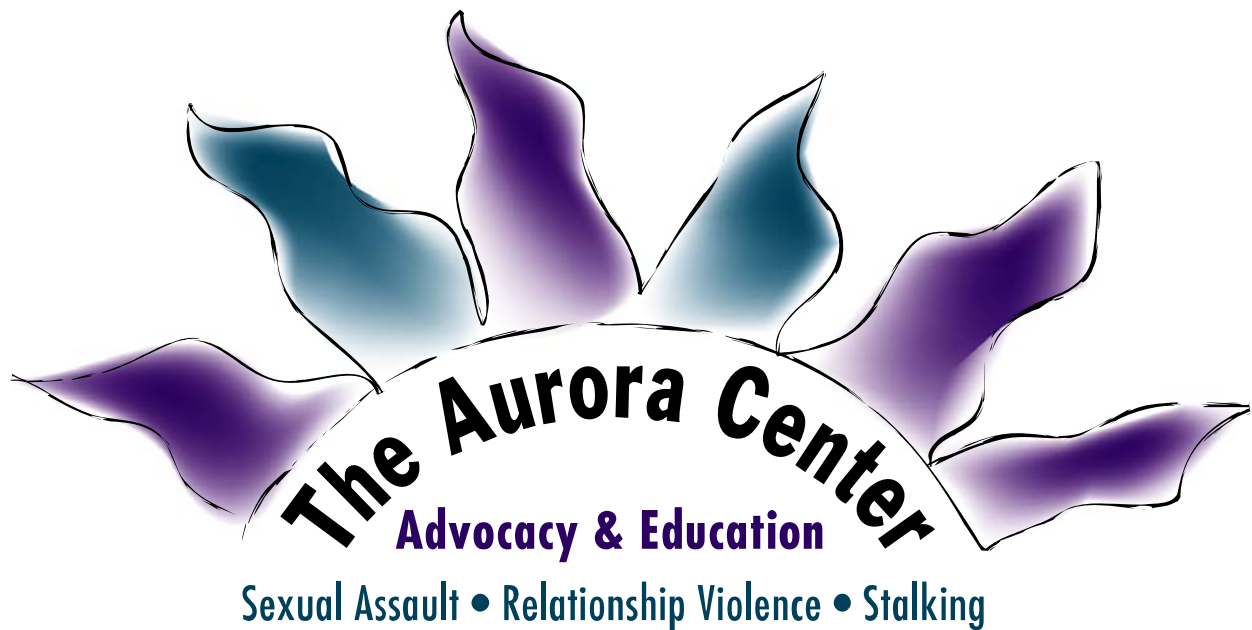


Stalking

Info Packet



The Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education
407 Boynton*410 Church St. SE*Minneapolis, MN 55455
Business Line: (612) 626-2929*TTY Line: (612) 626-4279
Email: aurora.center@umn.edu*Website: www.umn.edu/aurora

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA |
Office for Student Affairs

24hr Crisis Line: (612) 626-9111

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Dear Reader,

This information packet was created for several reasons: First, we hope and believe that information and education will help survivors to reach a healthy recovery. Second, we hope that people concerned about a survivor can learn to be an excellent support person by understanding more about the issue affecting their loved one. And finally, we believe the information can be helpful to those reading it for educational purposes because it deals with an issue that is important to them.

If you are a survivor of violence, you may find some comfort in the following pages. You may also read some things that are upsetting. Please remember that The Aurora Center crisis line is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: 612-626-9111.

All of the statistics and facts in this packet are followed by their source. The information in this packet is updated on an annual basis, but please confirm any information contained herein if you are concerned about its source or its accuracy. This packet was created for informational purposes only and should not be taken as legal advice.

Readers will notice that the female pronoun "she" is used to refer to the survivor of violence in the following pages. This usage is reflective of statistics and our practice which have shown that on a college campus, the survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking are overwhelmingly female. We have therefore chosen to avoid the cumbersome use of he/she, him/her, and his/hers. This does not mean that males are not victimized by these crimes, they are, but not in nearly the numbers that females are. Please note that we have devoted some sections of various information packets entirely to male survivors and we welcome male survivors to access our services.

Readers will also notice that we limit our use of the word "victim" when talking about a survivor. It is important for survivors to feel empowered and in control of their lives; labeling a survivor as a victim may cause a survivor to feel disempowered, and helpless. The term survivor implies that a person has lived through something traumatic by their own inner strength and endurance.

We hope that all readers of this information packet find it helpful and we welcome comments on its content sent to: aurora.center@umn.edu.

Sincerely,
The Aurora Center



What is Stalking?

Stalking is unwanted pursuit or harassment that causes fear. There are many different behaviors that can be called stalking, but they all share a common feature: they involve unwanted actions which threaten and/or cause fear in the victim. Although we most often read about strangers stalking celebrities, the majority of stalkers know their victim. New ways of stalking emerge frequently, and different behaviors can be threatening or cause fear to different individuals. No list can encompass all stalking behaviors, but stalking often includes the following:

- Following or surveillance
- Inappropriate approaches and confrontations
- Appearing at a place of residence or work
- Unwanted telephone calls
- Threats
- Threats to family and friends
- Unwanted emails and/or letters
- Unwanted or threatening gifts
- Unwanted text messages, pages, and/or instant messages
- Damage to property
- Physical assault
- Sexual Assault
- Unwanted messages on group network sites such as myspace or facebook

Warning Signs

There is no single list of warning signs that will tell you if you are a survivor. You are the best judge of your situation. If you are in a relationship that is concerning you or are feeling threatened by someone you know, the following are some warning signs to watch out for in this person.

- Frequent loss of temper
- Abuse of alcohol/other drugs
- Jealousy
- Expects you to spend all of your time with him/her or inform him/her of your whereabouts
- Following you
- Threats
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Damage or destruction to your property

Harassment and Stalking in Minnesota

Legal definitions as defined by the state of Minnesota (Statute - 609.749)

Harassment and Stalking

As used in this section, "harass" means to engage in intentional conduct which:

- The actor knows or has reason to know his/her actions would cause the victim under the circumstances to feel frightened, threatened, oppressed, persecuted, or intimidated; and
- Causes this reaction on the part of the victim.

Harassment and Stalking Crimes: Behavior

A person who harasses another by committing any of the following acts is guilty of a gross misdemeanor **:

- Directly or indirectly manifests a purpose or intent to injure the person, property, or rights of another by the commission of an unlawful act;
- Stalks, follows, or pursues another;
- Returns to the property of another if the actor is without claim of right to the property or consent of one with authority to consent;
- Repeatedly makes telephone calls, pages, text messages or induces a survivor to make telephone calls to the actor, whether or not conversation ensues;
- Makes or causes the telephone of another repeatedly or continuously to ring;
- Repeatedly emails, mails, or delivers or causes the delivery of letters, telegrams, messages, packages, or other objects

**A gross misdemeanor is any offense punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of \$3,000.

Stalking and the Internet

The internet can be one additional tool that stalkers use to access, and then target the person he is stalking. This type of harassment is often referred to as CyberStalking. Stalkers who use the internet can be just as dangerous as those who stalk someone in other ways. Many stalkers will use the internet to harass someone when they are unwilling or unable to confront their victims face to face.

Examples of CyberStalking behaviors:

- Using E-mail to send harassing messages
- Using live chat rooms or instant messaging to send harassing or threatening messages
- Using the victim's code name and/or e-mail to post messages on message boards or guest books
- Sending viruses
- Electronic identity theft
- Creating websites targeted at the victim; asking others to solicit material
- Sending harassing messages through online blogs such as Facebook or Myspace

If You Are Being Stalked Online:

- STATE CLEARLY ONCE – and only once (since even negative attention can encourage stalkers) – that you do not wish to receive any further communication. Don't respond at all if the email is from a stranger; when you reply, you are verifying your email address to the sender.
- SAVE ALL COMMUNICATION as evidence if the harassment persists. Print out the messages and also save them on your hard drive or Zip disk. Make sure that copies of email contain full headers – the information at the top of the communication that may look like gibberish, but contains vital data that help track the source of an email. (For more about this, visit www.haltabuse.org.)
- FILE A COMPLAINT with the administrator of the harasser's Internet service provider (ISP). You can do this at most sites by typing in `postmaster@` (name of Internet service provider).
- CONTACT THE AUTHORITIES. Many police departments have an officer or a unit devoted to computer crime. If the local police can't help, try your county or state police departments. An Aurora Center advocate can assist you in filing a police report and explain the process in more detail. You may also pursue a Harassment Order against the cyberstalker for sending repeated electronic messages; however, you must have the perpetrator's full name to file an order. The Aurora Center can help you obtain a Harassment Restraining Order in Hennepin and Ramsey County or help you to find an organization that can help you throughout Minnesota.

Risk Reduction Tips:

**Note: Many stalkers were friends or in a relationship with their victims, so these tips are not a guarantee, but they can reduce the risk of SOME types of stalking.*

- When setting up an email account at home, select an address or screen name that is gender-neutral, if applicable. Then, send yourself an email to check your "signature," the information that appears at the bottom of each message you send. Remove any personal information, such as your address or phone number.

- Use caution when setting up online website accounts on sites such as Facebook or Myspace. You can limit who has access to your personal information on these websites. Be aware of who you are allowing access to your personal information. You can also suppress your personal information on the University of Minnesota – Onestop website. This also limits who has access to your address and phone number. A good rule of thumb is not to post any information online that you wouldn't give to a stranger on the street.
- Consider setting up two separate email accounts. Establish a primary address that you give only to family and friends. For all other online activity, such as shopping and communicating in newsgroups or chat rooms, use a free account with a user name that is nothing more than a series of numbers or letters. These accounts are available through such services as Hotmail or Excite.
- Once a month, type your name into Internet search engines to see what information, if any, pops up. One suggestion is to start your spot checks at www.metacrawler.com because it accesses multiple search engines. Regular spot-checking is one of the most important acts you can take to protect yourself, says Trudy Gregorie of the National Center for Victims of Crime. If you are listed in the phone book, it's likely your name, address and phone number will appear in the directories of such search engines as Yahoo and Alta Vista. To have your name removed from directories; contact each search engine on which you are listed.

Adapted from "Protecting yourself on the Internet" from the Stalking Resource Center

What You Can Do If You Are Being Stalked

Documentation

By documenting stalking activity, you can help your advocate understand the specifics of your situation and/ or help law enforcement build a stronger case and better assist you.

Keep two log journals:

- A log of all factual information. Include dates, times, locations, any exact words that you can remember. Include any witnesses, where it was witnessed, and witness contact information if you can obtain it.
- A journal of how the behaviors made you feel. For example, uncomfortable, scared, fearful, etc.

Keep voicemail recordings or answering machine tapes that include unwanted, threatening or inappropriate messages. Keep any emails, letters, notes, other writings and any objects or gifts sent to you. It is important to save all evidence, no matter how inconsequential it seems.

Attached at the end of the packet you will find stalking incident logs to help you document contacts by the stalker.

Restraining Orders

In some cases restraining orders can discourage the stalking behavior. Restraining orders also assist law enforcement in building the strongest possible case. Restraining orders should be obtained as part of an overall safety plan. For some stalkers, court intervention in the form of a restraining order can escalate the situation and the violence. You need to make the decision that is best for you. A restraining order directs the offender not to approach or contact you. The Aurora Center can provide you with information and assistance in obtaining a restraining order.

Safety Planning

There are no easy answers to ensure safety. It is important to come up with a plan to utilize if you are in crisis. It is helpful to review these plans often and with loved ones. An Aurora Center advocate can help you develop a safety plan that fits your needs. The following are several suggestions to think about.

- Inform trusted neighbors (CAs in the dorms) or roommates of the situation and provide them with photos or descriptions of the offender and his or her car
- Plan escape routes from your home
- Keep a cell phone with you at all times
- Install solid core doors with dead bolt locks
- Change the keys to all your locks and always account for each key
- Make sure all windows can be secured and locked
- Install adequate outside lighting
- Use an unlisted phone number
- Be selective in giving out your phone number
- Vary your normal travel routes
- Have roommates screen calls and visitors
- If you work on campus, inform your campus employer and campus security
- If you have a restraining order, keep it with you at all times

You may also want to consider the following:

- Can you vary your schedule?
- Can you relocate to another office at your workplace?
- Are there any times that you are left alone in your workplace?
- Are there individuals at your workplace who know personal information (social security number, addresses, etc.)? Have these individuals been warned about your circumstances?
- Do you have secure parking?

Here are some helpful rules to share with co-workers, friends, and relatives:

- NEVER give out any information about the survivor to ANYONE. No matter how urgent the story sounds.
- Do not discuss the survivor with the stalker. Adopt a phrase such as “I am not going to discuss this with you” to redirect conversation.
- Stay firm, calm, and cool. Any emotional response may be interpreted as a weak point and the stalker may persist.
- If you make a threat, follow through with it. Do not say that you are going to call the police and then not do it. Let the stalker know that you are serious.

Identifying Potential Sources of Information

Stalkers will often use many sources of information to gain access to their victim. This list is not comprehensive.

- Co-workers
- Classmates
- Friends
- Relatives
- DMV
- City utilities
- The post office
- Phone companies
- Internet searches
- Human resource departments at workplaces
- Banks
- Credit card companies

Despite the confidentiality that many of the above listed sources claim to provide, through clever lying and manipulation, stalkers are able to access private information.

Police Reports

Filing a police report does not automatically mean that the perpetrator will be arrested. It often takes several police reports in conjunction with other legal action, such as a restraining order, to result in a criminal investigation. Filing a police report can help create a record of the stalking. The Aurora Center can provide you with more information about this option and assist you in filing a report.

No-Contact Statements

Any contact with the stalker could be potentially dangerous. No contact statements are best if used early on in the stalking. For legal support in the future, it is important that the survivor clearly instruct the stalker to stay away and stop all contact. It is important that this is only stated one time. The stalker may consider any additional contact a reason to hope and persist in pursuit. This can be difficult for survivors because the stalker often has intimate knowledge of the survivor and will use it to push buttons and manipulate the victim into responding. A no contact statement is best if it is in writing, but verbal is useful as well. There are several examples of no contact statements written below.

- *I am not interested in having a relationship with you. Do not continue to call, stop by, or have any contact with me whatsoever.*
- *I want you to stop trying to contact me. If I discover that you have followed me, been on my property, or called my work or home, I will call the police and file stalking charges.*
- *I am ending our relationship. Do not make any attempt to try and renew it. I will not change my mind. I do not wish to have any contact with you now or in the future. If you try to contact me, I will take legal action against you.*
- *I will no longer tolerate this harassment. If you try to contact me in any shape or form, I will call the police.*

Some of the above was taken from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office anti-stalking campaign, "love me not." And from Stalking: A Handbook for Victims by Emily Spence-Diehl, Learning Publications, INC. 1999

Common Feelings of Survivors

Common Feelings

- Uncomfortable
- Confused
- Not wanting to be contacted by the perpetrator
- Frightened
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Exhausted
- Powerless
- Intimidated
- Lack of Control

Some things that Survivors of Stalking May Need

- End the Stalking behavior
- Talk to an advocate or counselor
- Obtain Safe Shelter
- Feel Safe Again
- Regain control of their life
- Support from family and friends
- Help making a police report
- Help obtaining a restraining order

Myths and Facts about Stalking

Information taken from the Stalking Resource Center, part of the National Center for Victims of Crime

Myth: Only Celebrities are stalked.

Fact: 1.4 million people are stalked every year in the United States. We may hear more about celebrity stalking cases in the media, but the vast majority of stalking survivors are ordinary citizens.

Myth: If you ignore stalking, it will go away.

Fact: Stalkers seldom “just stop.” In fact, behaviors can turn more and more violent as time goes on. Survivors should seek help from advocates, law enforcement, and the courts to intervene to stop the stalking.

Myth: Stalking is creepy but not dangerous.

Fact: Stalking is creepy *and* dangerous. Three out of four women who were murdered by an intimate partner had been previously stalked by the killer.

Myth: Stalking is annoying but not illegal.

Fact: Stalking is a crime under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government.

Myth: You can't be stalked by someone you are still dating.

Fact: If your current partner tracks your every move or follows you around in a way that causes you fear, that is stalking.

Myth: Modern surveillance technology is too expensive and confusing for most stalkers to use.

Fact: Stalkers can buy surveillance software and hardware for as little as \$30 and can easily track their victim's every move on a computer.

Myth: If you confront the stalker, he'll go away.

Fact: Stalkers can be unreasonable and unpredictable. Confronting or trying to reason with a stalker can be dangerous.

Stalking Statistics

- 80.3% of campus stalking survivor's knew their stalkers.¹
- 13.1% of college women were stalked during a single six to nine month period.¹
- 3 in 10 college women reported emotional or psychological injury as a result of staking episodes.¹
- 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime.²
- The Average duration of stalking is 1.8 years. If the staking involves intimate partners, the average duration of stalking increases to 2.2 years. ²
- 28% of female survivors and 10% of male survivors obtained a protective order. 69% of female survivors and 81% of male survivors had the protection order violated.²

¹ Fisher, Cullen, and Turner. (2000). "The Sexual Victimization of College Women," NIJ/BJS

² Tajaden & Thoennes. (1998). "Stalking in America," NIJ

Stalking Incident Log

Full and accurate documentation of what has been happening to you is the most important part of any investigation. Please fill out this log completely. Save any items, messages or writings you have received from the suspect. Feel free to copy additional pages as necessary.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

First Name	Last Name	Sex	Date of Birth
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Home Address	Phone
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Work Address	Phone
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STALKER INFORMATION

First Name	Last Name	MI
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Sex	Race	Date of Birth	Height	Weight	Eyes	Hair
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Home Address	Phone
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Work Address	Phone
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Vehicle Description (Make, Model, License No., Color)

INCIDENT

Date	Time	Location
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Witness(es) Name, Address, Telephone

Law Enforcement Agency (If involved in the incident)	Report No.
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Description of Incident:
