

STALKING

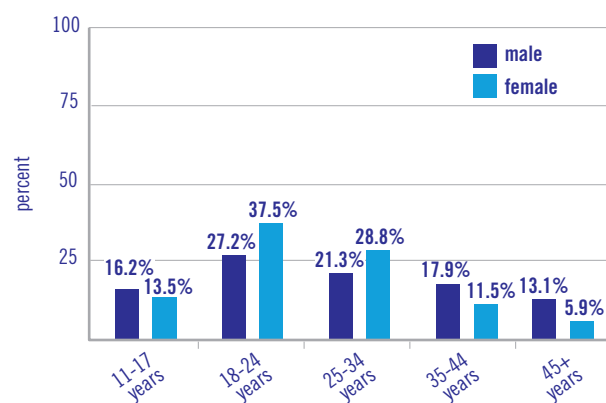
Stalking is a complex crime that is often misunderstood and largely underreported. It is a crime under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, many Tribal Codes, and the federal government, and is also an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Although it is a crime everywhere in this country, legal statutes vary widely in their definitions of stalking, scope, crime classification, and penalty. Unlike other crimes that are defined as an incident, stalking is a pattern of behavior, often of individual acts that could—in isolation—seem benign or be noncriminal. Advances in technology have made it easier for perpetrators to stalk their victims; stalkers frequently use various technologies to harass, monitor, and track victims. These technologies are common to many people including cellphones, cameras, computers, social networking sites, and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

Since the first stalking law was passed, knowledge about the crime has developed significantly. Research continues to yield important insights; however, to date there are only a few major national studies that have measured the rates of stalking in the United States. The 2011 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), provided data on the scope and magnitude of the crime of stalking.¹ This study supports earlier findings that show that more women than men are victimized by stalking and that individuals age 18 to 24 face the highest rates of stalking victimization. Moreover, the study demonstrated that stalking is linked to intimate partner violence and sexual assault and that this crime has a significant traumatic effect on its victims.

- During a one-year period, 7.5 million people age 18 or older in the United States were stalked.²

- At some point in their lives, 15.2 percent of women and 5.7 percent of men have experienced stalking victimization in which they felt fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.³
- At least 53.8 percent of female and 47.7 percent of male victims were stalked before the age of 25.⁴
- An estimated 13.5 percent of female and 16.2 percent of male victims reported having experienced stalking as a minor (between the ages of 11 and 17).⁵

AGE AT TIME OF FIRST STALKING VICTIMIZATION



- Of female stalking victims, 88.3 percent reported having been stalked by a male perpetrator and 7.1 percent by another female. For male victims, however, 48 percent reported having been stalked by a male and 44 percent by a female.⁶
- Of women who reported having been stalked during their lifetime, 24.5 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native women, 22.4 percent were multiracial non-Hispanic women, 15.9 percent were white non-Hispanic women, 14.2 percent were Hispanic women, and 13.9 percent were black non-Hispanic women.⁷

¹ For more information about the NISVS, please see Mathew J. Breiding et al, *Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization—National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014), 2-4, accessed September 15, 2014, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>.

² Ibid., calculated from 6-7.

³ Ibid., 6-7.

⁴ Ibid., 34.

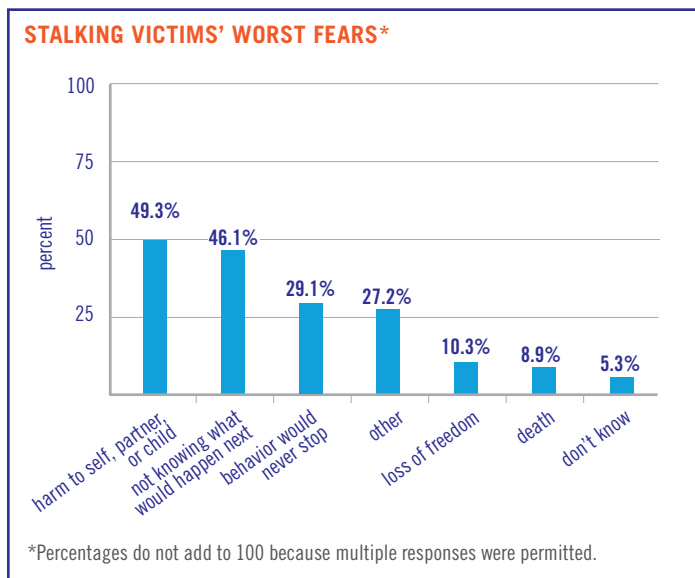
⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷ Ibid., Table 4.

- Most stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Among female victims, 60.8 percent were stalked by an intimate partner, and only 16.2 percent were stalked by a stranger.⁸
- Of women who are victimized by an intimate partner, 9.2 percent reported also having been stalked by their intimate partner.⁹
- Women who are victimized are more likely to experience a combination of stalking, physical violence, and rape (13 percent), or stalking and physical violence (14 percent), than stalking alone (3 percent).¹⁰
- According to the same report, more than 62 percent of victims age 18 or older had been stalked in the 12 months prior to the interview while the remaining 38 percent had reported being victims of harassment.¹¹ Females were more likely to report being stalked, while men were slightly more likely to report being harassed.¹²
- Approximately 28 percent of stalking victims age 18 or older in 2006 reported being victimized by a known intimate,¹³ while almost 42 percent reported being stalked by a friend, relative, or acquaintance of some type.¹⁴
- Stalking victims took a variety of protective actions, including changing their day-to-day activities (22 percent), staying with family (18 percent), installing call blocking or caller ID (18 percent), changing their phone number (17 percent), and changing their e-mail address (7 percent).¹⁵

- Thirty-seven percent of male and 41 percent of female stalking victimizations were reported to the police by the victim or by someone else aware of the crime.¹⁶
- Of stalking victims, 16 percent obtained a restraining, protection, or stay-away order.¹⁷



- Forty-six percent of stalking victims experienced at least one unwanted contact per week.¹⁸
- Eleven percent of victims of stalking had been stalked for five years or longer.¹⁹
- When asked to name their worst fear related to the stalking, 46.1 percent of stalking victims reported not knowing what would happen next; 31.1 percent reported harm to child, partner, or other family member; and 30.4 percent report harm to self.²⁰
- One in 8 employed stalking victims lost time from work as a result of the victimization, and of those victims, more than one-half lost five days of work or more.²¹

8 Ibid., 9.

9 Ibid., Table 6.

10 Michelle Black et al., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report*, (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011), Figure 4.1, accessed September 4, 2014, http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS_Report2010-a.pdf.

11 Shannan Catalano, *Stalking Victims in the United States – Revised*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), *calculated from data in Table 3*, accessed September 4, 2014, http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svus_rev.pdf.

12 Ibid., Table 5.

13 Known intimate could include a spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse, or ex-boy/girlfriend.

14 Ibid., Table 6.

15 Katrina Baum et al., *Stalking Victimization in the United States*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2009), 6, Table 8, accessed September 4, 2014, <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ovw/legacy/2012/08/15/bjs-stalking-rpt.pdf>.

16 Ibid., 8.

17 Ibid., Table 9.

18 Ibid., 1.

19 Catalano, *Stalking Victims in the United States*, 3.

20 Baum et al., *Stalking Victimization in the United States*, 7.

21 Ibid.

- One in 7 stalking victims moved as a result of the victimization.²²
- Seventy-six percent of intimate partner femicide (homicide of women) victims had been stalked by their intimate partner in the year prior to their murder.²³
- Of the victims in one state who experienced violations of their domestic violence orders (DVO), 59 percent were stalked six months before their DVO, while 49 percent were stalked six months after their DVO.²⁴
- In one state, 45 percent of rural and 26 percent of urban women reported that stalking occurred during or around the time an emergency protective order (EPO) was filed.²⁵
- In one state, 79 percent of protection order violators in urban areas were charged with stalking in addition to other crimes, compared to 26 percent in rural areas.²⁶
- The use of technology to stalk is increasingly common. A 2013 Pew Research Center telephone survey of 792 Internet-using adults found that those age 18 to 29 are most likely to report being stalked or harassed online, followed by those age 30 to 49 (15 percent), age 65 or older (3 percent), and age 50 to 64 (2 percent).²⁷
- The 2013 Pew Research Center survey also found that 22 percent of those with the lowest household income (under \$30,000) had been stalked or harassed online compared to only 4 percent of those with a household income of \$75,000 or more.²⁸ ★

²² Ibid., 6.

²³ Judith McFarlane et al., "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies* 3, no. 4 (1999): 311, accessed September 4, 2014, <http://www.markwynn.net/stalking/stalking-and-intimate-partner-femicide-1999.pdf>.

²⁴ T.K. Logan et al., *The Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study: A Rural and Urban Multiple Perspective Study of Protective Order Violation Consequences, Responses, and Costs*, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, Department of Behavioral Science, 2009), 99, Table 36, accessed September 4, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228350.pdf>.

²⁵ Ibid., 92, Table 29.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lee Rainie et al., "Anonymity, Privacy, and Security Online," (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, 2013), 23, accessed September 4, 2014, http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_AnonymityOnline_090513.pdf.

²⁸ Ibid., 24.

