

THE GRAY ZONE

IS IT HAZING?

Key elements of hazing:

- A power differential between “newer” and “established” members;
- An activity that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers a participant;
- regardless of their willingness to participate

Talent shows?

Scavenger Hunts?

Service to the group?

Gatherings with alcohol?

Traditions?

Road trips?



Make a report

If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, it’s likely hazing:

- Are only newer members being asked to participate? Ask why!
- Could anything about the activity be embarrassing, in poor taste, illegal, dangerous, or make someone feel humiliated?
- Might newer members interpret an invitation to drink as an expectation to drink? Could this lead to consumption of dangerous amounts of alcohol?
- Are there unreasonable time requirements and/or consequences for not participating?
- Are only newer members expected to set up, clean up, or perform acts of service outside of reasonable expectations? Are newer members given the least desirable jobs? Why?
- Does the activity have an unclear purpose or not align with the organization’s values?
- Would someone outside of your organization “not understand” or have concerns if they observed the activity?