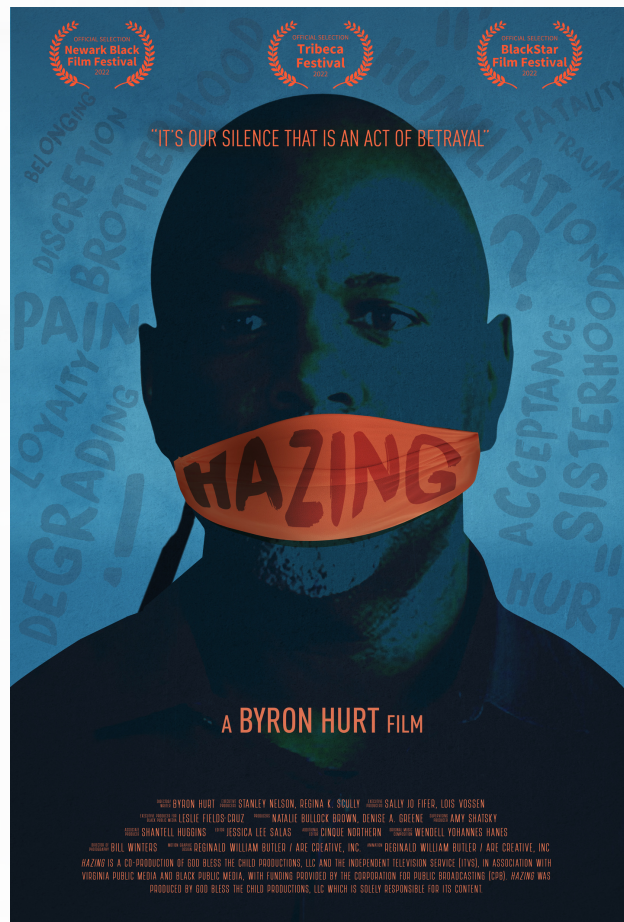




# HAZING VIEWING GUIDE

Introductory Guide & Discussion Questions

Pilot Release – *September 2023*



# HAZING and StopHazing Collaboration



In *HAZING*, a 90-minute first-person documentary, director Byron Hurt weaves his personal story with those of a diverse mix of characters. The film features the voices of hazing victims, family members of victims, perpetrators, and scholars, providing historical context with the film's thematic framework: that hazing is a widespread, far-reaching system fueled by tradition, secrecy, groupthink, power and control, and the desire to belong.

StopHazing and Hurt's production company, God Bless the Child Productions, LLC (GBC), have partnered to release a collection of resources to accompany the film. These materials are designed to support the film's use as a hazing prevention strategy and part of a comprehensive approach to hazing prevention.

## Using *HAZING* As a Prevention Tool

This resource is designed to enhance learning and knowledge by supporting the use of the film as a media teaching tool.

This *Viewing Guide* includes:

- An overview of the issue of hazing as a form of interpersonal violence
- Foundational concepts and research insights for hazing prevention
- Considerations for hosting a viewing and facilitating a program
- Discussion questions and reflection prompts
- A (forthcoming) series of short-form resources that focus on prevalent themes from the film including mental health, bystander intervention, leadership, and power dynamics.

Each themed short-form resource will connect the film to hazing prevention and provide suggested activities to extend reflection and learning from the film's content.

# About *HAZING*: A message from Byron Hurt



*I have long wanted to make a documentary about hazing but I never felt courageous enough to address it because of my proximity to the issue. I am a proud, active member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. However, I am not proud of the hazing culture that unfortunately persists inside Greek Life, sports culture, and other membership organizations.*

*Hazing is a sensitive and controversial topic for anyone to address, let alone a member of a fraternity. However, I decided to make this film after I learned about two tragic hazing deaths: George Desdunes was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon who died from alcohol poisoning at Cornell University in February,*

*2011; and Robert Champion was a Florida A&M University band member who died in November 2012, after his fellow band members beat him to death during a traditional hazing ritual. After reading about these two high-profile national news stories, I felt compelled to illuminate the issue of HAZING in a documentary film that would receive wide distribution nationally within the PBS broadcast system as well as digital streaming platforms.*

*The deaths of George and Robert touched me emotionally because of my personal connection to this topic. As a filmmaker who has been a victim and perpetrator of hazing, I felt perfectly situated and qualified to make a documentary that reveals the appeal of exclusive group membership while exposing the underbelly of hazing culture. As I have done with all my other work, I approached this subject with sensitivity, care, empathy, and journalistic integrity.*

*I believe this film will break new ground by providing viewers with deep access to sympathetic characters, powerful stories, and thoughtful analysis from those who have been directly impacted by hazing. Scholars who have thoroughly researched hazing culture provide additional context. My goal is to use the power of storytelling to help humanize victims of hazing, and investigate the complex world of hazing culture in an effort to shine a light on often unsupervised, illegal hazing practices which institutions tend to cover up.*

*In the end, I hope that this film will serve as a media teaching tool for students, parents, hazing prevention advocates, and anyone interested in preserving valuable rites of passage programs while eliminating the dangerous and harmful hazing behaviors.*

# What is Hazing?

## Foundational Concepts & Research Highlights

### Defining Hazing:

Having a clear definition of hazing is necessary for understanding the behaviors identified in the film.

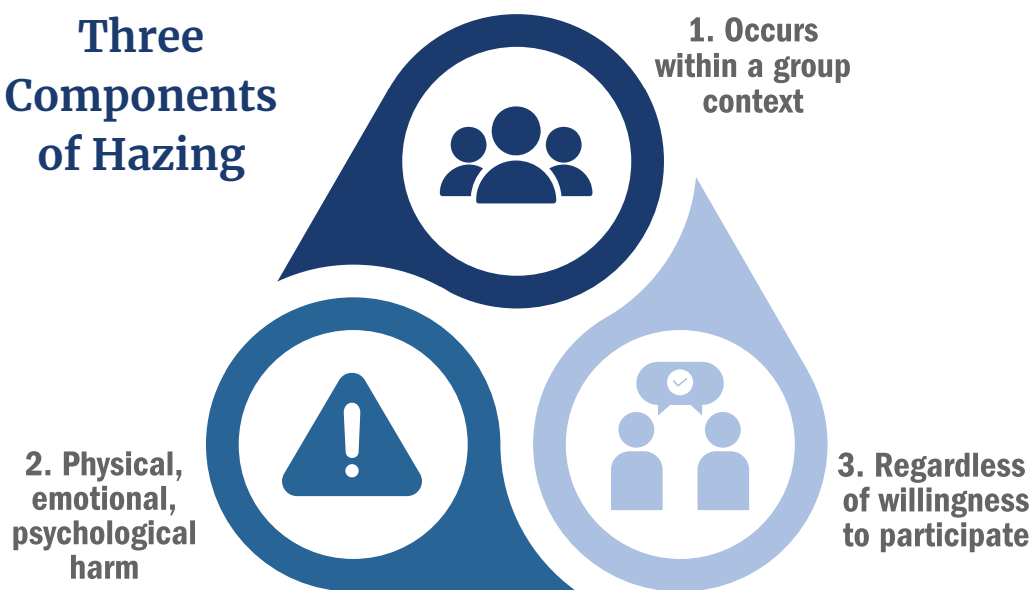
Hazing is defined as *any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person's willingness to participate.* (Allan & Madden, 2008)

### Hazing Behaviors

When does a tradition, ritual, or activity cross the line into hazing? To simplify, consider the definition broken into three components:

1. Hazing occurs within a **group context**, and this is tied to maintaining or gaining group membership.
2. Hazing has the potential to cause **emotional, physical, and/or psychological harm**.
3. Hazing can happen **regardless of a person's willingness to participate**. 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, making it difficult to provide true consent.

### Three Components of Hazing



(Allan, 2014)



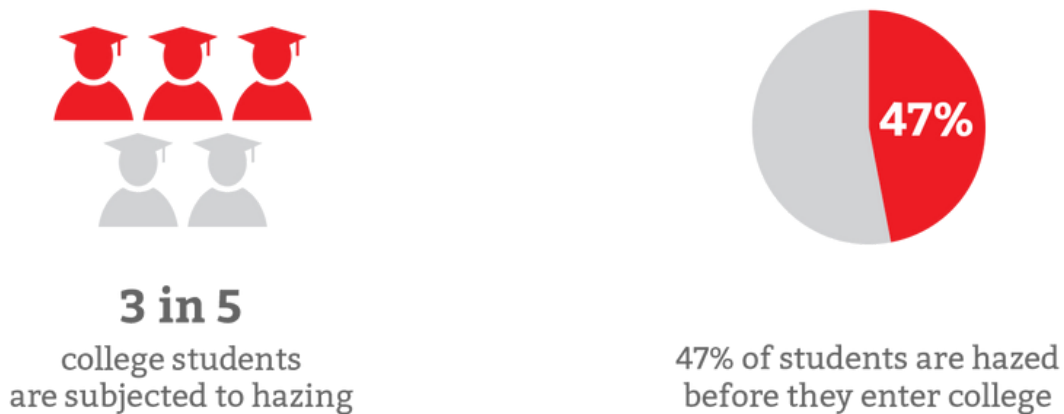
Note: Hazing is different from bullying although they often look alike because they both involve an abuse of power in peer and social relationships. A simple way to think about the difference is to consider that hazing typically occurs for the expressed purpose of inclusion (gaining or maintaining membership) in a club, team, or organization, whereas bullying behavior typically seeks to exclude and marginalize another person. More info at [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).

# What is Hazing?

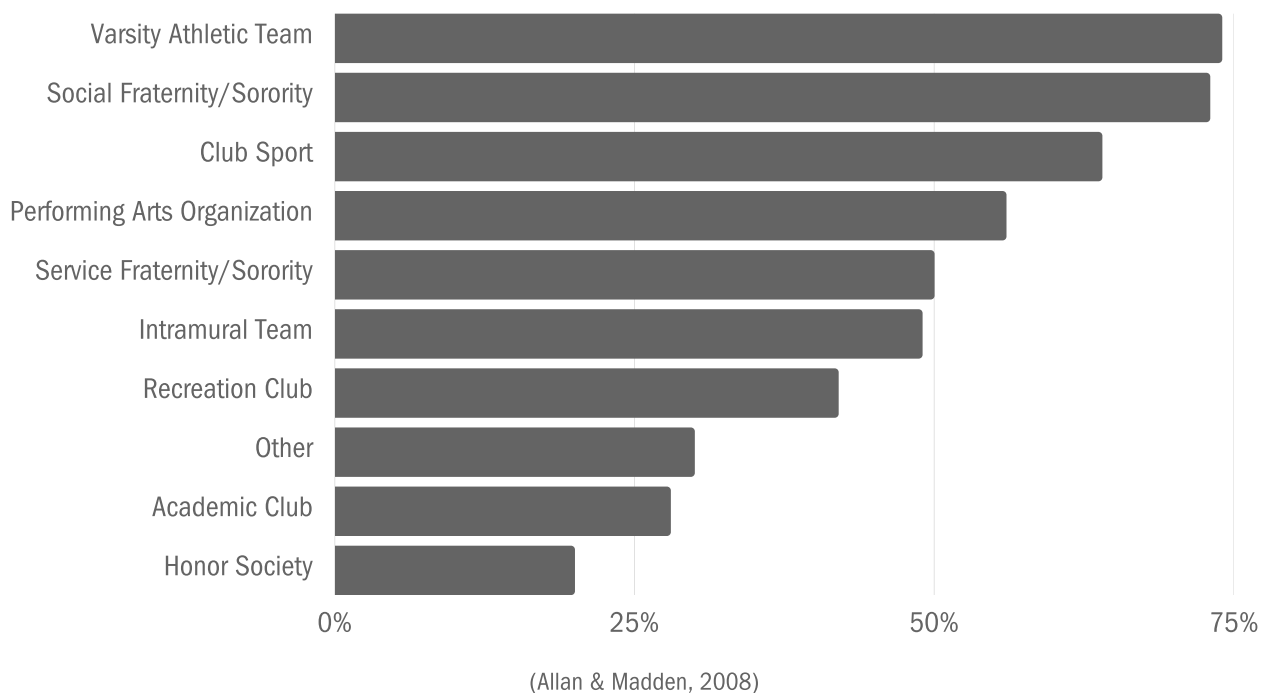
## Foundational Concepts & Research Highlights

### Where Does Hazing Happen?

While hazing is most commonly associated with fraternities, sororities, and varsity athletic teams, it occurs across a broad range of student organizations, teams, and clubs. The most comprehensive study on student hazing found that over 55% of students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experienced hazing in college, 47% of students experienced hazing prior to entering college, and nearly 70% of all students say they are aware of hazing happening on their campus (Allan & Madden, 2008; Allan et al., 2019).



### Percentage of Students Experiencing Hazing in Different Types of Groups





# What is Hazing?

## Foundational Concepts & Research Highlights

### Why is Hazing Harmful?

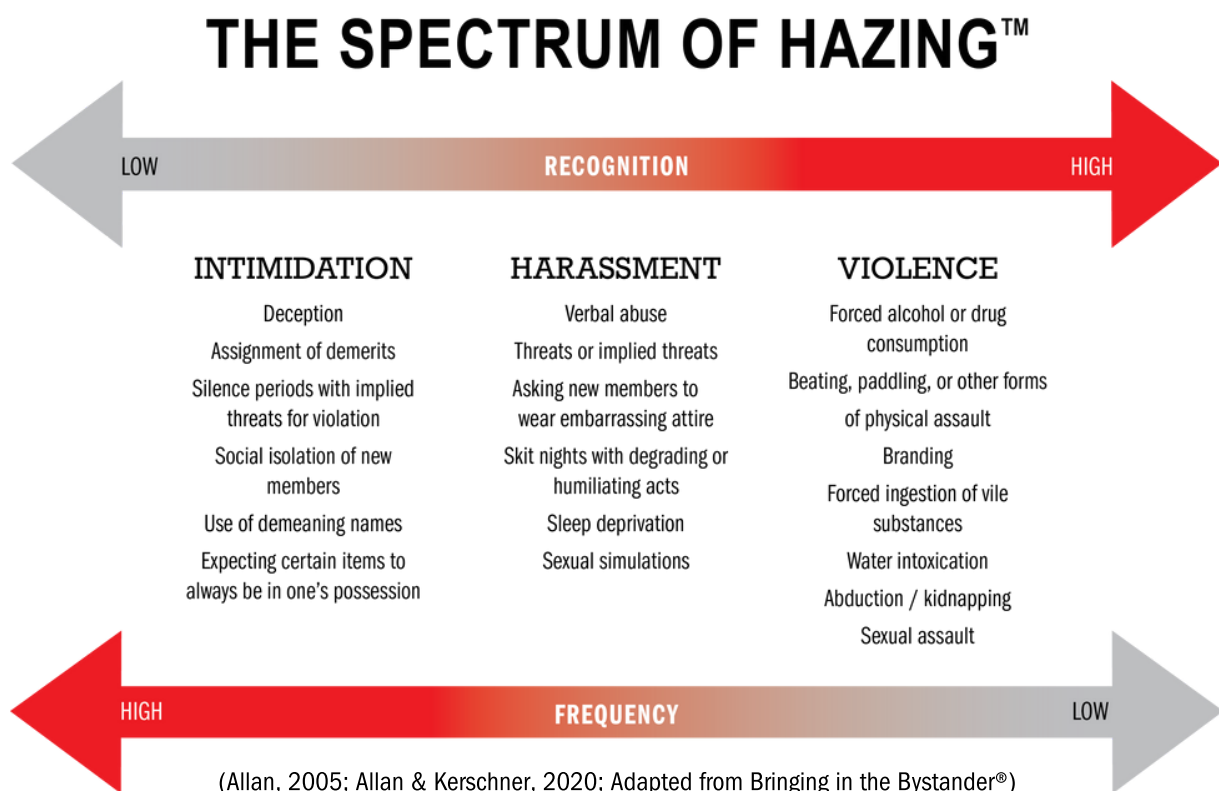
Hazing is a threat to the health and safety of students due to its intimidating, harassing, and often violent nature. It can cause long-lasting harm - physically, emotionally, and mentally - and cause or add to students experiencing mental health conditions. At extremes, hazing is lethal. Nearly every year since 1959, hazing practices have resulted in lives lost (Nuwer, 2023).

### Recognizing Hazing

Recognizing hazing is essential to its prevention. Yet, there is a documented disconnect between experiences of hazing and recognition. This gap is so prevalent that approximately 90% of students hazed do not recognize their experience as hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). Instead, hazing behaviors are often normalized as part of group cultures as harmless pranks and antics, traditions, or only considered “true” hazing if behaviors are physically harmful.

### The Spectrum of Hazing™

The *Spectrum of Hazing™* is a visual tool that can be used to help bridge the gap in recognizing hazing. The Spectrum (pictured below) highlights how different hazing behaviors can be categorized as intimidation, harassment, and violence and exist on a continuum with an inverse relationship between recognition and frequency.



Intimidation hazing behaviors occur at a high frequency with lower levels of recognition (e.g., demeaning names, assigning demerits, social isolation), while more violent hazing behaviors have higher levels of recognition and occur less frequently (e.g., paddlings, forced consumption of alcohol, beatings, sexual assault). In each category, the power imbalance created by hazing is asserted in different ways, which in turn impacts visibility and recognition (Allan, 2005; Allan and Kerschner, 2020).

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

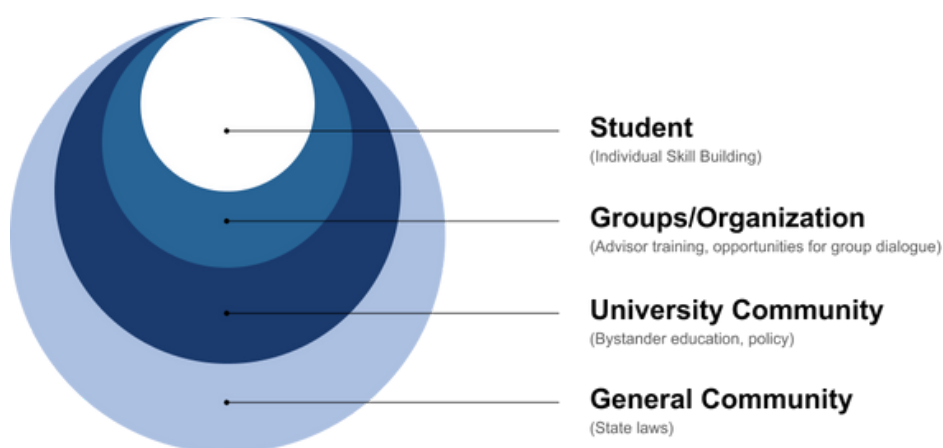
## Preventing Hazing

*Everyone has a role to play in preventing hazing.*

All members of a community can actively support the prevention of hazing. Because of the complexity of this issue, the collective efforts of students, group members and teammates, coaches, advisors, teachers, faculty and staff, parents and family members, and other community members are necessary to shift the organizational and group cultures in which hazing is embedded.

### The Social-Ecological Model (SEM)

The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) is useful for understanding how hazing prevention efforts can be embedded and implemented at multiple levels of the environment or community (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). The SEM provides a framework for considering factors that may be contributing to hazing and factors that are likely to prevent its occurrence at each level.



Using the SEM as a guide to plan and approach hazing prevention is key because to comprehensively prevent hazing and shift cultures, all levels of the environment need to be addressed. The individual, group, community, and institutional levels are depicted in the SEM, and efforts that are aimed at one group should reinforce the efforts targeted at another. In doing so, hazing prevention can take a holistic and synergistic approach, versus only targeting hazing prevention efforts at the individual level.

# Preventing Hazing

## The Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF)

The Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF) is the only data-driven framework for hazing prevention that provides a roadmap for a public health-based approach for comprehensive hazing prevention. The HPF is based on principles of prevention science, SAMHSA's (2019) Strategic Prevention Framework and findings from the Hazing Prevention Consortium – a research-to-practice initiative dedicated to building the evidence base for campus hazing prevention and providing tailored guidance and support for institutions committed to hazing prevention in the US.



(Allan et al., 2018)

There are eight interconnected components in this framework: Commitment, Capacity, Assessment, Planning, Evaluation, Cultural Competence, Sustainability, and Implementation.

While some components may be emphasized more at certain times, all are necessary and work in concert with one another to execute a comprehensive approach to hazing prevention. To further explore the HPF and its components, visit [stophazing.org/hpf](http://stophazing.org/hpf).

The HPF has been used to develop other campus hazing prevention resources including: the *Hazing Prevention Toolkit*, the *Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention: Action Guide*, and the *We Don't Haze Companion Guide*. All materials are available at [stophazing.org/resources](http://stophazing.org/resources).



A translational study is underway to test the use of the HPF in the U.S. Army!

## Connecting the HPF to this Viewing Guide:

This guide and the forthcoming resources to support the use of *HAZING* for education and prevention can be part of a comprehensive approach to hazing prevention. The intentional use of the film for meaningful discussion and/or training purposes is a type of **implementation** strategy and allocating time and space to do so demonstrates **commitment** to hazing prevention. As individuals learn through their engagement with the film, it helps to build **capacity** for prevention. *HAZING* also provides an opportunity to foreground **cultural competence**, and identity-consciousness in hazing prevention by illuminating the experiences of those participating in groups at HBCUs, in the Divine Nine organizations, and by foregrounding the voices of experts who are BIPOC. Additionally, collecting pre and post-data is recommended for planning and evaluation purposes. Specific resources to support data collection are forthcoming; reach out to the StopHazing Research Lab for additional information and support about this at [info@stophazing.org](mailto:info@stophazing.org).



# Using the Guide & Planning a Viewing Program

## How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to support the viewing experience of *HAZING*. In particular, it can support learners in digging more deeply into the issue of hazing, reflecting, and processing emotions and reactions to the film, and encouraging viewers to take personal responsibility to help prevent hazing.

The *Viewing Guide* is a package of resources that includes the following:

1. An Introductory Guide - This includes information about the film, foundational concepts and research highlights about hazing and hazing prevention, guidance for hosting a viewing of the film and facilitating a program/discussion, and resources and support for viewers.
2. Discussion & Reflection Questions - This includes several basic starter questions and reflection opportunities, as well as more specific discussion questions to prompt critical thinking, catalyze problem-solving, and ignite a robust dialog.
3. Themed Resources - (forthcoming) Each themed resource will connect the film to hazing prevention, and provide suggested activities to extend reflection and learning from the film's content.
  - Bystander Intervention for Hazing Prevention
  - Hazing & Power Dynamics
  - Leadership & Skill Development for Hazing Prevention
  - Intersections of Mental Health & Hazing

## Planning A Viewing & Program

Here are some tips and guidance to consider as you plan to host a viewing of the film and facilitate a supplemental program such as a discussion, reflection session, workshop/training, or activity.

### 1. Identify the audience

Prior to showing the film and diving into a program or discussion, spend time identifying and understanding the audience. Who will be in the room? What types of identities do/may they have? What types of groups or communities do they represent? Once you've identified the audience for the program, determine a delivery method or program structure - tailored to the audience - that may work best. Consider the learning outcomes (see 2 below) and what may need to be expanded or narrowed to meet the needs of the audience.

**Note:** Facilitators may know the audience very well or there may be new connections and participants in the room. Regardless of how well a facilitator believes they know their audience, we strongly encourage facilitators to share a content advisory/warning or advisory clause before watching the film due to the nature of the powerful storytelling.



### Content Advisory Example

We recommend sharing a trigger warning or content advisory before watching the film:  
*"The following content contains mature subject matter which may be triggering for some audiences, including discussions about physical and emotional abuse and violence."*

# Using the Guide & Planning a Viewing Program

## **2. Confirm learning outcomes**

Consider the goals and learning outcomes for the program. Upon watching the film and participating in a program, what should the participants gain in learning, understanding, or reflecting? The learning outcomes should be in alignment with the format of the program and its delivery too. For example, learning outcomes for a viewing and discussion may vary from the desired learning outcomes for a viewing and workshop or activity.

Below are a few examples of possible learning outcomes:

Participants will be able to...

- Define hazing and recognize the three components of the definition
- Recognize different types of hazing behaviors
- Identify strategies to prevent hazing

## **3. Identify partners**

Take time to consider any supporting offices, staff, community members, or organizations that can help connect the audience to resources. Could this be an opportunity to partner with different or new individuals/units/organizations to increase the impact and scope of the program? Are there individuals who could help deliver the program?

## **4. Cultivate the shared space thoughtfully**

First, consider the location for the film viewing and the subsequent program. How might the location offer a supportive, engaging, and comfortable environment? Next, thoughtfully craft the facilitation methods and discussion delivery. Although this guide provides suggestions for facilitation, be sure the method not only matches the facilitators' style but resonates with the audience. For example, will the workshop include mainly large or small group discussions? Are there anonymous engagement features such as online polling, or activities to accommodate different learning styles?

## **5. Evaluating the program**

We strongly encourage program evaluation. A simple survey or exit-question tool can help determine if learning objectives are achieved and if the training is effective for the audience. An evaluation can include a pre- and post-assessment to measure learning or a shift in perceptions; an overall program evaluation can provide feedback on the entirety of the program.

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## **Statement of Limitations**

While we have worked to showcase how hazing can impact people differently, particularly across various identities and organization types, we recognize that the film and this Viewing Guide cannot capture every individual's or group's experiences with hazing. We encourage you to continue engaging in thoughtful reflection and discussion about hazing and its prevention.

# Resources and Support for Viewers

## Viewer Well-being & Next Steps for Hazing Prevention

It is important for participants to know the potential resources available to them as they view the film and reflect on the information shared, as well as their own lived experiences. Also vital is ensuring viewers are aware of how to report hazing, warning signs of hazing, or other harmful behaviors.

*The following is a list of campus resources for students, faculty and staff, coaches and advisors, and parents and family members to consider:*

- Campus Safety and Emergency Services (911)
- Counseling Center
- Wellness Center
- Victim Support Services
- Anonymous Reporting
- Title IX Office
- Other key campus contacts and offices (e.g., hazing prevention coalition members, student organizations, fraternity/sorority life, athletics)

Additionally, there are resources beyond campus to support survivors and individuals taking a stand against hazing. We encourage those impacted by hazing to seek the support they need and to tap into support systems that resonate with them most - everyone's experiences with hazing and its impacts are felt differently. Some may feel supported by talking to peers, family members, counselors, or seeking out local or community support groups, while others may process and cope through other pathways. It is important to seek out the help and support you need as a consequence of the trauma and harm caused by hazing, both directly and indirectly.

StopHazing offers no-cost resources and information about hazing and its prevention, and how to prevent it at [stophazing.org/resources](https://stophazing.org/resources).

To report hazing, institutions and organizations typically have reporting systems in place - often anonymous - to which you can submit reports. You can also call the Anti-hazing Hotline at **1-888-NOT-HAZE**

# Discussion & Reflection

## Notes for the Facilitator:

- Adapt these questions to craft a discussion session that meets the needs of the audience and the allotted 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.



## Basic Starters and Reflections

- How are you feeling after watching the film?
- What are your big takeaways from the film?
- What did you learn about hazing and its impacts from the film?
- What did you think of the storytelling approach to discussing this topic?
- Did this film change your perspective about the topic of hazing in any way?
- What stood out to you as you watched the film? Was there anything surprising or perhaps unsurprising about the content?
- Who do you think should watch this film? What types of audiences could benefit from watching and learning more about hazing?

# Discussion & Reflection

## Thinking Critically

- Why do you think hazing continues?
- The film highlighted a range of hazing behaviors. Were there examples of hazing that were new to you? How do you think hazing may vary across different types of groups?
- What are some ideas you have for group bonding activities or ways groups can get to know newcomers and build connection and a sense of belonging?
- Often group members push back saying there needs to be a process to join the group, and that's why hazing persists - as a 'rite of passage' or to 'earn' the membership or status. What are some ways groups can develop or change their new member or joining processes to achieve the goals they think or expect hazing will accomplish?
- Research indicates that about 10% of those who experience hazing report it. Why do people choose not to report hazing? What makes reporting hazing or intervening difficult? What steps can be taken to encourage a culture of reporting and intervening?
- What are some factors that influence group behaviors, norms, and traditions? Were there any in the film that surprised you or any that were new to you? (e.g., donations/financial contributions to organizations, alumni involvement).
- Traditions can be very prominent in organizations, communities, and cultures. Hazing is often dismissed or rationalized as 'tradition'. What types of traditions do you have in your groups? When you think about hazing traditions or rituals that are often passed on year after year, how would you decide when to maintain a tradition or try to shift away from it? Are the goals of the tradition clear to the group? What can you do in place of the tradition to achieve the same goal(s)?
- Often, groups that are hazing are also claiming to stand for leadership, strong values, are service- or community-oriented, or are a family. How can hazing contradict those claims?
- What is it going to take to stop hazing in your opinion?

## For more...

The forthcoming resources connecting to the themes of mental health, leadership, power dynamics, and bystander intervention provide the opportunity for viewers to dig deeper into the topic and consider other layers of this complex and difficult topic.



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## Acknowledgments & Suggested Citation

If you have any questions about this resource, reach out to StopHazing at [info@stophazing.org](mailto:info@stophazing.org).

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The conceptual design, interpretation, and drafting of this project were led by Meredith Stewart, M.Ed., Operations Manager at StopHazing, Elizabeth J. Allan, Ph.D., Professor of Higher Education at the University of Maine and Principal of StopHazing, and Devin Franklin, M.Ed., Doctoral Research Fellow at StopHazing. Oversight, revision, and adaptation of the project were completed by Byron Hurt, Filmmaker of *HAZING* and owner of God Bless the Child Productions, LLC, and Natalie Bullock Brown, Producer of *HAZING*.

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