

# Stalking is a serious potentially life threatening crime

Stalking is a series of actions that puts a person in fear of their safety. Stalking is a serious potentially life threatening crime. Even in its less severe forms, it permanently changes the lives of people who are victimized by this crime as well as affecting their friends, family, and co-workers.

Some of the things stalkers do:

- ✓ Follow you and show up where ever you are
- ✓ Repeatedly call you
- ✓ Damage your home, car or other property
- ✓ Send unwanted gifts, cards or emails
- ✓ Monitor you phone calls or computer use
- ✓ Use technology, like hidden cameras or global positioning systems, to track where you go
- ✓ Drive by or threaten to hurt you, your friends, or pets
- ✓ Find out about public records or on-line search services, hiring investigators, going through your garbage, or contacting friends, family, or co-workers
- ✓ Other actions that control, track, or frighten you

Yet many victims underestimate the seriousness and impact of the crime. At first they view stalking as “creepy but not dangerous. They might think that ignoring stalkers or confronting them will stop them. But stalkers almost never stop. Confronting stalkers may escalate into violence.

Stalking is unpredictable and dangerous. No two stalking situations are alike. There are no guarantees that what works for one person may work for another.

Stalking is an insidious crime that eats away at you sense of security, leaving you feel more vulnerable than ever before in your life. Many stalkers change their behavior over time and escalate the frequency or intensity of their contacts. Ex-boyfriends, ex-husbands who stalk are often violent. Some of the most dangerous stalkers give little or no warning before they attack.

Some people who are stalked are more afraid then they need to be and others are not afraid as they should be. If you think you might be stalked, even if you're not sure...Consider that you could be in danger. Report it to the police. Keep a very careful log of every incident and every situation. And if there are any contacts to you by phone, record (if possible) and DO NOT erase the caller ID.

Remember to trust your instincts, take threats seriously and contact a victim service agency to develop a safety plan and help with a court order that tells the stalker to stay away from you. Tell family and friends about your situation and seek support.

For more information on stalking or any other topics please call our DOVE Office at (218) 935-5554. In a crises situation please call our 24-hour crises line at 1-877-830-3683. Our services are free and confidential.