



WHAT IS STALKING?



Stalking is harassment of or threatening another person, especially in a way that haunts the person physically or emotionally in a repetitive and devious manner.

Stalking of an intimate partner can take place *during* the relationship, with intense monitoring of the partner's activities. Or stalking can take place *after* a partner or spouse has left the relationship. The stalker may be trying to get their partner back, or they may wish to harm their partner as punishment for their departure.

Regardless of the fine details, the victim fears for their safety.

Stalking can take place at or near the victim's home, near or in their workplace, on the way to the store or another destination, or on the Internet (cyber stalking). Stalking can be on the phone, in person, or online. Stalkers may never show their face, or they may be everywhere, in person.

Stalkers employ a number of threatening tactics:

- repeated phone calls, sometimes with hang-ups
- following or tracking
- finding the person through public records, online searching, or paid investigators
- watching with hidden cameras
- suddenly showing up where the victim is, at home, school, or work
- sending emails; communicating in chat rooms or with instant messaging (*cyberstalking*)
- sending unwanted packages, cards, gifts, or letters
- monitoring the victim's phone calls or computer-use
- contacting the victim's friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors to find out about the victim
- threatening to hurt the victim or their family, friends, or pets
- damaging the victim's home, car, or other property

It is likely that stalking will turn into violence

Stalking can end in violence whether or not the stalker threatens violence. And stalking can turn into violence even if the stalker has no history of violence.

Women stalkers are just as likely to become violent as are male stalkers. Those around the stalking victim are also in danger of being hurt. For instance, a parent, spouse, or bodyguard who makes the stalking victim unattainable may be hurt or killed as the stalker pursues the stalking victim.

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