

# STALKING FACT SHEET



## WHAT IS STALKING?

While legal definitions of stalking vary between jurisdictions, a good working definition of stalking is: *a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.*

### STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- An estimated 13.5 million people are stalked in a one-year period in the United States.<sup>A</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime.<sup>B</sup>
- More than half of all victims of stalking indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25, and nearly 1 in 4 were stalked before the age of 18.<sup>C</sup>
- The vast majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know:<sup>D</sup>
  - 40% by a current/former intimate partner,
  - 42% by an acquaintance.
- 69% of female and 80% of male stalking victims were threatened with physical harm.<sup>E</sup>
- People aged 18-24 experience the highest rate of stalking victimization (among adults).<sup>F</sup>
- Stalkers use many tactics, including:<sup>G</sup>
  - Making unwanted phone calls.
  - Approaching the victim or showing up in places when the victim does not want them to.
  - Following and watching the victim.
  - Sending unwanted texts, photos, emails, and messages through social media.
  - Sending unwanted gifts.
  - Using technology to monitor, track, and/or spy on the victim.
- Almost half of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact per week.<sup>H</sup>
- 11% of stalking victims have been stalked for 5 years or more.<sup>I</sup>
- More than twice as many victims are stalked with technology than without.<sup>J</sup>

### IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next.<sup>K</sup>
- 29% of stalking victims fear it will never stop.<sup>L</sup>
- 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.<sup>M</sup>
- 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.<sup>N</sup>
- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.<sup>O</sup>

### STALKING OFFENDERS<sup>P</sup>

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

### STALKING LAWS

- Stalking is a crime under the laws of the 50 states, District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Federal government.
- Fewer than 1/3 of states classify stalking as a felony in all circumstances, including on the first offense.
- More than 1/2 of states classify stalking as a felony upon the 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.

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## Citations

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- <sup>A</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.
- <sup>B</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>C</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>D</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>E</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>F</sup> 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>.
- <sup>G</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.
- <sup>H</sup> Baum, K., Catalano, S., & Rand, M. (2009). Stalking Victimization in the United States. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- <sup>I</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>J</sup> Truman, J.L., & Morgan, R.E. (2021). Stalking Victimization, 2016. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report.
- <sup>K</sup> Baum, K., Catalano, S., & Rand, M. (2009). Stalking Victimization in the United States. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- <sup>L</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>M</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>N</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>O</sup> Blaauw, E., Arensman, E., Winkel, F.W., Freeve, A., & Sheridan, L. (2002). The Toll of Stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 17(1): 50-63.
- <sup>P</sup> 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.