

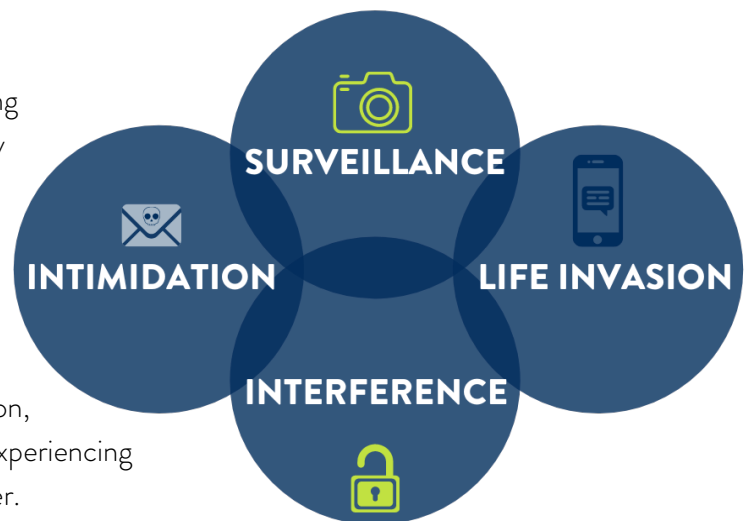
Identifying Stalking: SLII Strategies

Adapted from T.K. Logan's "Connecting the Dots: Advocates," 2017

Stalking is its own crime with its own risks, safety planning needs, and legal responses. Many stalking victims do not use the words "stalking" or "fear" to describe their experience(s).¹ They are more likely to say something like "my ex is bothering me," "an old coworker is being weird," or "my neighbor is harassing me." Victims respond to trauma differently, and may present as annoyed, frustrated, angry, or show no emotion at all rather than appearing scared.

As responders, it can be beneficial to determine if stalking victimization and/or fear is present in order to effectively assess risk, consider legal options, and/or safety plan.

Stalking behaviors are varied and may change over time. Most stalkers engage in multiple tactics to scare their victims.² Ask specific questions about the major stalking categories—surveillance, life invasion, intimidation, and interference (SLII)³—to better assess if a victim is experiencing stalking. These categories overlap and build on each other.



Stalking Behavior Screening Questions:

- Is the offender following you, watching you, showing up unexpectedly, or communicating with you in ways that seem obsessive or make you concerned for your safety?
- Has the offender repeatedly initiated unwanted contact with you (for example, repeated phone calls, texts, messages, emails, gifts, etc. or through third parties)?
- Has the offender threatened you or done other things to intimidate you? What have they done that has frightened or alarmed you?
- Has the offender significantly and directly interfered with your life? Have they assaulted you while stalking, harassing, or threatening you? Have they forcibly kept you from leaving or held you against your will, caused you to have a serious accident, physically assaulted your friends or family members, or seriously attacked you in other ways?

Key questions about fear/concern for safety:

- Have the offender's actions made you afraid for your safety or the safety of others?
- Have you changed your life in any way because you are afraid? If so, how? (for example, installed door locks, cameras, or lights; moved; changed jobs; altered schedule, route, and/or routines)
- What are you most afraid of happening?



SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance is the most commonly identified stalking tactic and includes watching and gathering information about the victim.

Has the offender...

- followed you?
- watched you?
- shown up unexpectedly?
- gone through your mail or trash?
- sought information about you from friends, family, or other acquaintances?
- communicated with you in ways that seemed obsessive or made you concerned for your safety?
- accessed your accounts (for example, social media, online finances)?
- planted a camera, GPS tracker, or other device on your vehicle or in your home?
- used tracking software on your phone, tablet, or computer to track you?
- monitored your activity online?

“He knows everything about me...I am so frightened.”⁴

- Stalking Survivor



LIFE INVASION

Life invasion describes ways that the offender is showing up in the victim’s life without the victim’s consent. “It is referred to as invasion because it means entry directly or through electronic means into the private sphere of victim lives—even though it can occur in public settings.”⁵ This may include excessive contact, showing up, spreading rumors, and/or sending gifts.

Has the offender...

- repeatedly initiated unwanted contact with you (for example, repeated phone calls, texts, messages, emails?)
- sent gifts to you or left objects/items for you to find?
- tried to initiate contact with you through third parties?
- spread rumors about you?
- humiliated, or tried to humiliate, you in public?
- impersonated you online?
- hacked into your accounts?
- harassed friends, family members, or other third parties?
- sent photos of themselves or of you in locations that you frequent?
- invaded your property (like letting themselves into your home or vehicle)?
- shown up at places you frequent (for example, your gym, child’s daycare, grocery store)?

“My entire life has been stolen from me. My privacy has been taken from me. I’m humiliated daily. It’s a living hell.”⁶

- Stalking Survivor

INTIMIDATION

Context is critical in stalking cases. Many behaviors are intimidating when considered within the totality of stalking behaviors and with the victim and offender's relationship and history in mind.

Has the offender...

- threatened you explicitly or implicitly, in-person or online?
- threatened family, friends, pets, or others that you care about?
- threatened to destroy property, harm pets, or to sabotage you in other ways?
- blackmailed you?
- threatened to share/post private information about you unless you perform sexual acts?
- engaged in symbolic violence (like a crushed soda can or burnt doll) that you perceived as a threat?
- threatened to or actually harmed themselves?
- done anything that has intimidated, frightened, or alarmed you?

INTERFERENCE *THROUGH SABOTAGE OR ATTACK*

Stalkers may interfere in a victim's life in many ways, affecting everything from the victim's reputation to their employment and/or physical safety. A common and significant consequence is victims losing financial and other resources, which can quickly spiral.

Has the offender...

- significantly and directly interfered with your life?
- damaged your property or stolen from you?
- disrupted your professional and/or social life?
- caused you to have a serious accident?
- meddled in online accounts (social media, finances, etc.)?
- posed as you and created harm?
- forcibly kept you from leaving or held you against your will?
- assaulted you while stalking, harassing, or threatening you?
- assaulted your friends, family, or pets, or seriously attacked you in other ways?
- shared with others and/or posted online private photos of you and/or information about you?

“It’s not easy to describe the fear you have when you see the stalker, or signs of the stalker, everywhere you go. I have given up all hopes of ever having a safe life.”

- Stalking Survivor

The Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP) is a free, web-based tool with more questions, available at www.CoerciveControl.org. It is designed specifically to examine stalking and assess the “big picture” of the stalking situation and a victim's risk in the moment.

Citations

- ¹ Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2001). Stalking: Its Role in Serious Domestic Violence Cases, Executive Summary. Center for Policy Research: Denver, CO.
- ² Mohandie, K., Meloy, J.R., McGowan, M.G., & Williams, J. (2006). The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 51(1), 147-155.
- ³ Logan, T.K. & Walker, R. (2017). Stalking: A Multidimensional Framework for Assessment and Safety Planning. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 18(2): 200-222.
- ⁴ Kelly, K. (2020, March 24). Sinister stalker bugged his ex-girlfriend's car and turned up on her new boyfriend's doorstep. *The Shields Gazette*.
- ⁵ Logan, T.K. & Walker, R. (2017). Stalking: A Multidimensional Framework for Assessment and Safety Planning. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 18(2): 200-222.
- ⁶ Greenberg, A. (2017 Jan 31). Spoofed Grindr Accounts turned One Man's Life Into a 'Living Hell.' *Wired Magazine*.