Recognizing and Responding to Stalking in the Federal Workplace

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Agenda

- Welcome
- About Workplaces Respond
- Learning Objectives
- What is stalking?
- Impact of stalking on employees & the workplace
- Workplace’s Role
- Supporting Co-workers
- Q&A
- Closing

About Workplaces Respond

Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center

- Educates and builds collaborations among workplace and non-workplace stakeholders – employers, worker associations, unions, and anti-violence advocates – to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual harassment & violence, and stalking impacting the workplace.
- Public-private partnership led by Futures Without Violence and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

www.workplacesrespond.org

Learning Objectives

As a result of this webinar, participants will better be able to:

- Define stalking and how it may occur independently from or concurrently with domestic violence, sexual violence, and sexual harassment;
- Describe interventions to prevent and respond to stalking in the workplace; and
- Provide survivor-centered, trauma-informed support to a co-worker experiencing stalking.

Poll: How many trainings specifically on stalking have you attended?

- 6 plus
- 3-5
- 1-2
- None
Many stalking victims:

* Experience mental health issues. Including PTSD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction.
* Lose time from work. 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work.
* Relocate. 1 in 7 stalking victims move.


* Stalking often co-occurs with additional victimizations, including physical assault and sexual violence
* 20% of stalkers use weapons to threaten or harm victims
* 76% of intimate partner femicides included stalking in the year prior


Poll: Have you seen or responded to stalking in the workplace?

* Never
* Yes, as an HR professional
* Yes, as a supervisor supporting a victim
* Yes, as a colleague supporting a victim
* Yes, as a supervisor confronting an offender to hold them accountable
* Yes, as a colleague confronting an offender to hold them accountable

Poll: Is this stalking? Y es/No

1. A male employee peeks into the women's bathroom.
2. An ex-partner repeatedly spreads vicious rumors about their former partner to that partner's colleagues.
3. A supervisor regularly asks her employee personal questions, mocks him in meetings, sends e-mails at odd hours, and is verbally abusive when he doesn't respond right away.
4. During virtual work meetings, one colleague routinely sends another private messages, and once had a package mailed to their house.
STALKING DEFINITION: BEHAVIORAL

Stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress.

CONTEXT IS CRITICAL in stalking cases.
Victim and Offender Relationships

- Person of Authority
- Family Member
- Stranger
- Brief Encounter
- Acquaintance
- Current/Former IP

Female Victims


Workplace Stalking Relationships

- Stalking Victims in the Workplace
- Non-employee stalking employee
- Employee stalking employee
- Client/customer stalking employee

- Stalkers in the Workplace
- Employee stalking employee, client, customer
- Employee stalking another person
- Employee using workplace items to stalk

Stalking Behaviors

Poll: Why do people stalk?

- Seeking affection
- Power and control
- Rejection
- Obsession
- Planning to commit a crime
- Because they can

SLII Framework
**SURVEILLANCE**
- Follow
- Watch
- Wait
- Show up
- Tracking software
- Obtain information about victim
- Proxy stalking

**LIFE INVASION**
- Unwanted contact at home, work, etc.
- Showing up
- Phone calls
- Property invasion
- Public humiliation
- Harass friends/family

**INTIMIDATION**
- Threats
- Property damage
- Symbolic violence
- Forced confrontations
- Threaten or actually harm self
- Threats to victim about harming others

**INTERFERENCE THROUGH SABOTAGE OR ATTACK**
- Financial and work sabotage
- Ruining reputation
- Custody interference
- Keep from leaving
- Road rage
- Attack family/friends/pets
- Physical/sexual attack

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**Technology & In-Person Stalking**

The majority of stalking victims experienced both in-person stalking and technology-facilitated stalking.
78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.

66% of stalkers pursue their victim at least once per week.


Poll: When do stalking & IPV co-occur?
- Never
- During the relationship
- During & after the relationship
- After the relationship ends


Intimate partner stalkers are more likely to:
- physically approach the victim
- be interfering, insulting, and threatening
- use weapons
- escalate behaviors quickly
- re-offend

In 85% of attempted & 76% of completed intimate partner femicides, stalking occurred in the year prior to the attack.
Top 10 risk factors for intimate partner homicide

Risk for male perpetrated & female IPH victimization

1) Direct access to guns - 11-fold increase in risk of IPH
2) Threatened victim with a weapon - 7-fold increase in risk
3) Non-fatal strangulation - 7-fold increase in risk
4) Perpetrated rape/forced sex - 5-fold increase in risk
5) Controlling behaviors - 6-fold increase in risk
6) Threatened to harm the victim - 4-fold increase in risk
7) Abused victim while pregnant - 4-fold increase in risk
8) Perpetrated stalking - 3-fold increase in risk
9) Jealousy - 2-fold increase in risk
10) Substance abuse - 2-fold increase in risk


Stalking is a lethality risk.

Intimate partner stalking impacts:
- More separation attempts than victims of intimate partner violence alone
- Intimate partner stalkers are more likely to assault third parties than non-intimate stalkers


Offender Self-Reports (Maine)

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Easy access to partner's workplace:
- Caused difficulty in workplace
- Contacted at workplace in violation of no contact order
- Caused her to be disciplined
- Caused her to be fired


Stalking victims:
- Employees experiencing stalking: 1 in 8
  - 10% changed or quit their work in response to the stalking.
  - Women who experienced stalking after getting a protection order lost 78 hours of work (nearly 2 work weeks) in a 6-month period.

Impact on Coworkers

* 38% of respondents were concerned for their own safety
* 31% of respondents felt they had to cover for a victim
* 27% reported frequently having to "do the victim's work for them"
* 25% resented co-workers because of the effect of their situation "on the workplace"

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence. (2005). National Benchmark Telephone Survey on Domestic Violence in the Workplace. Bloomington, IL.

Fear and Emotional Distress

Open-ended questions can include:
* How has this experience made you feel?
* Can you tell me what this experience has been like for you?
* What have you done to protect yourself?
* What has changed in your life as a result of their behavior?
* What did you think was going to happen if you didn't make these changes in your life?

Advise Disengagement

Recommend no contact with the stalker

Explain intermittent reinforcement.

BUT realize victims engage in behaviors to keep themselves safe.

Maintain contact, negotiation, minimizing threat.

Contact may be a safety strategy.
Stalking Decreases Offender Productivity

- 70% of domestic abuse offenders lost 15,221 hours of work time due to their domestic abuse arrests.
- Offenders report difficulty concentrating on their work because of their preoccupation with their victims.


Stalkers Use Workplace Resources

- Access to resources: telephones, cell phones, and cars.
- Over 75% used the company phone to contact the victim during work time.
- 25% used the company car to drive to the house during work hours.


Employer Responses

- Arrested offenders reported that their supervisors:
  - thought it was funny
  - clocked them in to cover for their absences
  - had domestic violence history and sympathized
  - offered to buy tickets to another country where he could kill her.
- 18% of supervisors provided bail money to (directly or indirectly) assist them in getting out of jail.


What are one or two of the workplace’s primary responsibilities in addressing stalking impacting workers and the workplace?

**Before: Develop/Enhance Policies & Raise Awareness**

- General workplace violence policy
- Policy specific to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Year-Long Engagement
  - Working Groups
  - Quarterly Trainings/Discussions
  - Commemorative Month Events
    - Stalking Awareness Month (January)
    - Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)
    - Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)

**Fact Pattern**

- Whenever you and your colleague happen to end your workday at the same time, you both tend to exit the building together through the employee entrance/exit.
- One day your colleague nervously insists to leave via another out-of-the-way exit, and asks that you do not accompany them.
Fact Pattern

• Your colleague’s reasons are personal and they have no safety concerns.

Fact Pattern

• One evening when working late, your colleague asked a security officer to walk them to their vehicle.
• From that point forward, whenever your colleague exits alone the security officer asks them if they would like to be walked to their vehicle, regardless of whether it’s late.
• Sometimes your colleague says “yes” in order to not seem ungrateful. Your colleague regrets this, as the conversations are becoming increasingly personal.
• Now that your colleague has shifted to a hybrid schedule, the security officer messages them daily to ask whether they would like to be walked to their vehicle.

After: Be Supportive, Engage in Safety Planning & Extend Reasonable Accommodations

Key Supportive Gestures

• Acknowledge Changes in Behavior
• Be Empathic and Supportive
• Connect to Resources

Why is it challenging for some victims of stalking to call what they’re experiencing “stalking?”

Basic Considerations

- Trust victim instincts
- Safety planning should evolve
- Consider stalker’s next tactic
- Anticipate stalker reaction
- Balance safety and freedom
**Believe and Validate**

- You might be one of the first people who knows about the situation.
- Don’t minimize or rationalize the stalker's behavior.
- Help them think through options for help.
- “That sounds scary.”
- “I can see why that would be upsetting.”

**Focus on the Offender**

- Focus on the offender’s actions instead of the victim’s responses.
- Nothing the victim did justifies the behavior.
- “It’s not right that they keep texting you.”
- “This is not your fault.”

**Encourage Documentation**

- Document incidents but not feelings.
- Ask if they want you to document incidents that you see, hear, read, or are told about.
- Consider documenting accommodations that the victim asks for.
- Template (and more!) at www.StalkingAwareness.org.

**Respect Privacy & Check In**

- Never share any information with the stalker.
- Never share any information with someone unless the victim has said it is okay.
- Stalking can last a long time and victim needs may change.
- “How can I help you feel safe?”
- “How would you like me to contact you?”

**Safety Planning**

- What have you already done?
- What do you need help doing?
- What are you not willing to do?
- Talk with the victim about what has happened, what is happening, and what might happen.
- Being proactive is vital – do not only plan around what has already happened, also consider what the stalker might do in the future, especially in reaction to specific dates, events, or actions taken by the victim.

**Safety Strategies: Victim**

- Changing routes to and from work.
- Parking somewhere different.
- Adjusting work hours or location.
- Check tech privacy settings.
- Tell employer to deny access to stalker.
- Register any protective orders with employer.
- Ask for workplace to be included in protective order.

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Safety Strategies: Employer

* Ask the victim what they want!
* Change victim phone number or extension
* Transfer victim to a different desk, department, shift, or work site
* Lock the door to victim's office or department
* Post a picture of the perpetrator at the security desk and inform all guards not to allow them into the building
* Escort victim to their mode of transportation


Safety Strategies: Employer (cont'd)

* Ask victim what they want!
* Remove victim's info and photos from website, directory
* Ensure that no one gives out employee information (days or hours of work, phone numbers, home or work address, etc.)
* Ensure that staff apply necessary precautions such as screening phone calls and people that come to the workplace
* Sometimes employers can get a restraining order against the perpetrator


Danger and Support

* If you think there’s an immediate danger, consider calling 911
* To connect with local resources, contact Victim Connect *
  https://victimconnect.org/
  1-855-4VICTIM (855-484-2846)
  Chat
* Learn about stalking at StalkingAwareness.org
* Learn about the Stalking & Harassment Assessment & Risk Profile (SHARP) at CoerciveControl.org
* Learn about technology safety at TechSafety.org

Resources

- Tech Safety App https://techsafetyapp.org/
Contact Information

Workplaces Respond: National Resource Center
Website: www.WorkplacesRespond.org
Email: workplacesrespond@futureswithoutviolence.org

Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center
Website: www.StalkingAwareness.org
Email: jholtemeyer@stalkingawareness.org