

What If I Am Being Stalked/Harassed?

If you think that you are being stalked/harassed, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and try to discourage the stalker.

- Keep a log of the dates, times, locations, and brief details of any unusual occurrences that may be related to the stalking/harassment.
- If the stalker is a former partner and property must be exchanged, use a neutral third party. Do not go to the stalker's home or allow the stalker to come to yours.
- Do not meet with the stalker in person to request contact to cease unless he/she is already present. Instead make this request in writing either by email or postal mail.
- After you have requested the stalker cease all contact with you, do not engage with that person any more. Any further contact, regardless of the nature of that contact, could serve to further reinforce the stalker's behavior.
- If the stalker does not already know where you live, block all of your information with the phone company, the University directory, and elsewhere online.
- If you must change your phone number, request that your friends not give your new number to anyone without your permission.
- Take extra safety precautions. Avoid being alone when possible and keep your cell phone charged and available at all times.
- If you are in fear for your safety and you see the stalker in your vicinity, call 911.

This list is not all inclusive. Please do not hesitate to come speak to a victim advocate at UFPD to discuss other options, such as Injunction for Protection Orders, Student Judicial Affairs, police reports, and ways for staying safe.

RESOURCES

Campus Resources:

University of Florida Police Department	(352) 392-1111
UFPD Office of Victim Services	(352) 392-5648
UFPD's Community Services Division Rape Aggression Defense Course	(352) 392-1409
SNAP	(352) 392-7627
Counseling and Wellness Center	(352) 392-1575
Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution	(352) 392-2161 x207
Student Health Care Center	(352) 392-1161
Student Legal Services	(352) 392-5297

Community Resources:

Alachua County Crisis Center	(352) 264-6789
Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center	(352) 264-6760
Alachua County Sheriff's Office	(352) 367-4000
Gainesville Police Department	(352) 334-2400
Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network	(352) 377-8255
Shands Hospital Emergency Room	(352) 265-0050

For more information, please contact
**University of Florida
Police Department**

**Office of Victim Services
(352) 392-5648**

**Community Services Division
(352) 392-1409**

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What
You Need
to Know
About

Stalking
and
Harassment



What is Stalking?

Stalking is becoming increasingly frequent among college-aged people. A national study estimates that 13% of college women will experience stalking during their college career (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Stalking is a pattern of behaviors that occurs over time, against the will of the victim, and may include behaviors such as the following:

- ☉ Following/watching the victim and/or showing up in places where the stalker does not belong
- ☉ Finding out about the victim by calling friends/family, looking at public records online, etc.
- ☉ Calling repeatedly at all hours of the day and night, including hang-ups
- ☉ Leaving multiple voicemail and/or text messages
- ☉ Sending unwanted gifts, cards, letters, e-mails, IM's, etc.
- ☉ Posting multiple messages to webpages, such as Facebook, MySpace, etc.
- ☉ Damaging the victim's home, car, or other property
- ☉ Threatening to harm him/herself if the victim does not comply with demands
- ☉ Threatening to hurt the victim, the victim's loved ones, or the victim's pets
- ☉ Continuing to engage in these behaviors after the victim has told the stalker to stop

Florida State Statute 784.048 defines stalking as "Any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyberstalks another person." If you have encountered any of the above-mentioned behaviors, you may have experienced stalking.

What is Harassment?

Harassment may often be confused with stalking. Unlike stalking, harassment may be time-limited, but can be just as emotionally harmful to the victim as stalking. Like stalking, harassment may take many forms, including the following:

- ☉ Phone calls, which may or may not include inappropriate or suggestive language, statements, requests, or threats
- ☉ Repeated hang-up phone calls
- ☉ Isolated or repeated insults, cruel jokes, veiled threats, etc. by a roommate, classmate, co-worker, or other person with whom the victim regularly comes into contact
- ☉ Sexual harassment (please see UF's Policy on Sexual Harassment: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eoo/sexharassment.htm>)

Common Reactions to Stalking/Harassment

People who have survived stalking/harassment may experience a variety of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that can vary in intensity and duration. These reactions include, but are not limited to:

- ☉ Anger
- ☉ Anxiety
- ☉ Denial
- ☉ Depression
- ☉ Fear of retaliation/re-victimization
- ☉ Guilt
- ☉ Rapidly shifting emotions
- ☉ Intrusive thoughts
- ☉ Loss of sleep
- ☉ Nightmares
- ☉ Trouble concentrating
- ☉ Avoidance of class/work for fear of seeing stalker
- ☉ Crying
- ☉ Social withdrawal

These reactions are all normal. Without support and assistance, however, such reactions can become problematic and/or lasting.

Risk Reduction Strategies

Though no one can prevent stalking and/or harassment from occurring, there are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of being stalked and/or harassed:

- ☉ Avoid posting personal information online, such as your phone number, your address, the name of the dorm or apartment complex in which you live, or your class schedule.
- ☉ Set your personal webpage, such as your Facebook or MySpace page, to private.
- ☉ Carefully screen people who request to be your friend online.
- ☉ Don't "play games." Mean what you say and express what you feel. If you have told someone to stop calling, emailing, etc., do not continue to respond to his/her repeated attempts to make contact.
- ☉ Be assertive. If you are uncomfortable with someone's actions toward you, say so and tell them to stop.
- ☉ Though it may be difficult, it is important to protect yourself from emotional and physical harm. Do not avoid setting necessary boundaries out of concern for the stalker's feelings or fear of seeming rude.
- ☉ Do not minimize your own experience or allow others to do so. If you feel uncomfortable or in fear, listen to those instincts and get assistance, even if other people insinuate that you are "over-reacting."