

Federal Agency Toolkit: Stalking Response and Prevention

Dear Federal Partners:

The National Resource Center: Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence (Workplaces Respond) is pleased to share with you this **Federal Agency Toolkit: Stalking Response and Prevention**. Using the Four Rs of Trauma Responsiveness, this toolkit will help federal agency employees *realize* the prevalence of stalking, *recognize* stalking behaviors, *respond* to people experiencing stalking with compassion and resources, and *resist (re)traumatization* through educating oneself and others. This toolkit can be used year-round to supplement awareness, prevention, and response policies, protocols, and practices within your agency.

This toolkit includes resources that will help build capacity for federal employees and agencies to identify stalking behaviors and impacts, provide resources to coworkers and supervisees who are experiencing stalking, and develop prevention materials for intra-agency education and training. Materials include:

- Information on raising awareness;
- An infographic with information about stalking and the workplace;
- Tools to identify and respond to stalking behaviors;
- Links to resources, tips, model policies and trainings, and videos; and,
- Suggestions for creating trauma-informed workplaces.

Workplaces Respond receives federal funding through the Violence Against Women Act and Office on Violence Against Women to provide free technical assistance for federal agencies. Technical assistance can support the development and implementation of workplace responses to assist survivors of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sexual harassment. Please [use this link](#) to submit requests for assistance.

With gratitude,
Workplaces Respond
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for more information: workplacesrespond.org/federal

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federal agencies can seek to actively resist (re)traumatization by incorporating trauma-informed practices into their workplace policies, protocols, and programs

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Realize: Raising Awareness

National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM)

Each year, January marks National Stalking Awareness Month. The first NSAM in January 2004 was in response to the stalking and murder of Peggy Klinke by her ex-boyfriend. Peggy's sister, Debbie Riddle, wanted to transform the tragedy of her sister's death to push for greater knowledge of stalking and increased responses to help save the lives of people experiencing stalking.

The National Center for Victims of Crime partnered with Lifetime Television and Representative Heather Wilson (R-NM) to share Peggy's story during a Congressional briefing. The briefing was focused on strengthening the response from law enforcement for people experiencing stalking. Rep. Wilson introduced a Congressional Resolution that same day to support a National Stalking Awareness Month.

Six months later, the first observance of NSAM was launched in January 2004. However, it wasn't until 2011 that the first Presidential Proclamation of NSAM was issued by President Obama.

In 2017, the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center (SPARC), a project of AEquitas, was established through a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. SPARC aims to increase awareness, provide education and training, and further the coordination between victim/survivor advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors to ensure more effective interventions as well as keep survivors and communities safe.¹

National Stalking Awareness Month is an opportunity to renew and strengthen our commitment to address stalking and support employees who may be experiencing stalking or are impacted by stalking year-round.

Day of Action

In 2024, SPARC introduced a Day of Action to NSAM that will occur each year on January 18. The day marks the date Peggy Klinke was murdered by a stalker — January 18, 2003. The purpose is not only to raise awareness, but to show support for survivors and honor the lives of victims.

Realize: Raising Awareness

Raising Awareness Beyond NSAM

Awareness, prevention, and response are all necessary components to addressing gender-based violence and harassment within your agencies.

- **Awareness** teaches people that a problem exists, the scope of that problem, and what the problem looks like in everyday life.
 - *Examples of awareness strategies* are hanging a poster with prevalence data and available resources, and social media campaigns sharing personal stories.
- **Primary prevention** aims to address the root causes of violence, decrease risk factors, and increase protective factors at individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. Primary prevention stops violence before it starts.
 - *Examples of primary prevention* include multiple training opportunities in a variety of formats that address the root causes of violence; policies and programs focused on eliminating barriers to access safer employment, housing, and education; programs that highlight pro-social behaviors and culture change; and opportunities for people to explore how power works within their organizations and their relationships.
- **Response** involves the support systems and structures put in place in the event that a survivor needs assistance and support. Response ensures that we are mitigating immediate harms and minimizing long-term impacts. An effective response is also referred to as secondary and/or tertiary prevention.
 - *Examples of response* include comprehensive policies that provide clear expectations and pathways for support and workplace accommodations; policies and practices that address people causing harm; onboarding training that provides universal education about the policies and various resources available; and partnering with local victim service agencies to provide confidential supportive services outside of available employer resources.

Realize: Prevalence

What is Stalking?

Legal definitions of stalking vary across different jurisdictions, however, the Violence Against Women Act defines stalking as “engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.”²

Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact that causes fear or concern for one’s safety or the safety of someone close to the target. Stalking can involve repeated visual or physical proximity; non-consensual communication via email, text, call, etc.; and/or verbal, written, or implied threats that would cause a reasonable person fear. Stalking can, and often does, take place in person, through a third party (proxy stalking), and/or via the internet/technology (technology-facilitated stalking).

Key points to remember:

1. Stalking is a crime that federal agencies should address. For further information, please see the Office of Personnel Management’s [Guidance for Agency-Specific Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Policies](#);
2. Stalking can impact the safety of all employees and others present in the workplace, employee performance (of the person being stalked and the person causing harm), and overall morale and productivity within an agency; and
3. Stalking can be a singularly or co-occurring crime connected to other forms of gender-based violence and harassment.

Technology-Facilitated Stalking³

Federal agencies should also ensure they are aware of technology-facilitated stalking, often referred to as cyberstalking. Technology-facilitated stalking involves the misuse of tech as well as the use of tech specifically designed for stalking.

Survivors of tech-facilitated stalking often report higher fear than survivors experiencing in-person stalking. Often, survivors will experience both in-person and tech-facilitated stalking.

Common Tactics



Unwanted calls, voicemails, text messages, emails, and messages via social media

Using social media to monitor activities



Posting or threatening to post or otherwise share personal and/or private information or images

Using apps or electronic devices to track location



Realize: Prevalence



1 in 3 women and **1 in 6** men reported experiencing stalking at some point in their lifetime.⁴



~1 in 6 (16%) of transgender people surveyed reported experiencing stalking by an intimate partner.⁵

67%

of survivors know the person stalking them⁶

9.4%

of survivors know the person stalking them as a professional acquaintance⁷

1 in 7

stalking victims are forced to relocate⁸

1 in 8

lost time from work due to safety concerns and/or to deal with the stalking⁹

3 in 10

accrued out-of-pocket costs¹⁰

80%

of stalking victims report being stalked through technology. Most commonly, these victims receive unwanted phone calls, voicemails, and text messages (66%)¹¹

~17%

of stalking victims described losing a job or job opportunities¹²

A 2021 review of multiple studies on stalking found that "victimization is common in professions that have an obligation or responsibility to their clientele."¹³

Some stalking victims also experience employment sabotage, which is a tactic some stalkers use to get a victim fired, prompt them to quit, or cause other negative consequences in the workplace. Employment sabotage can include repeated telephone calls to showing up in the workplace to contacting coworkers and supervisors. Read more about employment sabotage [here](#).

Recognize: Behaviors

Fixated

the stalker is single-mindedly focused on a specific victim

Obsessive

the stalker is all-consumed with the life details of the victim

Unwanted

the behavior of the stalker is unwanted by the victim

Repeated

the behavior of the stalker is repetitive in nature¹⁴



Surveillance

following, spying (in-person, through technology, or via a third-party proxy); appearing at a person's work, home, and/or public spaces (including online spaces)



Life Invasion

unwanted, harassing communication (in-person or through technology); making unwanted contact; spreading misinformation or harmful images



Intimidation

implicit and explicit threats to the victim, their family, friends, pets, and/or coworkers; threats of self-harm; property damage; forced confrontations; threats to post intimate images or AI-generated images of the victim; blackmail; retaliation



Interference

professional, personal, social disruption and/or sabotage in the life of the victim; physical and sexual attacks and violence; interfering with child custody, medical care, finances, housing, immigration issues; impersonating the victim¹⁵

Respond: Resources

Workplaces Respond Resources

These resources from the National Resource Center, funded by the Office on Violence Against Women, will help you learn more about stalking, supporting survivors within your agency, and creating policies and structures within your agency to prevent and respond to stalking.

- [Addressing the Impacts of Violence and Trauma in the Workplace: Promoting Worker Wellness and Resilience through Trauma-Informed Practice](#)
 - This white paper provides information about promoting worker wellness and resilience through trauma-informed practice.
- [Employer Guide to Safety Planning](#)
 - This guide provides information on different types of safety plans with a focus on workplace-related aspects.
- [Fact Sheet: Stalking and the Workplace](#)
 - This fact sheet provides information and prevalence data at the intersection of stalking and the workplace.
- [Model Federal Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking \(DVSAS\)](#)
 - This model policy aims to standardize survivor-centered and trauma-informed protocols that respond to employees experiencing DVSAS and advise employees of preventive and supportive resources.
- [Model Training on Preventing & Responding to DVSAS: Implementing Supportive Workplace Policies & Practices](#)
 - This training describes how DVSAS impacts the workplace, how workers can support survivors, and how workplaces can implement DVSAS policies.
- [Recognizing and Responding to Stalking in the Federal Workplace](#)
 - This slide deck provides an overview of stalking, resources, and practical steps.

Respond: Resources

- [Supervisors Supporting Survivors of Stalking](#)
 - This document provides key considerations and potential accommodations supervisors can use to support an employee who may be experiencing stalking.
- [Video: Supervisors Can Make a Difference](#)
 - This 20-minute training video, based on real-world experiences, demonstrates supportive and practical responses by supervisors to employees who experience DVSA. These practices can help keep everyone in the workplace safe and productive.
- [Video: Responding to Gender-Based Violence & Harassment in a Virtual Setting](#)
 - This video and accompanying discussion guide introduce ways in which workplaces and employers can better respond to and prevent DVSA in virtual workplace settings.

Federal Resources

These resources provide federal agency-created tools and resources to support further learning and guidance for building a prevention and response program for federal employees and agencies.

- [What is Stalking?](#)
 - The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) provides high level information about stalking, how to seek help, and general information.
- [Guidance for Agency-Specific Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking \(DVSA\) Policies](#)
 - OPM provides guidance to agencies to fulfill goals identified in the Presidential Memorandum on “Establishing Policies for Addressing Domestic Violence in the Federal Workforce.”
- [Federal Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Training](#)
 - This training applies to all government agencies and covers definitions and types of DVSA, why DVSA is a workplace issue,

Respond: Resources

signs and symptoms of DV/SAS, maintaining confidentiality, and identifying resources available to assist employees and managers.

- [Work-Life Brochure on Employee Assistance Programs \(EAPs\)](#)
 - Each Federal Executive Branch agency has an EAP. This OPM brochure provides information about EAPs, many of which offer access to counselors with expertise in DV/SAS and impacts.
- [Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Resource List](#)
 - This OPM list provides information about a variety of non-U.S. Government resources for survivors.
- [Promising Practices for Preventing Harassment in the Federal Sector](#)
 - This document from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides various strategies for agencies to use in their efforts to prevent DV/SAS and other types of harassment.
- [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action](#)
 - This first-ever national plan, released in May 2023, advances an unprecedented and comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing DV/SAS.
- [Government-Wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)
 - In November 2021, the White House released this Strategic Plan which lays out key steps agencies can take to strengthen their workforce policies, practices, and culture.

Learn More

These websites provide more information about behaviors associated with stalking; information, tools, and resources for survivors; and resources that may be used to strengthen awareness, prevention, and response programs.

- [The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center](#)
 - The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center (SPARC) is federally funded through the Office on Violence Against Women. It

Respond: Resources

is a project that provides resources and education about the crime of stalking. SPARC aims to enhance the response to stalking by educating the professionals tasked with keeping stalking victims safe and holding offenders accountable. SPARC ensures that allied professionals have the specialized knowledge to identify and respond to the crime of stalking.

- [University of Kentucky - Center on Coercive Control](#)
 - This website provides information about stalking as a tool of coercive control within intimate partner relationships. Tools include the Stalking and Harassment Assessment & Risk Profile (SHARP).
- [Fast Facts: Preventing Stalking](#)
 - This resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides an in-depth description of stalking tactics in addition to tips for prevention.

Helplines

Refer to these helplines and hotlines if you or somebody you know is experiencing stalking.

- [Victim Connect Resource Center](#)
 - Available Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. EST via phone, chat, or text.
 - 1-855-4VICTIM (855-484-2846)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
 - Available 24/7 via call, chat, and text.
 - 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
 - TTY: 1-800-787-3224
 - Text "START" to 88788
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#)
 - Available 24/7, callers will be connected with a trained sexual assault advocate in their area. Also available via chat on the website.
 - 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

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- [The Deaf Hotline](#)
 - Available 24/7 via phone and email.
 - 1-855-812-1001
- [Love Is Respect](#)
 - Available 24/7 via call, chat, and text for youth experiencing teen dating violence.
 - 1-800-331-9474
 - TTY: 1-800-787-3224
 - Text “LOVEIS” to 22522
- [Strong Hearts Native Helpline](#)
 - 24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives
 - 1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)

Technology Support

Provide these resources to people who are experiencing technology-facilitated stalking or abuse.

- [Tech Safety App](#)
 - A project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.
 - Find information about tech abuse and tips for privacy and safety.
- [Clinic to End Tech Abuse](#) (CETA)
 - A project of Cornell University Tech available to all survivors.
 - CETA works directly with survivors to evaluate the technology that might be used to perpetrate stalking and to offer safety planning for survivors with that technology. They also facilitate cutting-edge research to understand how abusers can misuse technology.
- [Coalition Against Stalkerware](#)
 - The Coalition Against Stalkerware was founded in November 2019 in response to the growing threat of stalkerware. With the purpose of fighting against technology-facilitated abuse, the initiative aims to unite both organizations that work to combat domestic violence and the IT security community.

Respond: Resources

- [Cyber Civil Rights Initiative Helpline](#)
 - Available 24/7 for victims of image-based sexual abuse.
 - 1-844-878-2274

Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

The following resources can be shared with people experiencing stalking and be used by supervisors to help the survivor develop safety and documentation strategies.

- [Documentation Logs](#)
- [Stalking Safety Strategies](#)
- [Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile](#) (SHARP)

For People Experiencing Stalking

Direct survivors to this resource if they are unsure what to do about the stalking they are experiencing.

- [What to do if You are Being Stalked](#)
 - This webpage provides a step-by-step guide for people who are experiencing stalking. Focusing on safety, it provides survivors tools, suggestions, and resources to ensure they are documenting stalking and seeking support from appropriate resources.

Resist (Re)traumatization: Tools

Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

Stalking, as well as other forms of gender-based violence and harassment, can have short- and long-term effects, one of which is trauma. Trauma is defined as “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”¹⁶

Using a trauma-informed approach to workplace prevention and response of gender-based violence and harassment will help survivors who are employees in your agency feel safe using resources and sharing their experience. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) introduced the following six principles in [*SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*](#).

Below are short summaries of the six principles.



Safety: People feel physically and psychologically safe in their environments.



Trustworthiness and Transparency: Operations and decisions are transparent and strive to build trust within the workplace and with external partners, including clients.



Peer Support: The workplace learns from workers, especially workers who are survivors, to discover what will work and how they can contribute to workplace safety and respect.



Collaboration and Mutuality: Where possible, practice power-sharing to achieve a collaborative and mutually respectful workplace.



Empowerment, Voice, and Choice: The workplace and decision-makers trust that survivors know what is best for them and work to give them opportunities to recover as they need.



Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues: The workplace and its decision-makers understand the complexity of identity as the identities a survivor holds can impact their risk and protective factors as well as access and barriers to supportive services. Additionally, they understand how historical and intergenerational trauma can compound the trauma survivors experience. A trauma-informed workplace tries to eliminate barriers and provide equitable access to resources.

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