

Security On Campus, Inc.

Please Note: We recommend making copies of this study guide to distribute to all participating students.

SAFE ON CAMPUS



Study Guide / Handout to Accompany:

Hamster Cocktails: The Truth About Hazing

Study guide developed by Security On Campus, Inc.

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The Facts About *Hazing*

Hazing: (n)

Hazing can be described as any action taken or situation created intentionally, as part of an initiation or for continued membership in an organization (whether on or off school premises) that produces or could produce mental and/or physical discomfort.

Myth or Fact? (www.stophazing.org)

- **Myth:** Hazing is a problem for fraternities and sororities only.

Fact: Hazing is a societal problem, and has been documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, religious cults, professional schools, and other types of clubs and/or organizations.

- **Myth:** Hazing is no more than some foolish pranks gone awry.

Fact: Hazing is a deliberate act of power and control over others. It is victimization, plain and simple. Hazing is pre-meditated and not accidental. It is abusive, degrading, and often-life threatening -- not to mention illegal.

- **Myth:** Hazing is an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline.

Fact: Respect must be earned, not taught. Victims of hazing rarely report having respect for those who hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds *mistrust, apathy, and alienation*.

“Could this be hazing?”

Imagine that you're new to a group and are about to participate in an activity with some other group members.

Here are some important questions to consider. If the answer to ANY of these questions is YES, it is very likely that the activity is hazing.

- ◆ Is alcohol involved?
- ◆ Would active, current members of the group refuse to participate in this activity with the new members and do exactly what they're being asked to do?
- ◆ Does the activity risk emotional or physical harm or abuse?
- ◆ Would you have any reservations describing the activity to our parents, to a professor, or to a university official?
- ◆ Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV news crew?

Where does hazing occur?



Hazing can occur anywhere. Incidents of hazing have been documented in all kinds of sanctioned and non-sanctioned organizations, such as the military, Greek life organizations, athletic teams, music or theater groups, peer groups, gangs, the workplace and even just groups of friends.

Why do people get hazed?



Many groups that practice hazing believe it fosters inclusiveness, making the victims feel like they “belong.” It is difficult to feel unity in a group where some members are subjected to humiliation and degradation. Hazing can be divisive and dangerous and can breed tension and animosity.

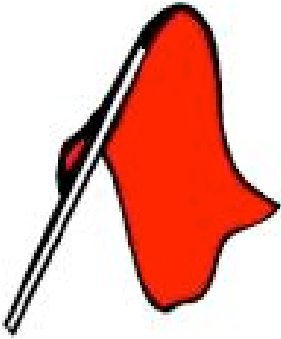
◆ Michael Carrington, age 19, died of water intoxication because of a fraternity hazing activity in 2005. The last room Matthew Carrington ever walked into was the cold, dank cellar of the Chi Tau fraternity house, where a message etched into the wall read, **“In the basement, no one can hear you scream.”**

“But I want to join a group!”



Not all groups have hazing, and **hazing is avoidable**. If you intend to join a group, ask what initiation rites (if any) are part of it. Here are some ways you can avoid an embarrassing, degrading, or dangerous hazing situation:

- Thinking ahead of time about a good exit strategy is important in case you find yourself in a scary hazing situation. Remember, “belonging” is never as important as your safety or health!
- Bond with other *new* group members outside sanctioned group activities and prior to any potential hazing incidents. For example, if you are a female joining a sorority, gather with other new pledges and create a plan so that all of you can act together to prevent any one of you from becoming seriously injured. Not only does this foster communication, friendship, and unity, but it gives each new member strength in knowing she can stand up if she doesn’t feel right about something.
- Think of how you can notify an outsider with authority if things become dangerous.
- If you are already a part of a group that traditionally hazes at specific times (e.g. your birthday, initiation) make a decision about whether or not to participate that day. Should you choose to be unavailable, consider yourself an independent and strong-willed individual who may have just saved yourself and others tremendous pain and suffering.
- If you are already a part of a group that hazes, be strong and take a stand against hazing! Tell your peers you don’t agree with what they are doing and you would like things to change.



Red Flags

(www.insidehazing.com/warning.php)

Here are some critical warning signs that may indicate hazardous initiation rites in a particular group or organization.

1. The leaders of the group are aggressive and intimidating.
2. You hear rumors from your peers about activities that are dangerous or sound embarrassing.
3. You have an uncomfortable gut feeling about the situation.
4. You have been warned by authorities (i.e. campus police or the school newspaper) that the group has a reputation for being extreme.
5. Although you may not acknowledge it, you have witnessed some events you feel are inconsistent with your personal values and morals.

- ◆ As of June 2005, 44 U.S. states had laws against hazing.
- ◆ Eighty-two percent of deaths from hazing involve alcohol.
- ◆ Since 1970, there has been at least one hazing-related death each year.

(www.greeklife.uconn.edu/antihaze.cfm)

Examples of Hazing Activities

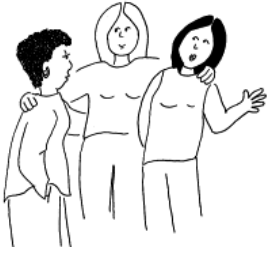
- A scavenger hunt in which all new members are forced to gather things from other individuals.
- A mandatory drinking game, often competitive, between older members and new members.
- Name games that involve penalties if the new member does not know older members' names.
- Forcing new members to wear strange or embarrassing outfits around campus or to an event.
- Forcing new members to drive to a faraway place to perform a task or ritual -- this is especially problematic on a school night!



Examples of Non-Hazing Activities

- An alcohol-free lunch or dinner where the old and new members get to know each other better.
- A non-mandatory (and not embarrassing!) ice-breaker designed to foster fun communication & conversation.
- Group members going to the movies together.
- An older member is assigned to a newer member so the more experienced person can show the new person the ropes, and can be a resource for them.
- Gathering all new members together for alcohol-free, non-mandatory retreats to foster togetherness and communication.





Responsibility is the Antidote!

Often, leaders of groups that practice hazing underemphasize the personal responsibility and individuality of group members.

However, each member of the group, no matter how new they are, has their own set of values and morals. Each person is responsible for himself or herself. One's actions must be congruent with one's belief in order to achieve happiness.

Take a Stand!

- Regardless of your position or status in the group, you can influence others. Tell them to think before they act, especially about long-term consequences they may face if they involve themselves with hazing.
- If you are a bystander of a violent situation, do not go against the group alone. If you can organize the group to act together to prevent the perpetrators and victims from getting into trouble, then do it. Do not stand up to violence alone. Instead, you can try to get help or report the incident as an individual, either anonymously or by revealing your identity.

Hazing Resources

- www.stophazing.org
- www.ohsaa.org/sptsmnshp/hazing.htm
- www.insidehazing.com
- www.hazinglaw.com
- www.securityoncampus.org
- www.safeoncampus.org

The Chad Meredith Act



As of July 1, 2005, the Chad Meredith Act will make high school and college hazing a crime, with consequences including:

1. One year in jail and a \$1,000 fine for an act of hazing that causes substantial risk of physical injury or death.
2. Up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine if the hazing results in serious bodily injury or death.

Chad Meredith was a student who, after drinking with members of the fraternity he hoped to join, drowned while attempting to swim across Lake Osceola in 2001.

Real-Life Hazing Horrors!

◆ *Frostburg State University, MD*
Six female field hockey players were involved in a hazing activity that has brought charges against five of them. During a "Secret Buddy" Christmas party, freshman victims were forced to drink excessive amounts of beer and liquor while blindfolded with their hands tied. This hazing incident caused one victim, 18-year old Carly Cross, to experience severe alcohol poisoning. Her BAC was a dangerous .365. She and other freshman victims were also pelted with eggs, ice, and flower, and forced to sit in their own vomit and urine.

◆ *California State University, CA*
As many as eight fraternity members could be charged with involuntary manslaughter for their alleged roles in a 2005 hazing death. Matthew Carrington died while pledging the Chi Tau fraternity after taking part in an all-night hazing activity in which pledges were forced to drink gallons of water and perform exercises while being doused with ice water. Michael Carrington, 19, died of water intoxication.