



HAZING PREVENTION ARTICLE # 5

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The atmosphere you establish within your team will determine what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable by your athletes. **Culture is the soil where character can grow.** A positive and safe atmosphere builds character. A negative culture creates conditions where destructive behaviors can flourish, including hazing.

Hazing 101

Any act committed against someone joining or becoming a member or maintaining membership in any organization that is humiliating, intimidating or demeaning, or endangers the health and safety of the person.

Hazing includes active or passive participation in such acts and occurs regardless of the willingness to participate in the activities! Hazing creates an environment/climate in which dignity and respect are absent.

FIVE TIPS

Building positive and safe cultures within a program should be a priority for all coaches and administrators. Each month we will share FIVE tips to help you develop safe, positive programs in the areas that have the greatest impact: Team Culture, Parent Engagement, Policy Development and Communication. This month's tips will focus on **preventing hazing at camps and clinics! Despite the weather, the calendar is telling us that it's getting close to summer time, and that means that camps and clinics will start up again. This month we will examine how to prevent hazing during all summer programming. Even if coaches aren't running programs on school grounds, but they are still operating as a coach of the school, any hazing that occurs may impact the school.**

Here are five tips to help you and your coaches ensure that you provide safe and positive summer programming:

Tip #1

Set up positive rituals.

Camp is a great time to create rituals that kids will remember from year to year and will create positive memories they can carry with them about their experiences. Be thoughtful about the rituals that you set up to ensure that you aren't targeting one group as better than another or singling out individuals to make examples of them. Rituals should reinforce the culture you want to have within your camp.

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Tip #2

Supervision! Supervision! Supervision!

Overnight camps can be fertile ground for hazing to sprout up. In the evenings or early mornings are when the most egregious incidents are reported. Make sure that you have systems set up that ensure there is consistent (although not predictable) supervision through the evening into early morning.

Tip #3

Set up a culture that discourages hazing.

Just like in practice, what you emphasize is what they learn. Make sure your coaches and counselors talk about hazing as something that is looked down upon and not accepted. Teach them how to create teams or groups that highlight the value of everyone. A good pre-camp training activity is to have staff go through some positive team building activities, so they see what it looks like, and how they might use that within their team or group.

Tip #4

Write it down.

It's not enough just to talk about not allowing hazing it should be something that is clearly written in all materials including and employment contracts. This should not just include your policy on hazing, but also your reporting systems and any/all definitions so that everyone is clearly on what is defined as hazing.

Tip #5

Train your staff.

It's so important to train staff. When someone is trained they feel more confident to respond to situations and thus ensure the safety of those they are leading. Here are some of the areas that we have found most important to include in a training:

1. Understanding how to identify and define hazing
2. Understanding how to guide and manage behavior
3. Recognizing the signs of a hazing culture
4. Understanding how to create positive rituals
5. Understanding how to talk to your athletes about hazing
6. How to train athletes to move from bystander to upstander
7. How to create team building activities that are positive and healthy
8. How to respond to hazing incidents should they occur

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Additional Resources:

- Stop Hazing: <http://www.stophazing.org/>
- Hazing Prevention: <http://hazingprevention.org/>
- Inside Hazing : <http://www.insidehazing.com>
- Coaching Peace: <http://coachingpeace.com>
- Safe 4 Athletes: <http://safe4athletes.org>

Articles of Interest:

Examples of Hazing at a Youth Sports Camp

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-surf-camp-told-to-stop-hazing-children-2006aug18-story.html>

Pro Sports Team Talks About Preventing Hazing:

<http://blog.nylizards.com/blog/hazing-in-sports>

Hazing at a Football Camp

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=96798&page=1>

*Camp Team Building Activities:

<https://youthgroupgames.com.au/team-building-activities/>

*More Camp Team Building Activities:

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/team-building-games-and-initiatives.page-1.html>

*These sites are provided as resources, not endorsements of all the activities.

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