

# Research on Partner Stalking:

*Putting the Pieces Together*



# Research on Partner Stalking: Putting the Pieces Together

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & CAVEATS

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Thank you to the researchers, clinicians, and other professionals involved in addressing stalking, as well as the victims of stalking, who have all provided a strong foundation of knowledge. This paper draws from that foundation, and without the work of the many committed people in this area we would not be ready to transition to the next generation of research and responses related to partner stalking.

A special thanks to Allison Mateyoke-Scrivner, Whitney Gore, Lindsay Kampfer, and Diane Parrish for their unique and important contributions to this report.

It should be noted that information for this paper was drawn primarily from peer reviewed published articles and published reports from the National Institute of Justice or other agencies such as the Stalking Resource Center and the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Stalking definitions vary greatly in the literature and some are hard to decipher. This paper attempted to restrict publications to those that defined stalking as: (1) repeated (2 or more) acts and (2) including some element of fear or concern about safety; or to those that defined stalking as a significant stressor or intrusion. General research trends are described within each section. Some of the trends that were noted are preliminary as they are from only one or two studies. Time and space limitations made it impossible to include every relevant research trend or citation.

The literature often uses the term victim and survivor interchangeably, with some disciplines favoring one over the other. The use of the term victim in this paper is not meant to imply that women who have experienced partner violence and stalking are not survivors. Rather, the use of the word victim was simply chosen to provide a consistent terminology throughout the paper and should be thought of as interchangeable with survivor.

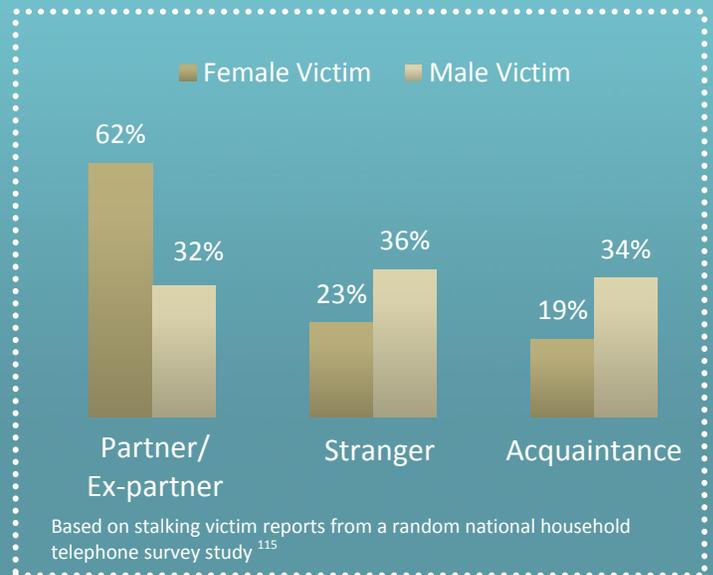
Research indicates that most stalkers are male, and most stalking victims, especially partner stalking victims, are female (especially when definitions include the fear element). Because of the gendered nature of partner stalking, many studies focus on female partner stalking victims.

## PREVALENCE

Research shows that partner stalking is a relatively common form of violence against women.

- Partner stalking is the **largest category** of stalking cases.<sup>84; 94; 106; 115</sup>
- Between **4.8%** and **14.5%** of women 18+ report ever being stalked by an intimate partner.<sup>c 2; 36; 48; 115</sup>
- In contrast **.6% of men** 18+ report ever being stalked by an intimate partner.<sup>2; 115</sup>
- College women appear to experience partner stalking at high rates with approximately **5.3% of female college students** from a large national sample of students reporting being stalked by a partner or ex-partner in about a 7 month period.<sup>35</sup> One smaller study of college women found that 6.9% of the sample was stalked by a current or former partner.<sup>13</sup>

### VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP FOR TWO STUDIES OF STALKING CASES



<sup>c</sup> Although studies vary in how intimate partner is defined, most definitions include current and former husbands, cohabitants, and boyfriends/girlfriends. Some studies explicitly included “dates” while others did not specify where “dates” would be categorized (i.e., intimate partner or acquaintance).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNER STALKING

### RELATIONSHIP CONTEXT

Partner stalking overlaps with a history of partner physical and sexual violence and coercive control.<sup>2a; 8; 12; 19; 20; 23; 24; 53; 55; 60; 75; 77; 95; 96; 108</sup>

- Brewster (2003) reported that 74% of those stalked by a former intimate partner reported violence and/or coercive control during the relationship while 26% did not.
- Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found that 81% of women stalked by a former or current partner were also physically assaulted by that partner. Stalking victimization during separation was also associated

with a range of controlling tactics during the relationship.

- Several studies have identified a significant association between partner stalking and sexual assault.<sup>19; 53; 58; 77; 94; 108; 115</sup>

### DURATION AND TRAJECTORY OF PARTNER STALKING

The average duration of partner stalking appears to be just over two years, and the vast majority of partner stalking victims report that the stalking began while the relationship was intact and escalated during periods of separation. Further, although partner stalking victims report separating more frequently in the past compared to partner violence victims who were not stalked, once a protective order is obtained, they are less likely to reconcile.

- Several studies suggest the average length of partner stalking is approximately 2.2 years<sup>8; 115</sup> and Brewster (1999) reported the median partner stalking duration as 12 months.
- Partner stalking is often initiated during the relationship. For example, Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found that 57% of stalking victims were stalked during the relationship. McFarlane et al. (1999) found that between 63%-69% of attempted femicide (women murdered or almost murdered by their partner) or actual femicide victims were stalked while in the relationship.

- Studies of partner stalking within the context of prior abusive relationships find even higher rates of stalking initiation during the relationship, with ranges of 81% to 90%.<sup>59; 82</sup>
- Partner stalking is also common during periods of separation, with several studies suggesting that stalking intensity and/or frequency increases during periods of separation.<sup>59; 76; 78; 82</sup>

Being stalked while the relationship is intact may make separating practically and psychologically very difficult. Stalking while separated may hinder the ability to stay separated for a variety of reasons including safety concerns. More specifically, stalking during separation may increase the risk of violence.<sup>67; 69</sup>

- Victims stalked by violent partners report more separation attempts than partner violence victims who were not stalked.<sup>62; 77</sup> Yet, several studies indicate that partner stalking victims were less likely to reconcile with the stalker after a protective order was obtained than victims with protective orders who were not stalked.<sup>53; 62; 69</sup>

## STALKING TACTICS

Stalkers vary considerably in the types and frequency of stalking tactics.<sup>7; 8; 59; 77; 78</sup>

**Most Common Tactics.** Although stalking tactics and frequencies vary widely, several clusters of tactics appear to be very common across partner stalking cases as noted in the table.

- Physical surveillance is often the most frequently cited tactic (when considering all the varieties of physical surveillance), followed by phone calls, and then by other unwanted contact. Property invasion or destruction also is fairly common although this tactic is not assessed as often in studies of partner stalking.
- Although few studies examine proxy stalking, which is the involvement of other people in tracking victims,<sup>86</sup> the few that do report that approximately half or just over half of cases of partner stalking involve some kind of proxy stalking.<sup>59; 82</sup> The proxies may include friends and relatives, unidentified persons, professionals (e.g., private investigator), and the stalker’s new intimate partner.<sup>59; 82; 86</sup>

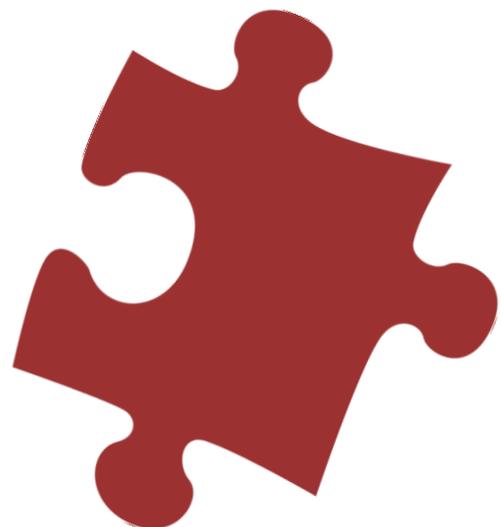
### Common Stalking Tactics

GENERAL TACTIC	SPECIFIC TACTICS	SOURCE
Physical surveillance	followed; spied on; watched; showed up places; waited places	6; 8; 13; 35; 38; 59; 76; 78; 82; 115
Unwanted phone calls		6; 8; 12; 35; 59; 75; 78; 82; 115
Other unwanted contact	Letters; emails; text messages; gifts	6; 13; 35; 38; 59; 75; 78; 82; 115
Property invasion or damage		6; 38; 59; 75; 78; 115
Proxy stalking		59; 82

**Cyber-stalking and the Use of Other Technology in Partner Stalking.** Cyber-stalking can be defined as “...the use of the internet, email, or other electronic communications devices to stalk another person” (Department of Justice, 1999, p. 2) while the use of technology is more broadly defined as “...the host of tools the stalker can use (now and in the future) to commit their crime” such as GPS and cameras in addition to the use of the internet (Stalking Resource Center, 2003, p. 1).

- Although many agree that the use of technology in stalking is an important area to study,<sup>34; 71; 85; 88; 103; 104; 107; 118</sup> Southworth, Finn, Dawson, Fraser, and Tucker (2007) indicate that few studies to date have examined the use of technology in partner stalking.
- Baum, Catalano, Rand, and Rose (2009) found relatively low rates of the use of technology within the context of stalking in general (26.1%).<sup>3</sup> Botuck, Berretty, Cho, Tax, Archer, and Cattaneo (2009) reported 15% of their sample of partner stalking victims reported contact through email or internet, 12.5% reported other technology use, and none used GPS.

- The following table summarizes a number of types of technology that can be used to stalk someone.<sup>3; 34; 85; 103; 104; 118</sup>



Examples of Ways Partner Stalkers Can Use Technology to Stalk

<b>Types</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Telephone Technologies</b>	<i>Caller Identification</i>	Reveals telephone number, name and location of caller
	<i>Fax Machines</i>	Reveals name, fax number and location of sender
	<i>TTY and TTD (Text-telephones used by hearing impaired)</i>	Can be used to impersonate others
	<i>Calling Cards/Spoof Cards</i>	(1) Provides anonymity for stalkers (2) disguises stalker number or allows impersonation
	<i>Cordless Telephones</i>	Conversations can be intercepted by other devices
	<i>Cellular and Wireless Telephones</i>	(1) Analog cellular telephones may be intercepted by radio scanners (2) new cellular telephone directory makes numbers available on an opt-in basis (3) can be used as listening devices (4) others can be impersonated or harassed through calls and text messages (e.g., SpoofApp) (5) call history can be monitored (6) another means of threats, harassment and flooding with texts, messages, phone calls
<b>GPS and Location Services</b>	<i>GPS (Global Positioning System)</i>	Location may be detected through GPS in cellular telephones or other GPS devices
<b>Computer and Internet Technology</b>	<i>Public Websites, Social Networking Sites, &amp; Blogs</i>	Websites or social networking sites can be used to (1) threaten victim (2) encourage others to contact victims (3) post personal information publicly (4) to impersonate victim or others to gain information about or access to victim (5) spread rumors about victim
	<i>E-mail and Instant Messages</i>	(1) Others or victim can be impersonated (2) used as another method of harassment through spamming or flooding the computer with unwanted email or messages (3) sending electronic viruses (4) subscribing victim to multiple listserves
	<i>Website Browser History</i>	Records internet activity
	<i>Spy Ware Software</i>	Monitors internet use
	<i>Keystroke Logging Software</i>	Records keys typed including passwords, PIN numbers, e-mail and Web sites
	<i>Hidden Cameras</i>	Web cameras connected to a remote computer
	<i>Online Databases and Information Brokers</i>	Personal information sold to and published by corporations, court and government agencies
	<i>Identity theft or other financial harm</i>	(1) Identity theft (2) purchasing items or services in victim's name

## DANGEROUSNESS & CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNER STALKING

### DANGER: COMPARING PARTNER STALKERS TO NON-PARTNER STALKERS

When examining dangerousness and characteristics of partner stalking, it is important to compare differences between partner stalkers and non-partner stalkers such as acquaintances and stranger stalkers.

Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, and Williams (2006, p. 153) summarize the difference between intimate partner stalkers and non-intimate partner stalkers:

*“[Intimate stalkers compared to non-intimate stalkers] are by far the most malignant. They have violent criminal records, abuse stimulants and/or alcohol, but are rarely psychotic. They frequently approach their targets and escalate in frequency and intensity of pursuit. They insult, interfere, threaten, and are violent. Over one-half of these subjects will physically assault their object of pursuit....Virtually all of them reoffend, and they do so more quickly than the other two groups. Almost one out of three will threaten with or use a weapon.”*

**Violence.** Partner stalkers are more threatening and more violent than non-partner stalkers. This trend has consistently been found in a number of different studies using a variety of methodologies.

- Partner stalkers are more threatening toward their victims.<sup>44; 84; 90; 101</sup> They are also more likely to follow through on those threats.<sup>90</sup>
    - For example, Thomas, Purcell, Pathé, and Mullen (2008) found that 71% of the partner stalking victims who were threatened were actually assaulted compared to 33% of the non-intimate partner stalking victims who were threatened.
  - Partner stalkers are more likely to assault their victim.<sup>31; 40; 73; 84; 90; 97; 99; 101</sup>
  - More partner stalkers threaten with, or actually use weapons on their victims.<sup>84</sup>
  - Partner stalkers are more likely to assault third parties.<sup>101</sup>
  - Palarea, Zone, Lane, and Langhinrichesn-Rohling (1999) found partner stalkers were more likely to threaten victim property and actually damage victim property than non-partner stalkers.
- Impact of Court Intervention.** Another dimension of stalking dangerousness is the responsiveness of the stalker to various interventions, especially court interventions.
- Partner stalkers are more likely to reoffend after a court intervention and to reoffend more quickly than non-partner stalkers.<sup>84; 98</sup>
- Features of Stalking.** In addition to threats and violence, partner stalkers appear to engage in stalking behavior more frequently and intensely than non-partner stalkers.
- Partner stalkers contact and approach their victims more frequently.<sup>84; 90</sup>
  - Partner stalkers are more insulting and interfering/intrusive in the victim's life.<sup>84; 101</sup>
  - Partner stalkers use the widest range of stalking tactics compared to non-partner stalkers.<sup>42; 89; 101</sup>
    - Having a prior history of intimacy may provide the stalker with a wider array of tactics to employ during the stalking.<sup>55; 59; 84; 86; 101</sup>
    - There are several reasons partner stalkers use a wider range of tactics including: (1) many boundaries have already been crossed in the relationship, making approach tactics more likely and potentially more threatening,<sup>90</sup> and (2) partner stalkers may know their partners' greatest weaknesses, concerns, fears, and secrets as well as details about their work, friends, family, customary routines, and hangouts.<sup>30; 55; 59; 90</sup>

- Partner stalkers escalate in frequency and intensity of pursuit more often than non-partner stalkers.<sup>84</sup>
- Partner stalkers are more persistent than non-partner stalkers.<sup>73</sup> For example, Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found partner stalking victims to be stalked an average of 2.2 years which was twice as long as non-intimate partner stalking victims who had an average stalking duration of 1.1 years.

**Characteristics of Stalkers.** Understanding what characteristics differentiate partner stalkers from other stalkers is important.

- In general, the research is inconsistent or lacking in the understanding of characteristics that differentiate partner stalkers from non-partner stalkers including criminal history, substance abuse, personality disorders, and delusional/psychotic disorders.<sup>28; 73; 99</sup>
  - However, some research is converging to suggest partner stalkers are more violent toward their victim but less likely to be psychotic.<sup>31; 46; 84</sup>

### DANGER: COMPARING ABUSIVE PARTNERS WHO STALK TO ABUSIVE PARTNERS WHO DO NOT STALK

A second way to examine partner stalking dangerousness is to examine differences between abusive partners who stalk their partners and abusive partners who do not stalk their partners.

**Prevalence.** Not all abusive partners stalk their victims.

- Several studies have found that between 50% and 60% of partner violence victims report ever being stalked by that partner.<sup>28; 39; 62; 66; 77</sup>
- The vast majority of partner violence victims who report ever being stalked by a violent partner report being stalked the year prior to obtaining a protective order (approximately 90%).<sup>57; 62</sup>
- Burgess, Baker, Greening, Hartman, Burgess, Douglas, and Halloran (1997) found 30% of domestic violence offenders in offender treatment self-reported stalking behaviors toward their victim.

**Danger and Harm.** It appears that abusive partners who stalk are more violent than abusive partners who do not stalk.

- Stalking was highly prevalent in cases of actual or attempted femicides.<sup>75; 76</sup> Approximately 90% of actual or attempted femicide victims who experienced a physical assault in the preceding year were also stalked by the violent partner.<sup>76</sup>

- Studies suggest that partner stalkers were more controlling and physically and sexually violent in the prior relationship compared to abusers who do not stalk their victims.<sup>19; 47; 53; 58; 62; 77; 81</sup>
- Klein, Salomon, Huntington, Dubois, and Lang (2009) recently completed a study of domestic violence police records and concluded that domestic violence cases with elements or charges of stalking were more threatening and violent than domestic violence cases without stalking.
- Several studies indicate women stalked by a violent partner after obtaining a protective order are more likely to experience almost every other kind of abuse and violence compared to women not stalked after a protective order, even after controlling for a number of relevant factors.<sup>54; 56</sup>
  - Specifically, Logan and Walker (2009a) found that women who were stalked by a violent partner after obtaining a protective order were 4 times more likely to experience physical assault, 9.3 times more likely to experience sexual assault, and 4.7 times more likely to be injured than women with protective orders who were not stalked<sup>d</sup>.
  - Logan and Walker (2010a) found victims who were stalked after obtaining a protective order experienced more overall violations and more severe violence than victims who experienced

<sup>d</sup> Controlling for other relevant factors including physical and sexual violence severity history. Numbers reported are Relative Risk Ratios.

ongoing violations but who were not stalked, even after controlling for past history of violence and other relevant factors.

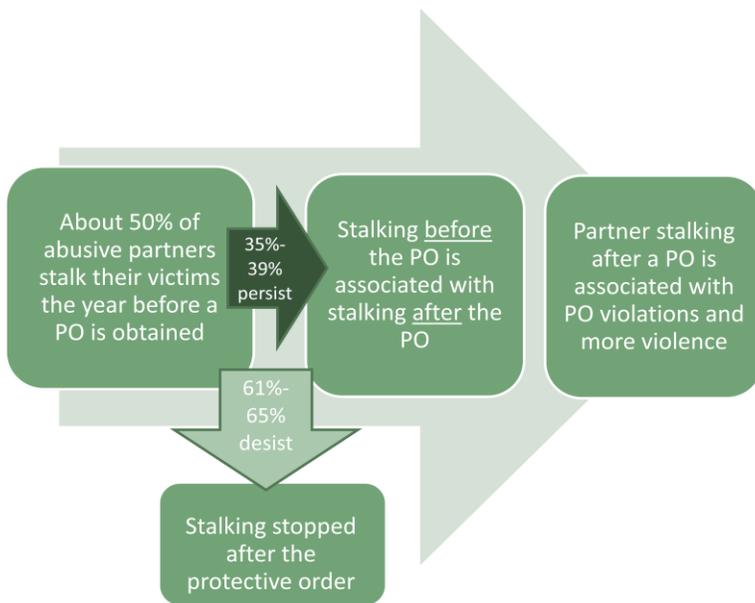
- Prior history of stalking is associated with future stalking.<sup>57; 62; 80; 81</sup> For example, Logan and Walker (2010b) found that of those stalked after the protective order, 78% were stalked before the protective order was obtained; however, 22% indicated the stalking was initiated after the protective order was issued.
- Even though prior history of stalking is associated with future stalking behavior, several studies suggest that the majority of partner stalkers discontinue their

stalking behavior after a civil protective order is obtained against them (61%-65%).<sup>37; 57; 62</sup>

- That means, however, that about 35% to 39% of stalkers continued to stalk their victims after a protective order was obtained.<sup>37; 52; 57; 62</sup>

**Characteristics.** Research on the characteristics of partner violence offenders who stalk compared to partner violence offenders who do not stalk is limited.

- A few studies suggest abusive partners who stalk have higher rates of drug and alcohol use<sup>14; 81; 95; 120</sup>



- About half of partner violence victims report their abusive partner had ever stalked them. Of those who report ever being stalked, the majority report they were stalked within the year prior to obtaining a civil protective order (PO).
- Being stalked before obtaining a civil protective order was significantly associated with being stalked after the order.
- However, several studies indicated that about one-third of stalkers continued to stalk their victims after obtaining a protective order, meaning that about two-thirds stopped stalking their partner after a protective order was obtained.
- Partner stalking victims who are stalked after a protective order experience more protective order violations and more violence than partner violence victims who are not stalked after obtaining a protective order.

## COLLATERAL IMPACT OF PARTNER STALKING

### FEAR, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, AND HEALTH

Partner stalking victims have higher levels of fear and distress including anxiety, PTSD, and depression symptoms than partner violence victims not stalked. Several studies indicate that partner stalking independently contributes to partner violence victims' fear and distress.

- In general, stalking victimization is associated with a range of fears and significant psychological distress.<sup>1; 3; 23; 25; 51; 68; 57; 93; 102; 109; 119</sup>

- Blaauw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan, and Freeve (2002) found from their study of stalking victims, of which 68% were stalked by an ex-partner, that 78% had mean scale scores for somatic symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression that were similar to symptoms reported by psychiatric outpatient populations.

- When partner stalking occurs within the context of a current or former relationship that was violent, victim fear and distress is significantly increased.<sup>11; 59; 78</sup>

- For example, Nicastro, Cousins, and Spitzberg (2000) found that partner stalking victims with histories of partner violence experienced over three times as many anxiety symptoms as stalking victims with no history of partner violence with the stalker.

- Brewster (2002) reported, from a sample of 187 women stalked by an ex-partner, that women who experienced violence during the relationship had higher distress levels than women who had not experienced violence during the relationship.

- Studies also suggest partner stalking contributes uniquely to fear and/or distress after controlling for other forms of partner violence.<sup>2; 52; 65; 79</sup>

- Logan, Walker, Hoyt, and Faragher (2009) compared the experiences of three groups of partner violence victims who had obtained civil protective orders: (1) partner violence victims who experienced no stalking and no protective order violations; (2) partner stalking victims who

experienced ongoing protective order violations but no stalking; and (3) partner violence victims who experienced protective order violations and stalking. Results indicate that stalking victims experience significantly higher fear of future harm and distress than even those with ongoing violations but no stalking.

- Dutton, Goodman, and Schmidt (2006) found that partner violence victims experience a wide range of fears. The Logan, Walker, Hoyt, and Faragher (2009) study found that partner stalking victims had significantly higher levels of fear across a variety of dimensions including: physical and sexual assault, ongoing harassment and threats, ongoing coercive control, harm and harassment of friends and family, child threat and interference, economic harm, and public humiliation.

- Partner stalking is also associated with sleep and health problems.<sup>7; 11; 23; 25; 57; 109</sup> Health problems may develop from, or be exacerbated by, the stress and distress from stalking or the cumulative stress and trauma from past violence and abuse as well as ongoing stalking.<sup>59</sup>

*Spitzberg (2002a, p. 278) concluded that "...stalking is significantly traumatizing and is traumatizing in ways that display a broad array of potential symptoms. It appears that stalking is at least as traumatizing as other forms of interpersonal violence. It is easy for practitioners to view stalking as a relatively mild trauma because there is often a lack of obvious physical harm or threat. Consequently, stalking victims often do not receive the same sense of urgency from law enforcement and counselors [as] victims of domestic violence or assault."*

- There is also evidence of a dose-response relationship with the intensity, frequency, and/or duration of stalking associated with increased fear and distress.<sup>6; 7; 22; 27; 45; 77; 89; 91</sup>

- Several studies suggest that explicit threats from the partner stalker are significantly associated with increased victim fear.<sup>8; 9; 74; 90; 97; 114</sup>
- McEwan, Mullen, and Purcell (2007, p. 7) concluded that, *“Though perhaps counter to expectations, it appears that the sense of looming vulnerability that accompanies threats may be more productive of psychological distress in stalking victims than the reality of actual physical assault, which importantly, may precipitate a more sympathetic response, particularly from law enforcement.”*
- This is consistent with others who have concluded that the harm from stalking is often more psychological than physical.<sup>21; 55; 59; 88; 91; 109; 110</sup>

## ECONOMIC HARM

The economic security of partner stalking victims is also at risk.

- Mustaine and Tewksbury (1999) suggest that being employed is associated with an increased risk of being stalked, and Nicastro, Cousins, and Spitzberg (2000) found that employed stalking victims experienced twice as many stalking tactics and were stalked three times longer than unemployed victims.
- Stalking victims frequently lose time from work, have actually lost a job, or are unable to take advantage of employment opportunities such as promotions or obtaining a better job due to the stalking.<sup>6; 44; 59; 64; 82; 115</sup>
  - For example, Logan and Walker (2010b) found that among partner violence victims with protective orders, those being stalked during the 6-month post-protective order follow-up period lost an average of 78 hours of productivity time (mostly time from work) compared to 18 hours for those that experienced ongoing violations but not stalking, and 4 hours for those who experienced no violations or stalking.<sup>57</sup>
- In addition to lost jobs and/or time from work, other consequences of stalking can jeopardize employment.<sup>64; 112; 113</sup>
  - For example, Logan, Shannon, Cole, and Swanberg (2007) found that partner violence victims who had ever been stalked by their violent partner reported more (1) direct on-the-job harassment (e.g., showing up at work, calling, lying to co-workers, harassing co-workers), (2) indirect job disruption (e.g., feeling too upset or stressed to work or continue working, sabotaging childcare arrangements or the car) and (3) indirect job performance interference (e.g., trouble concentrating at work) than partner violence victims who reported never being stalked.
- Stalking victims also report significant financial harm.<sup>8; 12; 44; 57; 59</sup>
  - Logan and Walker (2010b) found that partner violence victims who were stalked after a protective order was obtained incurred an average of \$610 in property loss or damage during the 6-month follow-up period, compared to \$135 for those who experienced ongoing violations but not stalking, and \$15 for those that experienced no violations or stalking.
  - Other financial costs to stalking victims include: (1) safety reasons such as devices to increase security (e.g. alarms) and changing residences; (2) legal fees; (3) health and mental health treatment; and, (4) deliberate damage to finances by the stalker (e.g., ordering items in the victim’s name, ruining credit).<sup>6; 8; 44; 59; 66; 82</sup>

## CHILDREN

Children can be used as tools, targets or allies in the stalking and there are secondary impacts of stalking on children.

- Having children in common with a stalker may increase the likelihood of interaction or more difficulty in changing routines, thus increasing the opportunity for the stalker to access the victim.<sup>12; 59</sup>
- Partner stalking victims experience more threats about the children than partner violence victims who do not report being stalked (e.g., threatening to obtain custody of children, sending threats through children, actually threatening to harm the children, and kidnapping or threatening to kidnap children).<sup>12; 59; 77</sup>
  - Logan and Walker (2010b) reported that partner stalking victims with children in common with the violent partner were 8.4 times more likely to experience threats of child harm or interference

after obtaining a protective order than partner violence victims who were not stalked.

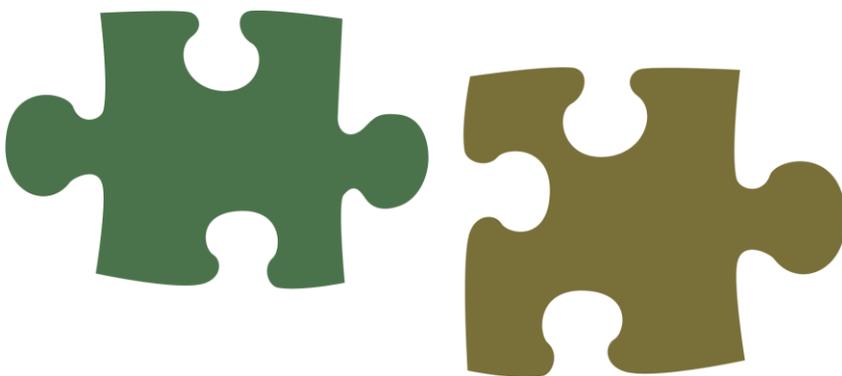
- Having children in common with the stalker may also increase the likelihood of harassment through the court system or child protective services.<sup>12; 59; 77</sup> Logan, Cole, Shannon and Walker (2006) found that some mothers feared that they would be held responsible for the stalker's behavior and that child custody could be threatened if child protective services or the courts believed the children were at risk in the home or that the mother was "unfit," as this is the message the partner often conveyed during the course of stalking.
- Logan, Cole, Shannon and Walker (2006) also found that mothers were concerned for their children's safety and children sometimes fear the stalker or what the stalker might do.

## FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Partner stalking victims are also impacted socially.

- Women experiencing stalking often become disconnected from their social networks and have more limited social opportunities.<sup>6; 12; 23; 45; 59; 109</sup>

- Not only are victims impacted by narrowing their social networks and opportunities, but their friends, family, and new partners may actually be at risk for threats, harassment, and actual assault by the stalker.<sup>59</sup>
  - Logan and Walker (2010b) found that friends and family of partner stalking victims were 4.5 times more likely to have been threatened, harassed, or actually assaulted than partner violence victims not stalked.



Although few studies have examined the cost of partner violence to society, the few that have suggest partner stalking is costly, although estimates to date are likely underestimates.

- Max, Rice, Finkelstein, Bardwell and Leadbetter (2004) estimated that partner stalking cost \$342 million in 2003 dollars for lost productivity and mental health care. This is likely a significant underestimate given that several important cost categories were not included.
- Logan, Walker, Hoyt, and Faragher (2009) estimated the cost of partner violence before and after a civil protective order was obtained against a male partner for one small state. The cost estimate included: (1) direct health, mental health, and

victim services used to cope with partner violence; (2) justice system costs; (3) lost productivity; and (4) property damage. Costs were then extrapolated to all those who obtained a protective order in 2007.

- For the estimated number of female stalking victims who obtained civil protective orders in 2007, partner violence and stalking cost the state about \$9 million. Because this estimate only includes stalking victims who obtained a protective order in a one year period (and not all those being stalked by a partner or those who had a protective order granted in a previous year) this number is likely an underestimate.
- Further, partner stalking cases cost the state significantly more money than partner violence cases with ongoing protective order violations, and cases with no protective order violations.

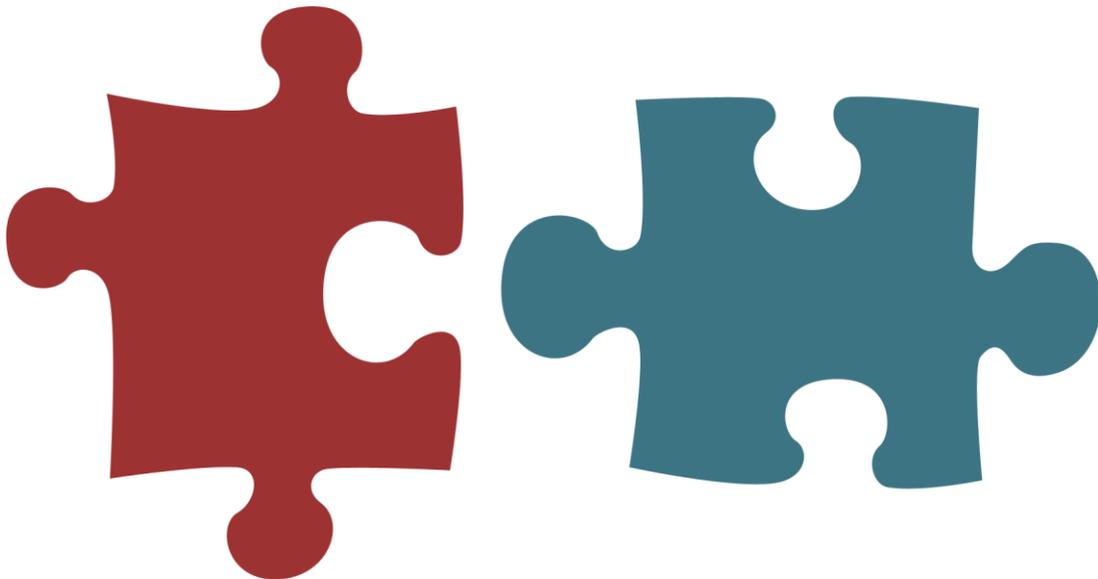
For female stalking victims who obtained civil protective orders in 2007, partner violence and stalking cost one small state about **\$9 million**

## PARTNER STALKING RISK ASSESSMENT

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Although there are limited risk assessments focused on partner stalking, a few research trends in risk assessment may be important.<sup>33</sup>

- Some evidence suggests that victim services personnel may not always identify partner stalking or are not always sure about how to advise partner stalking victims.<sup>8; 57; 70; 105</sup>
- Cattaneo (2007) examined risk of re-abuse for partner stalking victims in general, and found that victim advocates and partner violence victims assess risk of repeat abuse very differently. These authors conclude more research is needed to better understand how victims and advocates assess risk of repeat abuse. This study may have implications for partner stalking victims.
- A number of studies have examined partner violence victim prediction of repeat abuse and violence,<sup>5; 15; 16; 18</sup> and several of those found stalking to be an important factor in victim assessment and accuracy of risk.<sup>5; 18</sup>
- Although a few studies have developed an assessment of factors associated with stalking persistence and danger (e.g., Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM));<sup>4; 49; 50</sup> few have focused on persistence and danger of partner stalking.



# CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSES TO PARTNER STALKING

## REPORTING PARTNER STALKING TO THE POLICE

- Limited information exists about the rates of reporting partner stalking to the police.
- Several studies estimated that between 52% and 72% of partner stalking victims have talked to the police about stalking or incidents that occurred during the course of stalking.<sup>10; 59; 76; 117</sup>
- Fischer, Cullen, and Turner (2002) reported, from their sample of female college women, that only 17% of stalking incidents were reported to the police.
- Partner stalking victims cite a number of different reasons for not reporting their experiences to the police or for not reporting every incident of stalking. Some of the reasons victims give for not reporting stalking are shown in the table.

*Reasons victims do not report partner stalking to the police*

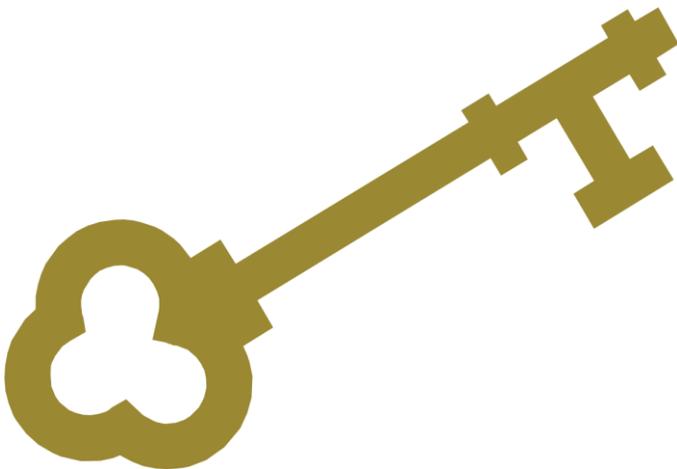
REASON	SOURCE
Police couldn't or wouldn't do anything	59; 66; 115
Afraid of the stalker	115
Lack of proof	66; 115
Concerned nobody would believe them	115
Didn't want police or courts involved	115
Not a police matter/private or personal matter	115
Stalking not severe enough	59
Consequences of calling the police are too negative	59
Not always clear how to report stalking	66



## POLICE IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNER STALKING

Police appear to have a limited understanding of partner stalking as shown through surveys, key informant interviews, and actual charges.

- Farrell, Weisburd and Wyckoff (2000) found that police officers have limited understanding of stalking statutes, policies, or how to identify and handle stalking cases. More recently, Klein, Salomon, Huntington, Dubois, and Lang (2009) reported that criminal justice system key informants had misinformation and limited knowledge about partner stalking cases.
- Several studies suggest police and other criminal justice system personnel are not always sensitive or helpful in partner stalking cases. For example, they sometimes do not take a report which can be problematic in terms of victim documentation; and it appears they infrequently advise a victim to document their experiences, discuss safety planning, or refer them to victim services for more help.<sup>3; 10; 52; 59; 70; 80; 83; 117</sup>
  - There is some indication that, in some jurisdictions, partner violence is a lower priority than other crimes which can impact responses to all types of partner violence including stalking.<sup>63; 66</sup>
- Police often do not charge stalking even when cases include elements of stalking.
  - For example, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000a), in a review of 1,785 domestic violence crime reports, found that 1 in 6 cases had evidence of stalking but only 1 case had official stalking charges. And, Klein, Salomon, Huntington, Dubois, and Lang (2009) estimated that for every 1 case of partner stalking identified by police, 21 were missed.
- It appears few stalking incidents reported to the police result in an arrest/charge (ranges between 29%-39%), especially compared to the estimated or actual number of stalking cases;<sup>10; 47; 66; 83; 115; 117</sup> however, a few studies suggest stalking victims who do report stalking to the police are those with more severe experiences of stalking threats and violence.<sup>10; 41</sup>
- If partner stalkers are charged, it appears they are often charged with crimes other than stalking such as protective order violations and assaults.<sup>47; 66; 115; 116</sup>
- Even when partner stalking is charged, stalking charges are often amended to other, often lower, crimes such as assault, harassment, menacing, intimidation, terroristic threatening, protective order violation, vandalism, breaking and entering, robbery, trespassing, and disorderly conduct.<sup>43; 47; 92; 115</sup>



## PROSECUTION OF PARTNER STALKING CASES

Consistent with trends in charges for partner stalking, charges and convictions for partner stalking are relatively rare.

- Prosecutions and convictions for stalking are low especially when they are compared to the estimated number of stalking cases.<sup>10; 43; 59; 61; 83; 88; 115; 117</sup>
  - For example, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000b) found that of the 336 female partner stalking cases, only 15% were prosecuted (n=49), about 40% of those cases were convicted (n=16), and about 56% of those cases were sentenced to jail or prison (n=9).
  - Sheridan and Davis (2001) reported that 36% of stalking cases were convicted; however, although partner stalkers were more violent than non-partner stalkers, stranger stalkers were more likely to be convicted of stalking-related offenses than partner stalkers.
  - Jordan, Logan, Walker, and Nigoff (2003), in a statewide analysis of males charged with stalking, found the most frequent outcome for felony and misdemeanor stalking charges was dismissal (55% for felony and 62% for misdemeanor charges) and the least frequent outcome was a guilty disposition (14% for felony and 24% for misdemeanor charges). When amendments (most often to lesser charges) outcomes were considered, about one-third of all stalking charges resulted in any kind guilty conviction.
- Logan, Nigoff, Jordan, and Walker (2002) found that having a history of protective orders had no impact on the rate of guilty dispositions for misdemeanor stalking charges, but that those with felony stalking charges who also had two or more protective orders in their past were more likely to be found guilty of felony stalking than those with no protective orders or just one prior protective order.
- Klein, Salomon, Huntington, Dubois, and Lang (2009, Section VI) examined police reports of domestic violence incidents that compared police-identified stalking cases to cases that had elements of stalking but were charged with other domestic violence-related charges and concluded; *“...police identification of stalking significantly increases the likelihood that these chronic and dangerous abusers will be held more accountable and a significant percent of victims will be protected from...further [abuse]. Police identification of stalkers was significantly associated with increased likelihood of arrest and court prosecution, compared to equivalent stalkers identified by police for non-stalking domestic violence offenses. Further, police identified stalkers without prior criminal histories or criminal abuse histories were significantly less likely to be charged with new domestic violence up to six years after police intervention.”*
- Logan, Walker, Hoyt, and Faragher (2009) compared 5-year disposition trends for three common misdemeanor level partner violence-related charges across several jurisdictions: Assault Fourth Degree-Domestic Violence, Violation of a Protective Order, and Stalking Second Degree. Stalking charges were about twice as likely to be dismissed and much less likely to have a guilty disposition compared to the other two crimes.
- There has been limited research on treatment for stalking offenders. However, in one small study, Rosenfeld, Galietta, Ivanoff, Garcia-Mansilla, Martinez, Fava, Fineran, and Green (2007) found that stalking offenders on probation who completed a Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) program were less likely to be charged with another stalking offense during the follow-up period than drop-outs and compared to general published recidivism rates.

## Conclusions

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This report provides a general overview of the current research on partner stalking and some of the prominent research trends.

- Partner stalking is complex and the articles cited here do not include all of the research on stalking in general or on partner stalking specifically. Further, research in this area is ongoing and new information about partner stalking is being released every day.
- Because this report provided a general overview of the research on partner stalking, it is important to consult the individual studies for more detail on methods and specific recommendations for future research and practice.
- The past decade of research has provided some important pieces of the puzzle regarding partner stalking. However, there is a need to continue research on partner stalking from a variety of directions.
- Research plays a critical role in addressing stalking. It is the key to linking victim's experiences, policy and practice.

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