Slide 1

- As a society, we aren’t taught very much about stalking.
- We mostly learn about stalking through how it’s presented in media.

Slide 2

- It’s essential to recognize that the media does not cause stalking.
- Casually using the term “stalking” does not cause stalking.
- Many people are exposed to the same media and language and do not choose to stalk.
- Only perpetrators are responsible for their behavior.

Slide 3

- You may have heard people use the word “stalking” casually in conversation, especially about their use of social media.
- Consider this example --
  - Let’s say you run into a friend you haven’t seen in a while.
  - S/he says: “I was totally Facebook stalking you and I saw you went to Mexico – it looked awesome!”
- Is this stalking? Why or why not?
- Based on the information we have, assuming these people know each other,
this is not stalking because it is not scary for a friend to look at pictures that you posted on social media.

- **Why does it matter that the term “stalking” is used casually?**
  - It dilutes the meaning of the word.
  - Stalking is underreported and misunderstood.

<table>
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<th>Impacts of Media Normalization</th>
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<td>* Builds empathy with stalkers rather than victims.</td>
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<td>* Leads victims to minimize experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Leads potential supports/friends of victims to dismiss experiences.</td>
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<td>* Misinforms general public about dangers and realities of stalking.</td>
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<td>* Creates an environment where stalkers can get away with stalking.</td>
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- Again, the media does not cause stalking.
- However, the messages that media sends can create a warped landscape in which stalking is minimized, normalized, accepted and/or laughed off.
- A lot of media on stalking is from the stalker’s perspective and shows hopeless romantics with good intentions.
  - This builds empathy with the perpetrator and may lead us to make excuses for stalkers and/or assume the best about them
  - Instead, we should be focusing on how victims feel about stalking and empathizing with them.
- Victims may minimize or dismiss their experiences instead of taking early warning signs seriously.
- Friends and potential supports – including law enforcement and service providers -- may underreact to a victim’s concerns, treating stalking as “awkward” or “romantic”
Slide 5

<table>
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<th>The Fantasy</th>
<th>The Reality</th>
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<td>The stalker is an attractive stranger or &quot;secret admirer.&quot;</td>
<td>The stalker is usually known to the victim and is often a current or former intimate partner.</td>
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<td>The stalker has only good and pure intentions, usually romantic.</td>
<td>Stalkers have different motivations, but often intend to scare their victims and/or do not stop when the victim is scared.</td>
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<td>The stalker’s actions range from sexy to flattering to harmless.</td>
<td>Stalking can escalate quickly and often co-occurs with or predicts serious violence.</td>
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<td>The stalker’s target should feel amused, flattered and/or affectionate towards the stalker.</td>
<td>Many stalking victims report feeling extreme fear and emotional distress.</td>
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- Stalking in media often creates a fantasy of stalking that is different than the reality.  
- Stalkers are often presented as attractive strangers or secret admirers with good intentions.  
- In reality, stalkers are usually known to the victim, intend to cause fear and are likely to become threatening and/or violent.

Slide 6

- For more information on the crime of stalking, visit SPARC at www.StalkingAwareness.org  
  - SPARC does NOT provide direct services to victims.