

# HIDDEN HARM: WHAT YOU PROBABLY HAVEN'T CONSIDERED

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**TIME** | 40 minutes

## **Objectives:**

- To understand what hazing is and what qualifies an activity as hazing
- To understand the detrimental impact hazing can have on a student's academic life and their physical and mental well-being

## **Group size:**

- Group size can be determined by the facilitator based on the size of the student group, classroom or grade level.
- All students who attend should participate if possible, either in the full group setting or in small group settings.

## **Setup:**

- Choose a space where the group can sit and face the facilitator comfortably.
- Choose a room that allows everyone to sit as comfortably as possible in a U-shape to promote face-to-face communication.
- You will play a PowerPoint presentation during the lesson, so you'll need to connect a laptop to a projector and screen.

## **Preparation:**

- Look up the state and school hazing policies and add them to the "What is Hazing?" handout in the Handouts section to create a comprehensive resource.
- Find state hazing laws through [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org).
- Be sure to review these policies in advance to gain a clear understanding of each and any differences between them.

## **Materials needed:**

- Laptop
- Projector and screen
- PowerPoint
- "What is Hazing?" "Hazing Hurts: Hazing Spectrum" and "Individual Values" handouts for each participant

## INTRODUCTION | 3 minutes

*Introduce yourself, welcome participants and thank everyone for attending the session.*

### Share:

- The purpose of this session is to bring our students together in a safe, open-minded environment to discuss the negative impacts hazing can, and often does, have on our fellow classmates.
- The information we discuss today will give us a better understanding of what constitutes hazing and how it can disrupt, and even paralyze, a student's academic career, and physical and emotional well-being.
- What we might not know is that today more than ever, students are joining our teams, clubs, or student groups having already struggled with their mental wellness, and more students will experience the onset of mental health issues during their time in high school and college. Statistically, we need to know that it is likely that some of us and some of our classmates and teammates are among those who may struggle.
- Mental health is not about having a problem. Mental wellness is the overall state of our thoughts and feelings and our ability to face the stresses and challenges that impact our well-being.

PREVENTING AND CONFRONTING  
HAZING IN HIGH SCHOOL

### Hidden Harm: What You Probably Haven't Considered

#### Purpose

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- To give us a better understanding of what constitutes hazing and how it can disrupt, and even paralyze, a student's academic career, and physical and emotional well-being.

#### Mental Health

- What we might not know is that today more than ever, students are joining our teams, clubs, or student groups having already struggled with their mental wellness, and more students will experience the onset of mental health issues during their time in high school and college.
- Statistically, we need to know that it is likely that some of us and some of our classmates and teammates are among those who may struggle.
- Mental health is not about having a problem. Mental health is the overall state of our thoughts and feelings and our ability to face the stresses and challenges that impact our well-being.

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## HAZING DEFINED AND DISCUSSED | 20 minutes

*Distribute the "What is Hazing?" handout*

### Ask:

- Take a moment to discuss these two questions with a partner:
  - » How do you define hazing?
  - » How is hazing different than bullying?

*Allow one minute for them to discuss.*

### Ask:

- Now, let's share what you discussed as a large group. How did you define hazing?

*Allow three to four students to share.*

- According to David Westol, a national expert on hazing prevention, one definition of 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."

### Ask:

- How is hazing different than bullying?

Hazing Defined and Discussed

- How do you define hazing?
- How is hazing different than bullying?

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How Do You Define Hazing?

"...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."

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*Allow three to four students to share.*

- The difference between hazing and bullying is that hazing involves requiring people—almost always those who are new or younger—to “earn” membership or “qualify” as a member of a group or organization.
- Bullying usually involves one or a few individuals singling out another individual through repeated attacks of intentionally hurtful behavior. Bullying is about excluding people from groups.

**Share:**

- We know hazing is happening in high school and even earlier.
- 1.5 million high school students are hazed every year.
- 82% of hazing deaths involve alcohol.
- 48% of high school students admit to participating in activities that would be considered hazing and nearly 30% of students report doing something potentially illegal to join a group, yet only 14% of students in high school admit to being hazed.

## The Hazing Spectrum

**Share:**

- It is important to know that hazing takes many forms and occurs whether someone agrees to participate or not, and the level of severity varies greatly. Most do not think of activities such as wearing a silly article of clothing in public to be hazing, but rather a joke or prank; but the negative effects of hazing can be both long-lasting and psychologically traumatic to the victim. These traumas can include depression, poor grades, shame or even suicide.
- Acts of hazing can generally be grouped into three different categories: low risk, moderate risk and high risk. Low-risk hazing programs usually involve tasks that place the new members in a position of ridicule, embarrassment or humiliation. On the low-risk end of the spectrum, we may see activities such as wearing silly clothes in public or doing favors for other members of the club or team.
- On the high end of the spectrum, activities may include forced alcohol consumption, simulated or real sexual acts and severe mental distress, which may entail name-calling, degrading and abusive verbal attacks, or even ridicule around body image.
- Many students may agree that high-risk behaviors qualify as hazing, but most do not realize that even the low-risk activities are forms of hazing, can be harmful and often evolve into high-risk activities.

*Show slide with hazing spectrum.*

*Ask students to identify a few low-, moderate- and high-risk hazing practices based on their perceptions.*

*Then, ask students to form small groups and distribute the “Hazing Hurts: Hazing Spectrum” worksheet. Give the groups five minutes to complete it.*

### Hazing versus Bullying

- Hazing involves requiring people—almost always those who are new or younger—to “earn” membership or “qualify” as a member of a group or organization. Hazing is a part of a process to join a group.
- Bullying usually involves one or a few individuals singling out another individual in repeated attacks of intentionally hurtful behavior. Bullying is about excluding people from groups.

### Hazing Statistics

- 1.5 million high school students are hazed every year.
- 82% of hazing deaths involve alcohol.
- 48% of high school students admit to participating in activities that would be considered hazing.
- 30% of students report doing something potentially illegal to join a group.
- 14% of students in high school admit to being hazed.

### The Hazing Spectrum

It is important to know that hazing takes many forms and occurs whether someone agrees to participate or not, and the level of seriousness varies greatly.

Lower Risk      Moderate Risk      Higher Risk

### Share instructions:

- We will now break into smaller groups, please count off to *(whatever number of groups you decided upon; groups should include no more than 10 people)*. Separate into your groups.

### Direct groups to specific areas of the room.

- I will give your small group a list of activities. Discuss and decide what category each activity falls into on the hazing spectrum. Keep in mind that it is possible for them to fall in between categories or to qualify for more than one category.
- You will share your thoughts with the larger group when you are done, so be prepared to talk about why your group chose the category and how each activity may be physically or mentally harmful to the individual or to our school. Before you discuss, nominate a spokesperson for your group.

### Give the group five minutes.

- Please stay in your small groups, but turn so we can talk as a large group.

### Discuss:

Depending on the number of groups, they may not all have time to share all of their examples. Use your judgment in order to stay on schedule and possibly only ask one or two groups for feedback.

For each question, ask a specific small group. When they finish, ask other groups if they had anything different on their list or if they want to add any comments.

- Was it difficult at times to categorize some of the activities? Why or why not?
- What did you list as **low-risk** hazing examples? Explain your reasoning and what kind of harm the examples may cause.
- What did you list as **moderate-risk** hazing examples? Explain your reasoning and what kind of harm the examples may cause.
- What did you list as **high-risk** hazing examples? Explain your reasoning and what kind of harm the examples may cause.

## MENTAL HEALTH

## AND PERSONAL VALUES | 15 minutes

### Share:

- Each individual deals with stress in his or her own way. Likewise, each person has a limit to the amount of stress he or she can cope with before having some form of mental or emotional breakdown. For some, the breakdown can be a good cry; some display avoidance behaviors, and for others, it can be catastrophic.
- If the person has a pre-existing mental health disorder they have been managing, it may send them into a relapse that requires

### Activity

- With your small group, discuss and decide what category each activity may fall into on the hazing spectrum.
- Keep in mind that it is possible for them to fall in between categories, or to qualify for more than one category.
- You will share your thoughts with the larger group when you are done, so be prepared to talk about why your group chose the category and how each activity may be physically or mentally harmful to the individual or to our sisterhood.

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### Hazing Spectrum



### Discussion

- Was it difficult at times to categorize some of the activities? Why or why not?
- What did you list as lower-risk hazing examples?
- What did you list as moderate-risk hazing examples?
- What did you list as higher-risk hazing examples?

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### Dealing with Stress

- Each individual deals with stress in his or her own way.
- Each person has a limit to the amount of stress he or she can cope with before having some form of mental breakdown.
- If the person has a pre-existing mental health disorder they have been managing, it may send them into a relapse that requires serious professional intervention to recover from.
- For others, it may trigger a memory of a traumatic life experience, or the stress overload could trigger the onset of a mental health disorder the person may be genetically predisposed to.

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serious professional intervention to recover from. For others, it may trigger a memory of a traumatic life experience, or the stress overload could trigger the onset of a mental health disorder to which the person may be genetically predisposed.

- What we may not have considered before is just how hazing, a very stressful experience, can turn a person's life upside down. Please consider the following statistics:
  - » One out of every 5 young adults suffers from some form of diagnosable mental illness.
  - » An estimated 5 million young females suffer from eating disorders each year.
  - » Eating disorders are the deadliest mental illness, claiming more lives than any other illness.

### Ask:

- What do you make of these statistics? Is there anything that surprises you?

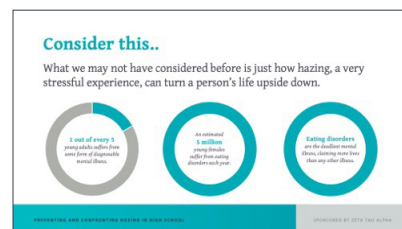
*Allow three to four students to respond. The purpose of these questions is to ensure the audience grasped the content and has a clear understanding of hazing and its levels of severity.*

### Share:

- It has always been important to exclude hazing from the high school experience, as it would negatively impact students' physical and mental health. With the growing number of challenges people carry with them, we have no way to gauge a person's tolerance to stress. The importance of preventing hazing increases more and more each year.
- We need to find ways to make the high school experience meaningful, memorable, special and hazing-free. Because high school students have a desire to experience a rite of passage, or "earn their way in," to a team, club or other student organization, we need to consider how we can make this a positive process built on a true foundation of trust.
- The most significant element in any relationship is trust. We must ensure that we are behaving in ways that are consistent with our personal values and develop a sense of belonging in which, without doubt, students can count on each other in good times and bad.

*Distribute Individual Values Handout. Then, share instructions:*

- Let's explore your personal values. With the handout I just gave you, take a moment to review the list and select three to five of the values that are most important to you.
- Give the group one to two minutes to select their personal values. Then, have them share their values with the person sitting next to them.



**Discussion**

- What do you make of these statistics?
- Is there anything that surprises you?

It has always been important to exclude hazing from the school experience, as it would negatively impact our students' physical and mental health.

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**Personal Values Discussion**

- We need to find ways to make the school experience
  - Meaningful
  - Memorable
  - Special
  - Hazing free
- We must ensure that we are behaving in ways that are consistent with our values and develop a sense of belonging in which, without doubt, students can count on each other in good times and bad.

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### Discuss:

*Allow three to four students to share between each question.*

- What are some of your personal values?
- In what ways are you living your values?
- Do your actions reflect your values?

### Share:

- Before choosing to embarrass another student or humiliate the individuals who just joined your team or student organization, think back to these values and ask yourself, “Do these actions reflect the real me?” and “How can I stick to my values?”
- Use your personal values as a starting point to create a safe and welcoming environment that fosters belonging and friendship. I’m sure those are two reasons you joined the club, team or student organization you are in, right?

## WRAP-UP | 2 minutes

### Share:

- We hope you have a better understanding of what hazing is and the negative impact it can have on your fellow students.
- If you have lingering questions, want further information about hazing or need to talk about something happening in your school, contact your teacher, counselor or principal for more information.

#### Personal Values Discussion

- What are some of your personal values?
- In what ways are you living your values?
- Do your actions reflect your values?

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#### Wrap Up

- We hope you have a better understanding of what hazing is and the negative impact it can have on your fellow students.
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# WHAT IS HAZING?

## SCHOOL HAZING POLICY

*(Search your school's policies to include it here.)*

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## STATE HAZING POLICY

*(Find each state's policy on [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org).)*

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## WHO CAN YOU TALK TO?

*(Add in your school's resources of how to report hazing and mental health resources.)*

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# HAZING HURTS: HAZING SPECTRUM

As a group, please place the following list of activities along the hazing spectrum based on the level of physical and mental health risk of each one.



- Wearing inappropriate, conspicuous and/or embarrassing clothing
- Forced alcohol consumption—whether someone is explicitly telling someone to drink or implying that the person must drink
- Verbal abuse, yelling or screaming at a new teammate or member
- Performing favors for others, such as running errands or cleaning their rooms
- Mandating that new teammates or members formally greet others in public
- Kidnapping a teammate or member
- Humiliation of new teammate or member (body image judgment, etc.)
- Forced calisthenics
- Forcing new teammates or members to simulate or perform sexual acts
- Requiring new teammates or members give older members access to their phones and social media accounts
- Restricting new teammates or members from communicating (either verbally or via phones) with other teammates or members
- Having new teammates or members buy food for everyone



# INDIVIDUAL VALUES

- Accountability  
*answerable for actions, reliable*
- Achievement  
*attaining goals, fulfillment*
- Advancement  
*progress, promotion*
- Adventure  
*new experiences, challenges, risks*
- Balance  
*managing all tasks well*
- Belonging  
*association, fellowship, relationships*
- Change  
*variety, new challenge*
- Community  
*association, similar interests, support*
- Compassion  
*empathy, consideration*
- Competitiveness  
*to be the best, viability*
- Confidence  
*trust, self-belief*
- Cooperation  
*teamwork, collaboration, mutual aid*
- Creativity  
*new ideas, visionary, imagination*
- Decisiveness  
*steadfast, determined, focused*
- Democracy  
*freedom, independence, social equality*
- Diversity  
*value differences, different perspectives*
- Efficacy  
*effectiveness, high value, worth*
- Efficiency  
*competence, accuracy, good use of time*
- Ethical Practice  
*fair, principled, honorable*
- Fairness  
*equity, honesty, impartiality*
- Fame  
*renowned, distinction*
- Family Happiness  
*close relationships, get along*
- Flexibility  
*adaptability, resilience*
- Friendship  
*close relationships with others, fellowship*
- Health  
*physical and mental well-being*
- Helpfulness  
*supporting others, improving community*
- Honesty  
*integrity, candor, openness*
- Inclusiveness  
*involving others*
- Independence  
*self-sufficient*
- Inner Harmony  
*being at peace, tranquility*
- Integrity  
*honesty, sincerity, walk the talk*
- Involvement  
*in some goal or experience*
- Knowledge  
*intelligence, observation*
- Learning  
*wisdom, active scholarship*
- Loyalty  
*allegiance, patriotism*
- Money  
*wealth, salary*
- Order  
*organized, structure, systematic*
- Peace  
*harmony, calmness, serenity*
- Personal Development  
*individual growth*
- Pleasure  
*fun, enjoyment, satisfaction*
- Power  
*importance, authority, influence*
- Purpose  
*mission, ambition, goals*
- Recognition  
*acknowledgment, discovery*
- Respect  
*honor, reverence*
- Responsibility  
*maturity, follow-through*
- Security  
*safety, protection*
- Self-Awareness  
*perceptive, clear thought*
- Self-Actualization  
*be the best you can be*
- Service  
*assistance, charity, civic responsibility*
- Social Awareness  
*understanding of others*
- Spirituality  
*devotional, faith*
- Tolerance  
*open-mindedness, acceptance*
- Tradition  
*belief, custom, practice, ritual*
- Trust  
*belief in others, assurance, conviction*
- Vision  
*foresight, ideal, conceptual*
- Others:

## MY TOP FIVE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.