

Intimate partner stalking, like domestic violence, is a coercive control where one person attempts to exert power over another.

When a survivor leaves a domestic violence relationship and is attempting to break free from the abusive cycle of that relationship, an abuser may continue to make an effort to have power and control over the survivor. Stalking can take on different forms. Some cases of stalking may look like flowers and chocolates on a car window, while for others it may be threatening and harassing calls and emails. If a person feels they are being stalked they could make a report and seek further options for help in getting protection. Some alternative options are getting a restraining order or looking into alternative housing like a domestic violence shelter.

After a survivor leaves an abusive relationship, due to heightened safety concerns, it is recommended taking extra precautionary measures for safety. If a survivor has a restraining order, it is important to have copies made and have them accessible at work, home, school, and/or on their person. If the abuser begins to harass the survivor and stalk them, it is important to inform the police of this crime. Stalking is a crime and can be reported.

What is stalking?

Stalking is defined by California Penal Code Section 646.9, which provides that “any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family” is guilty of the crime of stalking.

Unwanted pursuit. This is probably the best term to define stalking. There are many different behaviors that can be called stalking.

All of these acts share two things

1. They are actions/behaviors not wanted by the victim.
2. They threaten or cause fear to the victim.

New ways of staking emerge frequently and no list can encompass them all, but stalking often includes

- Following or surveillance
- Inappropriate approaches and confrontations
- Appearing at a place of work or residence
- Unwanted telephone calls

- Threats
- Threats to family and friends
- Unwanted letters
- Unwanted or threatening
- Unwanted pages or e-mails
- Damage to property
- Physical assault
- Sexual assault

Leaving the Domestic Violence Relationship

Sometimes, survivors may not be ready to leave their home yet, but are considering leaving. It might be helpful to create an escape bag that a survivor can store at a friend or family member's home in the event that they may have to flee from their batterer. Another option is to contact the local domestic violence agency, domestic violence hotline, and/or shelter, and **ask for their support in creating a safety plan** that fits the life and situation of the survivor.

To Stay Safe Where You Are

If the batterer has left or is incarcerated, a survivor may decide to not relocate from their current residence, however their safety and the safety of their family is still important. Here are some things to consider when taking the following measures:

- Apply for a Restraining Order and keep a copy
- Change the locks on the doors if the abuser has keys
- Consider changing their telephone number (the first time is free)
- Engage their neighbors help, let them know they can call the police if they hear fearful noises or see your partner hanging around your premises
- Keep originals or copies of important papers in a safe, accessible place - they may want to keep copies somewhere other than their home
- Monitored visitation of the children
- Take self-defense classes and learn to become assertive and build their confidence