

2005
National Stalking Awareness Month
R E S O U R C E G U I D E

Prepared by:

Justice Solutions
Washington, D.C.

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Dear Friends:

This January, our nation will observe the second annual commemoration of National Stalking Awareness Month, which was established in 2003 by a bi-partisan resolution that passed with a unanimous vote in the U.S. Senate.

Stalking is a crime that affects over one million women and nearly 375,000 men each year in America. Victims of stalking are harassed and intimidated and, in far too many cases, physically harmed and even murdered. It is a pervasive crime that merits our collective concern and dedication to collaborative prevention and response efforts.

Justice Solutions is pleased to provide you with this National Stalking Awareness Month Resource Guide. Its resources can help you promote greater awareness of stalking crimes, effective prevention and response strategies, and the many resources available from Justice Solutions and other sources to help stalking victims.

I encourage you to join together with law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, corrections and community members to generate awareness among stalking victims and members of your community about the crime of stalking, and the many opportunities available to respond in a manner that promotes individual and community safety.

My staff and I send you best wishes for a safe, productive and happy new year, and a successful commemoration of 2005 National Stalking Awareness Month.

Sincerely,

David Beatty
Executive Director
Justice Solutions

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Sample Proclamation

- Whereas,** stalking crimes are a threat to our nation and communities, with an estimated 1,006,070 women and 370,990 men stalked annually in the United States; and
- Whereas,** a stalker can be *anyone* – a current or former intimate partner of the victim, a non-intimate acquaintance of the victim, or a stranger; and that a victim of stalking can be *anyone* in our neighborhood, workplace, school, circle of friends, or family; and
- Whereas,** stalking victims need and deserve to participate in criminal and juvenile justice processes through the rights to information and notification, to be heard, to protection, and to be present at any hearing or court proceeding; and
- Whereas,** the critical assistance and services that provide for stalking victims' basic needs, such as immediate responses and interventions by the justice system, safety planning, counseling, and information, are vital resources in our community; and
- Whereas,** we appreciate and honor the many individuals, organizations and agencies that work on behalf of stalking victims to improve justice and the community's response, as well as rights, services, and the treatment of stalking victims; and
- Whereas,** law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, correctional professionals, victim service providers and the community as a whole play a critical role in enhancing the safety of stalking victims, and the safety of those around them, and in holding stalkers accountable; ***therefore, be it***
- Resolved,** that (*individual or entity*) proclaims the Month of January 2005 to be (*City/County/Parish/State*) Stalking Awareness Month, to bring attention to this crime of terror, and to honor stalking victims and those who serve them during this month and throughout the year; ***and be it further***
- Resolved,** that we commit our collective energies and resources to continue to promote effective interventions, and collaborative prevention efforts and responses to victims of stalking; ***and be it further***
- Resolved,** that a suitably prepared copy of this proclamation be presented to (*your organization*) on (*date*).

Sample Speech

There are currently one-and-a-half million terrorists operating in the United States. One is probably committing an act of terror in your community as we speak. However, we don't often call them "terrorists" – we call them *stalkers*.

By definition, stalkers are domestic terrorists. They use violence and threats of violence to achieve through intimidation and force what they cannot achieve through legitimate and legal means. Both attempt to impose their will on the unwilling, to subjugate and oppress the innocent in their maniacal quest for power and control.

Ironically, when asked, most stalkers will claim they stalk out of "love" and "affection" for their victims. But the truth is it's not the *power of love* that drives them, but the *love of power*. They are *not* the lovable losers romanticized in books and movies. They are *not* the shy, selfless, socially inept wallflowers whose ardor and persistence so impress the object of their affection that his or her heart melts, and they get married and live happily ever after. They are *not* their victims' dreams come true.

They are living nightmares.

Many stalkers are vicious, violent criminals who emotionally, and often physically, abuse and harm their victims. The reign of terror they inflict destroys not only the lives of victims, but also the lives of stalking victims' families, friends, and colleagues.

Their purpose is to literally cast a shadow of fear over the lives of their victims. Consider what it must be like to try to live your life knowing that you are the 24 hours-a-day target of someone's personal campaign of terror. One victim tried to describe it this way.

"I wake up every morning wondering if this is the day my stalker will kill me. I spend the day looking over my shoulder. Every time the phone rings, I jump. Every noise I hear at night keeps me awake all night. And when I do get to sleep, I have nightmares about him. There is not a single moment in my day, asleep or awake, when I can escape the fear...escape my stalker."

Stalkers not only destroy lives, they also take lives. Sixty percent of all women murdered in the United States are killed by a spouse or partner. In a majority of these cases, the victims were stalked by their murderer before their death. What is truly tragic is that in some cases, these murders could have been prevented. Experience has shown that early intervention can actually *prevent* violence – and even murder. There is considerable evidence that shows the earlier the intervention, the better the chances of averting violence and even murder. The reason for this is simple: Most stalking cases often escalate from simple unwanted displays of affection, as in inappropriate and repeated requests for dates, to invasions of privacy, to surveillance of the victim at home and at work, to threats of violence or even actual violence when the stalker's advances are rejected.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to stop stalkers once they have reached the level of obsession where they are willing to turn to violence with complete disregard for the consequences, including possible incarceration or even execution.

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Unfortunately, society and the criminal justice system have sometimes dismissed stalking cases, particularly during their initial stages when the opportunity to prevent escalation is greatest – when stalkers and stalking behavior can be defused before it spirals to an explosion of violence. Too often, the authorities view unwanted invitations, gifts, and intrusions from stalkers as harmless pleas for attention, to be tolerated or ignored by the victim, rather than viewing them as the serious crimes they are, and the more serious crimes they can become. Fortunately, *unlike* political terrorists, stalkers identify themselves as potential perpetrators *before the fact*, giving the authorities the opportunity to intervene and actually stop violence *before* it happens.

Regrettably, many stalking victims are regularly denied such early intervention and assistance. Many literally are left to fend for themselves – often with tragic results.

The true risk that stalkers pose to individuals and communities needs to be better understood and more fully appreciated if victims are to have any hope of escaping the ongoing acts of terrorism that are the literal and legal definition stalking. Considering that one in 20 American women and one in 40 men will become targets of stalking during their lives, virtually every American will either become a stalking victim or know someone who will. Your chances of becoming a victim of stalking are far greater than those of becoming a victim of a political terrorist.

The first step in solving any problem is to recognize it as a problem. To that end, Congress has dedicated January as National Stalking Awareness Month. Victim assistance organizations, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies across the country will focus attention on enhancing services for stalking victims, while creating more effective strategies to effectively respond to stalkers and stalking behaviors. You can become an active participant in this local war on terror in your community by contacting local victim organizations or criminal justice agencies and asking them what you can do to help. At the very least, I encourage you to simply make an effort to find out more about the crime of stalking, so you are better prepared should you or a loved one ever become the target of a stalker.

No one should have to live out their lives in the shadow of fear cast by those who target them with terrorist threats of violence. Help us cast a ray of hope. Find a way to help stalking victims find their way out from under the darkness of isolation and unrelenting fear that hangs over their lives. Do your part to help stop the acts of terror being committed by stalkers in your community virtually every day. Help bring stalkers to justice and justice to stalking victims.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 15, 2004

Contact: (Name/Agency)
(Area Code/Telephone)

National Stalking Awareness Month Slated for January 2005

City-State --- The Second Annual National Stalking Awareness Month is scheduled for January 2005. This national observance was first established in 2003 by a bi-partisan resolution that unanimously passed the U.S. Senate.

According to findings from the 1998 National Violence Against Women Survey sponsored by the Justice Solutions, eight percent of women and two percent of men in the United States have been stalked in their lifetimes. It is estimated that over one million women and nearly 375,000 men are stalked annually in the United States.

Crimes of stalking can have a devastating and, too often, deadly impact on their victims. When unwanted attention and personal contacts – such as phone calls, letters, e-mails and other unsolicited personal contacts – escalates, the results can have a profound impact on victims, psychologically, physically and financially. Stalking strikes terror in the hearts and lives of victims, and comprises a real and frightening threat to them, their loved ones and our communities.

Today, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have anti-stalking statutes. Tremendous efforts nationwide over the past decade have resulted in improved prevention and responses that involve law enforcement, prosecutors and courts, victim service providers, employers, and community members.

According to David Beatty, Executive Director of Justice Solutions, there is a wide range of information and safety resources available to assist stalking victims.

“It is critical that stalking victims report the crimes to law enforcement and carefully document the intimidating and threatening behaviors,” Beatty said. “Law enforcement and prosecutors across the nation can provide help in arresting and prosecuting stalkers, and victim assistance programs can provide information about stalking victims’ rights and measures to enhance their personal safety, including safety planning.”

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(*Spokesperson*) explained that stalking is a crime that puts victims, their loved ones, friends and colleagues at risk.

“Often, stalkers know no boundaries in their intimidating and sometimes violent behavior,” (*spokesperson*) said. “We should *all* do what we can to provide support to stalking victims, and to collaborate to promote safety in our homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces.”

Justice Solutions has published a National Stalking Awareness Month Resource Guide to promote greater understanding about stalking crimes and resources available to stalking victims, and to engage individuals and communities in efforts to prevent and respond to stalking in a comprehensive and consistent manner. The 2005 Resource Guide is available at: www.justicesolutions.org/2005stalking_guide.htm.

Here in (*jurisdiction*), special events are planned to heighten public awareness during 2005 National Stalking Awareness Month, including (*list any victim and public awareness activities – please refer to “Ten Tips” within this Resource Guide*).

For additional information about stalking, information and resources available to assist stalking victims, or information about how community members can help, please contact (*name/title*) at (*agency/organization*) at (*area code/telephone number*), or visit our web site at (*URL*).

END

Sample Public Service Announcements

30 Seconds

January is National Stalking Awareness Month. During this month, communities around the nation will join together to raise awareness about the often-misunderstood crime of stalking.

Stalking is a complex crime. It can turn a victim's life upside down. Stalking can begin with a few unwanted phone calls or notes, but often it grows into a persistent, invasive, and often dangerous and deadly crime.

There is help available in *(city/county/state)*. Supportive services and safety planning are available to stalking victims. You don't have to go through this alone.

If you or someone you know is being stalked, please contact *(agency)* at *(area code/telephone number)* or visit our web site at *(web URL)* for help.

15 Seconds

January is National Stalking Awareness Month. If you or someone you know is being stalked, please call *(agency)* for information and assistance. You don't have to go through this alone. Call *(area code/telephone number)*, or visit our web site at *(web URL)*.

Ten Tips for Victim and Community Outreach

1. Contact the local newspaper about running a weekly series about stalking during January in the Sunday “features” section. Each feature article can focus on a different aspect of stalking or different types of potential stalking behaviors, as well as provide readers with information about your state’s stalking laws, how and where to report stalking, and resources available to assist stalking victims.
2. Coordinate with victim service providers to enhance *all* your victim and public outreach efforts through “the power of the personal story.” Document the experience of stalking victims in brief vignettes that promote understanding of the scope and devastating impact of these crimes, and include them in your speeches, press release and other media and public outreach efforts.
3. Ask local criminal justice officials and victim service providers to each put forth a “New Year’s Resolution” that articulates their respective commitment to addressing crimes of stalking and assisting victims in 2005.
4. Work with law enforcement to provide roll call briefings about their role in addressing stalking in the community, with the overall goal of preventing stalking crimes and potential violence through early identification of stalking behaviors and early intervention, in order to hold the offender accountable and enhance the safety of stalking victims and the community.
5. Approach local corporations and businesses about sponsoring brown bag lunches during January to talk about stalking and its impact on the workplace. Hold the brown bag lunches at various businesses and workplaces throughout the month to reach as many employees as possible. Utilize the components of this Resource Guide to create brochures and tip sheets specific to this topic that can be distributed at these events.
6. Arrange with the local Chamber of Commerce to make a stalking awareness presentation during its January meeting to talk about stalking in the workplace, and effective responses by employers to protect stalking victims and other co-workers in the workplace.
7. Contact local high schools about presenting stalking awareness forums to the students, particularly in the context of teenage dating relationships. In addition to general stalking information, include tips about how they can help a friend who is being stalked.
8. Host an evening event for all of the Neighborhood Watch coordinators in your jurisdiction to discuss stalking laws, common behaviors and activities employed by stalkers, and how Neighborhood Watch members can be the “eyes and ears” for stalking victims in their neighborhoods. If possible, have a stalking victim talk to the group about the impact of the crime. If it’s not practical to have a stalking victim speak due to safety concerns, have a victim service provider and law enforcement official talk about the impact of stalking and the importance of neighbors acting as an “early warning system” by being on the lookout for the stalker, the stalker’s car, or any suspicious person near the victim’s residence.

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9. Create a drop-off program for donated cell phones on each Saturday of January at local shopping malls. The “Saturday Cell Days” campaign complements the “after-holiday sales” themes at local shopping malls. Ask local retailers to provide discount coupons that can be given to those who donate cell phones for use by victims of stalking. The donated cell phones can be programmed to instantly dial 911 and provided to stalking victims to enhance their personal safety.
10. Create door hangers that provide contact information for local victim assistance programs and basic information about stalking or safety tips for stalking victims. The door hangers can then be easily distributed on doorknobs in local neighborhoods and office buildings. Templates for door hangers that can be easily created and printed with a desktop printer are available in most computer stores, business supply stores, or office supply catalogues.

Toll-Free Information and Referral Resources for Stalking Victims

The following toll-free numbers are sponsored by organizations that can provide information and referrals about stalking victims' rights, services, and assistance.

National Domestic Violence Hotline	800-799-7233 TTY 800-787-3224
National Organization for Victim Assistance	800-TRY-NOVA
Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center	800-851-3420 TTY 877-712-9279
Stalking Resource Center	800-FYI-CALL
Witness Justice	800-4WJ-HELP

Additional Resources for Stalking Victims

Online Resources for Stalking Victims

Antistalking Web Site	www.antistalking.com
End Stalking in America, Inc.	www.esia.net
Love Me Not	www.lovemenot.org
Office for Victims of Crime	www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help/stalk.htm
Stalking Behavior	www.stalkingbehavior.com
Stalking Resource Center	www.ncvc.org/src
Stalking Victims Sanctuary	www.stalkingvictims.com
Survivors of Stalking (S.O.S.)	www.soshelp.org

Recently Sponsored Federal Resources on Stalking

Creating an Effective Stalking Protocol

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Open=True&Item=808>

Enforcement of Protective Orders

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/bulletins/legalseries/bulletin4/welcome.html

Stalking

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1042>

Stalking: Its Role in Serious Domestic Violence Cases

<http://virlib.ncjrs.org/more.asp?category=51&subcategory=150>

Stalking and Domestic Violence: Report to Congress, 2001

<http://virlib.ncjrs.org/more.asp?category=51&subcategory=150>

Stalking Laws and Implementation Practices: A National Review for Policymakers and Practitioners

<http://virlib.ncjrs.org/more.asp?category=51&subcategory=150>

Stalking Victimization: An OVC Help Series Brochure

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/help_series/pdf/stalkingvictimization.txt

Strengthening Anti-stalking Statutes

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/bulletins/legalseries/bulletin1/welcome.html

Toolkit to End Violence Against Women

<http://toolkit.ncjrs.org/>

Stalking Statistics

According to findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, eight percent of women and two percent of men in the United States have been stalked in their lifetime. (National Institute of Justice, 1998. *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Justice.)

Based on an analysis of 103 studies of stalking-related phenomena representing 70,000 participants, the prevalence across studies for women who have been stalked was 23.5 percent and for men was 10.5 percent. The stalking averaged a duration of nearly two years. (Sptizberg, B. 2002. "The Tactical Topography of Stalking Victimization and Management." *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*. 3(4).)

The average physical violence incidence rate in the above-mentioned study was 33 percent and the incidence of sexual violence was over 10 percent. (Ibid.)

According to the above-mentioned analysis, restraining orders against stalkers were violated an average of 40 percent of the time. In almost 21 percent of the time, the victim perceived that the behavior following the implementation of the order worsened. (Ibid.)

A recent analysis of 13 published studies of 1,155 stalking cases found that the average overall rate of violence experienced by the victims was 38.7 percent. (Rosenfeld, B. 2004. "Violence Risk Factors in Stalking and Obsessional Harassment." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 31(1).)

Stalkers with a prior intimate relationship are more likely to verbally intimidate and physically harm their victims than stranger stalkers. Among six different studies, risk factors for violence ranged from 45 percent to as high as 89 percent among stalkers with prior intimate relations with victims compared to risk factors for stalkers who targeted strangers or acquaintances that ranged from five percent to 14 percent. (Ibid.)

History of substance abuse proves to be one of the strongest predictors of increased rates of violence in stalking crimes. In combination, the strongest risk markers for assessing the likelihood of stalking violence are: 1) threats and intimidation; 2) the existence of prior intimate relationships; and 3) substance abuse. (Ibid.)

Stalking in the context of intimate partner violence often goes unreported as a crime. In an analysis of 1,731 domestic violence police reports, 16.5 percent included a narrative description of stalking behavior, yet the victim used the term "stalking" in only 2.9 percent of the cases and the officer used the term "stalking" in only 7.4 percent of the cases. (Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. 2001. *Stalking: Its Role In Serious Domestic Violence Cases*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Stalking allegations are more prevalent in reports involving domestic violence victims and suspects when they are former rather than current intimates. Of domestic violence reports involving formerly dating couples and co-habitants, stalking was involved in 47.4 percent of the reported cases. Of reports involving separated or divorced couples, stalking occurred in 32.7 percent of the cases. When stalking was reported in domestic violence cases involving married couples the rate dropped to 9.6 percent; for cohabiting couples, it dropped to 6.7 percent, and for dating couples, it dropped to 19.7 percent. (Ibid.)

The prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher among stalking victims than the general population, especially if the stalking involves being followed or having one's property destroyed. (Blaaw, E., et al. 2002. "The Toll of Stalking." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 17(1).)