

HAZING MYTHS

Myth #1: Hazing is a problem primarily for fraternities and sororities.

Fact: Hazing is a societal problem. Hazing incidents have been frequently documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, professional schools and other types of clubs, and organizations. Data shows that 55% of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing

Myth #2: Hazing is no more than foolish pranks that sometimes go awry.

Fact: Hazing is an act of power and control over others. It creates victims, not stronger people. It is pre-meditated and in no way accidental. It is abusive, degrading, and can be extremely dangerous.

Myth #3: As long as there is no malicious intent, a little hazing is alright.

Fact: You and/or your organization can still be found in violation of the OSU Code of Student Conduct whether or not you had malicious intent or positive intentions. Life-threatening incidents have occurred during "good intentioned" scavenger hunts and kidnapping trips.

Myth #4: 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 have hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds mistrust, apathy and alienation.

Myth #5: If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing.

Fact: Under Ohio law and under the OSU Code of Student Conduct, consent of the victim cannot be used as a defense. Even if someone agrees to participate in the hazing activity, it may not be true consent when considering the peer pressure and the desire to belong to the group.

Myth #6: Hazing is the only method for holding new members of the organization accountable.

Fact: While holding new members accountable may be important, you can do so without hazing. Effective parents, teachers, and bosses all know ways to hold others accountable without humiliating, degrading or physically hurting them. See our "Alternatives to Hazing" section for more information.

Myth #7: "Hell weeks"/"Initiation Weeks" create a climax to the new member program and develop a true appreciation of initiation.

Fact: During "Hell Weeks" or "I-weeks" or among any group that has an intense activity before initiation, there is often a lack of sufficient sleep/nourishment, a great deal of strenuous activities, and exposure to mental and physical harm. The student is robbed of the true meaning and appreciation of the mission, purpose, and values of the organization, while also being exposed to dangerous activities. These weeks or programs can also be very detrimental to the student's academic achievement. If the group needs this week or activity to unify its new members, it points to a flaw in the regular new member education program. Unification and bonding should have already been accomplished.

Myth #8: It's tradition. It's not hazing.

Fact: Some people defend their activities as being time honored tradition that somehow prepare new members for life challenges. "Tradition" does not justify subjecting new members to mental or physical

abuse. Traditions are created by groups, and groups hold the power to change or eliminate them. It only takes one year and often one strong member to break a hazing tradition. Remember that the founding members of organizations and teams were not hazed. Don't you look up to your founders?

Myth #9: Our organization operates by the motto "If it doesn't kill you, it only makes you stronger."

Fact: If this statement was true 100% of the time, then many illegal activities would be prescriptions for personal growth. While it's true that difficult situations can help individuals grow and prepare for life's challenges, many experiences that don't "kill" nevertheless do severe damage because of their psychological or physical impact.

Adapted from: Allan and Madden, *Hazing in View: College Students at Risk, Initial Findings from the National Study of Student Hazing* (2008), www.hazing.cornell.edu, and <http://www.stophazing.org/>