

Common Responses

If you are or have been stalked you may be affected in different ways. It is not uncommon to experience reactions such as anger, frustration, fear, sadness, and guilt.

Everyone reacts to stressful situations differently so know that whatever you are feeling or experiencing is normal. If your reactions last longer than a few weeks or are having an impact on your daily life, you might want to seek professional assistance.

Benefits of Counseling

Some of the benefits of seeking counseling are:

- Reviewing and processing the incident can help you clarify what actually occurred.
- Legal and judicial decisions can be discussed and utilized as part of the promotion of healing and resolution.
- Counseling can help develop coping skills and strategies—allowing for the continuance of school, work or relationships.
- Establishment of a support network can help to decrease the negative physical, emotional, and psychological effects that often result from traumatic experiences.

You can utilize traumatic experiences as an opportunity to build and practice confidence, assertiveness, and protective instinct skills.

Who can help?

The Travis County Sheriff's Office Victim Services Unit can assist you with information regarding your case status, Victims' Rights, Crime Victim Compensation, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to the appropriate community helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.



Resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
www.thehotline.org

First Call For Help: Dial 211
www.211texas.org

National Stalking Resource Center
www.victimsofcrime.org

Internet Safety
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov

Phone/Text Safety
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov

Information and Advocacy
www.womenslaw.org

Stalking

Victim Services Unit
5555 Airport Blvd
Austin, TX 78751
512-854-9709



Name/ID Number:

Direct Number:

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1748
Austin, TX 78767

What is Stalking?

A stalker attempts to control his/her victim through behavior or threats that are intended to intimidate and terrify. A stalker can be an acquaintance, an unknown person, a family member, or a former intimate partner. Stalking can be perpetrated by the stalker or by another person acting on her/his behalf. A stalker may follow a victim off and on for a period of days, weeks, or even years.

While stalking behavior is intended to create fear and can have a significant impact on the life of a victim, it is important to understand that not all stalking behavior is against the law.

Definitions...

According to the Texas Penal Code:

Someone commits **Stalking** if on more than one occasion they knowingly engage in conduct, including following another person, that the offender knows or a reasonable person would believe the other person will regard as threatening: 1) bodily injury or death for the individual, their family or household members, a person with whom they have a dating relationship or 2) that an offense will be committed against their property.

A person commits **Terroristic Threat** if he or she threatens to commit any offense involving violence to any person or property with the intent to place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury.

Someone commits **Harassment** if this person initiates communication by telephone, text, in writing, or by electronic communication with intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another.

If You are Being Stalked

Notify Law Enforcement

All stalking incidents should be reported to law enforcement. Request a copy of each report from your local law enforcement agency. Give any written correspondence to law enforcement and report any phone threats.

Keep a Log

Obtain the names and addresses of any witnesses. Put dates received on all correspondence from the stalker. Know the name of the law enforcement officer in each incident. For each incident, write a detailed description of what occurred.

Apply for a Protective Order

Applications for Stalking Protective Orders can be filed through the County Attorney's Office (314 W 11th St). Or, to get a Pro Se Protective Order Packet call 800-777-3247. This packet will help you apply for a protective order to bar the stalker from certain areas near your home, your work, or your child's school.

Record Telephone Conversations

Tell the stalker to stop calling and hang up. Screen your calls. Write down the time and date the stalker calls. Keep recorded messages and provide copies of them to law enforcement.

Take Pictures of the Stalker

Take pictures of the stalker if it can be done safely. Notate the time, date, and location for each picture.

Keep All Correspondence

Make a copy of anything you receive from the stalker. Touching the letter as little as possible will preserve fingerprints.

Tell Everyone

Give friends, family members, teachers, co-workers, and neighbors a description of the stalker. Ask them to document each time the stalker is seen by them.

Important Safety Measures

If you are being stalked, it is imperative that you take action to increase your safety.

- Be alert and aware of people and things that are happening around you.
- Vary routes of travel when you come and go from work, school, home, or even errands.
- Park in well-lit areas and ask someone to escort you to your car.
- Be aware of vehicles following you. If you are followed drive to a police/fire station, hospital, or busy shopping center and sound the horn to attract attention.
- Alert managers, co-workers, and security at your place of business. Provide a picture or description of the stalker.
- Have a Security Check by law enforcement of your home to ensure your home can be locked safely. Secure all doors and windows in both your home and vehicle.
- Maintain an unlisted Number and if Caller ID is available in your area, obtain the service for your phone.
- Do not dismiss any threat written or verbal.
- Maintain your privacy and never give out your personal information to anyone where the information can be overheard. Remove your phone number and social security number from as many items as possible.
- Develop a Safety Plan for yourself and family members in case of emergency. Decide on a safe place to meet and someone to call if problems do arise.

"What is Stalking" through "Important Safety Measures" adapted on 1/27/11 from the Office of the Attorney General website: <https://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/stalking.shtml>