STALKING FACT SHEET

WHAT IS STALKING?
While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is: a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

STALKING VICTIMIZATION
- An estimated 6-7.5 million people are stalked in a one year period in the United States.
- Nearly 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime.
- Using a less conservative definition of stalking, which considers any amount of fear (i.e., a little fearful, somewhat fearful, or very fearful), 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men reported being a victim of stalking in their lifetime.
- About half of all victims of stalking indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25.
- Stalkers use many tactics including:
  - Approaching the victim or showing up in places when the victim didn’t want them to be there; making unwanted telephone calls; leaving the victim unwanted messages (text or voice); watching or following the victim from a distance, or spying on the victim with a listening device, camera, or GPS.
  - Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases.
  - Almost 1/3 of stalkers have stalked before.
  - The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Many victims are stalked by a current or former intimate partner, or by an acquaintance.
  - People aged 18-24 have the highest rate of stalking victimization.

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS
- 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next.
- 29% of stalking victims fear the stalking will never stop.
- 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.
- 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.
- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.

STALKING OFFENDERS
- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.
- Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases.
- Almost 1/3 of stalkers have stalked before.
- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets, and their behaviors escalate quickly.

STALKING LAWS
- Stalking is a crime under the laws of 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and the Federal government.
- Less than 1/3 of states classify stalking as a felony upon first offense.
- More than 1/2 of states classify stalking as a felony upon second or subsequent offense or when the crime involves aggravating factors.
- Aggravating factors may include: possession of a deadly weapon, violation of a court order or condition of probation/parole, victim under 16 years, or same victim as prior occasions.


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