Examining the Intersection between Stalking, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Violence

Erika Smith, M.S., LMFT, CTS
Trauma Recovery Team Leader/Therapist
Lakeview Center
Outline

- Definition of Stalking
- Research and Statistics: The Connection between Stalking, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Violence
- Common Reactions to Stalking
- Assisting Victim/Survivors
- Resources
What is Stalking?

“A course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to experience fear.”

Repeated harassing or threatening behavior that causes a “reasonable person” to experience fear.

Context is key
Common Stalking Behaviors

- Gathers information about you
- Follows you, shows up wherever you are
- Watches you from a distance
- **Repeatedly calls you**, includes hang-ups
- Sends unwanted gifts, letters, cards, e-mails, or text messages
- Damages your home, car, or other property
- Monitors your phone calls or computer use
Common Stalking Behaviors

- Uses technology, like hidden cameras or GPS, to track where you go
- Drives by or “hangs out” at your home, school, or work
- Threatens to hurt you, your family, friends, or pets
- Finds out about you by using public records or on-line search services, hires investigators, goes through your garbage, posts information about you or spreads rumors, or contacts your friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers
Common Stalking Behaviors

- Leaves strange or potentially threatening items for you to find
- Sneaks into your home or car, does things to scare you or let you know they’ve been there
- Other actions that control, track, or frighten you
The National Violence Against Women Survey

(Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000)
Prevalence of Stalking

- 1 in 12 U.S. women (8.2 million) & 1 in 45 U.S. men (2 million) has been stalked at some point in their lives
- 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually
- There is no difference in stalking prevalence among men and women from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
Who are the Stalkers?

87% are **men**

94% of female victims were stalked by men

60% of male victims were stalked by men
Stalking Risk

78% of stalking victims are **women**

**Young adults** are the primary targets:
52% are between the ages of 18-29 &
22% are between the ages of 30-39 when the stalking begins
Average Duration of Stalking

All Stalking – 1.8 years
Intimate Partner Stalking – 2.2 Years
Non-Intimate Partner Stalking – 1.1 Years

Could victim be stalked for a period of time and then stalked again years later?
Stalking & Domestic Violence

Most victims know their stalker...

Current/former spouse
Current/former cohabitant
Current/former dating partner
Stalking & Domestic Violence

59% of female victims are stalked by an intimate partner

&

30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner

23% of women and 36% of men were stalked by a stranger
Stalking & Domestic Violence

Stalking may trigger the end of the relationship (21%)
OR
Stalking may begin after the relationship ends (43%)
OR
Stalking may be present both during and after the relationship (36%)
Stalking and Violence

81% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner have also been physically assaulted by that partner.

31% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner have also been sexually assaulted by that partner.

46% of victims experienced one or more violent incidents by their stalker.
The Legal Side

- 54.6% of women and 47.7% of men said their stalking was reported to law enforcement (victim reported in majority of cases – 84% of women and 75% of men)

- Only 13.1% of female victims and 9% of male victims reported that their stalker was criminally prosecuted (increases to 24% and 19% respectively when considering only those reported cases)
How Does Stalking End?

Victims said their stalking ended because:

- 19% - they moved
- 18% - stalker took new love interest
- 15% - police informally warned stalker
- 10% - victim talked to stalker
- 9% - stalker was arrested
Stalking Victimization in the United States
(Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009)
Key Findings

3.4 million persons identified themselves as victims of stalking in a 12-month period.

This represents an increase of 2 million victims per year over the findings of the 1998 study.
Key Findings

- An estimated 14 in every 1,000 persons age 18 and older were victims of stalking.
- About half (46%) experienced at least one unwanted contact per week.
- Risk was highest for individuals who were divorced or separated – also highest for younger persons (age 18-19 & 20-24).
- Women were at greater risk than men for stalking, but equally likely to experience harassment.
Key Findings

- Approximately 1 in 4 victims reported some form of “cyberstalking”
- 46% experienced fear of not knowing what would happen next
- Nearly 3 in 4 victims knew their offender in some capacity
- More than half lost 5 or more days from work related to the stalking
- 11% had been stalked for 5+ years!
The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey  
(CDC, 2011)
Prevalence of Stalking

- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men experienced stalking victimization during their lifetime in which they felt very fearful or believed they or someone close to them would be harmed or murdered.
Prevalence of Stalking

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men experienced stalking victimization during their lifetime in which they felt any amount of fear
Who are the Stalkers?

- About two thirds of female victims were stalked by a current or former intimate partner (66.2%), next most common was stalking by an acquaintance (24%)
- 41% of men were stalked by an intimate partner, next most common was stalking by an acquaintance (40%)
More than half of female victims and more than one-third of male victims were stalked before the age of 25.
Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide
(McFarlane et al., 1999)
Stalking & Murder

In the year prior to their murder:
76% of femicide victims had been stalked by their intimate partner.

67% of femicide victims had been physically abused by their intimate partner.

54% of victims reported stalking to law enforcement before they were killed.
Stalking: Real Fear, Real Crime
By permission of the National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Center

Stalking Video
Stalking & Murder

- Greatest risk of violence when the stalker:
  - Issued direct threats of violence
  - Expressed jealousy of the victim’s relationships with others during the relationship
  - Uses illegal drugs
  - Risk of violence is heightened when there is presence of all three factors

(from Women’s Experience of Violence During Stalking by Former Romantic Partner, 2005)
The National College Women Sexual Victimization Study (2000)
College Students and Stalking

A study conducted at multiple universities in the late 1990’s…

- 13.1% of college women were stalked during the 7 month period of the study
- 80.3% of victims knew stalker:
  - 43% current/former intimate partner
  - 25% classmate
  - 10% acquaintance
  - 6% friend
  - 6% co-worker
Reporting Stalking

- 83% of incidents were **NOT** reported to police or campus law enforcement...

  Why?

  Many victims may not formally report initially, but most (93.4%) confide in someone
Stalking and Sexual Violence

There are no profiles of stalkers

SO...

Who are the “stranger” stalkers?

“Nondomestic Organized Stalkers”

Stalking + Premeditation = Sexual Assault?
“Nondomestic Organized Stalkers”

- Appearance/dress of victim is virtually never a factor in how victim was selected.
- Stalkers select victims based on voyeurism and opportunity (vulnerability).
- Rapists typically stalk several women at a time and then wait for the best opportunity.
- Victim typically does not know she is being stalked until the stalker wants her to know.
Dr. Lisak’s Research

From studies of 1,882 male students from Duke and UMASS:
- 120 (6.4%) committed rape or attempted rape
- 76 reported committing multiple rapes
- The 120 committed a total of 483 rapes
- The 76 repeated rapists committed 439 of the rapes (average of 5.8 each)
- 70 of the 120 admitted to other acts of interpersonal violence, including battery, physical/sexual abuse of children, and other acts of sexual violence
- 0 were arrested/charged/prosecuted
Dr. Lisak’s Research

Interviews with the male students revealed:

- Rapists feel angry, not empathic, when victims resist.
- Rapists minimize their violence and blame victims for “leading me on” or say “she knew what she was getting into.”
- Rapists stalk and target their victims - they premeditate and plan their attacks.
- Rapists use multiple strategies (such as alcohol) to make victims vulnerable.
Rapists

Commonalities between Stranger and Non-Stranger Rapists:

- Many are serial rapists
- Typically plan the rape in advance
- Victim’s accessibility is the primary factor
- Victim’s appearance has little or nothing to do with the rapist’s choice of victim
Convicted rapists were asked what one thing could victims do to help protect themselves from being raped...
Stalking and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking
Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

- U.S. citizen children are being exploited every day for commercial sexual activities, including prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that at least 100,000 U.S. children are victims of sex trafficking each year.
Who are the Victims?

- It is estimated that at any given time, as many as 30,000-40,000 pre-teen and teenage “runaways” reside in Florida.
- These “runaway” and “throwaway” children are particularly vulnerable to and likely to be targeted for sex trafficking.
- Youth running away from unstable home environments where they suffered sexual and/or physical abuse are often lured by pimps with promises of love, security, and belonging.
Common Reactions to Stalking
Common Reactions

- Fear
- Feelings of vulnerability
- Difficulty trusting others
- Anxiety
- Depressed mood
- Disrupted sleeping and nightmares
- Disrupted eating
- Intrusive thoughts, flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating and forgetfulness
- Feelings of confusion
Assistance for Victims
Assistance for Victims

- **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS**
- Call 911 if you have an emergency
- Don’t be embarrassed or blame yourself
- Create a specialized safety plan
- Take all threats seriously
- Contact a crisis hotline, Rape Crisis Center or Domestic Violence Center
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Assistance for Victims

- Obtain a copy of your state’s stalking laws
- Visit the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) Stalking Resource Center website
- Notify your family, friends, & co-workers…remaining silent is the stalkers best weapon against you
- Consider taking a self defense course,
Assistance for Victims

- Stalking situations vary - do what you need to do to keep yourself safe at home, work, school, in your vehicle, and in other public places
  - Install solid core doors with dead bolts, change locks if needed (dead bolt buddy)
  - Install adequate outside lighting
  - Vary travel routes
  - May consider moving, adding phone number, obtaining protective order, obtaining PO Box…
Safety Planning

- Relocation assistance may be available
- Continuously assess threat of violence – threat level is not “fixed”
Risk Reduction

- Technology can be used to stalk…
- Geotagging is when your JPEG photos are “tagged” to show exactly where they were taken (provides the latitude and longitude). Uploading photos or videos from your GPS-enabled smartphone (i.e. iPhone) or digital camera to the internet then leads you to share where you live, work, etc. Although you can’t see the data in the photo, it is stored in metadata and can be retrieved through certain cites, allowing anyone to pinpoint your exact location and create a Google map to locate you.
Risk Reduction

- You can disable the geotag function on your smart phone (check out www.ICanStalkU.com for how-to steps)
- Know that your location is revealed when posting to Twitter from a GPS-enabled mobile device, but the geographical data is not hidden, as it is when posting photos
- Consider everywhere you post photos and videos, such as Craigslist and YouTube
Risk Reduction

- Be aware of the existence of websites such as this...

SpyBubble - Mobile Spy Application
Compatible with any Smartphone and Blackberry

Cell PhoneSpying - YouTube
What YOU Can Do

Listen to the victim’s story
Provide support
Never blame the victim
Encourage the victim to seek counseling services and to contact a crisis line
Allow the victim to make choices about how to handle her/his situation
Take steps for your own safety
Protection Under the Law

Stalking is a crime in all 50 states
Stalking: The Facts

- Stalking is a crime and should be considered dangerous
- Many people are stalked – not only celebrities
  - Most victims know their stalker
  - Anyone can be stalked - during, after or in the absence of a relationship
- Stalking is never the victim’s fault
- New technology can be used to stalk
- Help is available to victims of stalking
  - YOU can make a difference
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Resources

- Stalking: A Handbook for Victims by Emily Spence-Diehl
  (Available for free download at www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx)
References

- The National Center for Victims of Crime
  www.ncvc.org
  (Click on Stalking Resource Center)
References


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