

Healthy Boundaries in Peer Relationships

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this activity, participants will be able:

- 1) To describe the dynamic of “group think”**
- 2) To identify boundary violations (physical, emotional, behavioral) in group think situations**
- 3) To recognize the potential for harm in what seems a low-level risk situation**
- 4) To identify positive strategies for initiations that do not include hazing**
- 5) To identify someone they could tell if they feel they had been hazed (where their boundaries or someone else’s boundaries had been crossed)**

In the *Called to Protect*™ video, you learned that youths can be abused by adults or even other youths. How are your boundaries different with people who are close to your own age? Sometimes it can be difficult to say something if you feel threatened by a peer. Today we are going to talk about hazing and how peers can violate boundaries and make you feel like you can’t say anything about it.

ACTIVITY

“No Hazing”

Leader:

You are the person everyone looks up to and wants to be. Everyone thinks your ideas are the best and will do whatever you say.

Leader #2:

Whenever the leader isn't around, you're in charge. Your first priority is making sure that everyone follows the leader. You are loyal and support all of his ideas.

Followers:

You follow the leader. You don't like to make decisions and so you do whatever the Leader or Leader #2 says.

New Person:

You are not only new to the group, you are new to the town. This group has shown a real interest in you, and you'd like to be their friend.

Unpopular:

You have a hard time fitting in. You just can't seem to find your peer group, but lately, this group has started letting you hang around with them. You know that you're not really one of them, but you'd like to be.

Reason:

You are practical. You follow rules. When the group wants to do something out of line, you always speak up.

Task:

You are the [baseball team, theatre group, choir, track team, dance team]. You want to come up with a way to initiate new members into your group to bond.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **How did you feel about what just happened? Who was in charge? Why did the group follow that person?**

[Facilitator: talk with them about "group think" and power and how it felt to be a hazer.]

- 2) **Do you think the group made good decisions?**

3) What could have changed the direction of the outcome?

[Facilitator: try to get them to think about other decisions they could've made.]

4) What do think would happen if this initiation were allowed to occur?

[Facilitator: try to get them to think about the cost to the new person and whether the cost is too high. In other words, could anyone have been hurt?]

5) Would the initiation violate the new member's boundaries? (physical, emotional, behavioral) How?

6) Does the initiation you created reflect the values of your organization?

Facilitator: Ask what could your team do to initiate new members without hazing them?

Reinforce that hazing can not only be harmful but can also escalate to violence, assault and sometimes death. Warn the participants that hazing can quickly become something they did not intend but will be responsible for. Remind them that hazing activities can be against the law.

Discuss reporting. Ask who the kids would tell if they had been hazed or knew of someone who had. Remember, if your boundaries are being crossed, you need to talk with someone you trust. You might be in a position where adults seem to approve of what's going on, but if you feel that your boundaries have been crossed, you are encouraged to speak up. You have a right to maintain your boundaries in all situations.

Definition Hazing: 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.

Definition Group Think: Group think occurs when a group of decision makers do not carefully consider all points of view. Instead, they come up with one idea and follow it without listening to anyone who does not agree. The group is able to persuade everyone to follow the one idea even though some people realize the idea is wrong or bad in some way.

Remember, your boundaries are your own. You determine what you will and won't do. Don't encourage a peer to let their boundaries to be violated.