

STALKING INFORMATION PACKET

RESILIENCE
ADVOCATES FOR ENDING VIOLENCE™

For free & confidential
support 24 hours a day:
(800) 848-5991
Español: (866) 728-2131

Holland Program Center and Business Office

411 Butternut Drive, Holland, Michigan 49424

Walk-in Hours: M-F, 9AM - 5PM

Allegan Satellite Office

Hours vary, please call for appointment

151 Brady Street, Allegan, Michigan 49010

Grand Haven Satellite Office

Hours vary, please call for appointment

1475 Robbins Rd, STE 120, Grand Haven, MI 49417

Stalking can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. In this packet you will find information, and resources you can use to learn more about stalking. No one deserves to be stalked.

Defining Stalking

What is stalking?

Stalking is a crime of repeatedly following or harassing an individual that causes the individual to fear injury or death due to implied threats.

Stalking is a dangerous act that is often connected to domestic violence and/or sexual violence. Like other cases of violence, the perpetrator is most likely someone that the victim knows. It could be a spouse, partner, coworker, friend, family member, etc.

Stalking is often a form of escalation in domestic violence. Perpetrators use stalking as a way to gain control over their victims. If other ways of gaining control are failing, stalking may be a different way for a perpetrator to exert their power.

Pinpointing Responsibility

Myth: Stalking is done by strangers.

Fact: The majority of perpetrators are known by the victims. The majority of cases are intimate partners (44% of male victims, 61% of female victims) of the victim, but there is also a large number of cases in which the perpetrator is an acquaintance (32% of male victims, 25% of female victims) of the victim. This shows that the majority of victims know their stalking perpetrators.

Myth: Stalking isn't dangerous. If you ignore it it will go away.

Fact: 76% of intimate partner femicides were preceded in stalking before the murder. Stalkers are very persistent and it is hard to force the perpetrator to stop. PTSD is also common in stalking victims. The crime can have a long-lasting dangerous toll on its victims.

Terms Related to Stalking

Cyberstalking: Individuals using the internet to stalk or harass victims. This could include creating false profiles in the victim's name or fake name, monitoring internet usage and location, posting false information, etc.

Phone Stalking: Individuals sending unwanted texts or calls multiple times during any hour of the day. These communications can include manipulation, explicit content, threats, etc.

Physical Stalking: Individuals following their victims anywhere (especially home or place of business), vandalizing the victim's property, leaving gifts, attacking the victim, etc.

Do they ever...

Make you feel afraid?

Show up to your work?

Show up to your home?

Deny the stalking or tell you it's your fault?

Unwantedly call/text you multiple times?

Monitor your technology usage?

Track your location?

Lead you to believe you're crazy?

Leave "presents" for you to find?

Threaten to harm you, your pet, or your kids/family?

The Facts

About 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking in their lifetimes.

<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/prevent-stalking/index.html>

Barriers for Marginalized Communities

What is a marginalized community?

People whose unique values, customs, or beliefs are NOT fully accepted into the larger group. They are often alienated, pushed to the side, over-looked, or underrepresented. These communities often encounter barriers that prevent them from achieving their full potential or receiving services related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Examples of Marginalized Communities

- Immigrants, refugees, migrants
- Women and girls
- Survivors of human trafficking
- Individuals with mental illness
- LGBTQIA+
- People of differing religions
- Disabled people
- Incarcerated people
- People of various race
- People of various ethnicity
- Senior Citizens
- Individuals with low income
- and more

What barriers, or concerns, may face those looking for help with stalking?

- Police inaction, hostility, and dismissiveness: the fear that police will not believe the survivor, blame survivors for the stalking, or that police involvement will escalate the stalking
- Police bias: unfairness targeted toward particular groups of people or with regard to stalking
- Collateral consequences: fear that the actions of police may cause involvement of Immigration; loss of housing/income, or arrest of the survivor
- Cultural identity/hierarchy: a strong personal identification based on familial structure, (e.g. gender roles)
- Concern about cultural competency: survivors may fear that they will not be understood in the context of their culture by stalking advocates or other service providers
- Stereotype Threat: the concern that negative stereotypes about one's group will be confirmed by their behavior/report

What does this mean for survivors?

Due to these barriers, survivors may be LESS likely to reach out for help. Experiencing prejudice and discrimination based upon identity can lead to feelings of loneliness, being misunderstood, undervalued, or not fully human.

Safety Planning

Safety planning is a necessary and important step for someone experiencing stalking. Planning can be used while we are still being stalked. Our safety should be a top priority. We may not have control over stalkers, but we do have a choice on how to respond to them and how to best get ourselves to safety.

Below is a list of safety suggestions. Following these suggestions is not a guarantee of safety, but could help to improve your safety situation.

Personal Safety during Stalking

- Pay attention to details, such as what the stalker looks like or what they are driving, or the license plate of the car
- Keep texts, call logs, emails, DMs, letters, or items left as evidence
- Take notes of the stalking events as soon as you can while events are still fresh in your mind
- Don't engage the stalker to avoid escalation, don't agree to meet to talk to them
- Don't answer any blocked or unknown numbers, let it go to voicemail
- If possible audio record any answered phone calls
- Don't respond to any calls, texts, or letters, especially if they are persistent
- Identify the stalker's use and level of force so that you can assess danger.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. If stalking occurs, try to move to those areas.
- Don't run to where the children are, as the stalker may hurt them as well.
- If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target; dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- Let trusted friends, neighbors, and coworkers know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signals.
- Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the stalking. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- Keep weapons like guns and knives locked away and as inaccessible as possible.

Community Resources

If you are in immediate danger, please call 911.

Police/Sheriff Department– Non-Emergency:

Allegan County Central Dispatch: (269) 673-3899

Ottawa County Central Dispatch: (800) 249-0911

Holland Police Department: (616) 355-1100

Allegan City Police: (269) 673-5170

Allegan County Sheriff: (269) 673-0510

Legal Support:

Western MI Legal Services Hotline: (888) 783-8190

Allegan County Prosecutor's Office: (269) 673-0280

Allegan– Legal Advocate: (269) 673-4831 X2

Ottawa County Prosecutor's Office: (616) 846-8215

Ottawa County Circuit Court: (616) 846-8320

Victim's Rights Coordinator (Ottawa): (616) 846-8368

Violence Intervention Officer (Holland): (616) 355-4340

Information and Referral Networks:

211 of Ottawa County: Dial 211 or (888) 353-6717

First Call of Allegan County: (269) 686-2100

Other Resources:

Holland Rescue Mission: (616) 396-2200

Sylvia's Place: (269) 673-8700

West Shore Counseling Services: (616) 355-3000

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE