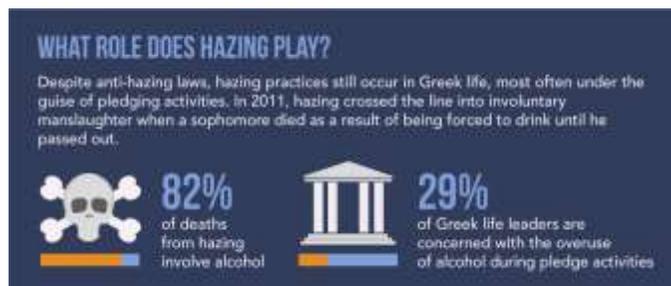


Prevent Hazing Among High School Students

By Skywood Recovery

Hazing behavior can be life-threatening. It is important to know the facts about high school hazing and help become part of the movement to prevent this dangerous activity.

When we think of the activity of hazing, most people think about college fraternities who undertake dangerous or risky behavior to “test” and initiate new members. The truth is, many young people have experienced hazing, but did not recognize it or the dangers of participating. Hazing includes, “...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.” (1, 3)



82% of deaths from hazing involve alcohol.
29% of Greek life leaders are concerned with the overuse of alcohol during pledge activities.

Despite anti-hazing laws, hazing practices still occur in Greek life, most often under the guise of pledging activities. In 2011, hazing crossed the line into involuntary manslaughter when a sophomore died as a result of being forced to drink until he passed out.

Hazing behavior can be dangerous at any age. As hazing has entered the world of high-school athletics and social groups, this behavior can be even more detrimental to the safety and developing brain of teenagers. Hazing in high-school clubs and groups has become increasingly common, and it is important to educate communities about this activity in order to prevent injury or even death. Hazing can include alcohol or drug use, even to dangerous levels. Some believe this to be a bonding activity, while others consider it a rite of passage. In reality, it is dangerous and often unsupervised and not condoned by school officials.

High School Hazing Statistics

The University of Maine surveyed over 11,000 college students who participated in a very large range of sports, clubs and organizations and found that 47% of respondents had experienced hazing in high-school, while 55% of respondents experienced hazing in college. Surprisingly, 8 out of 10 high schoolers and 9 out of 10 college students did not even identify their experiences as hazing. Out of those who did recognize the situation as hazing, only 5% of respondents felt comfortable reporting it.(1)

47% of college students experienced hazing in high-school

Hazing impacts every single type of student group. One study found that up to 24% of hazing in high-school even occurred in church-related groups. Hazing is not necessarily innocent behavior. The more violent or socially humiliating experiences of hazing may lead to higher anxiety, greater social isolation, and even emotional difficulties that carry on to adulthood.(3)

Athletics Hazing Statistics

A recent study was conducted on initiation rites among athletics for NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) sports teams that resulted in some surprising statistics. This study looked at over 325,000 college-level athletes from over 1,000 schools.(2) Some of the results included:

- More than 250,000 young athletes were put through some type of hazing as part of joining an athletic team.
- Out of these 250,000+ students, one in five experienced potentially illegal, dangerous, or unacceptable hazing. Some were forced to commit crimes such as harassment or destruction of property. Others were subjected to abuse or violence, such as being beaten, tied up, verbally humiliated, sleep-deprived, food-deprived, deprived of personal hygiene or appropriate clothing, or being kidnapped.
- Half of the students who were hazed were offered or coerced into drinking alcohol, drinking contests, or consuming large amounts of alcohol (binge drinking)

- Up to 79% of these athletes were no strangers to hazing—they originally experienced similar hazing activities in high school.(4)

Fortunately, one in five of these student athletes experienced a much more positive type of hazing, which involved safe activities such as ropes courses or team trips.(2)

How to Stop Dangerous Hazing

Individuals who are concerned about hazing among young people can do a number of things to help. Consider the following:

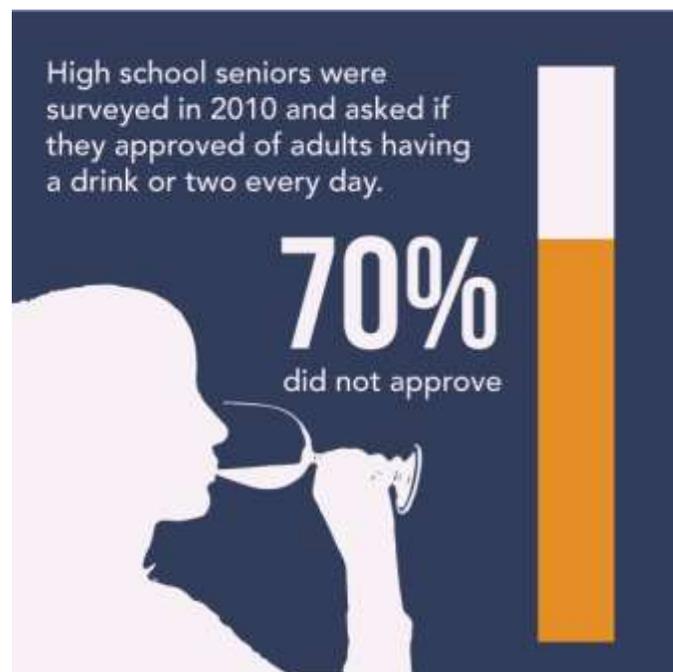
- 70% of High School seniors don't approve of adults having one or two drinks a day
- Learn more about hazing and identify the signs and symptoms of hazing. Most students who are subjected to hazing will not report these activities for fear of retribution, isolation, or bullying. Look out for terms such as “initiation”, “hell week”, or even “help week”. Directly ask students who may be acting strangely, dressing strangely, or participating in unusual activities if they are doing so as a “rite of passage.”
- Understand that “fitting in” is an important part of being human. We all want to be part of a group, and this particularly applies to teenagers and young adults. You may experience resistance if you try to stop hazing behavior, but most schools and organizations do have an anonymous reporting system. If you suspect dangerous hazing, take time to make a call. It can't hurt to initiate an investigation.

- If you see a student who may have participated in binge drinking, eating restriction, or another type of physically dangerous hazing behavior, seek treatment immediately. Many of these hazing behaviors are initiated under the misconception that every young person is 100% healthy. Even strong and agile athletes can have underlying heart conditions or undiagnosed ailments, such as diabetes, colitis, or blood clots, which makes many of these initiation rites potentially deadly. Binge drinking can become a silent killer for anyone, even physically fit young people. Often, overdoses, binge drinking, or hidden health conditions may make a person appear sleepy, unusual, or out of character. Reporting these incidents may save a life.
- Hazing can only become a thing of the past if we work together. Help build community awareness about hazing. Through education and connection, the myths about hazing can be eliminated. As individuals gain more understanding about hazing, this behavior stands a chance to become phased out and replaced by healthier community-building tactics.

Citations

1. Chaney, M. Hazing on School Campuses: What Parents and Students Need To Know. (nd).
2. Hoover, N. (1999, Aug 30). Initiation Rites and Athletics for NCAA Sports Teams.
3. Caudill, K. What is hazing? National Federation of State High School Associations. (2014, Jul 24).
4. Allen, E., Madden M. National Study of Student Hazing. (2006).

See more at: SkywoodRecovery.com/prevent-high-school-student-hazing



If you are concerned about a teen in your life, **Skywood Recovery** has a confidential helpline where experienced wellness professionals can talk with you. **Skywood Recovery** is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. (855) 317-8377