

January 2017



CONTACT THE
FAMILY GUIDANCE
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Spotlight On Domestic Violence

*First Step Newsletter
A Program of
The Family Guidance Center*

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

January is

National Stalking Awareness Month Stalking is real. It is a crime.

Stalking Defined

Stalking is a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

A stalker can be someone you know well or not at all. Most have dated or been involved with the people they stalk. Most stalking cases involve males stalking females, but males do stalk males, females do stalk females, and females do stalk men.

Stalking behavior can include:

- * Repeated, unwanted, intrusive, and frightening communications from the perpetrator by phone, mail, and/or email.
- * Repeatedly leaving or sending victim unwanted items, presents, or flowers.
- * Following or laying in wait for the victim at places such as home, school, work or recreation place.
- * Making direct or indirect threats to harm the victim, the victim's children, relatives, friends or pets.
- * Damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property.

**STALKING CAN HAPPEN
TO ANYONE
IT IS DANGEROUS**

- * Harassing victim through the internet.
- * Posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.
- * Obtaining personal information about the victim by accessing public records, using internet search services, hiring private investigators, going through the victim's garbage, following the victim, contacting victim's friends, family, work or neighbors, etc.

**If you feel your are in
immediate danger
Call 911
Need more info?
Call us at 828 322 1400**

A Stalking Victim Needs To:

- 1. Do your best to safely avoid all contact with the stalker.** Any communication only serves to prolong the stalking as it acknowledges and rewards the stalker. To many stalkers, any relationship, even if it is negative, is better than no relationship.
- 2. Inform family, friends and co-workers of what is going on regarding the stalking behavior.** Provide them with a picture or description of the stalker and their vehicle.
- 3. Document the stalking.** Stalkers often leave evidence of their harassment, i.e., messages, emails, letters, cards and unwanted gifts. Don't discard any of them, they may be vital for the purposes of investigation and prosecution. It is also useful to keep a log-book, documenting any stalking behavior with dates and times, take pictures of evidence with your phone, etc.
- 4. Report the stalking to the police and follow their advice.** If stalking has persisted for more than two weeks, contact the police.
- 5. Increase your personal safety.** Be alert at all times for suspicious persons. Install dead-bolt locks on all outside doors and replace all the locks—an ex may have made a copy of the keys. Install floodlights around your residence. Trim shrubbery away from windows and doors. Install a loud exterior alarm that can be activated from several places in your home. Develop a safety plan, identify who to contact, where to go, etc. Be sure to inform your employer or security guard or apartment manager.
- 6. Consider taking legal action.** Contact your local domestic violence agency and discuss your options. In Catawba County, call us, First Step at 828-322-1400.



On average stalking lasts about 2 years; intimate partner stalking lasts longer. 3/4 of stalking victims experience other forms of violence, including sexual and/or physical assault. In about 20% of cases, weapons are used to threaten or harm a victim.

Stalking takes a toll on a victim's emotional, physical, and economic well-being. The majority of victims report losing time from work, as well as income because of the stalking.

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS



“LIKE” us on Facebook to keep up with FGC news and see facts and information on Stalking throughout the month of January.