

Stalking Awareness

Brought to you by Delta Kappa Zeta
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Stalking Definitions

- ❖ In Nevada, **stalking** is defined as when a person performs a series of acts over time that reasonably causes you to reasonably feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, harassed, or fearful for your safety, or the safety of your family or household member.
- ❖ **Aggravated stalking** is when a person commits the crime of stalking (as defined above) and also threatens you with the intention of making you reasonably fear death or serious bodily harm.

Stalking: Victims

- ❖ Both men and women may be victims of stalking
- ❖ It is estimated that 3.4 million men and women are victims of stalking each year
- ❖ More than half of stalking victims are under 30 years of age
- ❖ Women are 3 times more likely to be stalked than raped

Safehorizon.org

Stalker: Perpetrator

- ❖ 3 in 4 stalking victims know their stalkers as either a current or former spouse or partner, roommate, co-worker, family member, or social acquaintance.
- ❖ Females are more likely to be stalked by a males (67%) than another female
- ❖ Men have reported that 41% of their stalkers were male, while 43% reported their stalkers were female.

Impact of Stalking

- ❖ Almost half of stalking victims have at least one unwanted contact with stalker per week
- ❖ 11% of stalking victims report being stalked for more than 5 years
- ❖ 1 in 4 victims report being cyberstalking (e.g, email, text)
- ❖ More than half of stalking victims report losing time from work because of stalking

FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 2010

Dangers of Stalking

- ❖ Violence may occur between 25% to 35 % of stalking cases (McEwan et al, 2007)
- ❖ 76% of intimate partner femicide victims have been stalked by their intimate partner.
- ❖ 67% had been physically abused by their intimate partner.
- ❖ 89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted had also been stalked in the 12 months before their murder.
- ❖ 79% of abused femicide victims reported being stalked during the same period that they were abused.
- ❖ 54% of femicide victims reported stalking to police before they were killed by their stalkers.

US statistics of Stalking

- ❖ Estimated 1.5% of persons +18 were victims of stalking.
- ❖ Individuals who were divorced or separated are more likely to be stalking victims than those who have never been married or widowed
- ❖ 7 in 10 victims know their offender in some way
- ❖ Females are more likely to be stalked than males; however, females and males were equally likely to experience harassment.

U.S Department of Justice:

<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1211>

Common Victim concerns

- ❖ The stalking will lead to physical and/or sexual assault
- ❖ Stalking won't stop or if it has stopped, will recur
- ❖ Stalking will cause significant psychosocial damage

McEwan et al., 2007

Stalking Behavior

Stalking behavior may vary and may impact victims in different ways
For example:

- ❖ Following, surveillance, spying
- ❖ Standing, loitering: victim's home, school, place of work etc.
- ❖ Verbal abuse or public humiliation
- ❖ Unsolicited: mail, postcards, photographs, gifts from the endearing to the bizarre
- ❖ Going through rubbish bins. Leaving offensive material in the garden
- ❖ Breaking into victim's car, home or office
- ❖ Interfering, damaging personal belongings
- ❖ Threatening your freedom by making false allegations to the police
- ❖ Repeatedly texting, emailing, leaving voicemails
- ❖ Planting spyware, viruses into your computer
- ❖ Hacking into your computer, email, social media accounts
- ❖ Spreading rumors, discrediting
- ❖ Threats or violence against the victim, family, friends or pets
- ❖ Damage to property, stealing victims belongings
- ❖ Physical violence, sexual assault, rape, murder
- ❖ “Befriending” victim's friends, family to get closer to the victim
- ❖ Invading your personal space by standing too close or brushing against you

Laws on Stalking on US

- ❖ Stalking is a crime under the laws of all 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 offense 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.

Nevada Laws on Stalking

- ❖ A victim can file a petition for an **order for protection** against stalking and harassment if someone is stalking or harassing.
- ❖ No attorney is required to get an order but it is recommended.
- ❖ There is no fee to file for and **order for protection** and to have the order served on the abuser if they are in Nevada
- ❖ “Under Nevada law, harassment and stalking is considered to be committed in the place where the acts occur or in the place where the victim is located at the time s/he is harassed or stalked.”

Nevada Stalking Laws cont.

EXAMPLE: If you live in **Nevada** and the abuser lives in **Arizona**, “if the abuser sends you a threatening text message or email and you receive it in **Nevada**, the harassment can be considered to have been committed in **Nevada**.”

❖ If victim believes abuser has violated the order, they can immediately call the police.

❖ If abuser has been served with a copy of the order, the police can immediately make an arrest.

Clinical Implications

- ❖ There is no consensus among victim-assistance providers about standards of practice in how to help them (Logan, Walker, et al., 2006; Spence-Diehl & Potocky-Tripodi, 2001).
- ❖ Researchers argue that developing an approach that builds on the client's understanding of their own situation and views service providers as consultants in the client's decision-making process is needed.
- ❖ There is a small amount of research that supports the assertion that allowing victims more voice and control leads to more positive outcomes (Zweig & Burt, 2007; Bellknap & Sullivan, 2002; Hotaling & Buzawa, 2003).

Clinical Implications Cont.

- ❖ Clinical practice should be conducted with an explicit understanding that what works today may not work tomorrow, and contingencies for future contact with sources of help should be outlined. Clinicians should also pay close attention to victims' assessment of their own safety and offer assistance in ways that honor individual victim's circumstance and personal understanding of risk.
- ❖ Research also indicates that victims have a good understanding of their own level of risk and that they do not appear to be in denial (Cattaneo & Goodman 2007, Cattaneo, Bell, Goodman & Dutton, 2007; Heckert & Gondolf, 2004; Kropp, 2004; Weisz, Tolman & Saunders, 2000).
- ❖ In order to effectively assist victims of stalking, more information on the individual case is needed to understand which strategies will work and identify when and how they may work.
- ❖ Safety accounts for more than 30% variance in the rate of change of mental health over time.

Resources

- ❖ Safehorizon.org
- ❖ Womenslaw.org
- ❖ Victimsofcrime.org
- ❖ The CARE Line at UNLV:
<http://www.unlv.edu/srwc/groups/care>
- ❖ Contact the Crimes Against Persons Bureau at L.V.M.P.D. for harrassment/stalking/protective orders at (702) 229-5635

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