



STALKING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT STALKING ?

- Stalking is defined as: **A pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.** However, it is crucial to remember that a perpetrator can threaten someone without using threatening words and can also use non-criminal acts to stalk. Some examples may include: sending an email, giving gifts, texting, or surprise visits.
- **3.4 million people** are stalked annually, with persons aged 18-24 experiencing the highest rates of stalking victimization. *(Stalking Victimization in the U.S., BJS 2009)*
- Females are nearly **3 times** more likely to experience stalking than males. *(EVAW Project)*
- **76%** of femicide cases involved at least one episode of stalking within 12 months prior to the murder. *(Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide, McFarlane et al. 1999)*

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN STALKING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT?

- Perpetrators of sexual violence often “groom” victims through voyeurism, surveillance, and information gathering.
- In a 2007 survey amongst college women, three-fourths of respondents who experienced stalking-related behaviors experienced other forms of victimization. 11% of survey respondents reported stalking, physical assault, and rape/sexual assault. *(Stalking acknowledgment and reporting among college women experiencing intrusive behaviors)*
- **31%** of women stalked by their intimate partner were also sexually assaulted by that partner. *(National Violence Against Women Survey, 1998)*

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES SPECIFIC TO STALKING VICTIMS?

- According to the EVAW Project, 85-90% of stalkers use some form of technology to stalk their victims. Rapid technological advances with devices like cameras, listening tools, computers, spyware, assistive technologies, and global positioning systems (GPS) make it easier for perpetrators to stalk victims. Because the technologies are so advanced, the victim may not be able to identify all of the tools being used to stalk. Stalking victims may feel that they are “going crazy” or that no one will believe them. They may need special assistance from law enforcement to perform a “sweep” of the victim’s house, computer, car, phone, etc. to determine what tools the stalker is using. Because many perpetrators stalk their victims in the work place, stalking victims often report lost time from work and lost wages.

WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH STALKING VICTIMS?

The framework for working with stalking victims includes four components: **Safety, Advocacy, Documentation** and **Support**. An advocate can work with a stalking victim to help determine threat assessment and safety planning. Allow victims to tell their stories and provide validation that anger, fear, frustration, and guilt can be normal reactions to traumatic events. Victims can document the stalking with a “Stalking Incident Log.” The National Stalking Resource Center (<http://ncvc.org/src/>) is an excellent referral for questions and technical assistance.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, call us toll free at 1-877-37-CCASA or visit our website at www.ccasa.org to find information on your local Rape Crisis Center.

