

## 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> Between 6% and 39% of college students have reported being stalked since starting college.<sup>2</sup> Stalking is a crime in every state and can be prosecuted regardless of the relationship between the complainant and the respondent.

### What is stalking?

Stalking means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress. Such conduct can occur in person or online, but the conduct must involve an education program or activity of the College.

### Who can be stalked?

Anyone can be stalked. However, certain portions of the population, such as women and young adults, are at a higher risk. At least 54% of female victims and 48% of male victims are stalked before the age of 25.<sup>4</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. Respondents 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. 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

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.

<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>Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Madden, K. (2020). *Report on the AAU campus climate survey on sexual assault and misconduct*. Westat  
<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>

## **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. Being stalked is a crime and against NOVA Student Code of Conduct. For more information on NOVA's obligation under Title IX to address instances of sexual misconduct, see the Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://www.nvcc.edu/titleix/files/NOVAs-Title-IX-Policy.pdf>.

- You have the right to file a police report or to the Title IX Coordinator.
- Document all instances of stalking in a 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 snapshot 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.
- Use NOVA's LiveSafe app.