What’s the deal with...

HAZING?

According to the “Code of Student Conduct”, “Hazing” refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate. Hazing is a complex social problem that is shaped by power dynamics operating in a group and/or organization and within a particular cultural context. (www.StopHazing.org)

But what does that mean?

Nationally, student members of a wide variety of organizations experience some form of hazing. Stereotypically, people often equate hazing with fraternities, sororities and athletic teams. However, hazing can occur in ANY organization or group, regardless of whether or not they have compiled with the formal University student organization registration process. The George Washington University seeks to educate students about hazing in order to avoid and prevent this dangerous behavior on our campus.

How does that affect life at GW?

Hazing is illegal. The University supports the law and has taken a strong stance against hazing practices by prohibiting such behavior. The “Code of Student Conduct” prohibits hazing and defines it as: "... any action taken or situation created, intentionally, with or without consent, whether on or off campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule...">

In addition, the “Code of Student Conduct” stipulates: "... A student group or organization may be held collectively responsible and its officers may be held individually responsible when violations of the “Code” by those associated with the group or organization have occurred."

GW considers the following to be acts of Hazing:

- paddling in any form...
- creation of excessive fatigue...
- physical or psychological shocks...
- quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts or road trips...
- engaging in public stunts or buffoonery...
- morally degrading or humiliating games and activities...
- publicly wearing any clothing that is conspicuous and not normally in good taste...
- ANY activity that is inconsistent with the Academic Mission of The George Washington University...

**This is not an exhaustive list but are simply examples of acts that are considered hazing**

Some unacceptable Causes, Justifications and Rationalizations for Hazing:

- No one's been hurt before.
- They have to respect us.
- We'd lose prestige on campus if we stopped.
- We don't know what else to do.
- I couldn't do anything, I am just one person.
- It created a sense of team...sisterhood...brotherhood...
- They wanted to participate.

What if I am Being Hazed, Witness Hazing, or Haze Someone Else?

The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities works to stop these actions and prevent hazing victims from any further injury. If you participate in hazing, you must be prepared to accept the consequences for your actions. You will face disciplinary action taken by the University. You may be arrested for your behavior. You may then face a court process in addition to the disciplinary action taken by the University. Hazing is a serious offense that could result in suspension or expulsion of individuals and/or loss of recognition for the organization from the University amongst other sanctions.

If you are being hazed or witness hazing, you should contact the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities, the Center for Student Engagement, or the GWU Police Department. Submit a confidential report at: https://greeklife.gwu.edu/confidential-hazing-report-form.