

Subject: January is Stalking Awareness Month

Date sent: 1/17/2020

Sent with approval from Jamee Harrington, Chief Human Resources Officer

Dear Ospreys,

This month is the [17th annual National Stalking Awareness Month](#). The month of January is dedicated to raising awareness of stalking and understanding what we can do to recognize and combat this serious issue. The Harassment & Discrimination Response Team compiled helpful information and resources on what this month is all about.

What is Stalking?

While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, we can generally understand stalking as a form of harassment where a pattern of behaviors are directed at a specific person that causes them to feel scared and unsafe. [Stalking behaviors](#) can include unwanted contact (repeated calls, texts, or emails), physically following someone, sending unwanted gifts or letters, tracking someone via GPS, looking up personal information about someone online, threatening to post personal/intimate details about someone online, or waiting for someone outside of their home, work, or school.

The [Oregon Department of Justice](#) also notes: “Stalking behaviors are related to harassment and intimidation... **Stalking can happen between strangers, but most people have dated or been involved with their stalker.** Stalking can begin during a relationship or after a relationship has ended. Stalking behaviors are unpredictable and can lead to violence.”

While stalking might seem like a separate issue from sexual violence, the two can overlap. Someone who stalks oftentimes [feels possessive of the person they're stalking](#), which can lead to manipulation and a feeling of entitlement to “have” that person. The motivation to stalk comes from wanting to make the victim feel vulnerable, much like people who commit sexual violence. Some stalking behaviors are explicit forms of sexual violence, such as hacking into a victim’s phone to retrieve intimate photos, using those photos to blackmail the victim, or lurking outside of a victim’s home to watch them undress.

Impact of Stalking

Stalking can have serious implications on victims’ mental health. Victims of stalking are [more likely to develop depression, sleeping problems, and lower levels of mental and emotional well-being](#) than those who are not victims of stalking. Many victims’ daily lives are also negatively

affected by being stalked. [Good Therapy](#) found that one in five people change some element of their daily routine, one in six people change their phone number, one in seven people move out of fear after being stalked, and one in eight employed victims are impacted at their jobs or lose time at work.

Why It's Important

Stalking can happen to anyone, at any time. The internet makes people more accessible to stalking through social media, phone information, and channels of contact. In the United States alone, [1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men](#) in the U.S. were victims of stalking at some point in their lives during which they felt fearful or believed someone close to them would be harmed or killed.

With pop culture phenomena like Netflix's [You](#), people are becoming more open to talking about the very real, very serious issue of stalking in real life. The main character of the show, Joe, demonstrates classic examples of stalking by hacking into his victims' phones, following them home or out in public, and sneaking into people's homes and taking personal items like underwear (just to name a few). There are plenty of [other warning signs](#) of stalking than those demonstrated on the show, but Netflix's *You* works to create a dialogue about stalking among its audience and make the problem more visible and recognizable in real life.

What You Can Do

While stalking is a serious issue that affects many people everywhere, it's important to remember that no problem is too big to tackle. There is always something that can be done about it, no matter how small the act may seem. Raising awareness and educating others about the topic is an easy place to start, and it's something that everyone can do to help combat stalking.

Learn More

[Stalking Resource Center](#)

[Stalking: Know It. Name It. Stop It.](#)

[CDC Stalking Prevention](#)

[RCC's Advocacy and Resources Page](#)

[A Toolkit for Survivors](#)

Best,
Amy

[Amy Peterson](#)

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