

# STALKING RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS



**13.5 million  
PEOPLE are  
STALKED  
each year**



## WHAT IS STALKING?

While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is:

**a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for their safety or the safety of others, and/or suffer substantial emotional distress.**

### DID YOU KNOW

Stalking is a dangerous crime that affects an estimated 13.5 million women and men each year. Stalking — generally defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for their safety or the safety of others, and/or suffer substantial emotional distress — is a crime under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and the federal government. Stalking can have devastating and long-lasting physical, emotional, and psychological effects on victims. The prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher among stalking victims than in the general population. Victim advocates can help victims devise a safety plan, navigate the criminal justice system, assert their rights as crime victims, and obtain the services and support they need and to which they are entitled.

### HOW VICTIM ADVOCATES CAN HELP

1. Recognize that stalking is a pattern of behavior, and a stalking victim's level of fear and need for resources and assistance may vary and change based on the stalker's behaviors.
2. Realize that stalking victims may maintain contact with their offenders to keep themselves (or loved ones) safe. Work with victims to establish safety plans.
3. Documentation can be extremely helpful in stalking cases. Victims could consider using [a documentation log](#).
4. Collaborate with others in your community, such as law enforcement, prosecutors, and community corrections, to help protect victims of stalking. Health care providers and members of faith communities also can be vital resources.
5. Work with law enforcement, prosecutors, and others to educate victims about the ongoing dynamics of stalking cases and what evidence and documentation may be required if they choose to report to the police.