STALKING: Connecting the Dots[1]

Advocates

DEFINITION: A **course of conduct** directed at a specific person that creates an implicit or explicit threat and **induces fear or concern for personal safety** or the safety of close others.

5.2 million women and 1.4 million men will be stalked each year

Many victims do not use the term "stalking" but they describe stalking behaviors including:

SURVEILLANCE

Following, showing up, spying, using technology to keep tabs on the victim.

LIFE INVASION

Repeated unwanted contact in person or by phone, text, email, card/note, message, third party, and social media.

INTIMIDATION

Implicit and explicit threats, third party threats, forced confrontations, property damage, and threatened suicide.

INTERFERENCE

Disruption of the victim's life professionally and socially as well as physical and sexual attacks.

LISTEN FOR:

Connections between incidents:

- Behavior by the perpetrator, such as showing up unexpectedly at places the victim goes, that suggest that he/she might be following or tracking the victim.
- Indications that the perpetrator is using technology, such as spyware, to stalk the victim.
- Repeated "coincidental" incidents, such as vandalism to the victim's car or property.
- Disregard of consequences (such as arrest, jail, physical harm) by the alleged perpetrator.
- Other crimes that intersect with stalking (protective order violations, partner abuse, property damage).

Victim resistance: Telling the stalker she/he wants no contact; changing phones, residence, workplace, locks, social groups; altering life to prevent contact.

Stalker persistence: Repeated attempts by the perpetrator to contact the victim after notice (verbal, written or in a protective order) or other behaviors indicating she/he wants no contact.

Fear: Heightened fear on the part of the victim for self and others, even though she/he might not have been physically abused or explicitly threatened.

Impact on Life: Disruptions to the victim's personal, professional, social, and/or academic life and relationships.

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Women are more likely to be victims of stalking

Men are more likely to be stalkers regardless of victim gender

ASK THE VICTIM:

About the Course of Conduct

1. Is he/she following you, watching you, showing up unexpectedly, or communicating with you in ways that seem obsessive or make you concerned for your safety?
2. Has he/she repeatedly initiated unwanted contact with you (e.g., repeated phone calls, texts, messages, emails, gifts, etc. or through third parties)?
3. Has he/she threatened you or done other things to intimidate you? What has he/she done that has frightened or alarmed you? (Note: If victims describe behavior that does not superficially appear to be threatening/annoying, ask them why the behavior was frightening to them. Why does the victim perceive the behavior as an implied threat?)
4. Has he/she significantly and directly interfered with your life? Has he/she assaulted you while he/she has been stalking, harassing, or threatening you?

About Threats

5. Have there been any threats to harm you? Threats to harm others you are close to?
6. Have there been any threats of suicide by the perpetrator if you don't do what he wants?

About Fear and Concern for Safety

7. Has his/her actions made you afraid for your safety?
8. Have you changed your life in any way because you are afraid? If so, how? (ex., installed door locks, cameras, lights; moved; changed jobs; altered schedules; don't go out, etc.)
9. What are you most afraid of happening?

KEY QUESTION

What would make you feel safer: in your home? In your workplace/school? During child exchanges/visits? Other situations?

ENCOURAGE THE VICTIM TO:

See it/acknowledge it as stalking (complete the Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile at www.CoerciveControl.org)	Think about the specific threats and vulnerabilities she/he has and safety plan around that.	Preserve evidence and document stalking behaviors (see websites below for documentation logs and tips for documentation)	Plan ahead for safety and think about ways to make it as difficult as possible for the perpetrator to stalker her/him.	Seek support through trusted friends and family, victim advocates through local shelters and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (www.thehotline.org), police.

Check out: the **Stalking Resource Center** at www.victimsofcrime.org/src and **OutrageUs** at www.outrageus.org.