

STALKING & LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS: FACT SHEET

Generally, research shows that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely than heterosexual and cisgender individuals to experience stalking.



What does LGBTQ+ stand for? LGBTQ+ is an acronym used as an umbrella term for a range of sexual minority and gender non-conforming identities: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (all referring to sexual orientation); Transgender, Queer (both referring to gender identity); and the plus sign at the end expands the acronym to include additional sexual orientations and gender identities* not specifically listed.

**Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction toward others. Gender identity is the psychological sense of one's gender or lack thereof.*

LGBTQ+ STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- 54% of bisexual women, 35% of lesbian women, and 30% of heterosexual women have been stalked in their lifetimes.^A
- 27% of gay men, 26% of bisexual men, and 16% of heterosexual men have experienced stalking victimization in their lifetimes.^B
- Among undergraduate students, 1 in 7 transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer and 1 in 10 female reported experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 17 of all students.^C
- Since entering college, 1 in 4 lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, or queer students report experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 6 of heterosexual students.^D
- Transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer student stalking victims (33%) were more likely than cisgender student victims (28% ciswomen, 29% cismen) to contact a program or resource for help.^E
- Active duty service members identifying as LGBT are two times more likely than non-LGBT service members to experience stalking.^F

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than the general population.^G
- LGBTQ+ individuals have higher rates of mental health issues when compared to heterosexual and cisgender individuals, which researchers believe stem from stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that heighten stress levels and predisposes them to adverse health outcomes.^H



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 fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking is a crime in all U.S. jurisdictions.

STALKING OFFENDERS^I

- Among lesbian stalking victims:
 - 56% were stalked by an acquaintance and 32% by a current or former intimate partner; and
 - 52% were stalked by males and 28% by females.
- Among bisexual female stalking victims:
 - 52% were stalked by an intimate partner and 43% by an acquaintance; and
 - 82% were stalked by males and 14% by females and females.
- Among heterosexual female stalking victims:
 - 43% were stalked by an intimate partner and 40% by an acquaintance; and
 - 85% were stalked by males, 7% by females, 6% by males and females.
- Among gay male stalking victims:
 - 41% were stalked by an acquaintance and 36% by an intimate partner; and
 - 89% were stalked by males.
- Among bisexual male victims:
 - 44% were stalked by an acquaintance; and
 - 27% were stalked by males.
- Among heterosexual male victims:
 - 44% were stalked by an acquaintance and 32% by an intimate partner; and
 - 42% were stalked by males, 40% by females, 14% by males and females.

Marginalization: LGBTQ+ individuals have historically faced—and continue to face—stigma, prejudice, discrimination, violence, and a lack of understanding in daily life and when accessing services. They often experience a hostile and stressful environment. Listening, being open, and treating victims with respect is essential.^J

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SUPPORT SERVICES

The support organizations below are LGBTQ-aware and are likely to provide respectful support and services for LGBTQ+ people and issues. Victim advocates are encouraged to learn more with [SPARC's Guide for Responding to LGBTQ+ Stalking Victims](#).

- **The New York Anti-Violence Project** provides direct services geared to LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected communities, through a national hotline and online reporting form.
 - <https://avp.org/get-help/> or call 212-714-1141 for English and Spanish
- **The Network/La Red** offers a 24-hour hotline providing confidential emotional support, information, referrals, safety planning, and crisis intervention for LGBTQ+ folks, as well as folks in kink and polyamorous communities who are being abused or have been abused by a partner.
 - <https://www.tnlr.org/en/24-hour-hotline/> or call 1-800-832-1901
- **The NW Network** supports the LGBTQ+ community through emergency and ongoing advocacy-based counseling, available for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, and hate crimes.
 - <https://www.nwnetwork.org/support-for-survivors> or call 206-568-7777
- **The Trevor Project** specializes in providing suicide and mental health support for LGBTQ+ young people. Crisis counselors answer calls, chats, and texts 24/7.
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/> or text 'START' to 678-678 or call 1-866-488-7386
- **Trans Lifeline** provides suicide and mental health support for trans and nonbinary individuals. It is staffed by trans and nonbinary peers.
 - <https://translifeline.org> or call 877-565-8860

SOURCES

^A Chen, J., Khatiwada, S., Chen, M. S., Smith, S. G., Leemis, R. W., Friar, N., Basile, K. C., & Kresnow, M. (2023). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2016/2017: Report on Victimization by Sexual Identity. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

^B *Ibid.*

^C Cantor, D., et al. (2020). Report on the AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct. Westat.

^D Fedina, L., Backes, B. L., Sulley, C., Wood, L., & Busch-Armendariz, N. (2020). Prevalence and sociodemographic factors associated with stalking victimization among college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 68(6), 624-630.

^E Cantor, *supra* note C.

^F Schuyler, A. C., Klemmer, C., Mamey, M. R., Schrager, S. M., Goldbach, J. T., Holloway, I. W., & Castro, C. A. (2020). Experiences of Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Sexual Assault During Military Service Among LGBT and Non-LGBT Service Members. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 33(3), 257-266.

^G Blauuw, E., et al. (2002). *The Toll of Stalking*. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17(1):50-63.

^H Meyer, I. H. (2016). Does an improved social environment for sexual and gender minorities have implications for a new minority stress research agenda?. *Psychology of Sexualities Review*, 7(1), 81-90.

^I Chen, *supra* note A.

^J National Center for Victims of Crime & the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (2010). Why it matters: Rethinking victim assistance for LGBTQ victims of hate violence and domestic violence. Washington, D.C. & New York.