

Healing from Stalking

The background is a rich, textured collage of colors including red, green, yellow, and purple. It features stylized, layered foliage such as ferns and large, rounded leaves. In the center, a shield-shaped emblem is filled with a warm orange and red gradient. Inside the shield is a large, detailed eye with long, dark eyelashes and a dotted border. Above the shield, a cluster of sharp, green, pointed leaves resembles a succulent or a crown. The overall style is artistic and expressive, with a focus on natural and symbolic elements.

Where there is breath, there is life.
Where there is life, there is hope.



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Introduction

None of us ever deserve to be harmed. The responsibility for stalking is with the person who chose to instill fear and anxiety by stalking someone else.

Stalking is a traumatic experience that interrupts our lives and affects our relationships with other people, the wellness of every aspect of our being (emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical), and our work and home life. When someone stalks us, it is normal to be confused about what to do and to feel like life is out of control. Surviving stalking does not make us any less worthy, strong, or powerful, even if things feel overwhelming. It is common to question whether we could have done something different that would have prevented a person from stalking us, but we do not need to question our actions. **If you have been stalked by someone, it is not your fault and healing is possible.**

If you are unsure what to do or need support, this booklet can help you understand what stalking is, why you may be feeling the way you are, and can be a resource to help you feel more in control. It is important to realize that everyone responds differently to harm and trauma and that recovery is often a confusing and slow process. Be patient with yourself. Remember that healing takes time and is not linear.

Remember to breathe – where there is breath, there is life – where there is life there is hope.

Where There Is Breath, There Is Life

Our minds, bodies, and spirits are connected; each influences the other. Our whole being can be harmed when we experience violence and abuse in our relationships, including when we experience stalking. When one or more pieces of ourselves are harmed, we feel it everywhere else. If we can begin healing and restoring one part of ourselves, all parts of us can benefit.

Whenever we are harmed, focusing on our breathing can help parts of our healing process.

Take a breath. When we focus on our breath, we can think more clearly, have more control of our actions or reactions, and restore our energy.

Low and s-l-o-w. The stronger and most restorative breath comes from breathing low in our bodies, from below our belly buttons, rather than high in our chests. Our inhales should fill our bellies and our exhales should be long and s-l-o-w.

Movement + breath. We breathe deeper when we stop, relax our shoulders and neck, and sigh. Movement with breathing is important for anyone who has experienced trauma. Raise your arms on the inhale and lower your arms on the exhale. Inhaling naturally and exhaling low and s-l-o-w will help release tension we hold in our bodies and help us feel present in the moment.

Adapted from Norma Wong from Move to End Violence



Where There Is Life, There Is Hope

Hope is the life force that keeps us going. Hope can help us recover more easily from the pain we feel when we experience violence and abuse.

When we experience violence and abuse, like stalking, we can sometimes believe that our experience is normal. We can begin to feel that we don't have any control over our options because of the behaviors of the people harming us.

Regaining or maintaining control over our own thoughts, decisions, and actions can help us rebuild our sense of power and freedom from the domination and violence.

When we slow down, we begin to undo the harm or traumatic impact of the violence. Listening, thinking, speaking, eating, and moving slower will help us make one decision at a time. Realizing we have options and choices will help us begin the healing we deserve.

Practice Daily Self Care

The most important step we can take is to practice daily self care.

Kindness – Be compassionate with ourselves.

Rest – Try to sleep 6 to 8 hours each night.

Breathe – Practice breathing deeply, low and s-l-o-w.

Water – Drink water and stay hydrated throughout the day.

Support – If we are able, spend time with friends and family who accept and support us, and make us happy.

Spaciousness – Take five minutes a day to do something restorative for ourselves (drink a cup of tea, take a quiet moment to think of something positive, or take a short walk).

What is Stalking?

Stalking is a pattern of behaviors directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Stalking behaviors may include:

- Repeated phone calls, texts, or contacts through social media;
- Showing up wherever we go;
- Following us when we travel from one location to the next,
- Presenting us with unwanted gifts;
- Damaging our home, car, or property or our loved ones and acquaintances;
- Monitoring our phone calls or computer use;
- Other actions that control, track or frighten us.

Most of us experiencing stalking are stalked by someone we know. The majority of us are stalked by a current or former intimate partner (a significant other or spouse).

Profile of a Person Who Chooses to Engage in Stalking Behaviors

While every case is different, people who stalk can be very dangerous. Most people who stalk use multiple tactics and can escalate their behavior(s) at any time.

Unfortunately, there is no single psychological or behavioral profile that predicts what people who stalk will or will not do. Stalking behaviors can escalate from more indirect ways of making contact (like phone calls or texts) to more direct contact (like delivering gifts or showing up where we are).

- Two-thirds of people who stalk do so at least once per week; many people who stalk do it daily.
- 78% of people who stalk use more than one way of interacting with us.
- Weapons are used to harm or threaten us in 1 out of 5 stalking instances.
- Almost one-third of people who stalk have chosen to engage in stalking behaviors before.
- Intimate partners who engage in stalking behaviors escalate quickly.

How do we know if we are being stalked?

Oftentimes, we are unsure whether what we are experiencing is stalking. The reason for that is because stalking behaviors can look minor when looking at one instance, or the type of behavior may seem insignificant, such as a text message. However, we must look at the whole picture in how we experience the behaviors. We must trust ourselves and believe our inner alarm when something just doesn't feel right or safe. To help determine whether what you are experiencing is stalking you can ask yourself if you are

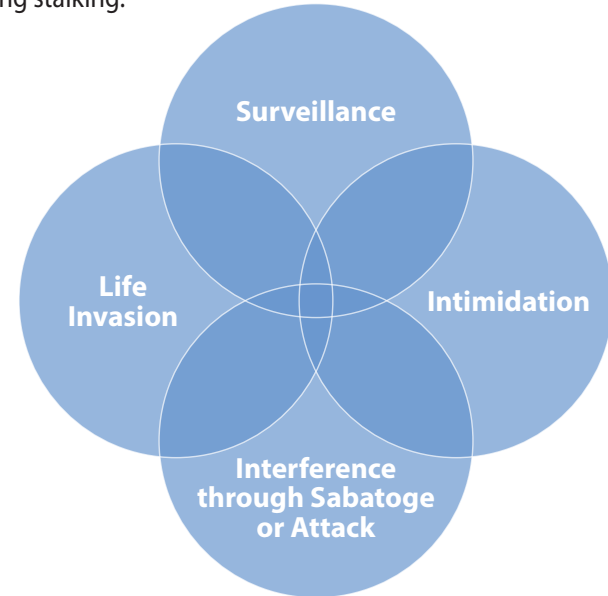
- Always looking over your shoulder or scanning your surroundings?
- Confused about how someone always seems to know where you are?
- Unsure when that person will show up again?
- Nervous about checking your e-mail or phone because it might be them again?
- Scared of what that person might do next?


If so, you may be experiencing stalking.

Stalking often looks like someone physically following us, or someone consistently trying to communicate with us when we have told them to stop, or when we have not reciprocated an interest to communicate with them. People who stalk can exhibit a wide range of behaviors.

Surveillance, Life Invasion, Interference and Intimidation

A helpful way to understand stalking is to consider all of the SLII (Surveillance, Life Invasion, Interference, Intimidation) strategies that the person may engage in. If you are experiencing any of the behaviors listed below, you likely are experiencing stalking:





Surveillance: Surveillance is the most common strategy. When we experience surveillance by another, we and the people around us are more likely to recognize the behavior as stalking. We may experience surveillance as severe violence and fear. Examples of surveillance include:


- Following us;
- Watching us;
- Waiting for us;
- Showing up in places unexpectedly;
- Using tracking software;
- Gathering information about us; or
- Proxy stalking (using a third party to keep track of us).

Life Invasion: The person who is engaging in stalking enters into the private aspects of our lives – either directly or indirectly. Our routines, relationships, and lifestyle are interrupted by the behaviors or signs of the person who is stalking us. Examples of life invasion include:

- Unwanted contacts at work, public places and home;
- Phone calls, text messages, social media contacts;
- Coming onto our property or into our workplace;
- Public humiliation; or
- Harassing our family and friends.

Intimidation: A person who is stalking instills fear into us so that we are scared for the safety or well-being of ourselves or others. Examples of intimidation include:

- Threats,
- Property damage or vandalism,
- Forced confrontations,
- Threats to harm self or others; or
- Actual harming of self or others.



Interference through Sabotage or Attack: Our lives change as we are impacted by the stalking or we adapt to cope with the stalking behaviors. A person who is stalking causes direct consequences to our daily lives and well-being. Examples include:

- Financial and work sabotage;
- Ruining our professional or personal reputation;
- Custody interference;
- Preventing us from leaving a place;
- Road rage;
- Attacking our friends and family; or
- Physical/sexual attack.

Responses to Experiencing Stalking

The emotions and reactions we may have in response to experiencing stalking will likely be different from one another. However, there may be some common experiences, such as

- Feeling fear for what the person stalking will do;
- Feeling hopeless, powerless, depressed, angry, or nervous;
- Feeling confused, frustrated, or isolated because other people don't understand why you are afraid;
- Having flashbacks, disturbing thoughts, feelings, or memories;
- Feeling vulnerable, unsafe, anxious, and not know who you can trust;
- Feeling stressed, including having trouble concentrating, sleeping, or remembering things;
- Feeling nervous, irritable, impatient, or “on edge”; or
- Feeling that you have lost control of your life;

All of these feelings are absolutely normal, and understandable. We cannot judge ourselves for feeling these things. We can only do our best in finding the support right for us and doing what we can to remain connected with ourselves and the supportive people in our lives.



What We Can Do When We Are Being Stalked

The following options may be useful to us in trying to enhance our safety when someone is stalking us. Please consider which suggestions may work best for your unique circumstances.

Trust your instincts. You are the expert on your life.

- Work with a local shelter or victim service program to develop a safety plan.
- Keep a documentation log of every stalking incident including the date, time, what happened, and the names and phone numbers of any witnesses or people you reported it to.
- Be aware that your cell phone and computer may be monitored by the person who is stalking you.
- Change your normal daily routine.
- Save all text messages, voicemails, social media posts or contacts and emails from the person who is stalking you.
- Tell your family, friends, and neighbors that you are being stalked.

- Consider filing for a protection order. A community or tribal domestic and sexual violence advocate or victim service provider can help you figure out if you are eligible for one.
- Notify police, campus authorities, or your workplace security if it is safe for you to do so.
- Do not communicate with the person who is stalking you. Any type of contact may reinforce their behavior. Stopping communication is helpful because it lets the person stalking you know you do not want any contact and that their behavior is unwanted. Some of us may have to continue to communicate with the person who is doing the stalking because we share custody of children or have other legal matters going on. Others of us communicate with the person who is stalking us because we feel like it allows us to know how the person who is stalking us is feeling or thinking. You know what is best for you, but if it is possible, do not communicate with the person who is stalking you.

The Use of Technology to Stalk

Many people who are engaging in stalking behaviors use technology to stalk us. People who are stalking may monitor our cell phone, send text messages, access voicemails, monitor computer usage, use a GPS device to track our location, make contact through social media, monitor social media accounts or create fake ones in our names, or use other forms of technology to pursue us.

Technology changes constantly, and anyone who is being stalked should use caution and become familiar with the safety features available with the technology that we use.

Consider visiting the National Network to End Domestic Violence Tech Safety page at www.techsafetyapp.org for more information on technology safety.

If You Have a Family Member or Friend Who is Being Stalked

Some of us may not be experiencing stalking firsthand, but we may know someone who is. We can support people we know who are living through the fear and trauma of being stalked by doing the following:

- Listen. If someone says they are being stalked, believe them.
- Do not blame them for the behaviors of the person stalking them.
- Ask how they would like you to support them.
- Do not respond to the person who is stalking in any way.
- Advise them to document everything. You can also document any incidences of stalking that you witness.
- Do not give any information out about them, no matter what the person who is stalking them might say.
- Offer to accompany them places so they do not have to be alone.
- Refer them to a community or tribal domestic and sexual violence organization or victim service program for support.

Remember, every situation is different. Allow and empower the person being stalked to make choices about how to handle it.

Find someone you can talk to about the situation. Take steps to ensure your own safety.

Idaho Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs Help-line Numbers

Advocates Against Family Violence – Caldwell (208) 459-4779
Advocates for Survivors of Domestic Violence – Hailey (208) 788-6070
Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse – Moscow (208) 883-4357
Bingham Crisis Center – Blackfoot (208) 681-8712/ Spanish (208) 681-8715
Boundary County Youth Crisis and DV Hotline – Bonners Ferry (208) 267-5211
Coeur d’Alene Tribal STOP Violence Program – Plummer (208) 686-0601
Crossroads Harbor Domestic Violence Shelter (previously known as Mini Cassia Shelter for Women & Children) – Rupert (208) 436-0987
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center – Idaho Falls (208) 235-2412
Elmore County Domestic Violence Council – Mountain Home (208) 587-3300
Family Crisis Center – Rexburg (208) 356-0065
Family Safety Network – Driggs (208) 354-7233
Family Services Alliance of SE Idaho – Pocatello (208) 251-4357
Lemhi County Crisis Intervention – Mahoney House – Salmon (208) 940-0600

Oneida Crisis Center – Malad (208) 766-3119
Priest River Ministries – Priest River (208) 290-6529
ROSE Advocates – Weiser (208) 414-0740
Safe Passage Violence Prevention Center – Coeur d’Alene (208) 664-9303
Shoshone County Women’s Resource Center – Wallace (208) 556-0500
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Victims of Crime Assistance Program – Fort Hall (208) 339-0438
Shoshone Paiute Tribes STOP Domestic Violence Program – Owyhee, NV (775) 757-2013
‘Úuyit Kímti Program (New Beginnings) (formally known as the Nez Perce Tribe Women’s Outreach Program) – Lapwai (208) 621-4778
Voices Against Violence – Twin Falls (208) 733-0100
Women’s & Children’s Alliance – Boise (208) 343-7025
YWCA of Lewiston-Clarkston – Lewiston (208) 746-9655



Stalking Resources

Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center

www.stalkingawareness.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

RAINN (Rape Abuse Incest National Network Hotline)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)



Linen Building, 1402 W Grove St., Boise, ID 83702 • 1-888-293-6118 • www.engagingvoices.org

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