

STALKING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: FACT SHEET



What is stalking? While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, Title IX and the Clery Act have a good working definition of stalking:

Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to (1) Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or (2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.



Stalking is a violation of student conduct codes and Title IX, and a crime under the laws of the 50 states, District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Federal government.

COLLEGE STUDENT STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- Between 6% and 39% of college students report being stalked since entering college.^A
- College students at higher risk for experiencing stalking include:
 - Women^B
 - Students of color^C
 - Sexual minority and gender non-conforming college students (LGBTQ+)^D
 - Students with disabilities^E
 - Students living off campus^F
 - Younger students^G
- Among undergraduates stalked by an intimate partner:^H
 - 32% were sexually assaulted the prior academic year
 - 40% experienced co-occurring coercive control
 - 27% experienced co-occurring threats for a partner to hurt themselves, the victim, or someone the victim loves
 - 11% experienced co-occurring physical assault by an intimate partner
- 43% of college stalking victims who meet the legal criteria of 'stalking' do not identify their experience as 'stalking'.^I

DISCLOSURE AND HELP-SEEKING

Among college stalking victims:^J

- 92% tell friends and/or family.
- 29% contact a program or resource for help, more than victims of sexual harassment (12%) or IPV (19%).
 - Transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, or gender questioning (33%) are more likely than cisgender students (28% cis women/29% cis men) to do so.
- Of those who contact a campus program for help, 40% say it was extremely or very useful and 35% say it was a little or not at all useful.

18-24-year-olds experience the highest rates of stalking among adults.^K

This makes it vital for colleges to appropriately address stalking on campus and ensure services are accessible to all victims.



STALKING OFFENDERS

- The majority of college student victims are stalked by someone they know.^L
 - Most stalkers are also students.
 - The most common stalkers are former intimate partners (33%), closely followed by someone the victim knows or recognizes but is not a friend (31%), then friends (25%), classmates (18%), and current intimate partners (14%).
- The most common stalking behaviors reported by college stalking victims include:^M
 - Unwanted voice or text messages (45%).
 - Unwanted emails or social media (44%).
 - Being approached or seeing the stalker show up at places when the victim did not want them to be there (37%).
- Stalkers misuse common technology and use specialized technology to facilitate stalking:^N
 - 24% of college stalking victims have had a stalker create a fake profile pretending to be the victim.
 - 21% have experienced spoofing (calls, texts, or e-mails in which the stalker makes the contact seem that is coming from someone else).
 - 16% have been doxed (had private or identifying information published publicly online).
 - 16% have been the victim of nonconsensual sharing of intimate images.
- People with Autism Spectrum Disorders are more likely to engage in inappropriate courting behavior and pursue romantic targets longer,^O so reports of stalking committed by these students require specialized interventions that include input from disability experts.^P

School-Related Impacts for Stalking Victims Include:

- difficulty concentrating in class, on assignments, and during exams
- missing meetings and extra-curricular activities
- dropping classes
- lower grades
- considering dropping out of school
- changing living situation, like moving out of dorms

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