



BYSTANDER INTERVENTION GUIDE

HAZING FILM ADDENDUM





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Use this Film Addendum to facilitate a group discussion or activity following the viewing of the film, *Hazing*.



Bystander Intervention and Hazing

Any situation in which a person observes or hears about potential harm and takes steps to support and/or prevent that harm to those involved or to themselves is considered bystander intervention.^{4,7} ***This is the idea expressed in the slogan “See something, say something”.*** This resource is designed to help folks learn about bystander intervention for hazing prevention and participate in discussion to strengthen intervention skills.

Why Utilize Bystander Intervention for Hazing Prevention⁸

1. It helps change social and community roles by calling attention to hazing behaviors that are often minimized, normalized, or dismissed as harmless pranks, antics, and traditions.
2. It discourages victim blaming by placing accountability on the hazers.
3. It has a demonstrated impact on sexual violence prevention, and implementation can be translated to hazing prevention.

Why should you become an Empowered Bystander?

1. To foster community change, the more people speak up against hazing the less likely hazing behaviors continue to occur or be normalized.
2. To make space for hazing victim voices to be heard and be taken seriously by their community.
3. To help strengthen a culture of accountability for hazing.
4. To uphold your commitment to your organization or team. Each of us has a responsibility to ensure hazing behaviors do not persist within our organizations, teams, or in our campus community.

Becoming an Empowered Bystander Against Hazing

There are five steps to becoming an empowered bystander, and these steps build on each other.



(Berkowitz, 2009; Stapleton & Allan, 2014)

Step 1: Notice the Behavior

When individuals have a complete understanding of what hazing is and how it can present in groups, teams, and organizations, they are more likely to notice and identify hazing. To build these skills, individuals should familiarize themselves with the definition of hazing and the *Spectrum of Hazing*TM.²

Defining Hazing

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.^{3,6}

Notably, there are three components to defining hazing:

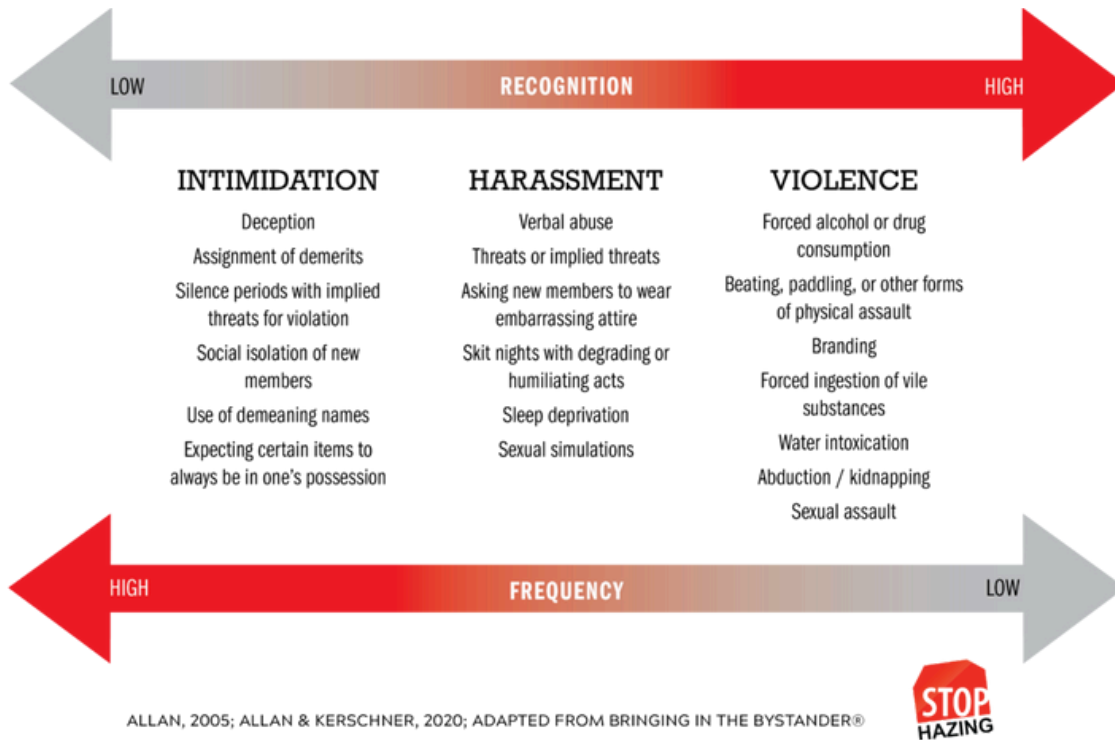
1. it occurs in a group context
2. it includes humiliating, degrading, and endangering behaviors, and
3. it happens regardless of an individual's willingness to participate (or regardless of consent).

The third component, the consent component of the definition, is particularly important because, while individuals might be presented with a "choice" to participate in hazing, the "choice" is often in the context of peer pressure and power dynamics within the group. This makes providing true consent extremely difficult.



(Allan, 2014)

The Spectrum of Hazing™



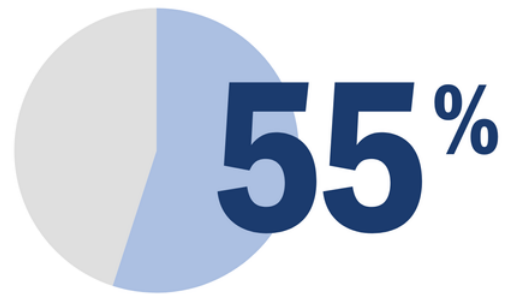
Becoming familiar with the Spectrum of Hazing™ can support skill development for recognizing a full range of hazing behaviors. Increasing recognition of the higher frequency hazing behaviors enhances the opportunities to intervene in hazing situations that are often normalized or minimized as harmless and shift them toward healthier team-building activities before they escalate to even more potentially harmful and endangering behaviors, such as those on the violence end of the continuum.



Step 2: Interpret the behavior as a problem

Building on the previous step of recognizing hazing, it is important to acknowledge hazing as problematic behavior that needs to be addressed, no matter where it is on the *Spectrum*.

The 2008 National Study revealed that **55% of college students involved in a group, team, or student organization experience hazing**, and these behaviors can impact students physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, spiritually, and academically.³ Beyond individual students, the impacts of hazing are felt by families, friends, and other group members.



of college students who participate in groups experience hazing

(Allan & Madden, 2008)

Discussion Questions:

1. How can hazing impact individuals *beyond physical injuries or sickness*?
 - How could hazing impact individuals *mentally and emotionally*?
 - How could hazing impact individuals *financially*?
 - How could hazing impact individuals *academically*?
2. How can hazing impact individuals' *friends and families*?
 - How might hazing impact an individual's *relationships*?
3. How can hazing create unhealthy group dynamics and environments?



Step 3: Accept Responsibility to Intervene

Once the hazing behavior has been identified and interpreted as problematic, individuals must accept personal responsibility for intervention. Accepting this responsibility is especially important when considering the potential of a **diffusion of responsibility**- when being in a group setting can lead individuals to believe that *someone else* will intervene or take action.⁵

This allows the cycle of hazing to continue, even when group members know it is wrong. It can be easy to assume that someone else will do or say something, or write off the situation by saying "It's none of my business." The fear of embarrassment or retaliation may also make someone nervous to intervene. However, bystander intervention as hazing prevention calls on everyone to realize that they owe it to themselves, their peers, their organizations, and their campus community to act against hazing.

Step Four: Intervening Safely ¹

Before intervening, individuals need to learn how to do so safely. Here are some strategies to safely disrupt hazing and intervene safely.

- 1. Shifting the focus:** Shifting the focus involves redirecting attention from the person(s) being hazed towards something/someone else. Examples include:
 - Ignoring or refusing to engage with group members who are encouraging the hazing.
 - Changing the subject when someone brings up participating in hazing, to demonstrate a lack of interest in participating.
 - Initiating a discussion about the organization's values and suggesting alternative healthy team-building activities that do not lead to hazing.
- 2. Safely confronting:** Confronting the hazing directly involves letting others know you are not going to participate in hazing. Examples include:
 - Encouraging others to not participate in hazing.
 - Engaging others to think critically about the harm of hazing behaviors.
 - Describing your concerns about the hazing behaviors and their impact on individual members and group dynamics.
 - Discouraging those who are carrying out or planning the hazing behaviors.
- 3. Shifting attitudes:** Shifting attitudes involves taking small steps to de-normalize acts of hazing, which will lead to a greater impact. Examples include:
 - Talking about hazing behaviors to increase knowledge and awareness.
 - Helping others see how harmful all hazing behaviors can be (not just violence hazing).
 - Challenging misconceptions about "harmless" hazing behaviors and "traditions".
 - Supporting those who experience/experienced hazing by helping connect them to resources available through the organization or campus.
- 4. Documenting the behavior:** Consider filing a report with your institution's Fraternity and Sorority Life Office, Office of Community Standards (conduct), Compliance Officer (athletics), Dean of Students office, or campus safety officers, so that individuals and groups can be held accountable for their role in hazing. Be sure to provide as much information as possible about those involved, the location of the hazing, and the behaviors witnessed, so that professionals can follow up accordingly.

The following are important considerations for safe and respectful bystander intervention:

- Take care of yourself and ensure your own safety. Get support from your peers or from campus safety officials as needed. Find another person to be an ally with you.
- Give respect to the other person(s) by listening to what they have to say openly and honestly. Recognize when to "call out" someone versus calling someone "in" to a productive conversation.
- While hazing is never justified, these abusive and harmful behaviors can be cyclical. Keep an ear out for underlying issues or warning signs that a person may be dealing with past or current concerns.
- Be aware of the other person's level of defensiveness. Look for opportunities to keep the conversation open, and monitor if others are showing a willingness or resistance to what you are saying. Ensure that mutual respect is maintained throughout the conversation.

Step 5: Take Action

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There are multiple ways to take action against hazing. Building your skill set to intervene safely can help you decide which strategy makes sense for the particular situation you are in and your comfort level. After **directly** or **indirectly intervening**, it is important to check up on the affected parties and refer them to the available campus resources.

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on a time when you took action to help someone or when someone took action to help you. Describe the scenario.
 - How did it feel to help? How did it feel to receive help?
2. Can you think of a time when you could have intervened but didn't?
 - What barriers stopped you? After learning about bystander intervention, what approaches might you try in the future?



Reflection & Group Discussion

Directions: In a group or individually, ask the participants to self-reflect on what they learned during this experience using the questions below.

Discussion Questions:

- How can you confront acts of hazing in and outside of your organization?
- What resources can help you build recognition and intervention skills for bystander intervention? Does your organization have resources available?
- How can you take action against hazing both directly and indirectly when you see it, know, or hear it is occurring?
- How might hazing impact your campus community?
- What is your biggest takeaway from this experience?



References

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Recommended Citation:

StopHazing (2024). Bystander Intervention Guide.

HAZING Film Addendum for Bystander Intervention

In HAZING, the 90-minute first-person documentary by Byron Hurt, several hazing incidents are highlighted. Pair this resource with a film viewing to facilitate a conversation about bystander intervention for hazing prevention.

Notes for Facilitator:

- Adapt these questions to craft a discussion session that meets the needs of the audience and the allotted discussion time frame.
- Anticipate that folks may share personal experiences and stories about hazing.
- Keep in mind that identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual identity), lived experiences, social and gender dynamics, and more play a role in how folks perceive the film and enter the discussion space.
- When showing this film, it is important to create a supportive, engaging, and comfortable space. Hazing is a complex topic, and this film might bring up hard feelings for viewers. Share a content advisory before viewing the film, and encourage viewers to take care of their mental health and well-being throughout the film viewing.

Reflection Questions:

1 - When introducing the film, director Byron Hurt said that he did not talk about the hazing he experienced. He said he didn't talk about it *"out of loyalty to my fraternity, because of my fear of the consequences, and because I didn't want to be seen as a snitch"* [1:10-1:27].

- **How does this statement make you feel? In what ways can you relate to Byron's perspective?**
- **How do feelings like these keep individuals from being empowered bystanders?**
- **How can you help change attitudes and perceptions like these in your own groups, orgs, and teams?**

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2 - In the film, Robert and Pamela Champion discussed the hazing and abuse that led to the death of their son, Robert. His parents discussed that Robert was a target for hazing when he began his time at Florida A&M University [14:02], and Dr. Ricky Jones discussed how these hazing "traditions" in the marching band were known, but no one intervened [17:17].

- **How might an empowered bystander have intervened?**
- **What traditions have you seen, heard about, or experienced that meet the definition of hazing?**
- **What resources are available on your campus to help you report hazing?**
- **How could you help your group, club, team, and organization recognize when a tradition crosses the line to hazing?**

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Reflection Questions (continued):

3 - Director Byron Hurt asked the questions: “Why didn’t anyone intervene to save Robert’s life? Why didn’t any of his bandmates stop it from happening?” [21:36]

- **In your opinion, what factors prevent individuals from intervening?**
 - **How can you combat those factors to ensure that you are acting as an active bystander?**
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4 - In HAZING, Rasheed Ali Cromwell, Esq. (founder of the Harbor Institute™) discussed how hazing can create a disconnect between the values of the organization and its practices [25:30].

- **How could your organization's values be a tool in guiding your organization away from hazing before it becomes a “tradition”?**
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5 - In the film, Byron talked about George Desdunes. George was a Cornell University student who was bound, forced to consume alcohol, and left unconscious on a couch; the incident claimed his life [30:30].

- **What could George's fraternity brothers have done differently to prevent hazing?**
 - **What could George's fraternity brothers have done differently to ensure George received the medical attention he needed?**
 - **What resources and policies are available on your campus to promote active and empowered bystanders even when policy violations are involved (e.g., Good Samaritan laws, amnesty policies)?**
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6 - James Vivenzio [34:12 - 36:05] described a range of hazing behaviors across the [Spectrum of Hazing™](#) (see p. 4).

- **What are some examples of intimidation hazing?**
 - **What are some examples of harassment hazing?**
 - **What are some examples of violence hazing?**
 - **How might an empowered bystander have responded in this scenario?**
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7 - James described an incident where one of his fellow pledges asked to go to the hospital, but nobody in his fraternity would take him [35:46].

- **How might an empowered bystander have responded in this scenario?**
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8 - Jo Hannah Burch, described her experience being hazed in a sorority at Young Harris College [51:32 - 54:11].

- **How does Jo Hannah’s experience showcase the long-term mental and emotional impacts of hazing?**
 - **What factors kept others from standing up to hazing in this scenario?**
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Reflection Questions (continued):

9 - In the film, Byron Hurt says, “Hazing is something a lot of my brothers embrace, and the film that I’m making is saying ‘what you guys believe in is wrong.’ The thought of losing the respect of my fraternity brothers and chapter brothers– it scares me. I feel like it’s gonna be very painful. It’s going to be painful to be rejected by this group of men that I love and have known for 30 years now. I remained quiet tonight– even though I wanted to say something– I felt paralyzed. **If it was that challenging for me as a grown man, who’s 51 and who knows better, think about how hard it is for someone who’s actually going through [hazing] to speak up**” [1:01:10-43].

- **How can the need to belong prevent people from intervening in hazing incidents or stopping it before it happens?**
 - **How could social pressure impact an individual’s willingness to go along with hazing?**
 - **What are some strategies for overcoming these real barriers?**
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10 - Byron Hurt discussed his role as a hazer [1:18:00 - 1:19:10] in his fraternity.

- **How could he have been an empowered bystander and leader in his group to prevent the cycle of hazing from continuing?**
 - **If you have been a member of a group, team, or student organization that has hazed new members, what are ways you can help break this cycle?**
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11 - In the film, multiple documentary participants discussed the “Code of Silence” around hazing incidents [1:24:00 - 1:25:18].

- **How could bystander intervention be used to break that code of silence?**
 - **Why is it hard for individuals who have been hazed to break that code of silence?**
 - **What avenues are available on your campus to report instances of hazing?**
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12 - **In your opinion, what is going to stop hazing?**

13 - **What are your next steps for building skills for safe bystander intervention for hazing prevention?**

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For more...

The forthcoming resources connecting to other themes in the film, including mental health, leadership, and power dynamics, provide opportunities for viewers to dig deeper into the topics and consider additional layers of this complex and difficult topic.

Recommended Citation:

StopHazing & God Bless the Child Productions, LLC (2024). *HAZING* Film Addendum for Bystander Intervention.