



## **Facts about Domestic Violence and Stalking**

### **What is stalking?**

Stalking is defined by law by the federal government. When an abuser acts in such a way as to intentionally create a fear of harm or death for the victim that is stalking. This could take the form of a fear of harm, injury or death for themselves, a relative, or any third party. Abusers who use stalking to terrorize and threaten create substantial emotional distress for their victims, family members and third parties.

### **Did You Know?**

- A 2011 survey found 5.1 million women and 2.4 million men had been stalked the previous year.
- 1 in every 6 U.S. women and 1 out of every 19 U.S. men have been stalked in their lifetime.
- Nearly 3 out of 4 victims of stalking know their stalkers in some capacity. The most common relationship between the victim and perpetrator is a current or former intimate partner.
- People aged 18-24 have the highest rate of stalking victimization.
- Although stalking is a crime in all 50 states, less than 1/3 of states classify stalking as a felony if it is a first offense, leaving stalking victims without protections afforded to victims of other violent crimes.

### **Why It Matters:**

Stalking is often an indicator of other forms of violence. 81% of women who were stalked by a current or former husband or cohabitating partner were also physically assaulted by that partner; 31% of women were sexually assaulted. Abusers use stalking to intimidate and control their victims.

### **Stalking and Femicide:**

- 76% of women murdered by an intimate partner were stalked first, 85% of women who survived murder attempts were stalked.
- 89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted before their murder were also stalked in the last year prior to their murder.
- 54% of femicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their stalkers.

### **Impact on Victims**

- 1 in 7 stalking victims has been forced to move as a result of their victimization.
- 1 in 8 stalking victims has reported losing work because of the stalking. More than half of these victims reported losing 5 or more work days.
- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.
- 86% of victims surveyed reported their personalities has changed as a result of being stalked.
- 37% victims of stalking fulfill all the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; an additional 18% fulfilled all but one diagnostic criteria.
- 1 in 4 stalking victims contemplate suicide.

### **How to Help:**

- Encourage your legislators to tighten stalking statutes so that stalking is both easier to prosecute and classified as a more serious crime.
- Ask your legislators to update the federal definition of domestic violence to include stalking and dating violence. This will prohibit stalkers from having access to firearms.
- Ask your congressmen to support legislation providing additional funding for local program initiatives that provide counseling and other services to victims of stalking and domestic violence, such as programs established by the Violence Against Women Act.
- Support legislation encouraging domestic violence education for middle and high school students. An appropriate curriculum should include information about healthy relationships, domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and available resources.
- Encourage local schools and youth programs to train teachers, school counselors, and athletic coaches to recognize children and teens who are in violent situations. Provide educators with resources and prepare them to intervene in domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking situations.
- Support programs in your community aimed at increasing domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking education, prevention, and intervention.