

WHAT IS STALKING?

Stalking is a *course of conduct*, including intimidation, surveillance or harassment, that places a person in *reasonable fear of material harm* to their *health or safety* or the health or safety of an immediate family member, household member, spouse or intimate partner, or pet. Stalking is a serious crime. Former and current intimate partners often use stalking to terrorize their victims.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A 2011 survey found 5.1 million women and 2.4 million men had been stalked the previous year.¹
- 1 in every 6 U.S. women and 1 out of every 19 U.S. men have been stalked in their lifetime.²
- Nearly 3 out of 4 victims of stalking know their stalkers in some capacity. The most common relationship between the victim and perpetrator is a current or former intimate partner.³
- 66% of female stalking victims were stalked by current or former intimate partners.⁴
- People aged 18-24 have the highest rate of stalking victimization.⁵
- Americans who experience stalking are at least 200 times more likely to be murdered than Americans who are not stalked; due to many data limitations, the true magnitude of this increased risk is likely to be much higher.⁶
- In one year, stalkers threatened 242,420 victims with weapons.⁷
- Almost 10% of stalking victims fear they will be killed by the stalker.⁸
- 20% of stalking victims are physically attacked by the stalker.⁹

INTIMATE PARTNER STALKING

A study of contacts to the National Domestic Violence Hotline found that:

- 2/3 of respondents experienced intimate partner stalking.
- 28% experienced both stalking and gun threats.
- 76% of women threatened by an intimate partner with a gun also experienced stalking.
- 1/3 of women who were stalked by an intimate partner but were not threatened with a gun worried their abusers would get a gun to harm them.
- Women in rural areas were more likely to experience intimate partner stalking and also gun threats than women in urban and suburban areas.¹⁰

STALKING AND FEMICIDE

- 76% of women murdered by an intimate partner were stalked first; 85% of women who survived murder attempts were stalked.¹¹
- 89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted before their murder were also stalked in the last year prior to their murder.¹²
- 54% of femicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their stalkers.¹³

If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org.

Please visit the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's** website at www.ncadv.org for more fact sheets, membership information, and valuable resources.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

- 1 in 7 stalking victims has been forced to move as a result of their victimization.¹⁴
- 1 in 8 stalking victims has reported losing work because of the stalking. More than half of these victims reported losing 5 or more work days.¹⁵
- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.¹⁶
- 86% of victims surveyed reported their personalities had changed as a result of being stalked.¹⁷
- 37% victims of stalking fulfill the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; an additional 18% fulfilled all but one diagnostic criteria.¹⁸
- 1 in 4 stalking victims contemplate suicide.¹⁹

HOW TO HELP

- Encourage your legislators to pass tighten stalking statutes so that stalking is both easier to prosecute and classified as a more serious crime.
- Ask your legislators to update the federal definition of domestic violence to include stalking and dating violence. This will prohibit stalkers from having access to firearms.
- Ask your congressmen to support legislation providing additional funding for local program initiatives that provide counseling and other services to victims of stalking and domestic violence, such as programs established by the Violence Against Women Act
- Support legislation encouraging domestic violence education for middle and high school students. An appropriate curriculum should include information about healthy relationships, domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and available resources.
- Encourage local schools and youth programs to train teachers, school counselors and athletic coaches to recognize children and teens who are in violent situations. Provide educators with resources and prepare them to intervene in domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking situations.
- Support programs in your community aimed at increasing domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking education, prevention and intervention.

¹ Breiding, M., J., Smith, S. G., Basile, K. C., Walters, M. L., Chen, J., & Merrick, M. T. (2014). *Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization — National intimate partner and sexual violence survey, United States, 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm>.

² Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey (NISVS): 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_executive_summary-a.pdf.

³ Catalano, S., Smith, E., Snyder, H. & Rand, M. (2009). *Bureau of Justice Statistics selected findings: Female victims of violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf>.

⁴ Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J. & Stevens, M. (2011). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Meloy, J. R. (1999). Stalking: An old behavior, a new crime. *Forensic Psychiatry*, 22(1), 85-99.

If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org.

Please visit the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's** website at www.ncadv.org for more fact sheets, membership information, and valuable resources.

⁷ Baum, K., Catalano, S., Rand, S., & Rose, K. (2009). Stalking victimization in the United States. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=365>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Logan, T. & Lynch, K. R. (2018). Dangerous liaisons: Examining the connection of stalking and gun threats among partner abuse victims. *Violence and Victims*, 33(13), 399-416. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-17-00134>

¹¹ McFarlane, J.M., Campbell, J.C., Wilt, S., Sachs, C.J., Ulrich, Y., & Xu, X. (1999). Stalking and intimate partner femicide. *Homicide Studies*, 3(4), 300-316.

¹² Ibid..

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Baum, K., Catalano, S., Rand, M. & Rose, K. (2009). *National crime victims survey: Talking victimization in the United States*. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ovw/legacy/2012/08/15/bjs-stalking-rpt.pdf>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Blauuw, E., Winkel, F., Arensman, E., Sheridan, L. & Freeve, A. (2002). The toll of stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17(1) 50-63.

¹⁷ Hall, D.M. (1998). The victims of stalking. Meloy, J. R. (Ed.). *The psychology of stalking* (113-137). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

¹⁸ Pathé, M. & Mullen, P. F. (1997). The impact of stalkers on their victims. *British Journal of Psychology*, 170, 12-17

¹⁹ Ibid.

If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org.

Please visit the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's** website at www.ncadv.org for more fact sheets, membership information, and valuable resources.