

# January is National Stalking Awareness Month



## **Stalking is a dangerous crime:**

7.5 million people are stalked in one year in the United States.

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>1</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 many instances will actually physically injure their victims.

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

- 15% of women and 6% of men have experienced stalking at some point during their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>
- The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know.
- 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization and more than half lose 5 days of work or more.<sup>2</sup>
- Stalkers often use technology to contact their victims.
- In 2016, a total of 641 arrests were made for stalking in Virginia resulting in 144 convictions, a 30% increase over 2015.<sup>3</sup>

## **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 e-mails, text messages, photos, and postings on social networking sites as evidence of the stalking behavior.**

**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)

<sup>1</sup> Stalking—Code of Virginia §18.2-60.3

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

<sup>3</sup> Attorney General of Virginia, Office of the Attorney General, 2017 Annual Report: Domestic and Sexual Violence in Virginia

