

What is Stalking?

Stalking is a series of actions or pattern of behavior directed at a person that makes that person feel afraid or in danger for their safety. Stalking does not have to involve physical contact but can increase to such behavior.

Stalkers (people who engage in stalking behaviors) can be someone known to the person like a current or former intimate partner, friend, family member, or an acquaintance like a co-worker. Stalkers can also be strangers.

Stalking behaviors can include, but are not limited to:

- Following you, showing up wherever you are, or waiting for you.
- Sending or leaving unwanted gifts or notes for you.
- Unwanted contact through repeated calls or hang-ups, texts, e-mails, or social media messages.
- Damaging your home, car, or other property.
- Using technology like spyware to monitor your phone or computer use.
- Using technology like hidden cameras or GPS to track where you go.
- Posting, sharing, or threatening to post or share information about you.
- Driving by or hanging out near your home, school, or work.
- Threats to hurt you, your family, friends, or pets.
- Using other people to communicate with you, like family or friends.
- Other actions that control, track, or frighten you.

How to Support Someone Who Is Being Stalked:

Stalkers can be dangerous and unpredictable. It is important to remember that victims of stalking have no control over the stalker's behavior and are not responsible for what they do. Many victims fear the stalker and may experience feelings of stress, worry, or confusion.

Below are some things you can do to support a victim of stalking:

- Listen and be supportive.
- Do not blame the victim for the crime or for the stalker's behavior.
- Remember that every situation is different. Allow the victim to make their own choices about how to handle the situation.
- Provide resources to the victim, such as the phone number to the Kansas Crisis Hotline or the local sexual and domestic violence service provider (see back panel).
- Take steps to increase your own safety, if needed.

If You Are Being Stalked:

Below are some safety tips to consider if you are being stalked.

Seek Support

- Contact your local sexual and domestic violence service provider for free, confidential help (see *Advocate Response*).
 - ◆ Advocates can help get you connected to resources and can help you create a plan for your safety.
 - ◆ They can also help you with legal resources, such as getting a protection from stalking order, getting you in contact with an attorney, or helping you make a police report.
- Report the stalking to the police if it is safe for you to do so.
 - ◆ In Kansas, stalking is a crime (see K.S.A. 21-5427).
 - ◆ Reporting the stalking to the police will help develop an "official" record and it can help show a pattern of behavior.

- ◆ Even if the police do not arrest the stalker, you can ask them to make a written report and ask for the report number for your records.
- ◆ Remember, anything you share with the police can be used as evidence and may be shared with the prosecutor or the stalker.

Safety Planning

Trust your feelings and take threats seriously. If you feel unsafe, seek support. Do not downplay the danger.

If you believe you may be in danger, develop a safety plan:

- Think about changing your routine.
- Keep important phone numbers and contact information in a safe place.
- Keep important documents (such as driver's licenses, birth certificates, immigration documents) in a safe place.
- Have a trusted friend or relative go places with you.
- Make a plan for what you will do if the stalker shows up at your home, work, school, or somewhere else.
- If you have a protection order, keep a copy with you at all times.

Save Evidence When Possible

- Saving evidence and documenting the stalking behaviors are important, especially if you want to use this information for protection order applications, divorce and custody issues, or criminal court. It can also help you remember what all has happened if you need it later to make a police report or to testify in court.
- Keep evidence of the following:
 - ◆ Stalking Incident Log (see back)
 - ◆ Emails, text messages, social media, phone calls, voicemails, or other contacts

STALKING FACTS:

- An estimated 6 – 7.5 million people are stalked each year in the United States.
- Nearly 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime.
- About half of all stalking victims were stalked before the age of 25.
- The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know.
- Almost half of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact per week.



- 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.
- 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization and more than half lose 5 days of work or more.

[See Smith, S.G., et al., (2018). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. See also Catalano, S., et al., (2009). U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Selected Findings: Female Victims of Violence*. See also Baum, K., et al., (2009). U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Special Report: National Crime Victimization Survey Stalking Victimization in the United States*.]

- ◆ Letters or notes
- ◆ Photographs of anything the stalker has damaged or injuries caused by the stalker
- ◆ Threats to hurt you, your family, friends, or pets
- ◆ Photocopies of protection orders, police reports, or other important documents
- ◆ Keep the evidence in a safe place and consider telling someone you trust where you keep the information.

Advocate Response

Kansas sexual and domestic violence services can provide the support, safety, and help victims and survivors often need. These services are offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services include crisis hotlines, crisis intervention, personal advocacy, medical advocacy, court advocacy, law enforcement advocacy, emergency accommodations, safe shelter, supportive counseling, support groups, and child and youth advocacy.

All of these services are free and confidential. Any information shared is kept private and cannot be shared with anyone outside the organization, unless:

- In limited circumstances, the organization is required by law to disclose the information.
- The victim or survivor signs an informed, written, time-limited release allowing them to disclose the information.

Visit www.kcsdv.org/find-help for the list of Kansas sexual and domestic violence service providers and contact information.

Stalking Incident Log

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Description of the event:

Location of the event:

Witnesses: (Names, addresses, and phone numbers of other people who saw or heard what happened)

Police Called (Report #): _____
 Officer Name (Badge #): _____

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Description of the event:

Location of the event:

Witnesses:

Police Called (Report #): _____
 Officer Name (Badge #): _____

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Description of the event:

Location of the event:

Witnesses:

Police Called (Report #): _____
 Officer Name (Badge #): _____

Visit the *Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC)* website at www.stalkingawareness.org to download the log and for other resources about stalking.

For 24/7 confidential support, contact the following:

Kansas Crisis Hotline
 1-888-END-ABUSE (1-888-363-2287)

Kansas Sexual and Domestic Violence Services Nearest You
 Visit www.kcsdv.org/find-help for the list of service providers in Kansas and contact information

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INFORMATION ABOUT STALKING



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