Stalking isn’t a Punchline...
Stalking isn’t Glamorous...
Stalking is Dangerous

Jennie Reister
The Julian Center
Welcome and Introductions

- Thanks for joining us!
- ICESA and the ICESA Campus Consortium
  - OWH Federal Grantee
  - Tracey Horth Krueger (Chief Executive Officer)
  - Mahri Irvine, PhD (Director of Campus Initiatives)
  - Alexandria Benifield, MPH (Evaluation Specialist)
  - Burton Patterson (Rape Prevention Education Coordinator)
  - Piper Rowley (Research Assistant)

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ICESA Campus Consortium
Webinar Technology

• Your mic is automatically muted
• No group chat feature
• Submit your questions in the “Question” box
• This webinar is being recorded
• 1 handout
Today’s Presenter

Jennie Reister
Senior Director of Mission Impact
The Julian Center
Stalking isn't a Punchline. Stalking isn't Glamorous. Stalking is Dangerous.

Presented By:
Jennie Reister, The Julian Center
In this webinar, we will discuss stalking including statistics, characteristics and examples which some viewers may find triggering.

If you are uncomfortable during the webinar for any reason, please leave the session and seek support from a trusted colleague or friend.

There is no explanation necessary or expected for your departure from the session.

Always take care of yourself first.
January is National Stalking Awareness Month

Stalking is one of the few crimes where early intervention can prevent violence & death.

Stalking is not romantic, it's a crime.

Stalking: know it, name it, stop it.
Session Agenda

• Overview of Statistics
• Overview of Definitions
• Stalker Acceptance Myth
• The Normalization of Stalking
• How Advocates Can Help
I feel that there is a critical shortage of reliable research on the statistics of stalking as it relates to LGBTQ+, Latinx, immigrant, deaf/hard of hearing and differently-abled populations.

Rather than provide inaccurate or dubious statistics, I did not include any in this presentation.

All participants should be aware that these populations also experience stalking and sections of this presentation following the statistics are relevant to all stalking victims and survivors.
Like intimate partner violence and sexual violence, stalking is difficult to quantify due to under-reporting, definition confusion and barriers to seeking assistance.

Also like intimate partner violence and sexual violence, the perpetrator are known to the victim the vast majority of the time.

In the U.S. 15% of women and 6% of men have experienced stalking where they feared for their life or safety.
Stalking Statistics

• Over 30% of stalking perpetrators have multiple victims over their lifetime
• 46% of stalkers make unwanted direct contact with their victims at least one time per week
• 15% of stalking victims have been stalked for 5 years or more with no cessation in behavior
• Weapons are used to harm or threaten the victim in 20% of stalking cases
The federal law governing the firearms prohibition following domestic violence conviction does not typically extend to stalking convictions.

Indiana State Code allows for firearms prohibition following a conviction for domestic battery or “crimes of domestic violence” which may include stalking (instituted in 2016 – House Bill 1069).
Stalking was not a crime anywhere in the U.S. until 1990.

According to the Stalking Resource Center in a national study:

- 72% of stalking victims report that charges were not filed in their cases after reporting to law enforcement.
- In cases where police have all the information they need to charge stalking, stalking is only charged 5% to 16% percent of the time.
Stalking Definitions

Legal definitions of what constitutes stalking vary widely from state to state – the general definition provided by the Stalking Resource Center is:

“A course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.”
There are three distinct characteristics that most researchers, advocates and laws use to identify stalking:

- **Victim does not desire contact, attention or communication from perpetrator**
- **Repeated contact or tracking behaviors by perpetrator**
- **Victim fears harm to self or loved ones**

**Stalking Definitions**
These characteristics may present issues to prosecuting stalking cases:

1. Stalking by its nature involves multiple incidents

2. Stalking requires the victim to feel fear and fear is subjective

3. Many of the acts that make up a stalking case on the whole may not be illegal as individual acts
Stalking Definitions

IMPORTANT:
Stalking is **NOT** defined by the relationship between the perpetrator and victim.
Impact on Victims

Common Outcomes:

• 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next
• 29% of stalking victims fear the stalking will never stop
• 1 in 8 employed stalking victims lose time from work as a result of their victimization
• 1 in 7 stalking victims move as a result of their victimization
• Negative mental health impact:
  • Anxiety
  • Insomnia
  • Social dysfunction
  • Severe depression
  • Suicide
Intersection with Intimate Partner Violence

• 76% of IPV survivors experience stalking after leaving an abusive relationship
• 89% of female homicide victims had also been stalked in the 12 months before their murder
• 79% of abused female homicide victims reported being stalked during the same period that they were abused
• 54% of female homicide victims reported stalking to police before they were killed by their stalkers
Stalking Acceptance Myth

Common misperceptions feed the rejection of stalking reports:

1. Belief that stalking is benign and not harmful to anyone
2. Belief that stalkers pursue others because they receive encouragement or a lack of active discouragement
3. Belief that stalking is (or should be) flattering to the victim
Stalking Acceptance Myth

These perceptions have been shown to have outcomes on behavior related to stalking:

1. Stronger stalking myth acceptance is associated with higher levels of perpetration
2. Jurors who indicate endorsement of these myths hand down more lenient sentences
3. Distinct difference have been observed among different genders in perception of the severity of stalking
Stalking behaviors have been featured and romanticized in media, film and books for many years. These portrayals may contribute to a societal agreement that stalking is an acceptable form of showing romantic affection, even following rejection.
How Stalking is Romanticized in Films

1. Cute or tragic meet-up
2. Chemistry
3. “Will they or won’t they” moments
4. Few happy moments
5. Betrayal of one partner
6. Betrayed partner tells other they don’t want to be with them
7. Betrayer is miserable
8. Random BFF of Betrayer says “You gotta win him/her back”
9. Betrayer performs an exceedingly inappropriate and unwanted act known as “The Grand Gesture”
10. Happily Ever After
"Men are socialized to be persistent and women are socialized to be flattered by it... Women are taught that we should want this from men. That it means we’re desirable."

- Dr. Julia Lippman, University of Michigan

Examples of Popular Movies that Depict Stalking Behavior as Romantic:

Love, Actually
Twilight Series
50 Shades of Grey Series
Beauty and the Beast
Crazy, Stupid, Love
Suicide Squad
Nocturnal Animals
Normalization of Stalking

When does following my ex online become stalking?
From celebrity news, we're always obsessed over people that critique us. Social media just makes that easier - but there's still a line you can cross.

76 Thoughts Everyone Has While Facebook Stalking Their Crush
The only reason you still have Facebook.

23 Confessions Every Social Media Stalker Will Understand
"I stalk my enemies on social networks to confirm my life is better."

The casual use of the word “stalking” or “stalker” normalizes actual stalking behavior and minimizes the experience of stalking victims.
As with intimate partner violence and sexual violence, we start by believing.

Hi...I believe you.

You can’t say the wrong thing if you’re listening.
How to Help Victims

1. Stop viewing stalking as a standard part of a violent relationship and view it as an escalation of danger

2. Be mindful of your language at your agencies, on social media and at professional events not to minimize or normalize stalking behavior

3. Screen all clients for stalking as part of their safety assessment:
   • Are they the target of unwanted contact?
   • Have there been any threats?
   • Is the client afraid for themselves or their family?
Safety Planning

A detailed safety plan for stalking victims may include risk reduction strategies such as:

- Changing phone numbers
- Deleting Social Media Accounts
- Changing banks/grocery stores/pharmacies/doctors
- Varying routes to work/school
  - Enhanced home security
  - Moving to a new location
- Telling others about the stalking
- Keeping a log of stalking behaviors

Having to make these changes is traumatic for victims — it is important that you acknowledge their feelings about having to modify their lives because of something out of their control.
Special Considerations

- Shared Children
- Legal Proceedings
- Shared Employer
- Shared School
- Shared Friends
- Shared Financial Interests

These issues may increase danger for victims stalking victims.
Whether or not violence is present, someone is still exerting control over their lives against their will.

Someone is making them feel afraid.

Someone is making them feel unsafe.

Someone is making their life miserable.

Someone is making them feel like they’re going crazy.

Thank you for all that you and for lighting the path for some of the most vulnerable people in our community — your work matters and you make a difference!

THIS IS ALL OF YOU.

because I was exactly what the world needed everywhere I went.
Have Questions or Just Didn’t Get Enough of Me Today? 😊

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References


Thank You!

- Please complete the survey at end of webinar!
- Please send list of attendees to katie@indianacesa.org by Feb. 2!
- Upcoming Webinars and Trainings
  - February 6: Digital Storytelling webinar
  - February 20: Trans Communities webinar
  - March 12 – 16: Victim Advocacy training (40 hours)
  - April 9 – 10: ICESA annual conference
  - April 23: Human Resources Investigations webinar
- www.indianacesa.org