

# STALKING FACT SHEET



## WHAT IS STALKING?

While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is: **a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.**

### STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- An estimated 6-7.5 million people are stalked in a one year period in the United States.
  - Nearly 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime.
  - Using a less conservative definition of stalking, which considers any amount of fear (i.e., a little fearful, somewhat fearful, or very fearful), 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men reported being a victim of stalking in their lifetime.
  - About half of all victims of stalking indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25.
  - **Stalkers use many tactics including:**  
Approaching the victim or showing up in places when the victim didn't want them to be there; making unwanted telephone calls; leaving the victim unwanted messages (text or voice); watching or following the victim from a distance, or spying on the victim with a listening device, camera, or GPS.
- \* Source for the above stats: 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.
- The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Many victims are stalked by a current or former intimate partner, or by an acquaintance.
  - People aged 18-24 have the highest rate of stalking victimization.

\*\* Source for the above stats: 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>.

- Almost half of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact per week.
- 11% of stalking victims have been stalked for 5 years or more.
- 1 in 4 victims report being stalked through the use of some form of technology (such as e-mail or instant messaging).
- 10% of victims report being monitored with global positioning systems (GPS), and 8% report being monitored through video or digital cameras, or listening devices.

\*\*\* Source: Katrina Baum et al., "Stalking Victimization in the United States," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

### IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next.
- 29% of stalking victims fear the stalking will never stop.
- 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization and more than half lose 5 days of work or more.
- 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.

\*\*\*\* Source: Katrina Baum et al., "Stalking Victimization in the United States," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.

\*\*\*\*Source: Eric Blauuw et al., "The Toll of Stalking," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17, no. 1 (2002):50-63.

### STALKING OFFENDERS

- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.
- Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases.
- Almost 1/3 of stalkers have stalked before.
- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets, and their behaviors escalate quickly.

\*\*\*\*Source: Kris Mohandie et al., "The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers," *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 51, no. 1 (2006).

### STALKING LAWS

- Stalking is a crime under the laws of 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and the Federal government.
- Less than 1/3 of states classify stalking as a felony upon first offense.
- More than 1/2 of states classify stalking as a felony upon second or subsequent offense or when the crime involves aggravating factors.
- Aggravating factors may include: possession of a deadly weapon, violation of a court order or condition of probation/parole, victim under 16 years, or same victim as prior occasions.