

# January is National Stalking Awareness Month



## Stalking is a dangerous crime:

Every year, it is estimated that between 6.0 and 7.5 million people are stalked in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Stalking is commonly defined as a “pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.”<sup>2</sup>

In Virginia, stalking is defined as *conduct (on more than one occasion) which places a person, or his or her family or household member, in reasonable fear of death, sexual assault, or bodily injury.*<sup>3</sup>

Stalking is a unique crime, because stalkers are obsessed with controlling their victims’ actions and feelings.

Stalkers will frequently threaten and harass, and in some instances will actually physically injure or kill their victims.

***Stalking is a crime that can be committed against anyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.***

- Approximately 1 in 6 females and 1 in 17 males have experienced stalking at least once in their lives.<sup>4</sup>
- Most victims are stalked by someone they know. 52.5% of stalking victims are stalked by a current or past intimate partner, 31.5% by an acquaintance, 16% by a stranger, 9% by a family member, and 2.5% by a person of authority.<sup>5</sup>
- Studies show that there is a correlation between stalking and intimate partner femicide. 76% of victims of intimate partner femicide were also stalked by their intimate partner. 54% of all femicide victims reported being stalking to law enforcement prior to their murder.<sup>6</sup>
- More than 50% of all stalking victims reported first being stalked before the age of 25.<sup>7</sup>
- Stalkers use weapons to threaten or harm victims in 20% of cases.<sup>8</sup>
- Almost half of all stalking victims report feeling fear over the uncertainty of what will happen next, and almost 30% report fearing that the stalking will never end.<sup>9</sup>
- In Virginia in 2018, there were a total of 696 arrests for stalking, which resulted in 134 convictions.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stalking Facts Infographic Sheet, Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC), 2020, [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFacts\\_Infographic.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC_StalkingFacts_Infographic.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> National Stalking Resource Center Fact Sheet 2015

<sup>3</sup> Stalking—Code of Virginia §18.2-60.3

<sup>4</sup> Stalking Fact Sheet Stalking Prevention Awareness, and Resource Center 2018 [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFactSheet\\_2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC_StalkingFactSheet_2018_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Stalking Facts Infographic, Stalking Prevention and Awareness Resource Center (SPARC), 2020 [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFacts\\_Infographic.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC_StalkingFacts_Infographic.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Stalking and Intimate Partner Violence: Fact Sheet, Stalking Prevention and Awareness Resource Center, 2018, <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Stalking-IPV-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Stalking Fact Sheet Stalking Prevention Awareness, and Resource Center 2018 [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFactSheet\\_2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC_StalkingFactSheet_2018_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Stalking Facts Infographic Sheet, Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC), 2020, [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFacts\\_Infographic.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SPARC_StalkingFacts_Infographic.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Stalking Fact Sheet Stalking Prevention Awareness, and Resource Center 2018 [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC\\_StalkingFactSheet\\_2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SPARC_StalkingFactSheet_2018_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Attorney General of Virginia, Office of the Attorney General, 2019 Annual Report: Domestic and Sexual Violence in Virginia





## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING STALKED

### **Trust your instincts.**

*Victims of stalking often feel pressured by friends or family to downplay the stalker's behavior; but stalking poses a real threat of harm.*

### **Call the police if you feel you are in any immediate danger.**

*Explain why even some actions that seem harmless—like leaving you a gift—are causing you fear.*

**Keep a record or log of each contact with the stalker. Also, document any police reports.**

**Save all emails, text messages, photos, and postings on social networking sites as evidence of the stalking behavior.**

## Resources

Tech Safety App is a free, downloadable app through the Tech Safety Center of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. The app provides information on the various ways technology is used to stalk and harass others. It provides users with privacy and safety tips, as well as resources on documenting stalking and ways to seek help. The app can be downloaded at <https://techsafetyapp.org/>.

The Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP) is a web-based assessment that provides a risk profile of the specific stalking situation as well as information regarding safety planning. It can be accessed at <https://cdar.uky.edu/CoerciveControl/sharp.html>.

The Stalking Prevention and Awareness Resource Center (SPARC) has many stalking resources for both victims of stalking and the professionals that support them. Please visit [www.stalkingawareness.org](http://www.stalkingawareness.org) to learn more.

**If you or someone you know is a victim of stalking, please contact the  
Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline**

**1-800-838-8238** or [www.vadata.org/chat](http://www.vadata.org/chat) (24-hours/day, toll-free)

For more information about stalking, contact the  
**Stalking Resource Center at the National Center for Victims of Crime**  
[victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center](http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center)