

# Stalking- FAQs

If you are a victim of stalking, know that you are not alone. Approximately 7.5 million people are stalked every year in the United States.<sup>1</sup> On college campuses over 13% of women will be stalked in one year.<sup>2</sup> Stalking\* is a crime in every state and can be prosecuted regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

## What is stalking?

Stalking is a course of conduct, targeted at a particular person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.<sup>3</sup>

## Who can be stalked?

Anyone can be stalked. The blame for this crime lies solely with the perpetrator. However, certain portions of the population, such as women and young adults, are at a higher risk. At least 54 percent of female victims and 48 percent of male victims are stalked before the age of 25.<sup>4</sup>

## Who is the stalker?

The majority of stalkers are male and the majority of victims are female. When men are stalked, it is often by former intimate partners. On college campuses, the stalker is often not a stranger to the victim. Four in five campus victims know their attackers.<sup>5</sup> These perpetrators have an intimate relationship or close friendship; they may also be classmates, co-workers, neighbors, acquaintances or related to their victims. Stalkers may have traits such as jealousy, narcissism, obsession, compulsion, manipulation, deception, and control.<sup>6</sup>

## What does stalking look like?

With the advances of technology in the recent years, stalkers have utilized more complex methods to stalk their victims. Perpetrators often use technology such as GPS, phones, cameras, computers, etc. to facilitate both direct and indirect contact with victims. However, stalkers still also utilize traditional methods such as following victims or their loved ones. Some examples of stalking include any combination of these behaviors:

- Receiving numerous unwanted calls, texts, or emails
- Repeated indirect contact with the victims' loved ones in order to portray a message or threat
- Finding notes of messages on your door or windshield (not necessarily threatening notes)
- "Coincidental" run-ins with the same individual on multiple occasions
- Being followed or watched, either physically or electronically
- Finding the same person outside your work, class or home when you leave or arrive

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<sup>1</sup> 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*, Atlanta GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2-4. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (1999). *The extent and nature of the sexual victimization of college women: A national-level analysis* (Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, NCJ 179977). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 27. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Stalking Resource Center. (2012). *The stalking fact sheet*. Retrieved from [http://www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/src/stalking-fact-sheet\\_english.pdf?sfvrsn=4](http://www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/src/stalking-fact-sheet_english.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

<sup>4</sup> 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*, Atlanta GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 34. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (1999). *The extent and nature of the sexual victimization of college women: A national-level analysis* (Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, NCJ 179977). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 28. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Spence-Diehl, E. (1999). *Stalking: A handbook for victims*. Homes Beach, FL: Learning Publications, Inc.

Although some stalkers never escalate beyond unwanted indirect contact, some cause serious financial, emotional, sexual or physical harm to the victim. There is no way to tell for sure whether a stalker will give up easily or engage in criminal activities such as stealing the victim's identity, destroying his or her property, and/or using violence.

### **What can you do to if you or someone you know is being stalked?**

It is important to seek support to understand what your options mean and seek accompaniment through the process. Contact NOVA's Sexual Assault Services (SAS) at 703-338-0834 or at [nova.sas@nvcc.edu](mailto:nova.sas@nvcc.edu) to receive support. Being stalked is a crime and against NOVA student conduct policy. For more information on NOVA's obligation under Title IX to address instances of sexual misconduct, see the Title IX Policy on Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking: [https://www.nvcc.edu/policies/student/\\_docs/Title-IX-Policy-2015.pdf](https://www.nvcc.edu/policies/student/_docs/Title-IX-Policy-2015.pdf). (The Title IX Policy has misplaced NOVA's Sexual Misconduct Policy.)

- NOVA SAS can help you think about your options and talk about how the incident(s) has (have) impacted you.
- You have the right to file a police report, file a complaint with your Dean of Student's office or the Title IX Coordinator.
- Document all instances of stalking in a log (Click here for an example of a [stalking log](#)).
- Let your loved ones know that you are being stalked and provide them with any information you have about the stalker, including their picture.
- Save a copy of all emails, texts, and other messages received by the stalker both in physical format (e.g taking a picture or snap shot of messages) and in electronic format (e.g saving a copy in your phone or email).
- In case of an emergency, first call 911 or notify campus police at 703-764-5000.
- If you are a victim of stalking, know that it is never your fault and there are resources available for you.

**\*Please see VA code § 18.2-60.3. for the legal definition of stalking and related offenses. There may be additional codes that apply. Please contact law enforcement if are not sure whether or not what has happened to you is a crime.**

**For more information, contact NOVA Sexual Assault Services (SAS)  
at**

**703.338.0834 or [nova.sas@nvcc.edu](mailto:nova.sas@nvcc.edu).**