FRATERNITY & SORORITY HAZING: A PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO RELEVANT RESEARCH & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION

Elizabeth Allan, Ph.D., Brian Joyce, Ph.D., & Emily Perlow, Ph.D.
Hazing remains prevalent on college campuses. It is a threat to the health and safety of college students, in particular, fraternity and sorority students. Fraternity and sorority life professionals are often faced with the growing pressures and challenges to prevent hazing on their campuses. This paper is intended to serve as a resource for fraternity and sorority professionals to align practice with research findings and research-informed guidance about hazing prevention.

Hazing continues to undermine the health and safety of students, their groups, and the larger communities in which they operate. Humiliating, degrading, or having the potential to be physically and/or emotionally harmful, hazing is at odds with the missions of educational institutions and national/international organizations and undermines ethical leadership development and practice. As such, many campus and national/international organization leaders have heeded the call to action to prevent hazing. Despite these concerted efforts, however, hazing persists. Analyses of high-profile and lesser-known cases have illuminated the social complexity of hazing behavior and the limits to traditional prevention approaches.

Research can help us to better understand the complex and nuanced factors contributing to, and mitigating or eliminating, hazing behaviors. A developing knowledge base about its prevention holds promise for providing fraternity and sorority professionals with data-driven approaches to guide more effective practice. This white paper is intended as a comprehensive, yet concise review of the literature on the topic of fraternity and sorority hazing and its prevention. In writing this, our goals were to provide readers with a snapshot of the research and to delineate its practical applications for practitioners committed to hazing prevention.

**Literature Review**

Whether it was the wearing of certain attire, paddling, forced alcohol or food consumption, competition between first-year and upper-class students, or brutal "pranks" between students, hazing is an unfortunate thread woven into the fabric of college campuses since their early history (Syrett, 2009; Nuwer, 2020; Trotta & Johnson, 2004). At least one hazing death has occurred every year in the United States since 1959, with the vast majority occurring within fraternities (Nuwer, 2020). Calling attention to the horrific and deadly incidents of hazing is vital for alerting the public to the problem of hazing and catalyzing change-making initiatives. However, limiting our focus to these types of incidents may have an unintended effect of eclipsing the broader range of harm that can occur from hazing and the diversity of students, families, and communities who are impacted by it.

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 (Hoover, 1999), can be understood within a spectrum of interpersonal violence that includes alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep deprivation, and sexual acts serving as common behaviors (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). In a national survey of 11,482 students, Allan and Madden (2008, 2012) found that over half (55%) of all college students participating in a campus organization experienced hazing in their college career. Fraternity and sorority members were one of the most likely group members to experience hazing, with 73% of members reporting they experienced behaviors meeting the definition of hazing. Rates of hazing among varsity athletes were comparable at 74%, with club sports (64%), performing arts organizations (54%), and service fraternities and sororities (50%) following in prevalence (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012).

The body of knowledge about hazing in the context of fraternity/sorority membership has grown over the previous 15 years. With several tragic hazing deaths making headlines, researchers are increasingly turning their attention to this important topic. However, prior to 2005, the literature was somewhat sparse, in part because hazing, which is grounded in secrecy and deception and rife with social desirability bias, is quite difficult to study. Connected to this, hazing is often overlooked as a problem to be solved. Minimization and normalization contribute to it often being...
invisible or eclipsed except in extreme cases. Additionally, the absence of federal funding specifically designated for research about hazing means the literature is growing at a slower rate than other areas, such as substance abuse. A monograph by Biddix et al. (2014) reviewed more than 1,500 eligible studies about fraternity and sorority members and experiences between 1996 and 2013. Among those studies, Biddix et al. identified 300 methodologically sound, peer-reviewed studies to synthesize. Only 2% of these studies addressed fraternity and sorority hazing experiences. While the focus of this white paper is the fraternity and sorority experience on college campuses, no literature review would be complete without also drawing from studies of other college students, athletes, high school students, and military environments. Among the body of literature, fraternity and sorority hazing research often seeks to answer several broad questions:

- What exactly constitutes hazing? How do student and administrator definitions of hazing differ?
- Why does hazing happen?
- What are the outcomes of hazing?
- How do identity characteristics such as race or gender impact hazing participation, attitudes, and outcomes?
- Why does hazing persist?

The following pages will explore each of these questions.

What constitutes hazing? How do student and administrator definitions of hazing differ?

In general, hazing is defined as any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group (such as a student club or team) that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers, regardless of a person’s willingness to participate (Hoover, 1999; Allan & Madden, 2007a; Bryant & DeAngelis, 2004; Bryshun, 1997; Hollmann, 2002; Sweet, 2004). There are many explanations for hazing, viewed through the lenses of sociology (e.g., Hollmann, 2002; Keating et al., 2005; Kiesling, 2005, Montague et al., 2008), psychology (e.g., McCready, 2019; McCreary et al., 2017; Parks et al., 2013; Parks & Southerland, 2013), anthropology (e.g., Sweet, 2004; Cimino, 2011, 2013, 2017), public health (e.g., Allan & Kerschner, 2020a; Langford, 2004), folklore (e.g., Dundes & Dundes, 2002; Mechling, 2008), criminology (e.g., Alexander & Opsal, 2020; Parks, Jones, & Hughey, 2015), and organizational behavior (e.g., DeSantis, 2007; Parks, 2012; Parks & Laybourn, 2017; Perlow, 2018). Many of these theories are rooted in the socio-psychological research on students and their identity development through group interaction. The reasons for hazing, thus, have been organized into three primary functions: (a) a rite of passage; (b) a tool to align individual and group identity; (c) a mechanism for exerting power and dominance; and (d) a tool to discourage freeloaders; (e) a tool to build group cohesion, and (f) a mechanism of moral disengagement.

Hazing as a rite of passage. Rites of passage in many cultures mark the transition between childhood and adulthood. Typically, fraternity and sorority membership takes place in this transitional time when students in their late teens and early 20s are forming their identities as college students and young adults. During this time, many traditional-aged students experiment with their identities, views, personal boundaries, and ethical decision making (Arnett, 2004). According to some scholars, students who endure hazing as part of the joining process, demarcate themselves as members from non-members (Donnelly, 1981; Johnson, 2011; Nuwer, 1999; Sweet, 2004). For many, the process of establishing one’s adult self happens concurrently with the fraternity and sorority membership rite of passage, thus, fraternity/sorority identity and identity can become intertwined (Arnett, 2004; Sweet 2004).

Hazing as a way to align individual and group identity. Hazing also helps reinforce shared identity characteristics as new members reshape their own identities in relation to the group (Allan & DeAngelis, 2004; Bryshun, 1997; Hollmann, 2002; Sweet, 2004). Through receiving symbols such as t-shirts and decorative paddles and through shared experiences, including hazing, students cement their affiliation. Once the individual and group identity are aligned, students will work to maintain group norms and protect the group as an extension of their own identity, including supporting unpopular ideas or engaging in detrimental activities such as hazing (Addelson & Striratt, 1996; Walden, 2008). Hazing, in effect, inexplicably intertwines meaning of the self with the fraternity or sorority identity.

Hazing as power and dominance. As a rite of passage as well as a way to align individuals and groups, hazing is a mechanism by which members of the group exercise power. Hazing can involve bullying behavior, but bullying is not necessarily hazing (Allan & Madden, 2012). The fact that students can clearly identify harmful activities as hazing and struggle to problematize less egregious activities as hazing (Ellsworth, 2006; Hoover, 1999), suggests that students see the potential for harm as a condition of hazing. While studies indicate that approximately 75% of fraternity/sorority members (Allan & Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005; Owen et al., 2008) experienced some form of hazing, many of these students may show difficulty problematizing activities that did not personally cause them or their close peers harm.

Why does hazing happen?

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Hazing as a tool to build group cohesion. Those who are hazed often express the belief that a challenging new member experience creates a more cohesive group (DeSantis, 2007; Hollmann, 2002; Morinis, 1999). Called the maltreatment effect or the severity-attraction effect (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Keating et al., 2005), individuals who are mistreated sometimes demonstrate greater loyalty than those who are treated well. In a laboratory setting, those participants who were mistreated and perceived themselves to have misbehaved towards the abuser and that a greater perception of the abuser’s power compared to individuals who engaged in activities without maltreatment. Mistreated participants also agreed more often with the viewpoints of those they perceived as in power (Keating et al., 2005; Wellard, 2002). These sacrifices are compelled through some of the same strategies employed by cults or gangs: social control and isolation, indoctrination of beliefs, requiring compliance to certain rules or codes of behavior, and the use of fear to intimidate (Hollmann, 2002; Nuwer, 1999). Through hazing, the organization employs dishonesty, control, and lying to increase the sense of sacrifice among aspirants in order to: (a) guarantee all members to have sacrificed equally (Jones, 2000); (b) prevent freeloaders from reaping the status and benefits of membership in the organization (Cimino, 2011, 2013); and (c) create greater psychological commitment and attraction to the group (Keating et al., 2005; van Raaftte et al., 2007).

Hazing as a consequence of moral disengagement. Moral disengagement is the psycho-social process by which individuals convince themselves that ethical standards of behavior do not apply to them in a given context. The unequivocal acceptance of group norms that deviate from social mores and the accompanying complicity that accompanies this acceptance of group norms can lead to group moral disengagement that takes the shape of dehumanization attributed to blame to organization aspirants, and diffusion of responsibility for ensuring good treatment (Bandura, 1986, 1999). Men and boys tended to show higher levels of moral disengagement (Hamilton, 2011; McCready, 2012; Paciello et al., 2008). Additionally, a strong correlation has been shown between the likelihood of hazing and moral disengagement (Hamilton, 2011; McCready, 2012; McCready et al., 2016). While there are many explanations for why hazing happens, none of them are singularly explanatory. Hazing is a complex psycho-social phenomenon that is influenced by individual characteristics, group culture and dynamics, and the larger environmental norms in which the hazing is situated. Individuals may agree to participate in hazing and groups may see hazing as a necessary form of new member socialization for all or some of these reasons.

What are the outcomes of hazing? In many studies, both the hazers and the hazed
than fraternity members and their unaffiliated peers to hold the president of an organization responsible for hazing when they were not directly involved in the hazing behavior. They also found that sorority members saw commitment to initiation and sense of obligation as having greater causal significance for hazing than did fraternity members. The researchers concluded that differential response to victimization by gender suggested a tendency for sorority members to view the organization as playing a more significant causal role in a hazing incident.

Aside from gender differences in reported behavior and attitudes about hazing, some researchers have examined ways in which gender identity and gender norms intersect with hazing (Allan & Kinney, 2018; McCready, 2019; Perlow, 2018; Tran & Chang, 2013; Veliz-Calderon & Allan, 2017). From this perspective, hazing can be considered a tool to reinforce the desired gender identity of the organization by marginalizing and othering new members who exhibit undesirable forms of gender expression or sexual orientation (Anderson, 2005; Holman, 2004; Kimmel, 2008; Perlow, 2018; McCready, 2019). Simultaneously, gender norms can be used as a tool for humiliating and harassing behavior in hazing (Allan & Kinney, 2018). Sexualized hazing features prominently as a tool to reinforce what is and is not desirable gendered behavior for athletic team and fraternity members, as demonstrated by sorority women who compel their new members to perform a sexualized dance for a men’s group or fraternity men or athletic team members who make new members dress in drag or for a men’s group or fraternity men or athletic team and sorority hazing policies, the normative culture of binge drinking within new member socialization processes seen primarily in historically White organizations is deeply ingrained in the social experience for the vast majority. The new member processes in these organizations often mirror the larger fraternity and sorority experience in terms of its socialization of high-risk alcohol consumption (Weschler et al., 2009). Given the strong desire to fit into the group, potential new members are likely more susceptible to the influence of their peers’ high-risk alcohol norms (Kuh & Arnold, 1993) as drinking patterns are established for many students during the initial phases of membership (Biddix et al., 2014). Particularly for newcomers to an organization who deeply desire to belong, this may lead to the consumption of alcohol well beyond their limit in order to demonstrate the ability to align with group norms (Hughes & Coakley, 1991).

The Role of Alcohol in Hazing

Fraternity and sorority members in predominantly White fraternities and sororities, engage with alcohol and binge drink more often than their non-affiliated peers; thus, not surprisingly, fraternity and sorority members experience the negative repercussions of drinking more often than non-members (Weschler et al., 2009). Men often conform or overconform to the normative drinking patterns of their peers to affirm their masculinity and to establish their place within the group (Sryett, 2009; Kimmel, 2008; McCready, 2018). Alcohol is often utilized to foster intimacy and unity, and to promote bonding among college men (Nitzel et al., 1994). The drinking culture in fraternities and sororities is also symbiotic with dangerous or deviant behaviors, such as hazing and pranks, that are often retold as funny, legendary, and a source of bonding (Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Kiesling, 2005; Snyder, 1994; Workman, 2001).

Given a heavy reliance on alcohol in the overall fraternal experience, alcohol consumption features frequently in hazing activities particularly among historically White organizations (Anderson, McCormack, and Lee, 2012; Hoover, 1999; Malszczak, 2004). While the consumption of alcohol as a condition of membership into an organization is a violation of all campus and national/international fraternity and sorority hazing policies, the normative culture of binge drinking within new member socialization processes seen...
is perceived autonomy to do what one wants, and where secrecy is one of the deeply entrenched cultural mores. As an example of the problematic nature of fraternity housing: while most fraternity and sorority members were drinkers, more than 86% of fraternity house residents were binge drinkers (Wechsler et al., 2009).

Worth noting, the fraternity or sorority house is not the sole site for hazing. In Allan and Madden’s study (2008), 25 percent of the students who reported experiencing hazing behaviors said the hazing occurred in a public setting. Almost half of the students reported their hazing occurred during the day (Allan & Madden, 2008). In 2008, one in four students experiencing hazing said alumni were present and perceived that coaches and/or advisors were aware of the activity (Allan & Madden, 2008) and in a more recent study, Allan et al., (2019) report that more than 40% of students surveyed indicated that a coach or advisor had knowledge of the hazing activities and more than 25% say these individuals were physically present when the hazing occurred. Nearly a third (29%) of respondents reported that alumni were present for some of the hazing activities they experienced.

**Why Does Hazing Persist?**

As seen from a quick scan of newspaper headlines, hazing clearly causes harm, leaving many administrators and researchers perplexed about why hazing persists. One reason individuals and organizations continue to haze may be the perception that there are more positive outcomes of hazing than negative ones. In Allan and Madden’s (2008) study, 31 percent of students experiencing hazing said they felt a sense of accomplishment as a result of the activity (Allan & Madden, 2008) and in a more recent study, Allan et al., (2019) report that more than 40% of students surveyed indicated that a coach or advisor had knowledge of the hazing activities and more than 25% say these individuals were physically present when the hazing occurred. Nearly a third (29%) of respondents reported that alumni were present for some of the hazing activities they experienced.

**Hazing Prevention**

While literature on prevention of high risk drinking, sexual assault, and bullying is well established, the body of work focused on hazing prevention is nascent. To date, published empirical studies documenting efficacy of primary hazing prevention in any context are few. However, research points to the value of public health frameworks and principles of prevention science for informing hazing prevention (Allan et al., 2018). As noted in Allan and Kerschner (2020a), a public health approach emphasizes activities that prevent problematic behavior before it begins (primary prevention). Other forms of prevention are also important, including intervention (secondary prevention) and response to hazing (tertiary prevention). However, studies from community health affirm that a focus on primary prevention is needed to make significant gains in behavior change and to shift cultural norms (Nation et al., 2003). Consideration of the environment in which human behavior occurs, the comprehensive nature of a prevention approach, and community readiness are themes from the literature that inform campus hazing prevention (Allan et al., 2018; Langford, 2008).

Systematic and comprehensive approaches are widely known to be most effective for developing violence prevention programs (Langford, 2004). Additionally, evidence indicates that theory-based programs, varied teaching methods, sustained dosage, and appropriate timing and customization to institutional characteristics and target populations are associated with effective prevention programs (Nation et al., 2003). Drawing from these and the Strategic Prevention Framework (SAMSHA, 2019), Allan et al., (2018) described a data-driven Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF) that incorporates these principles and applies them to hazing prevention specifically (Figure 1). The HPF delineates eight key components for comprehensive hazing prevention including: commitment, capacity building, assessment, planning, cultural competence, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability. Specific indicators for assessing progress in hazing prevention are elaborated for each component of the HPF. When the components are applied in an integrated manner, the HPF can provide a roadmap for comprehensive hazing prevention.

Drawing from the premise that human behavior is shaped by factors at multiple levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) of a particular context, Dahlburg and Krug’s (2002) social ecological model (SEM) portrays the interplay of dynamic systems at multiple levels of an organization within the context of the broader community (Figure 2). The SEM is frequently employed in community health initiatives and can assist practitioners in planning for prevention strategies that are targeted to address multiple layers of the social ecology including: individuals, groups, the institution, and the broader community (Allan et al., 2018; Langford, 2008). Used in conjunction with other frameworks, the SEM can be a powerful tool to assist campus professionals with planning for a more strategic and targeted approach to hazing prevention.

A problem analysis process, in alignment with the SEM, can support practitioners in strengthening a strategic and targeted approach to hazing prevention by identifying risk and protective factors for hazing at multiple layers of the social ecology (Langford, 2008; Allan et al., 2018). Informed by research and local assessment data, coalitions of campus professionals identify and differentiate factors believed to increase the likelihood of hazing relative to each layer of the SEM. For instance, a risk factor at the individual or intrapersonal level might be the lack of established social networks outside the group or team in which the student is seeking membership or belonging. At the group level, a risk factor might be the organization or team’s history of hazing behavior and active alumni participation.
members who reinforce the importance of maintaining
the tradition, and at the institutional level, the lack of
clearly communicated expectations and accountability
for hazing could contribute to a perception that hazing
is not taken seriously and thus increase the likelihood
that hazing might occur. Also, as part of the problem
analysis process, it is equally important to identify
factors that may protect against hazing at each level of
the SEM (protective factors). For instance, at the
institutional level, expectations clearly communicated
via anti-hazing policies, clear reporting mechanisms,
strong accountability, and transparency relative to
violations may help deter some hazing behavior. While
this analysis process can be based on an environmental
scan, it will be substantially fortified if grounded in
formal assessment data.

After key risk and protective factors are identified,
the process moves to the identification of specifically
targeted strategies relative to risk and protective
factors at each level of the SEM. In some cases (e.g.,
trainings), a particular strategy might reduce risk
while also strengthening factors that are believed to
protect against hazing. In other cases, a strategy might
be solely focused on diminishing a risk factor, while
another strategy is developed to amplify protective
factors (e.g., ethical leadership development and
bystander intervention). This problem analysis process
aligns with a public health approach that emphasizes
the importance of mechanisms that are informed
by research and data, developed in a strategic and
targeted way, and carry clearly defined goals and
objectives (Langford, 2008). Theory-based programs,
varied teaching methods, sustained dosage, and
appropriate timing and customization to institutional
characteristics and target populations are established
principles associated with effective prevention
programs (National et al., 2003).

**Promising Practices**

Building on the foundation of prevention science,
several studies have sought to explore the promise
of particular hazing prevention strategies. In an
evaluation of a hazing prevention training for high
school athletes, Hakkola et al., (2019) reported
statistically significant shifts in scales measuring
general knowledge about hazing, attitudes and
perceptions of hazing, and knowledge about hazing
prevention strategies. In another study of a hazing
prevention training with college students, Allan &
Kerschner, (2020b), researchers employed a rigorous
evaluation design including two treatment groups
and a control group. Data were collected from nearly
400 (n=395) students enrolled at one of three U.S.
universities and included members of a leadership
development program, resident advisors, club sport
athletes, and fraternity and sorority members at their
respective campuses. Students randomly assigned
to view the film, *We Don’t Haze*, were Treatment
Group A, while students assigned to Treatment Group
B, viewed the same film supplemented by a facilitated
discussion. Overall, in comparison to the control
group who viewed a generic leadership video, students
who participated in either treatment group were
more likely than their peers to increase their knowledge
and understanding about what constitutes hazing,
the full range of harm that hazing can cause, and
where hazing occurs. Additionally, students in both
treatment groups were more likely than their peers
to shift their attitudes and perceptions away from those
that serve to support and normalize hazing and toward
attitudes that assist in the development of inclusive
group and team environments. Finally, students in
the treatment groups were significantly more likely to
gain knowledge about how to prevent hazing.

The film, Intervise includes brief scenarios
demonstrating ways in which student bystanders
are able to intervene in a range of high risk or
problematic situations including sexual assault,
intimate partner violence, sexual harassment,
emotional distress, alcohol emergency, bias, and
hazing. A randomized controlled evaluation examined
the effectiveness of the video as a stand-alone
intervention for undergraduate and graduate students
and found that after four weeks, students who watched
the video reported a higher likelihood to intervene for
most situations compared to the control group who did
not view the video (Santacroce et al., 2020).

In addition to trainings, studies are in development
to examine the potential effectiveness of other
implementation strategies for hazing prevention
including: visible campus messaging communicating
that hazing does not align with the college, university,
or group’s values; a social norms campaign that works
to correct misperceived norms about peer acceptance
of hazing attitudes and behaviors; increased institutional
transparency about hazing reports and accountability
measures for hazing violations; amnesty policies for
reporting hazing; ethical leadership development
activities; and incentivizing non-hazing alternatives
for building group cohesion.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example considerations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>What individual characteristics contribute to hazing behavior? These can include demographic factors, life experiences, knowledge, values, and beliefs.</td>
<td>• Considering your campus demographics, what aspects of identity (race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) may make students at higher or lower risk of engaging in hazing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>What connections does the individual have that provide support, a sense of identity, and a role in the greater culture?</td>
<td>• Does your campus have a high percentage of first-generation students who may not have mentors to consult with if they are experiencing hazing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution</td>
<td>What institutional characteristics might influence a hazing culture? Consider physical and symbolic messages, rules, policies, norms, and cultural practices on the campus.</td>
<td>• What policies and procedures are in place to dissuade members and organizations from hazing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The broader community</td>
<td>What societal norms support or inhibit hazing?</td>
<td>• Is low-level hazing viewed as tolerably deviant and thus permissible?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practical Application**

Informed by the body of literature about fraternity
and sorority hazing and the developing body of work
focused on campus hazing prevention, we recommend
the following strategies and action steps.
Clearly Define Hazing

The development of a common, shared, and inclusive definition of hazing is a vital aspect of hazing prevention. According to Allan and Kerschner (2020a), understanding the following three components can help students and campus professionals discern when seemingly innocuous behavior becomes hazing:

• Group context - hazing is associated with the process of joining or maintaining membership in a group.
• Abusive behavior - hazing involves activities that are potentially humiliating and degrading, with the potential to cause physical, psychological, and/or emotional harm.
• Regardless of an individual’s willingness to participate - hazing occurs in a context where the “choice” to participate in hazing is diluted by the strong desire to belong compounded by the power dynamics of peer pressure in the context of gaining membership in a group.

Further, a narrow framing of hazing may be problematic when predominant understandings of “harm” tend to focus on physical harm and overlook the “hidden,” yet damaging emotional harm that can result from hazing (Appgar, 2013). Presenting hazing along a continuum may help to broaden the conceptualization (Figure 3). According to Allan and Kerschner (2020a), on the left side of the spectrum, hazing behaviors are humiliating and degrading. These behaviors are thought to occur with greater frequency and are more likely to be normalized or “explained away” with euphemisms that erase the label of hazing and replace it with more palatable descriptions like “initiation,” or “tradition.” At the right side of the spectrum, hazing includes physical and sexual assault, alcohol poisoning, and other potentially life-threatening activities. These behaviors, largely condemned as unacceptable and at times abhorrent, are more likely to be identified as hazing yet are believed to occur less frequently than other behaviors along the continuum. The documented disconnect between student experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as hazing may be linked to predominant images of hazing that are depicted on the violence end of the continuum (Veliz-Calderon & Allan, 2017). However, regardless of the outcome, hazing is predicated on an abuse of power where consent is often compromised.

Assess the Climate on Your Campus

It is critically important to assess campus climate to illuminate common perceptions about hazing, motivations for hazing, predominant understandings about campus policies, reporting mechanisms, and ways in which the campus culture can support and strengthen hazing prevention. If it is not feasible to work with an external entity to conduct a campus climate assessment, an internal group can use data from an environmental scan (e.g., informal and formal reports of hazing; policy language, response protocols) to begin a systematic review. After gathering some initial data, applying the SEM at four levels: the individual, groups, the institution, and the broader community is helpful for identifying and prioritizing risk and protective factors for hazing (Allan et al., 2018; Langford, 2008). Commonly employed in the public health field, this type of analysis can help campus leaders dissect a complex issue and better understand the interplay among all levels (Richard et al., 1996).

Seek Out Partners

To be effective, hazing prevention needs to involve partners from across the institution. Consider partnering with institutional research to better incorporate extant relevant data to inform a planning process; colleagues from health services might help to strengthen amnesty policies and incorporate a public health approach; residential life staff can help to ensure consistency in all living environments; wellness offices can bring expertise to strengthen bystander intervention programs and to nest and align broader campus prevention frameworks with hazing prevention; athletics and other offices that oversee high-risk student populations or student organizations (e.g., club sports, performing arts groups) can ensure consistency in prevention and response efforts; judicial or community standards offices can strengthen and clarify the expectations of students and student organizations and reporting structures; alumni can serve as advisors or mentors in stewarding and maintaining change; and counseling and mental health professionals can align hazing prevention efforts with broader initiatives to promote student well-being. These partners can help you form a coalition of campus professionals who are committed and focused on preventing hazing across your campus. Plan regular meetings of the full group; create sub-committees for implementation of specific initiatives; and work across functional areas to jointly plan and implement hazing prevention efforts.

Make Data-Informed Decisions

If you are not already doing so, develop a plan to collect data that can help inform your coalition’s decisions. These data might include:

- Characteristics for who is joining your chapters: race/ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), academic performance, or conduct records before joining
- New member retention rates
- Campus alcohol data
- Student organization conduct records
- Hazing attitudes and behaviors of students and student organizations on your campus

Ask Questions

Given these data, consider asking the following questions:

- Where is hazing happening most frequently? Are there specific populations more impacted than others?
- Who are the stakeholders who can support this effort? Make sure to consider non-traditional stakeholders like alumni, community neighbors, and parents.
- What policies are needed?
- What resources are needed?
- What are the current social norms relative to hazing on your campus?
- What opportunities or threats exist in your environment?
How will you promote the behaviors you want to see?
How do you incentivize the behaviors you want to see?
What are some short term successes?
What are long term successes?

Create A Hazing Prevention Plan using a Primary Prevention Model

With more clarity about the current climate and challenges you may be facing as an institution, it is crucial to create a campus specific plan that capitalizes on the Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF) to guide a comprehensive and campus-wide approach (Allan et al., 2019). Ideally, your plan should include the following eight components of the HPF (Figure 1):

- **Commitment**: A visible commitment of resources for hazing prevention throughout all levels of the organization.
- **Capacity building**: The institution must ensure human and fiscal resources are aligned to support hazing prevention efforts.
- **Assessment**: The institution must implement efforts to collect qualitative and quantitative data to better understand hazing in the campus context.
- **Planning**: It is imperative that the institution use assessment data to develop measurable efforts at prevention.
- **Cultural competence**: The institution must acknowledge that hazing prevention cannot be a one-size-fits-all plan, but must be population specific. It must account for the societal forces that influence students’ decision making and success.
- **Implementation**: Efforts must be implemented in a coordinated fashion so as to widely communicate to students that hazing is not tolerated. These efforts must have multiple passive and active touchpoints with students.
- **Evaluation**: All hazing prevention efforts must be documented and evaluated as a means to determine effectiveness.
- **Sustainability**: The efforts must be able to be supportable, executable, and achievable over time. Systems and structures must be implemented so that prevention efforts can be sustained over multiple years.

See Appendix for a “Hazing Prevention Framework Mapping Sheet” you can use to map your institution’s plans in each area.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Hazing is a complex psycho-social phenomenon that has many explanations. The challenges as a busy practitioner are many: (a) to find the time to read relevant research; (b) to develop a comprehensive hazing prevention approach grounded in the literature; and (c) to thoughtfully and intentionally implement this approach at an institutional level. Our hope is that this resource can assist you in accessing and understanding relevant research findings and in building a research-grounded plan to prevent hazing on your campus.
## Appendix

### Hazing Prevention Framework Mapping Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>What Does Your Campus Currently Do?</th>
<th>What More Can Your Campus Do?</th>
<th>Who Are the Stakeholders You Need to Enlist?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Commit resources in visible ways (from the senior level to the student levels) toward hazing prevention.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capacity</strong></td>
<td>Ensure human and fiscal resources are aligned to support hazing prevention efforts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Implement efforts to collect qualitative and quantitative data to better understand hazing in the campus context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td>Use assessment data to develop measurable hazing prevention initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Competence</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledge that hazing prevention cannot be a one-size-fits-all plan, but must be population-specific and account for societal forces that influence students’ decision making and success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Implement efforts in a coordinated fashion to widely communicate that hazing is not tolerated and to incentivize non-hazing alternatives to initiations and bonding within groups and teams. These efforts must have multiple passive and active touchpoints with students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Include evaluation data gathering in hazing prevention as a means to determine effectiveness and to inform refinements as part of an iterative process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Trotz, B., & Johnson, J. (2004). A brief history of hazing. In J. Johnson & M. Holman (Eds.), Making the team: Inside the world of sport initiations and hazing (pp. x-xvi). Canadian Scholars’ Press.


