

Hazing –“It’s not a team building experience.”

Hazing is a practice often used in sport as “ team building” or ‘morale boosting” or ‘initiation rite’ for new team or club members. It is an activity that allows established team members to teach the new members about the team hierarchy, so rookies are aware of the leaders of the team and their place on the team. Sometimes, hazing is meant to be fun but often includes behaviors that are demeaning, hurtful and sometimes criminal.

Myth: Hazing is just foolish pranks that are rarely dangerous.

Fact: Hazing is not about foolish pranks. At its core, hazing is about power and control over others. It is premeditated victimization. Even if there is no malicious intent, the imbalance of power between members and non-members created the potential for abuse to occur. Many deaths have been caused by events that many members initially considered “harmless”.

Source: www.emprc.org/oct00/hazing

What is Hazing?

Hazing has been defined as “any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

Source: www.stophazing.org

Did you know?

Sport Manitoba Terms and Conditions of funding require all PSOs have a harassment policy that include hazing.

Hazing is abusive when:

1. Individuals are not permitted to ‘ opt-out’ of the experiences without some kind of punishment or consequence.
2. Some form of coercion or threat is involved.
3. The activity involves physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, humiliation or the creation of an environment of fear and intimidation.
4. The ritual includes consumption of potentially harmful substances or creating the impression that such substances are being consumed.
5. The hazing includes activities that are illegal such as coercing a minor to consume alcohol or the use of illegal substances.

Source: www.redcross.ca/article

Did you know?

“The amount of hazing in recreation and sport is unknown ... due to the ... large number of unreported cases. Regardless of the total number of incidents, the amount reported has grown dramatically during the past twenty years. (Crow & Phillips, n.d., p. 19)”. Every year the acts of violence seems to be getting more severe.

How does Hazing happen?

Generally the need to fit in, and the peer pressure that is received from the leaders, compels a feeling of obligation among those being hazed. Those being hazed may not even realize that they are being hazed when the initiation is going on. Some hazing is more covert and subtle. No matter how subtle, the experience the athletes go through during the hazing ritual is often humiliating and uncomfortable. The situation would be made even more uncomfortable if there is resistance to participate. “ The intense peer pressure involved in hazing along with the desire to belong to the group, make it very difficult to say no to hazing.

As a result of these initiation acts, those who are hazed are often left with physical and emotional scars. Hazing can lead to a loss of self-esteem, trust, and self-confidence. It can also lead to friendships and teams being undermined, and respect being lost for those involved.

Source: www.mashinc.org/resources

Adults often know what’s going on?

One of the most harmful aspects of hazing is that it often takes place with the support or encouragement of the adults involved. Sometimes chaperones, leaders, coaches and other adults volunteers pretend that they do not know what is going on. At other times it is the adult that remind the team or club veterans of their obligation to haze newcomers. The hazed individual quickly realizes that it is both their peers and the adults in care who support the practice.

Did you know?

“A 1999 US Survey indicates that about 20% of all athletes endure severe physical or mental abuse during hazing rituals.” Hank Nuwer

What can you do as an Individual to eliminate hazing?

- Ensure your own behavior models respect and integrity towards coaches, officials, participants and other parents.
- Understand the issues and become knowledgeable.
- Know and support your Association’s policies and procedures.
- Act when you see a bullying, harassing or abusive situation.
- Report incidents and promote safe environments.

As an Association what can we do about hazing?

- Education of adults in care about the damaging effects of hazing.
- Education of young people about their rights and responsibilities – talk about hazing; discuss peer pressure.
- Creative thinking about alternative ‘team building’ programs that do not hurt or shame.
- Including references to hazing into comprehensive Risk Management policies and practices.

Source: www.redcross.ca/article

Check out these resources for further information:

www.StopHazing.org
www.redcross.ca

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