STALKING FACT SHEET

WHAT IS STALKING?

While legal definitions of stalking vary between jurisdictions, a good working definition of stalking is: a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

STALKING VICTIMIZATION

• An estimated 13.5 million people are stalked in a one-year period in the United States.  
• Nearly 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime. 
• More than half of all victims of stalking indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25, and nearly 1 in 4 were stalked before the age of 18. 
• The vast majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know: 
  o 40% by a current/former intimate partner, 
  o 42% by an acquaintance. 
• 69% of female and 80% of male stalking victims were threatened with physical harm. 
• People aged 18–24 experience the highest rate of stalking victimization (among adults). 
• Stalkers use many tactics, including: 
  o Making unwanted phone calls. 
  o Approaching the victim or showing up in places when the victim does not want them to. 
  o Following and watching the victim. 
  o Sending unwanted texts, photos, emails, and messages through social media. 
  o Sending unwanted gifts. 
  o Using technology to monitor, track, and/or spy on the victim. 
• Almost half of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact per week. 
• 11% of stalking victims have been stalked for 5 years or more. 
• More than twice as many victims are stalked with technology than without.

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

• 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next. 
• 29% of stalking victims fear it will never stop. 
• 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization and more than half lose 5 days of work or more. 
• 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization. 
• Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.

STALKING OFFENDERS

• 2 in 3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method. 
• 78% of stalkers use more than one tactic. 
• Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases. 
• Almost 1 in 3 of stalkers have stalked before. 
• Intimate partner stalkers are the most likely stalkers to approach, threaten, and harm their victims.

STALKING LAWS

• Stalking is a crime under the laws of the 50 states, District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Federal government. 
• Fewer than 1/3 of states classify stalking as a felony in all circumstances, including on the first offense. 
• More than 1/2 of states classify stalking as a felony upon the second or subsequent offense, or when the crime involves aggravating factors. 
• Aggravating factors may include: possession of a deadly weapon, violation of a court order or condition of probation/parole, victim under 16 years, or same victim as prior occasions.

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Citations


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