Blame Game: A Question of Accountability

### Scenario Group 1

Your chapter is currently at the bottom of the Greek GPA list for State University. As a result, the academic achievement chairman, with the backing of the Executive Committee, has made it clear to the chapter that academics will be the focus of this semester. In fact, a rule was implemented that required all sisters to achieve at least a 2.75 GPA for the semester. Any sister that made below this average would be placed on social probation, and any new members below the GPA would not be initiated.

Sarah is currently a new member of the chapter. She is a second-semester freshman and is very eager and excited about being a sister. She was elected president of her new member class and helped design the T-shirts and advertisement for a spring breast cancer awareness service event. She is well-liked by a majority of the sisters.

Sarah is currently enrolled in a 101 public speaking class. The class meets one night a week. The professor stressed the importance of being in attendance at each class and stated that missing class will have "an adverse affect on your final grade." Jane, a less involved sister and second-semester senior, is also in the class.

During the fourth week of class, Sarah went to her Big Sister and let her know that she was having some problems with her boyfriend. Sarah said the problems were starting to affect her ability to focus on school work. Her Big Sister told her that it sounded like something almost everyone in the chapter had dealt with and that she was sure that things would get better.

During the seventh week of school, Sarah started to miss class. In fact, she missed two weeks of her public speaking class (which included two quizzes and one homework assignment). During one of the classes, the professor asked if anyone had seen Sarah, to which one student replied that he had seen her out "hammered" several nights a week. After hearing this, the professor commented, "That's what I've come to expect from sorority girls."

During the last week of class, Sarah began to worry that she would not be able to make the necessary GPA requirement for the semester. She had her final speech due in class the next day, and she had not done well on her previous speeches. The professor said her speaking style was "good" but the structure and information in her speeches was "deplorable." When Sarah asked him to assist her with her final speech, he said he would not help her because she had missed too much class. Sarah began to panic. Then she realized that Catherine, a current new member, had taken the same class last semester and made an "A." Sarah presented her situation to Catherine and begged her to let her "borrow" a copy of her last speech to see "what it looks like." After hearing Sarah's story, Catherine agreed.

During the last class, Sarah gave her speech and everyone in the class commented on how well she did. The professor agreed with the class, but became suspicious of Sarah's sudden improvement. After investigating some past files, the professor noticed that Sarah's speech was almost identical to that of a student in a previous class, Catherine. As a result of the investigation, Sarah receives an "F" on the speech and in the class and does not make the required GPA.

**Instruction: In the scenario above, there are six characters. They are listed below in no particular order. As an individual, rank the characters in order from 1 (most responsible) to 6 (least responsible) for what happened to Sarah. After you have finished your individual ranking, work with the other members of your group and decide on a group rank order for the six characters.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Big Sister      \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah      \_\_\_\_\_ The Professor  
\_\_\_\_\_ Catherine      \_\_\_\_\_ Jane      \_\_\_\_\_ The Academic Achievement Chairman

## The Blame Game: A Question of Accountability

### Scenario Group 2

Your chapter is currently at the bottom of the Greek GPA list for State University. As a result, the academic achievement chairman, with the backing of the Executive Committee, has made it clear to the chapter that academics will be the focus of this semester. In fact, a rule was implemented that required all sisters to achieve at least a 2.75 GPA for the semester. Any sister that made below this average would be placed on social probation, and any new members below the GPA would not be initiated.

Sarah is currently the chapter president. She is a second-semester junior and is very eager and excited to improve the organization. Not only is she president of the chapter, she also helped design the T-shirts and advertisement for a spring breast cancer awareness service event. She is very well-liked among a majority of the sisters.

Sarah is currently enrolled in a 101 public speaking class. The class meets one night a week. The professor stressed the importance of being in attendance at each class and stated that missing class will have "an adverse affect on your final grade." Jane, a less involved sister and second-semester senior, is also in the class.

During the fourth week of class, Sarah went to her Big Sister and let her know that she was having some problems with her boyfriend. Sarah said the problems were starting to affect her ability to focus on school work. Her Big Sister told her that it sounded like something almost everyone in the chapter had dealt with, and that she was sure that things would get better.

During the seventh week of school, Sarah started to miss class. In fact, she missed two weeks of her public speaking class (which included two quizzes and one homework assignment). During one of the classes, the professor asked if anyone had seen Sarah, to which one student replied that he had seen her out "hammered" several nights a week. After hearing this, the professor commented, "That's what I've come to expect from sorority girls."

During the last week of class, Sarah began to worry that she would not be able to make the necessary GPA requirement for the semester. She had her final speech due in class the next day, and she had not done well on her previous speeches. The professor said her speaking style was "good" but the structure and information in her speeches was "deplorable." When Sarah asked him to assist her with her final speech, he said he would not help her because she had missed too much class. Sarah began to panic. Then she realized that Catherine, a current new member, had taken the same class last semester and made an "A." Sarah presented her situation to Catherine and begged her to let her "borrow" a copy of her last speech to see "what it looks like." After hearing Sarah's story, Catherine agreed.

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### Scenario Group 3

Your chapter is currently at the bottom of the Greek GPA list for State University. As a result, the academic achievement chairman, with the backing of the Executive Committee, has made it clear to the chapter that academics will be the focus of this semester. In fact, a rule was implemented that required all sisters to achieve at least a 2.75 GPA for the semester. Any sister that made below this average would be placed on social probation, and any new members below the GPA would not be initiated.

Sarah is currently a member of the chapter. She is a second semester-sophomore and is an average sister of ZTA. While she does not hold an elected position in the chapter, she did help design the T-shirts and advertisement for a spring breast cancer awareness service event. Sarah is not one of the "favorite" members of a majority of the sisters because she usually does just enough to "get by."

Sarah is currently enrolled in a 101 public speaking class. The class meets one night a week. The professor stressed the importance of being in attendance at each class and stated that missing class will have "an adverse affect on your final grade." Jane, a less involved sister and second-semester senior, is also in the class.

During the fourth week of class, Sarah went to her Big Sister and let her know that she was having some problems with her boyfriend. Sarah said the problems were starting to affect her ability to focus on school work. Her Big Sister told her that it sounded like something almost everyone in the chapter had dealt with, and that she was sure that things would get better.

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