

# Hazing Facilitator Guide

This guide was designed to assist in a discussion on the dynamics exhibited in the adjacent hazing video. The aligned awareness scenario and video was written, developed, and filmed by Mr. Nicdaniel Landries, an Oviedo Florida High School Graduate and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) student conducting a summer intern project with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

Target Audience: **Leaders**

**Training Objective**

- To discuss indicators and potential effects of hazing, harassment, demeaning behaviors, unfair treatment, and/or possible toxic environment.
- To generate thoughts and ideas about how to best address hazing situations as a leader.
- To understand different approaches in addressing concerns.

Physical Setting

- Members seated at tables to view the video and then discussing possible courses of action as a small group. Later, sharing small groups' perspectives in a larger group setting.

Procedures (Time 50 min):

- **Facilitator will arrange room for members to observe the video (3 min).**
- **Facilitator will allow individuals to answer initial questions (5 min) and then discuss the scenario in small groups (15 min).**
- **Facilitator will facilitate a discussion with the large group on the smaller groups' results (25+ min depending on discussion).**

**Facilitator reads:** The video you are about to view depicts a series of interactions between individuals and their supervisors. After the video, you will answer some individual questions and then you will have an opportunity to discuss your answers with the group at your table.

**Facilitator will play the video.**

**Facilitator reads:** Now that you have viewed the scenario, take 5 minutes to individually answer the following questions:

- What behaviors did you observe in the situation? By whom?
- Name some possible effects the subordinates may have felt.
- Have you observed a situation like this in your unit? If so, what were the results of the incident?
- If you were a leader observing incidents of this type, what would you do?
- How would you prevent further occurrences of hazing?

**After 5 minutes, the facilitator reads the following:** Now that you have had the opportunity to come up with your own responses, as a group (of 5-10) you will discuss your responses with each other and come up with a consensus to share with the larger group. You will have 15 minutes to discuss your responses.

**After 15 minutes, ask small groups to discuss their responses with the larger group (25+ min).**

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Answer Key, Potential Responses, (this is not an all-inclusive list):

What behaviors did you observe?

- At the beginning of the video there is a historical example of hazing. A man is lying on a table as various individuals do several things to him. The narrator states, "Under the tender administrations of the Royal doctors, the pollywogs on the operating table feel the caress of the electric knife, suffer the prods of probing thumbs, and receive pungent and bitter pills of cayenne pepper to warm their inners." This was a "Crossing the Equator Ceremony" on the U.S.S. Indianapolis (1936). President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was in attendance (though that is not seen).
  - This example was sanctioned by the Navy at that time. Is this "tradition" an appropriate activity today? Why, or why not?
  - What was the purpose of the ceremony? To initiate members in a historical ceremony commemorating their crossing of the Equator for the first time and making them "full members" of the crew. Today, under current policy, this is considered a hazing activity and should be stopped.
- Individuals conducting training in a NBC (gas) chamber. Is this an example of hazing? Why or why not? How do you know? It depends on the purpose of the event. If this is on the formal training schedule and everyone is participating as part of an actual training event, then it is not hazing. However, if only a few members (new initiates) are undergoing the activity as part of an initiation or other type ceremony, then it is an example of hazing. A leader may not know unless questions are asked or the situation is examined to understand the full intent of the activity. Leaders must develop the practice of questioning events/activities to determine their purpose, validity, and appropriateness.
- Individuals getting hit after receiving a promotion/award. Is this an example of hazing? Yes, while the behavior may be desired by some initiates as part of the "official rite of passage", condoning the behavior by not addressing/stopping it sets a new example and promotes its acceptability and implies official endorsement. Leaders should find other ways to acknowledge these milestones that are more positive and promote an overall team building environment.
- Other members were present during multiple occasions and did not intervene, question, or stop the behavior. Would that conduct be acceptable for leaders today?
- Name some possible effects the individuals being hazed may have felt.
  - They might feel that if they don't undergo these behaviors they would not be accepted as team members. If they complete the hazing activity they might now be accepted as full members in the group.
  - Ready to participate and join others in hazing the next person to undergo the experience.
  - Fearful/ Hurt

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- Assaulted/Abused/Ashamed
- Have you observed hazing in your unit? If so, what were the results of the incident?
  - Leaders will have various experiences (it is important to facilitate lessons learned).
- As a leader, explain how you could possibly address and eliminate hazing.
  - Know the difference between traditions, training, and hazing. If you aren't sure what it is, challenge or stop the event until clarification is received.
  - Be an active bystander- intervene immediately and stop any hazing.
  - Inform your subordinates of what "right" looks like.
  - Conduct initial, quarterly and annual counseling; honest assessment for annual evaluations.
  - Know your personnel and look out for their well-being.
- How would you prevent further occurrences of hazing?
  - Create policy letters to clearly define hazing and unprofessional behavior.
  - Inform members you will not allow/accept any unequal treatment towards members.
  - Address/correct inappropriate behavior immediately.
  - Provide realistic ongoing developmental training.
  - Conduct climate assessments.
  - Hold offenders accountable for their actions.

**Facilitated Discussion Points:** Leaders should always intervene, but they don't always:

- What stops leaders from intervening or taking action?
- What prohibits them from taking action?
- What is your responsibility as a leader observing a situation of hazing?

Some might consider some of the behaviors exhibited in this scenario as harmless, but they are not. If allowed to continue they can escalate and foster a variety of individual and organizational climate changes such as, a lack of trust in leadership, low unit cohesion, and low morale, etc. Identifying inappropriate behaviors and intervening early are crucial to developing a cohesive and professional workplace. Many past activities, many of which were considered "traditional" were once considered "appropriate" and "acceptable." Today, these activities are not acceptable and are against DoD and Service policy. Leaders should be continually aware and cognizant of activities, ceremonies, and other traditions which are used as methods to establish newcomers into the organization. Leaders need to look at the appropriateness of such activities and determine if they contribute to the health and benefits of organizational members.