

STALKING & LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS: FACT SHEET

Generally, research shows that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely than heterosexual and cisgender individuals to experience stalking.



What is stalking? While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is: a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking is a crime under the laws of 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and the Federal government.



What does LGBTQ+ stand for? LGBTQ+ is an acronym used as an umbrella term for a range of sexual minority and gender non-conforming identities: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (referring to sexual orientation); Transgender, Queer (referring to gender identity); and the plus sign at the end expands the acronym to include additional sexual orientations and gender identities* not specifically listed.

**Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction toward others. Gender identity is the psychological sense of one's gender or lack thereof.*

LGBTQ+ STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- 1 in 3 bisexual women, 1 in 5 lesbian women, and 1 in 6 heterosexual women have experienced stalking victimization in their lifetimes.^A
- 1 in 9 gay men, 1 in 14 bisexual men, and 1 in 20 heterosexual men have experienced stalking victimization in their lifetimes.^B
- Among 18-24-year-olds after high school: Nearly 1 in 2 lesbian and bisexual white women; More than 2 in 5 gay and bisexual white men and men of color; Nearly 2 in 5 lesbian and bisexual women of color experience stalking victimization.^C
- Active duty service members identifying as LGBT are four times more likely than non-LGBT service members to experience sexual harassment, two times more likely to experience stalking, and two times more likely to experience sexual assault.^D

LGBTQ+ STALKING VICTIMIZATION ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- Among undergraduate students, 1 in 7 transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer and 1 in 10 female reported experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 17 of all students.^E

- Transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer student stalking victims (33%) were more likely than cisgender student victims (28% ciswomen, 29% cismen) to contact a program or resource for help.^F
- Since entering college, 1 in 4 of sexual minority students (lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, queer, other not listed) report experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 6 of heterosexual students.^G
- Among college students, bisexual and pansexual women are significantly more likely to experience stalking than heterosexual women, and gay men are significantly more likely to experience stalking than heterosexual men.^H

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next.^I
- 29% of stalking victims fear the stalking will never stop.^J
- 13% of stalking victims lose time from work due to fear or concern for safety, 12% lose time from work due to getting a protection order or testifying in court, and more than half lose 5 days of work or more.^K
- 11% of stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.^L
- Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction than people in the general population.^M
- LGBTQ+ individuals have higher rates of mental health issues when compared to heterosexual, cisgender individuals, which researchers believe stem from stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that heighten stress levels and predisposes them to adverse health outcomes.^N

Marginalization: LGBTQ+ individuals have historically faced—and continue to face—stigma, prejudice, discrimination, violence, and a lack of understanding in daily life and when accessing services. They often experience a hostile and stressful environment. Listening, being open, and treating victims with respect is essential.^O

STALKING OFFENDERS

- The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Many victims are stalked by a current or former intimate partner, or by an acquaintance.^P
- For sexual minority college students, the stalker was most likely to be an acquaintance, neighbor, coworker, or roommate.^Q
- 64% of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.^R
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.^S
- 19% of stalkers use a weapon to threaten and/or harm their victims.^T
- 31% of stalkers have stalked before.^U



This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-TA-AX-K074 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

1000 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1010 | Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 558-0040 | stalkingawareness.org

STALKING & LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS: FACT SHEET

SOURCES

- ^A Chen, J., Walters, M. L., Gilbert, L. K., & Patel, N. (2020). Sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence by sexual orientation, United States. *Psychology of Violence*, 10(1), 110–119.
- ^B *Ibid*
- ^C Brady, P.Q., Reynolds, B. W., Landhuis, J. (2021). *Applied stalking: Examining whether physical and/or technology-facilitated stalking influences stalking acknowledgement and victims' decision to report to the police.* Submitted for publication.
- ^D Schuyler, A. C., Klemmer, C., Mamey, M. R., Schrage, S. M., Goldbach, J. T., Holloway, I. W., & Castro, C. A. (2020). Experiences of Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Sexual Assault During Military Service Among LGBT and Non-LGBT Service Members. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 33(3), 257-266.
- ^E Cantor, D., et al. (2020). *Report on the AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct.* Westat.
- ^F *Ibid*
- ^G Fedina, L., Backes, B. L., Sulley, C., Wood, L., & Busch-Armendariz, N. (2020). Prevalence and sociodemographic factors associated with stalking victimization among college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 68(6), 624–630.
- ^H Davis, G. E., Hines, D. A., & Reed, K. M. P. (2021). Routine activities and stalking victimization in sexual minority college students. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, Online first.
- ^I Baum, K., et al. (2009). *Stalking Victimization in the United States.* Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- ^J *Ibid*
- ^K *Ibid*
- ^L *Ibid*
- ^M Blauuw, E., et al. (2002). *The Toll of Stalking.* *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17(1):50–63.
- ^N Meyer, I. H. (2016). Does an improved social environment for sexual and gender minorities have implications for a new minority stress research agenda?. *Psychology of sexualities review*, 7(1), 81–90.
- ^O National Center for Victims of Crime & the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (2010). *Why it matters: Rethinking victim assistance for LGBTQ victims of hate violence and domestic violence.* Washington, D.C. & New York.
- ^P Catalano, S., Smith, E., Snyder, H. & Rand, M. (2009). *Bureau of Justice Statistics selected findings: Female victims of violence.* Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf>.
- ^Q Davis, G.E., Hines, D.A., & Palm Reed, K.M. (2021). *Routing Activities and Stalking Victimization in Sexual Minority College Students.* *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*: 1-29.
- ^R Mohandie, K., Meloy, J.R., McGowan, M.G., & Williams, J. (2006). *The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers.* *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 51 (1), 147-155.
- ^S *Ibid*
- ^T *Ibid*
- ^U *Ibid*