

# BUILDING A COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE (CCR) TO STALKING

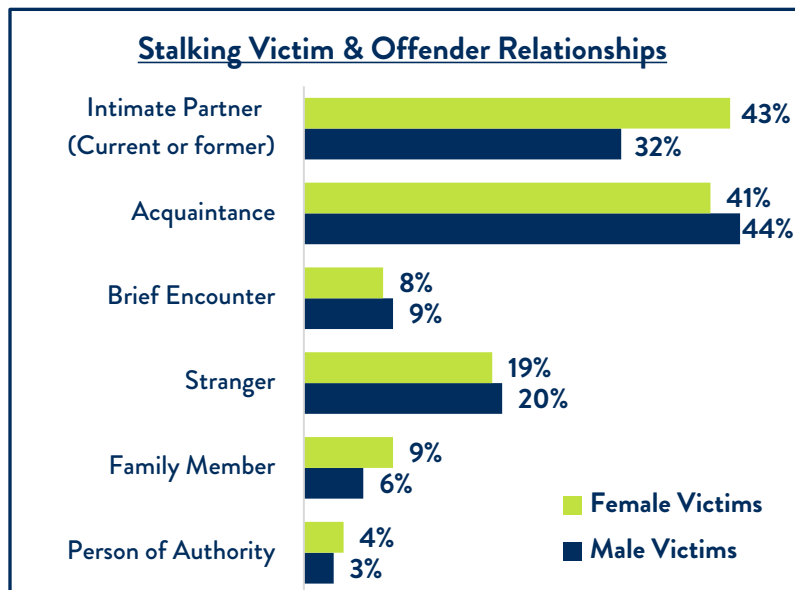
## What is a CCR?

A Coordinated Community Response (CCR) is widely considered a best practice in responding to stalking, domestic violence, and sexual violence. **A CCR is a localized initiative that brings together key players – from the criminal justice system, the civil justice system, victim support services, and the broader community – to work together to support victims and hold offenders accountable.** By sharing information, policies, protocols, strategies, and training, CCR teams can more successfully organize their respective agency responses to be more effective, holistic, and coordinated.



## Why should stalking be part of a CCR?

It is important to identify stalking separate from and in addition to co-occurring victimizations because stalking is its own form of violence with its own risks, safety planning needs, and legal responses. Stalking can be added to an existing CCR or a CCR specifically around stalking can be created. Approximately 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men experience stalking over their lifetimes, but it is much more rarely named as stalking.



**Despite its prevalence, stalking is often misunderstood and rarely identified by victim service professionals, legal systems, and/or even by victims themselves.**

Research shows that the vast majority of victims are stalked by someone they know, with 40% stalked by a current or former intimate partner.<sup>i</sup> It is vital to address stalking within responses to intimate partner violence because research shows that intimate partner stalkers use violence and threats the most, followed by acquaintance stalkers, and then strangers.<sup>ii</sup>

**But if stalking is only addressed as part of a multidisciplinary team focused on domestic violence, more than 50% of stalking cases will be missed.**

## STALKING IS DANGEROUS

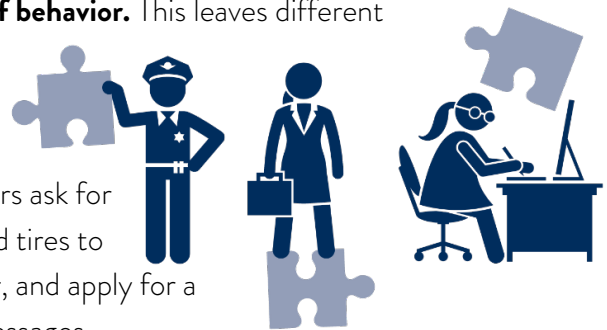
Stalking is a prevalent and dangerous crime that too often goes unidentified, leaving victims without the particular supports they need and allowing stalkers to not be held accountable for the full extent of their crimes. **Stalking can be an indicator of an urgent, volatile, risky situation.** Generally, the more access to and information about the victim that the offender has, the more dangerous and threatening they can — and are likely to — be. Stalking frequently co-occurs with other victimizations and is a risk factor for homicide.

- Intimate partner stalkers are more likely (than stalkers with other relationships to victims) to physically approach the victim; be interfering, insulting, and threatening; use weapons; escalate behaviors quickly; and re-offend.<sup>iii</sup>
- Abusive partners who stalk are more likely (than abusive partners who do not stalk) to verbally degrade, threaten, use a weapon to attack, sexually assault, and/or physically injure their victims.<sup>iv</sup>
- Stalking increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by three times.<sup>v</sup>
- 81% of women stalked by a current or former husband or cohabitating partner were also physically assaulted by that partner.<sup>vi</sup>
- 48% of stalking victims say their abusive partner threatened others with guns, compared to 30% of IPV victims not stalked.<sup>vii</sup>
- 31% of women stalked by an intimate partner were also sexually assaulted.<sup>viii</sup>

## MISSING THE PATTERN

**Too often, stalking behaviors are assessed as singular victimizations or isolated incidents rather than being identified as pieces of a larger stalking pattern of behavior.** This leaves different

responders with different pieces of the puzzle and without the full picture, and the necessary urgency is often lacking. Stalking victims may only tell certain responders about certain incidents unless the responders ask for more information; for example, they may report slashed tires to law enforcement, a sexual assault to a rape crisis center, and apply for a civil no contact order to stop constant calls and text messages.



**Screening for stalking, discussing cases, and having CCR partners to turn to can help connect the dots** to better understand a victim's situation, increase support for victims with more comprehensive responses, and more effectively hold offenders accountable with appropriate measures.

## HOLISTIC RESPONSE

Since stalking victims experience a wide range of stalking behaviors that affect many parts of their lives, they often need multiple different types of support. Whether the entryway is through property damage, a civil protection order, identity theft, physical/sexual assault, or domestic violence, a CCR can help connect victims' interactions with multiple systems so that whomever first identifies the situation as stalking has relationships with partners to help provide a coordinated, holistic response.

## Who should be part of a CCR?

A CCR should include members from each part of the criminal and civil justice systems, a variety of victim support services, and the broader community. Many models have core team member meetings monthly and broader group meetings quarterly. Core members of CCRs typically include victim advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, court services, and forensic medical services for sexual assault and domestic violence. Broader group meetings should also include:

- Community resources such as housing, immigration, education, disability, etc. for both support and advocacy
- Corrections, probation, parole agents
- Culturally-specific community resources
- Dispatchers / emergency communications personnel
- Judicial officers and court personnel (criminal, civil, family, immigration, etc.)
- Medical services such as health care providers and mental health providers
- Pre-trial services personnel
- School personnel



Also consider inviting religious leaders, batterer's treatment program staff, and individuals with lived experiences of stalking to join the broader group.

## What makes a CCR successful?

The foundation of a CCR is clear, frequent communication. Frequent multi-disciplinary case reviews, sharing information, and collaboratively developing response strategies are ways to cultivate relationships across different disciplines and build a CCR. Stalking can be incorporated into existing multidisciplinary group meetings (like Sexual Assault Response Teams, High Risk Teams, Human Trafficking Task Force, etc.) or a community can create a new multidisciplinary group specifically to address stalking. A successful CCR focuses on risk (using the [Stalking & Harassment Assessment & Risk Profile](#)), victim safety planning, integrating disparate responses into a comprehensive approach, and involving corrections, probation, and parole for appropriate supervision of offenders. It is vital to build strong relationships and be able to provide victims with warm referrals to partner organizations and different types of support.

## What are strategies for an effective systemic response to stalking?

While different members of the CCR team have different perspectives and priorities, they should all have a basic understanding of what the other parties do and insight into how best to set victims up for success across agencies and systems.

## EDUCATION:

- Each partner must be able to [identify stalking](#) and understand how they should respond to stalking.

## INVESTIGATION:

- Each partner must understand how they should contribute to addressing the full context of the stalking situation, including the various behaviors and methods that make up the course of conduct as well as the victim's reaction to the conduct.

## COMMUNICATION:

- Each partner must clearly communicate their needs and expectations across disciplines and jurisdictions. Information-sharing limitations around victim confidentiality must be clearly articulated.



## PROSECUTION:

- Each partner must understand that offenders should be held accountable for the full scope of their criminal conduct. A victim's decision to participate in the criminal justice system or not should be respected. All parties should understand what prosecutors need to hold offenders appropriately accountable and can provide basic documentation tools and strategies.

## SUPERVISION:

- Each partner must understand the appropriate restrictions and monitoring that offenders should face.

## What roles do different partners play in a CCR?

All CCR partners have important roles to play. Generally, all partners need training on identifying stalking behaviors, the dynamics of stalking, interconnected and co-occurring victimizations, and safety planning with stalking victims. Some core roles are listed below, but remember that victims may disclose in any number of community settings (such as schools, workplaces, community resources, culturally specific resources, health care providers, mental health care providers, and more). These community partners should be educated on responding appropriately to stalking victims and confident about where to refer victims for further assistance.

### VICTIM SERVICES & ADVOCACY



Victim services/advocacy professionals need specific training on how to identify stalking and incorporate responding to stalking into their work. They can use SPARC's [Guide for Advocates](#), [Guide for Working with LGBTQ+ Victims](#), and [Checklist for DV and SA Organizations](#) to assess their response to stalking. Their role is to:

- Screen victims for stalking and provide specific safety planning support
- Provide victims with information about stalking and reporting options and processes
- Work with victims [to document stalking behaviors](#)
- Work with victims on [safety planning](#) and [risk assessment](#)

- Assist victims with civil protection orders
- Identify local shelter options and other support available to which they can refer victims
- Provide individual support and support groups
- Provide access or referrals to mental health counselors trained in stalking victimization
- Provide outreach and education on stalking, particularly to organizations and groups that are likely to receive disclosures of stalking behaviors from victims

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement need specific training on identifying and investigating stalking behaviors; dispatch, patrol, investigators, and supervisors all need to understand stalking and their respective responsibilities in supporting victims and holding offenders accountable. Agencies should have a stalking policy and standard operating protocol. They can use SPARC's [Model Policy on Stalking](#), [Guide for LE](#), [Identifying Stalking on LE Calls for Service](#), [LE Investigations and Report Writing](#), and [LE Tips for Identifying SLII Stalking Behaviors](#) to enhance their response to stalking. Their role is to:



- Conduct thorough, offender-focused investigations
- Identify both intimate partner and non-intimate partner stalking
- Identify stalking in reports of both property crimes and crimes against persons
- Review incident reports and call logs to identify/screen for stalking
- Appropriately interview victims
- Respond to victims in a trauma-informed, victim-centered way
- Engage with advocates when working with victims
- Assess threats
- Identify co-occurring and interconnected crimes
- Enforce protection orders
- Enforce firearm surrenders and prohibitions

## PROSECUTORS



Prosecutors need specific training on analyzing the elements of their stalking statute(s); recognizing stalking in cases where it has been employed by the offender in connection with another criminal offense; appreciating the strategic value of charging stalking in cases where it is related to other criminal offenses; determining what evidence is necessary to prove the elements of the crime and ensuring that such evidence is properly documented and preserved; securing and admitting digital evidence; and appropriate sentencing. They can use SPARC's [Guide for Prosecutors](#), [Strategies for Prosecuting Stalking](#), [Stalking via the Court System](#), and [Protection Order Violations as Stalking](#) to enhance their response to stalking. Their role is to:

- Communicate elements of the crime and evidence needs to law enforcement
- Charge stalking within intimate partner violence, human trafficking, and other crimes as appropriate
- Use risk assessments

- Use firearm surrenders and prohibitions
- Oppose defense demands for private or confidential victim information
- Use expert testimony
- Leverage forfeiture by wrongdoing for unavailable victims/witnesses
- Keep victim informed about the status of the case

## PRE-TRIAL MONITORING, CORRECTIONS, PROBATION, AND PAROLE

Corrections/Probation/Parole need specific training on identifying stalking behaviors; screening for stalking; recommended supervision strategies; and suggested special conditions of supervision for stalkers. They can use SPARC's [Guide for Community Corrections Officers](#), [Stalking via the Court System](#), and [Supervising Offenders: Identifying Stalking Behaviors](#) to enhance their response to stalking. Their role is to:



- Screen offenders for stalking, especially those with a domestic violence or intimate partner violence charge
- Make contact with victims
- Have frequent field contacts with offenders
- Look for offenders fixated on someone
- Utilize specialized caseloads whenever possible
- Use and enforce specialized conditions: social media accounts, firearms, unannounced home visits, warrantless searches/seizures of property like cell phones/computers

## COURT SERVICES



Judicial officers and court services personnel need specific training on identifying stalking behaviors and how these behaviors relate to other crimes to be better able to identify stalking in any type of case. Whichever type of case stalking occurs in, judicial officers are encouraged to make specific findings of fact regarding stalking and issue detailed orders designed to stop stalking behaviors, hold offenders accountable, and prevent dangerous consequences. Judicial officers should consider stalking in all types of legal proceedings, including in Federal courts; Tribal courts; immigration courts; state family, juvenile, civil, and criminal court cases; and administrative law adjudications including immigration and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission adjudications. They can use SPARC's [Guide for Judicial Officers](#), [Stalking via the Court System](#), and [recorded webinar on Responding to Stalking](#) to enhance their response to stalking. Their role is to:

- Look for stalking behaviors in a wide range of court cases, including domestic violence, sexual assault, protection orders, custody, divorce, child welfare, employment, human trafficking, and immigration cases, as well as other family, civil, or criminal court matters
- Identify and make findings about stalking separate from and in addition to concurring criminal and/or abusive conduct, particularly in intimate partner relationships
- Make specific findings of fact regarding stalking as a record of the behavior and issue detailed orders designed to stop stalking behaviors, hold stalkers accountable, and prevent dangerous consequences

## MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical service providers need specific training on the dynamics of stalking, how to identify and screen for stalking behaviors, and how to incorporate responding to stalking into their work. In particular, forensic medical services need training on the intersections of stalking with sexual violence and intimate partner violence. They can use SPARC's [recorded webinars](#), [Identifying Stalking as SLII Strategies](#), and [Stalking SLII Behaviors as Sexual Violence](#) to learn more. Their role is to:



- Identify stalking behaviors and screen victims for stalking
- Provide victims with information about stalking
- Provide appropriate medical care for stalking victims (physical, mental, or forensic, depending on their role)
- Identify local support services to which they can refer victims

### How can a CCR increase the community's ability to identify stalking?

Stalking frequently intersects with other crimes and victimizations, so it is important to look for stalking in the context of other crimes as well as other crimes in the context of stalking. If your community already participates in a multidisciplinary team or task force, particularly for domestic violence, sexual violence, and/or human trafficking, consider screening those cases for stalking behaviors and appropriately responding in cases that involve stalking. When stalking victims talk about what they are experiencing, they are unlikely to use the word “stalking.” The four questions below can help professionals screen for stalking victimization by discussing stalking behaviors without using the word “stalking.” Also consider completing the [SHARP assessment](#) when the CCR discusses a stalking case.



#### Use these four screening questions to identify stalking behaviors:

- Has the offender followed or watched the victim, showed up unexpectedly, or communicated with the victim in ways that seem obsessive or make the victim concerned for their safety?
- Has the offender repeatedly initiated unwanted contact with the victim (e.g. repeated calls, texts, messages, emails, gifts, including through third parties)?
- Has the offender threatened the victim or done other things to intimidate them? What have they done that has frightened or alarmed the victim?
- Has the offender significantly and directly interfered with the victim's life? For example, have they assaulted the victim, forcibly kept the victim from leaving or held them against their will, caused the victim to have a serious accident, physically assaulted the victim's friends (or children, family, pets, or community), or seriously attacked the victim in other ways?

## What tools can help build a successful CCR to stalking?

Every member of the CCR can benefit from tools to help identify and respond to stalking. Some key resources are listed below.

- [SPARC victim brochures and awareness posters](#)
- [SPARC guides, checklists, and more](#) for different disciplines (victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, judicial, corrections, campuses) on how to respond to stalking
- [SPARC recorded webinar trainings](#), including:
  - Building a coordinated response to stalking
  - Identifying stalking: Context is Key
  - Intersection of stalking and sexual violence
  - Intersection of stalking and intimate partner violence
  - Intersection of stalking and sex trafficking
  - Investigating and prosecuting stalking
- [CCR Toolkit from End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin](#)
- [CCR resources from Praxis International](#)
- [Sexual Assault Response Teams Toolkit from the Department of Justice](#)
- [Sexual Assault Response Team Toolkit from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)

---

This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-22-GK-03986-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

### Citations

- <sup>i</sup> Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., & Kresnow, M. (2022). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Stalking. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/nisvsStalkingReport.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> Mohandie, K., Meloy, J., McGowan, M., & Williams, J. (2006). The RECON typology of stalking: Reliability and validity based upon a large sample of north American stalkers. *Journal of Forensic Science*, 51(1), 147-155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-4029.2005.00030.x>
- <sup>iii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>iv</sup> Logan, T.K., Shannon, L., & Cole, J. (2007). Stalking Victimization in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence. *Violence Vict.*, 22(6), 669-683.
- <sup>v</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.
- <sup>vi</sup> Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (1998). Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey (NCJ# 169592). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- <sup>vii</sup> Logan, T., & Lynch, K. (2018). Dangerous liaisons: Examining the connection of stalking and gun threats among partner abuse victims. *Violence and Victims*, 33(3), 399-416.
- <sup>viii</sup> Tjaden, *supra* note vi.