A Fact Sheet About Stalking

Stalking is the repeated following, watching, and / or harassing of another person in a way that would cause a reasonable person to be fearful.

The stalker is often trying to force a relationship with someone who is unwilling. The stalker may go to great lengths in order to know what the person they are stalking is doing at all times. Stalking behaviors can cause the victim emotional distress or fear for her or his personal safety or the safety of her or his family.

Stalking, like sexual violence, is often committed by someone the victim knows. Stalkers may be current or former intimate partners and stalking behavior is often linked with domestic violence. However, stalkers may also be someone the victim went on just a few dates with, someone the victim works with or someone the victim has only met briefly.

Stalkers may intimidate a person in a number of ways such as:

- Following the victim.
- Watching the victim’s home or place of employment.
- Writing letters or sending unwanted gifts to the victim or their family.
- Spreading rumors.
- Making repeated and unwanted phone calls, texts, emails, or contacts through social networking websites.
- Threatening to commit physical or sexual violence.
- Threatening to harm themselves as a way to intimidate the person they’re stalking.
- Using GPS, cell phone tracking and other technology to constantly track the victim’s location.

Stalking is against the law in every state including Vermont.

Stalking can affect a victim’s life dramatically by interfering with work, home, and social situations as well as affecting the lives of friends and family. Stalking can also get worse over time and can lead to violence. If you or someone you know is being stalked, please contact the Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800–228-7395 or the Sexual Violence hotline at 1-800-489-7273 or contact the VT Network to find a domestic/sexual violence program near you.
About Abuse Protection Orders

A protection order, sometimes called a restraining order, is a court order intended to protect a person from abuse or harm. In the case of stalking, a protection order can demand that the stalker cease or limit contact with the victim, including stopping communications and staying away from the victim’s home, workplace, or anyplace the person happens to be.

The Vermont legal system is required by federal law to honor most protection orders issued by other states. For more information about getting a protection order, contact the VT Network to find a domestic/sexual violence program in your community.

Some Statistics:

National

- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point during their lifetime in which they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.

- The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. 66% of female victims and 41% of male victims of stalking are stalked by a current or former intimate partner.

- 89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted had also been stalked in the 12 months before their murder.
  (Judith McFarlane et al., “Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide,” Homicide Studies, 3, no. 4. 1999.)

- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.

- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets and their behaviors escalate quickly.

- The prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression is much higher among stalking victims that the general population, especially if the stalking involves being followed or having one’s property destroyed.