

## **SPARC's Victim Advocate Community of Practice**

This Community of Practice is for victim advocates seeking to strengthen their response to stalking.

### **Why focus on stalking?**

Victims report experiencing stalking at much higher rates than our support and legal systems identify it. In the U.S., 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men report experiencing stalking in their lifetimes.<sup>i</sup> Stalking is a risk factor for homicide and frequently co-occurs with other violent crimes. Stalking is one of the top ten risk factors for intimate partner homicide, with a three-fold increase in risk when present.<sup>ii</sup> Stalking is criminal, dangerous, and traumatic. While legal definitions of the crime of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes fear or emotional distress.

### **What is this advocate community of practice?**

This community of practice (COP) is for community-based and systems-based victim advocates to strengthen their response to stalking. Convened by the [Stalking, Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center \(SPARC\)](#), virtual meetings will be facilitated by national experts and designed to help victim advocates improve their understanding of and response to stalking. The group will meet virtually once per quarter to share experiences and resources, ask questions, and discuss promising practices. The meetings will be no longer than 60 minutes and will provide a platform for building relationships that enable participants to learn from each other, receive and provide feedback, and improve their own victim-centered, trauma-informed response to stalking victims.

### **Who should join?**

Community-based and systems-based advocates are invited to join. Many victim advocates are not explicitly tasked with responding to stalking victims, but due to the prevalence of stalking and its co-occurrence with many other crimes, this community of practice is open to all. This includes advocates embedded within the criminal and civil legal systems—at law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, courts, or others—as well as those based in community organizations. In particular, victim advocates serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence are encouraged to join. *If you are interested in joining, please fill out the online application here: <https://forms.gle/EHKBBbLkxRCiNwmq87>*

To learn more about this community of practice, contact Julia Holtemeyer at [jholtemeyer@stalkingawareness.org](mailto:jholtemeyer@stalkingawareness.org).

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### ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., & Chen, J. (2018). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>ii</sup> Spencer, C.M. & Stith, S.M. (2018). Risk Factors for Male Perpetration and Female Victimization of Intimate Partner Homicide: A Meta-Analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(3), 527-540.