

*Professional and Volunteer Practitioner Guide*

# **Strategies for Enacting Change at All Levels of the Horizontal Hazing Model**

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This guide supports campus based and organization advisors and volunteers to think about and apply a summary model from a monograph entitled *Evaluating Hazing and Related Behaviors, Intervention & Prevention Efforts: A Solutions Based Approach* (Biddix et al., 2022). The monograph offers a collection of hazing research at the middle school, high school, and college level and identifies intervention strategies from the prevention literature. The *Piazza Model of Horizontal Hazing* (Veldkamp et al., 2021) guides these recommendations.

## **Six Strategies for Enacting Change at the Individual Level**

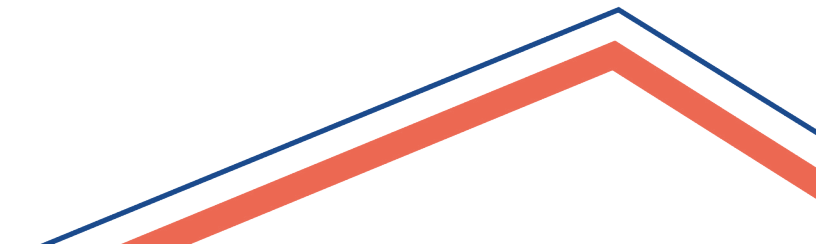
First, it's important to identify and increase protective factors, which are characteristics or skills that reduce the likelihood of victimization, for the most vulnerable students. As is the case with other public health challenges, often there must be multiple programs and interventions to be effective (Goodwin, 2020; Robertson, David, & Rao, 2003). To reduce risks, consider the following strategies:

1. **Understand and harness peer norms.** Students often participate in hazing because they believe it's what is necessary to gain acceptance. As we see with alcohol, students both often over-consume to fit in and/or assume their peers drink more than they do. The same is true for hazing. As a professional or volunteer, it's important to understand why students are engaging in hazing, so take time to talk with students about what motivates their choices. Then, upon understanding the motivators, deconstruct these reasons and motivators. For example, by right-sizing students' understanding that not everyone endures hazing or wants to engage in the behaviors, this can help decrease the willingness of individuals to participate.
2. **Equip students with refusal and intervention skills,** both of which have been quite successful alcohol-based situations.
3. **Provide and advertise multiple pathways for developing positive peer relationships** on campus through avenues such as residential living, clubs and organizations, intramural sports teams, and major specific or identity-based cohorts.
4. **Create and clearly broadcast confidential reporting mechanisms.** Peers report having wide knowledge that hazing is occurring though they rarely intervene or report it.
5. **Provide leadership development for organizational leaders** with a focus on ethical decision making. Research shows that leaders can have a powerful influence on members who are exhibiting unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB), or behaviors that are both unethical but stand to give an organization a leg-up (Zhang et al., 2021).
6. **Offer clear messaging and quality resources** around mental health supports.



## Six Strategies for Enacting Change at the Chapter/Organizational Level

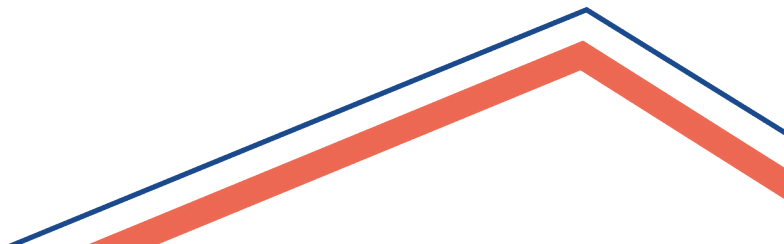
At the organizational level, everything from the way the organization views decision making, to the mechanisms in which members are motivated, to the ways in which organizations introduce new ideas can influence the presence, frequency, and types of hazing that can arise. As a professional or volunteer, here are a few strategies you can enact:

- 1. Seek to understand chapter norms and then design targeted interventions.** Each organization has its own set of norms and acceptable behaviors. Understanding those norms and drivers can help you as a professional or volunteer identify solutions that are compelling to the organization. For example, fraternity chapters exhibiting hypermasculine gender norms such as misogyny, homophobia, or risk taking are also likely to endorse social dominance hazing rationales. In response, practitioners can develop programs that help men understand how to positively build intimate relationships and strong emotional connections with other men in healthier ways (McCready, 2020).
  - 2. Engage in regular motivational interviewing with chapter leaders with specific focus on decision-making in the organization.** Motivational interviewing is a strategy that both seeks to have students understand the scenario, but also empowers them to take action. It often includes phrases like “In what ways?” or “How will you make that change?” This strategy also offers encouragement and reinforcement. Organizational decision-making can play a large role in hazing perpetuation. For example, in some cases authoritarian decision-making around new member activities can create space for hazing to be introduced by single actors supported by other active participants. As you meet with chapter leaders consider the following questions:
    - How does the chapter make decisions? What is voting like in your chapter?
    - Where do the good ideas come from? Who gets to decide when an idea is adopted?
    - How are you building consensus around your ideas?
    - What motivates your members to make change?
    - What happens when someone thinks an idea is problematic? How can they raise their concerns?
  - 3. Focus your advising energy.** Peers are far more powerful at influencing peers than external authority figures. Find out who the influential peers are in the organization (they are not often the elected leaders) and find ways to engage them in conversation, elicit their ideas, and generate their buy-in for hazing elimination. If they believe the chapter or organizational culture should change, they are going to be far more effective at making that change than you will.
  - 4. Harness stakeholder power.** Additionally, other powerful stakeholders such as coaches and advisors serve as important influencers and disruptors of situational strength. As they often work with organizations over a period of years as opposed to student leaders who change from year to year, they can help support the larger campus cultural messaging about hazing and provide continuity.
  - 5. Consider reward structures.** Often leaders and members alike find that hazing achieves some positive outcomes like group loyalty, commitment, organizational status in the community, and sense of shared experience. The perceived loss of those rewards are often why students resist change. Seek ways to understand the benefits that students perceive from specific hazing activities and then help them design experiences that achieve those benefits while reducing unintended costs or inherent risks.
  - 6. Encourage chapters to document their processes and plans for all new member activities.** Creative (or borrowed from other organizations) new member socialization activities often arise when there is poor officer transition and little documentation. By encouraging leaders to write down a curriculum outline with learning objectives, instructions for enacting the activity, and then store this document in a shared location that can be easily shared with future leaders, continuity can be maintained from year to year.
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## Six Strategies for Enacting Change at the Community Level

Community wide change requires a comprehensive approach that examines systems, structures, norms, and environmental cues and seeks to harness these environmental components to influence change. Too often change fails because change makers fail to use good change management strategies. It is important to be planful and intentional in developing a shared vision while simultaneously ensuring both students and stakeholders have the requisite skills to enact change and clear understanding of the incentives and resources that support the change (Knoster et al., 2000).

- 1. Engage students in the community change process.** If you embrace the belief that people support what they create, students must be involved in helping generate solutions and implement change. They know what's really happening when all the administrators and volunteers go home. They can tell what ideas will stick with students and what feels too administrative or too unrealistic. It is critical that student voices be part of your community change process.
  - 2. Review your policies.** Consider the ways your organizational or campus based policies help encourage or discourage hazing elimination. For example, if hazing policies are so all encompassing that students think "everything is hazing so why should we even pay attention," then you have not achieved the goal of the policy. The policy must have clear, concise, and limited definitions, must include ways to report hazing that protects the reporters, and must be clearly communicated and understood by students and stakeholders.
  - 3. Regularly monitor campus trends and integrate themes across organizations.** Using the data available (See *Four Uses of Data for Hazing Prevention Program*), assess the trends you're seeing on your campus. Does the campus culture emphasize and reward use and abuse of alcohol? What trends do you see among police reports? Are there declines in new member academic performance during the joining process? Does chapter Dyad Strategies data or similar data show broad acceptance of hazing supportive or hazing adjacent norms? As trends emerge, work with campus stakeholders (in areas such as alcohol education or academic advising) to design data-driven interventions. Then monitor the status of those interventions and adjust or double-down as needed.
  - 4. Learn how status is assigned on campus/in the organization.** One of the prime external motivators for hazing is perceived status among other organizations. In particular, for single gender organizations, this status extends to the other organizations that seek to associate with the organizations. Understanding the broader context for how status is assigned can help you start to identify other rewards and status drivers on the campus that encourage a hazing free experience. Make sure to note that status does not often originate in doing what the university asks of organizations, so it will be important to tap peer influences to assist in shifting the narrative.
  - 5. Understand relationships between groups.** Which groups influence which groups? Which are the groups that everyone aspires to be like or be around and what are their practices, what are they putting on social media, how are they presenting in situations where no authority figures are present? Who has cross-organizational engagement? Knowing and harnessing this information can help start to unpack the motivators for hazing behaviors and other risk-taking behaviors. It can also help you focus your change efforts. If the organizations that everyone follows and connects with start to make change, others will follow.
  - 6. Design hazing prevention curriculum that helps empower change.** Too often hazing prevention strategies focus heavily on the definitions and consequences of hazing. We tell students what they aren't allowed to do, but then we don't equip them with tools to decide what to do. Curriculum also often doesn't provide tools on the motivations for hazing or support for students on how to reframe and replace hazing in their own organizations that encapsulate these motivators. Instead, consider ways to engage students in designing tailored solutions for their own organizations; they are more likely to enact them and the changes are more likely to persist over time.
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## Questions & Feedback

Inquiries, comments, and feedback related to this guide can be directed to [PiazzaCenter@psu.edu](mailto:PiazzaCenter@psu.edu).



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