



Being A Big Brother Is...

Introduction

Having and being a Big Brother is a tradition within many chapters. A Big Brother is there to serve as a guide and mentor through a new candidate's experience in the Fraternity. A person to help answer questions, provide a listening ear, and offer support.

In almost all cases the Big Brother/Little Brother relationship is one of positive support and mentorship, however unhealthy Big/Little relationships can manifest themselves without even realizing it. For example, restricting a Little to only hanging out with his Big Brother and his Big Brother's friends or requiring the Little to run personal errands or do chores for the Big is not what this relationship is supposed to be about. Being a Big Brother is about friendship, being a role model, a mentor, offering help when needed, and setting a positive example of what it means to be a member of our Fraternity. You and your chapter have the tools and opportunities to make the Big Brother/Little Brother experience one based on a positive, healthy, and long-lasting relationships.

Each year, as part of our efforts in support of National Hazing Prevention Week, we shed light on the fact that hazing is unfortunately still happening on college campuses across the country. The National Hazing Study found 55% of college students involved in student organizations and sports teams experience hazing¹. Coerced or forced alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep- deprivation, and forced calisthenics are just a few of the hazing practices still seen on campuses.

Sometimes, this can be perpetuated by a Big Brother on his Little Brother. But if being a Big is about mentorship, friendship, and providing guidance, why would we ever consider subjecting our Little Brother to something as meaningless as hazing? Let's talk through how we can ensure the Big/Little relationship is one that helps, not harms, the development of our new members.

Discussion Questions

- When you think of having a Big Brother, what characteristics come to mind?
- When you think of being a Big Brother, what characteristics come to mind?
- In what ways can a Big Brother be a positive member of a Candidate Member's experience?
- What activities can you and your Big Brother do together that is healthy and positive?
- In what ways can a Big Brother be a negative member of a Candidate Member's experience?
- In what ways does our chapter not always foster a healthy Big/Little relationship?
- In what ways does our chapter foster a healthy positive Big/Little relationship?

Reflection Questions

- How has your Big Brother been a positive of your experience as a member?
- What can we do as a chapter to build a positive chapter Big/Little experience that reflects our organization's values?

¹https://www.stophazing.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/hazing_in_view_web1.pdf

Setting Expectations

- What do we expect of those who are serving as a Big Brother?
- What will we not tolerate as a chapter when it comes to the Big Brother/Little Brother relationship?

When structured and utilized correctly, the Big Brother/Little Brother experience can help everyone feel a deeper, more meaningful connection to our organization.

Resources

HazingPrevention.Org

StopHazing.Org

Anti-Hazing Coalition

National Hazing Hotline: 1-888-NOT-HAZE (1-888-668-4293). Available 24 hours a day.