



WASHINGTON STATE
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Hazing Prevention at WSU

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What exactly is Hazing and why does it matter for students and leaders to get honest about knowing?

- This session will focus to level set group dynamics, peer to peer and self-regulation of hazing prevention within groups.
- As a student you will see and hear many markers of hazing, yet many students do not even realize it.
- This session will explore practical myths around hazing, reporting information, discuss research findings that have developed practical ways to understand ways you can approach peer to peer group dynamics that could influence a change within organizations.

RCW 28B.10.900

"Hazing" defined.

As used in RCW 28B.10.901 and 28B.10.902, "hazing" includes any act committed as part of a person's recruitment, initiation, pledging, admission into, or affiliation with a student organization, athletic team, or living group, or any pastime or amusement engaged in with respect to such an organization, athletic team, or living group that causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger or physical harm, or serious psychological or emotional harm, to any student or other person attending a public or private institution of higher education or other postsecondary educational institution in this state, including causing, directing, coercing, or forcing a person to consume any food, liquid, alcohol, drug, or other substance which subjects the person to risk of such harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. "Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions.

Exploring Practical Myths Around Hazing and Reporting:

Myth: Hazing Builds Unity and Solidarity:

- Reality: Hazing can create fear, hostility, and resentment, leading to a toxic group environment. True unity is built on trust, respect, and positive interactions.

Exploring Practical Myths Around Hazing and Reporting Continued:

Myth: Reporting is Weakness or Betrayal:

- Reality: Reporting hazing takes courage. It's an act of strength and protects the well-being of individuals and the group as a whole. Encourage reporting by ensuring confidentiality and non-retaliation policies.

Exploring Practical Myths Around Hazing and Reporting Continued:

Myth: Only Extreme Cases Are Hazing:

- Reality: Hazing exists on a spectrum. Even seemingly minor activities can escalate, causing harm. Recognizing and addressing early signs is crucial.

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HAZING BEHAVIORS SPECTRUM

LOW SEVERITY

HIGH SEVERITY

INTIMIDATION

Social isolation

Using demeaning names for initiates and demanding titles (Ms., Mr.) for existing members

Assigning meaningless or impossible tasks

Requiring new members to carry specific items at all times

Deceptions

Behaviors and/or activities that reinforce power differentials

HARASSMENT

Verbal abuse, yelling

Threats or implied threats

Sleep deprivation

Requiring “pranks” such as stealing or harassing another organization

Skit nights with degrading or humiliating acts

Requiring new members to perform services for existing members (cleaning, errands)

VIOLENCE

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse

Forced consumption of alcohol, drugs, and/or disgusting substances

Abductions, or limiting someone’s ability to leave a situation or place

Bondage

Total or partial nudity

HIGH FREQUENCY

LOW FREQUENCY

Awareness and Impact:

- Why is it important for students and leaders to be aware of hazing within their organizations or communities?
- What do you believe are the potential consequences or negative effects of hazing on individuals and groups?

Impact of Hazing on Victims:

- Sleep problems, including insomnia
- Difficulty forming relationships or trusting others
- Decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Depression, anxiety, self-harm
- Loss of sense of control and empowerment
- Lower grades and poor performance in classes
- Problems in relationships with friends, significant others and family

Impact of Hazing on Victims Continued:

- Post-traumatic stress syndrome
- Loss of interest in being part of organizations
- Illness or hospitalization (because of psychological or physical illness/injury)
- Death

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Impact of Hazing on Those Who Haze:

- Deterioration of relationships with friends, significant others and family
- Loss of connection to alums through the organization
- Scrutiny from local and national media
- Damage to personal reputation
- Distorted sense of leadership
- Feelings of disgrace and guilt
- Financial strain (result of lawsuit)

Impact of Hazing on Organizations:

- Loss of reputation within the campus community, local area and nationally
- Civil damages may be levied against the organization
- Organization's officers may be held responsible
- Gradual loss of the true meaning and values of the organization
- Difficulty recruiting to the organization
- Damage to the reputation of similar organizations

As a students you may see and hear many markers of hazing....

- Power Imbalance and Control
- Secrecy and Exclusivity
- Reliance on Tradition as a Justification
- Reluctance to Discuss
- Humiliation and Degrading Activities
- Emotional and Physical Stress
- Unexplained Injuries or Behavior Changes

- Cougs don't haze.

Being a Cougar means being part of a respectful, safe community that welcomes and includes everyone. Hazing hurts individuals and our entire campus community by creating environments of fear and discrimination.

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➤ **Call out hazing behaviors in the moment you feel safe doing so**

- **Report the behavior/actions to WSU**
- The Center for Community Standards
 - Compliance and Civil Rights
 - WSU Police
 - A local/national chapter of the organization conducting the hazing

If you're not sure if something is hazing, try asking yourself the following questions:

- Would I feel comfortable with this activity if my family were watching?
- Does this activity violate any WSU or organizational standards or codes of conduct?
- Is this activity illegal?
- Does this activity cause participants emotional, physical or mental distress?

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If you answered yes to any of those questions,
please make a report to the university

<https://communitystandards.wsu.edu/hazing-prevention/>




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Hazing Report Form

We are all accountable for maintaining a safe, healthy, and inclusive campus. We contribute to a community which encourages and educates everyone to make positive choices and share messages of our values. Occasionally students make choices that put those values at risk. The community standards process is designed to support those students, uphold their rights and responsibilities, and hold them accountable for behaviors that conflict with our community standards.

Washington State University defines hazing (WAC 504-26-206) as any activity expected of someone joining a group (or maintaining full status in a group) that causes or is likely to cause a risk of mental, emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

You have the option to report anonymously, although our ability to investigate anonymous reports may be limited. Thank you for helping us and our students uphold community expectations. More information about the Standards of Conduct, and the community standards process are available on our website, communitystandards.wsu.edu .

Who must report?

- WSU Employee (e.g., faculty, staff, instructors)
- WSU Student employees
- Volunteers

What must be reported?

Any incident in which the mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe hazing has occurred



Amnesty in Reporting...Keep WSU Safe!

Washington state law states that a person who witnesses hazing, or has a reasonable cause to believe hazing has occurred or will occur and makes a report in good faith may not be sanctioned or punished for the violation of hazing unless the person is directly engaged in planning, directing, or act of hazing reported.

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As a Peer Leader, you can be the difference

- ❑ Positive Role Modeling
- ❑ Education and Awareness
- ❑ Open Communication
- ❑ Support New Members
- ❑ Challenge Group Norms
- ❑ Promote Mental Health
- ❑ Continuous Self-Reflection

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Understanding Group Dynamics:

- ❑ **Leadership Role:** Identify and empower influential figures within the group to lead by example. Positive leadership can significantly impact group behavior.
- ❑ **Inclusivity:** Foster a sense of belonging within the group. Often, hazing occurs due to the desire to prove one's worth or loyalty. Inclusive environments can reduce this need for validation through negative means.
- ❑ **Communication Channels:** Establish open lines of communication within the group. Encourage members to voice concerns without fear of retribution. This can help in early detection of hazing activities.

Encourage Self-Regulation:

□ Awareness Campaigns:

- Raise awareness about hazing and its consequences. Knowledgeable members are more likely to self-regulate and prevent harmful activities.

□ Accountability:

Hold individuals accountable for their actions. Implement a strict anti-hazing policy with clear consequences for violators. This can act as a deterrent.

□ Empathy Building:

Develop empathy within the group. Understanding the feelings and perspectives of others can discourage harmful behavior.

Promote Positive Peer Interactions:

□ Team-building Activities:

- Organize team-building exercises to strengthen the bond among group members. Positive interactions in such settings can translate into respectful behavior within the group.

□ Peer Education:

Encourage older or more experienced members to educate newcomers about the group's values, norms, and expectations. Peer-led workshops or seminars can be effective.

□ Mentorship Programs:

Implement mentorship programs where experienced members guide new recruits. Positive mentorship can counteract negative peer pressure.



Questions?

**Center for Community
Standards**

Lighty Student Services

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Citations

- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28B.10.900. Hazing defined. Retrieved from <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28B.10.900>
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