

# ***Hazing Prevention Guide for Chapter Advisors of Fraternities and Sororities***

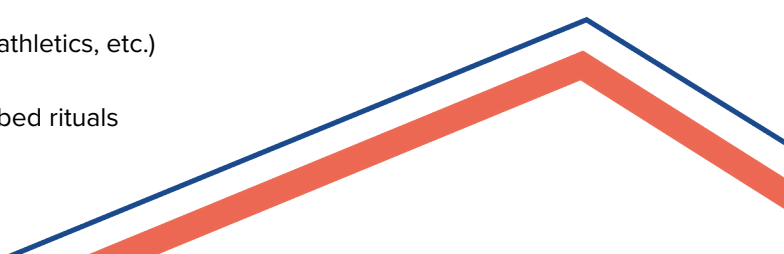
- *Robert Selsor, Mizzou Greek Alliance*
- *Emily Feuer, University of Albany, State University of New York and Piazza Center Scholar*
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Hazing has been a long-standing issue within student groups such as collegiate athletics, bands, and fraternities and sororities. Hazing poses a threat to the safety and well-being of its members. Chapter advisors play a key role in the prevention of hazing activities. Piazza Center teamed up with representatives of the Missouri Greek Alliance (MGA), a coalition of alumni and advisors who assist their university and headquarters in prevention. This guide presents advice from advisors and research informed strategies to help prevent hazing in group contexts.

When student groups form and function, hazing may result from natural tendencies to create group identities, establish power and show dominance within a group (Cimino, 2013). Cimino also points out that hazing is often coalitional and found in alliances or subgroups that have a history of working together and plan to continue doing so. Hazing can also happen when individuals within groups experience shifting identities due to their involvement in the group, related rites of passage, and setting aside what they think is right or fair. Further, in college, factors like alcohol misuse and displays of masculinity can lead to more severe hazing incidents (Allan et al., 2020; Cimino, 2011; McCreary & Schutts, 2019; Sasso, 2015).

## **Look for individual and organizational signs**

There are common strategies advisors use to detect hazing. The Piazza Center (2022) uncovered common strategies mentioned by campus staff, it is important to note the researchers found differences in strategies based on gender and race/ethnicity that need to be explored further. Common strategies to detect if hazing is occurring include direct observations or working with key stakeholders including parents, residential life staff, paraprofessional staff, and house staff. Behaviors to monitor include:

- **Member/New Member Behavior**
    - Changes in communication patterns with others
    - Physical appearance changes
    - Social isolation
    - Social media (especially a decrease in use)
  - **Organizational Behavior**
    - Decrease in academic performance
    - Poor class attendance
    - Detachment for normal activities (other organizations, athletics, etc.)
    - Detachment from parents or advisors
    - Lack of implementing positive ceremonies and prescribed rituals
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## Learn about individual and group attitudes

Get a pulse of the mentality of members and new members. Students and members are ever changing and new members add a whole new dynamic to organizations. Ask students what their attitudes are about hazing. However, students don't always recognize that certain behaviors, especially ones participated in, are hazing because they've rationalized them. It is important to frame some conversations with students about activities required for membership and where there is different treatment of new members. As membership continues to change in fraternities and sororities it is important for advisors to continually evaluate members' attitudes and motivations (*McCready; McCreary*).

Additionally, advisors can ask about if members or new members experienced hazing in high school. Students that were previously hazed are more likely to be perpetrators of hazing and participants because the hazing behavior is normalized (*Allan & Madden, 2008; Gershel et al, 2003; Reid et al., 2019; Waldron, 2014*).

## Identify potential instigators

"Watch out for the outlier member who foments hazing. You have to expose them for what they are" stated Robert Selsor, MGA. It is crucial to be vigilant and identify any members or alliances who may be instigating or promoting hazing activities. These individuals often act as outliers within the larger group, attempting to exert power and control over others.

- Look for members and newer alums who express extreme views of gender identity (masculinity and femininity norms)
- Ask new members if they fear anyone in the organization
- Speak with leadership about cliques within the organization or who may be a challenge

By closely monitoring the behavior and actions of our members, we can identify these instigators and take appropriate action. It is essential to expose them for what they are and ensure that they face the consequences of their actions, which may include disciplinary measures or even expulsion from the chapter.

## Attention-seeking behavior in newest members

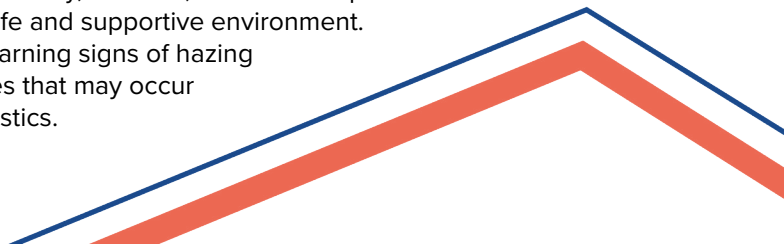
"Watch out for the newest members/neophytes who will do anything to draw attention to themselves, they are a danger to themselves and others" shared MGA. Some individuals may engage in hazing activities to gain attention or recognition within the group. These neophytes may go to extreme lengths to draw attention to themselves, putting themselves and others at risk. As chapter advisors, it is crucial to identify and address such behavior promptly. By providing alternative avenues for recognition and appreciation, such as leadership roles, community service projects, or academic achievements, we can redirect their focus towards positive contributions and discourage attention-seeking through hazing or if warranted asking them to leave.

## Educate members about the consequences of hazing

One of the most effective ways to prevent hazing is by providing our members with knowledge about its potential consequences. Sharing real-life stories, especially peer stories and videos, of unintended harm can help students change their attitudes. If your campus has a hazing prevention program, learn the main points and reinforce them with members. Many programs produce knowledge about unintended harm and by asking members to process the information you can deepen their anti-hazing attitudes. "Knowledge is power, if you show your members where hazing can take them, they will not be blindsided," stated MGA.

## Conclusion

Preventing hazing within our chapters requires a proactive approach that involves education, vigilance, and fostering a culture of dignity and respect. Chapter advisors play a key role in helping identify, educate, and address potential instigators. Redirecting attention-seeking behavior can create a safe and supportive environment. Future steps in this research include uncovering significant early warning signs of hazing occurring within organizations and continuing to explore differences that may occur based on gender, race/ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics.



## Resources

- [Detecting Signs of Hazing in Fraternities and Sororities](#)
- [Hazing Prevention Network](#)
- [Hazing Prevention Advocate Certification](#)
- [Goride Center](#)
- [Missouri Greek Alliance](#)
- [Stop Hazing.org](#)
- [With Us Center](#)
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