

Deaf Survivors of Sexual Violence, Domestic
Violence, and Stalking/Cyberstalking:

Successful Multidisciplinary Strategies

Stephanie Smith-Bowman
CC Dobronyi
Dave Fox
Jeremy Stokes

National Center for Victims of Crime Conference 2011

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.

Objectives

- To understand intersections of stalking, domestic violence, sexual violence and the Deaf community
- To illustrate the value of a multidisciplinary team to understand and meet the needs of the Deaf community
- To identify stalking/cyberstalking techniques unique to and commonly used within the Deaf community
- To learn about Deaf survivors' experiences with systematic barriers in seeking protection orders



Introduction and Roles

- Stephanie Smith-Bowman, Long Term Advocacy Services Coordinator, SARNCO
- Dave Fox, Investigator: Telecommunications Harassment and Cybercrime Unit, Columbus City Attorney, Domestic Violence & Stalking Unit
- Jeremy Stokes, Private Investigator and Owner, J Investigations
- CC Dobronyi, Interpreter, D & H Solutions

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.

Columbus City Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit



Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.

What's Special about Columbus, OHIO?

- Deaf & Hard of Hearing Census
- 66,000: Ohio
- 10,000: Franklin County
 - Total Population: 1 million
- One of largest U.S. Deaf population



Domestic Violence

- **1 in 4** women have been in an abusive relationship (www.nnedv.org)
- **1 in 5** men have experienced family or relationship abuse in their lifetime



Domestic Violence



- A 2001 U.S. study:
- 85%: Female with a male batterer.
- 15%: Intimate partner violence in gay and lesbian relationships
- In same category: Men who were battered by a female partner.

(www.nnedv.org/resources/stats/faqaboutdv.html)



Anecdotal evidence links **90% of men in power in the Deaf community** are perpetrators of violence

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.



Sexual Violence



- **1 in 6 women** and **1 in 10 men** have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (www.RAINN.org)
- People with disabilities are **10 times more** likely to experience victimization from multiple perpetrators in their lifetime (BCJS, Department of Justice)




Anecdotal evidence shows Deaf women are more likely to experience childhood incest and multiple perpetrators in adulthood than hearing survivors

Stalking

- **1 in 12** women and **1 in 45** men will be stalked in their lifetime

([www.ncadv.org/files/DmesticViolenceFactsheet \(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/files/DmesticViolenceFactsheet%20(National).pdf))

- **77%** of female and **64%** of male victims know their stalker

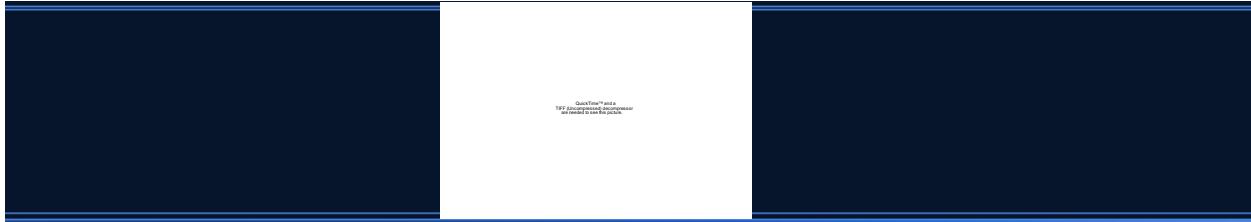


Anecdotal evidence shows stalkers in the Deaf community more frequently stalk multiple people at the same time and recruit others to assist in the stalking.

Stalking

- **1 in 4** victims reported having been stalked
- Unwanted phone calls/messages: **66%**
- Spreading rumors: **36%**
- Following/spying: **34%**
- Showing up at same places without reason: **31%**

(www.ncvc.org)



Anecdotal evidence has shown technological advances have led to an increase in frequency and diversity of stalking behaviors in the Deaf community

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.

SAFETY PLANNING STRATEGIES

- Changing day-to-day activity: 22%
- Staying with family: 18%
- Installing call blocking or caller ID: **18%**
- Changing phone number: 17%
- Changing email address: 7%

(www.ncvc.org)





Anecdotal evidence has shown these protection techniques are NOT as accessible to the Deaf community.



Protection Order Process

1. Victim experiences criminal act and calls the police.
2. Police file a report and refer the victim to county prosecutor's unit.
3. Victim bring evidence and police report to meeting with prosecutor's office. Victim brought before a judge or magistrate for an ex parte hearing that day. Granted a temporary order.



Protection Order Process

4. Victim returns in 7-10 days for a full hearing with additional evidence.
5. Judge or Magistrate approves the victim's request for the full protection order.
6. All contact between the perpetrator and victim ceases.

• THIS IS THE IDEAL!

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.



The Reality



1. Victim experiences criminal act and calls the police.
2. Police do not have an interpreter and do not file a report and do not give further information to the victim.
3. Victim goes to the courthouse with another Deaf friend to try to file for a protection order pro se.



The Reality



4. Victim is referred to several different offices that do not provide interpreters, but offer written materials, which the victim may or may not be able to read.
5. Victim has a Deaf friend who is “better with English” to fill out the paperwork with victim's information and returns to the courthouse the following day.



The Reality



6. Victim is pointed in the direction of a courtroom from the protection order desk.
7. Victim waits in the courtroom without an interpreter for approximately 2-4 hours.
8. Victim stands in front of a Judge or Magistrate without an interpreter and tries to explain the criminal act.



The Reality



OR

8. Victim stands in front of a Judge or Magistrate and tries to explain the criminal act through an interpreter who is unqualified, underqualified, uncertified, or undercertified.

What is the result?

Property of SSB, DF, JS, and CD
Permissions required for use.