

# January is Stalking Awareness Month

Stalking can be best described as willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly harassing, following or causing credible threat to another individual in an attempt to frighten or harm them. Harassment and Stalking both are crimes under Minnesota Statute 609.749 and are punishable by jail time and/or a fine.

Some behaviors that can be associated with harassment and stalking include:

- Repeatedly calling you either at home, work or at another location
- Repeatedly calling your friends and family and asking for information about you, your whereabouts, who you are with, and other information pertaining to you
- Waiting outside or inside of places that you may be visiting or shopping
- Watching you from a distance (some stalkers use disguises so that they are not easily identifiable)
- Following you or showing up uninvited at events that you may be attending and that the stalker has no particular reason for being at
- Sending unwanted letters, e-mails, or text messages after having been told that the behavior is unwanted
- Sending unwanted gifts or flowers

For a victim of harassment/stalking, it is very terrifying. Victims of this crime vary in gender, age, ethnic groups, financial status, religion, and sexual orientation.

Some of the other statistics include:

- Persons aged 18-24 years experience the highest rate of stalking
- 17 percent of Native American women have been stalked
- 1 in 4 victims report being stalked through some form of technology including but not limited to Global Positioning System (GPS), cellular phones, cordless telephones, baby monitors, video and digital cameras, surveillance software and hardware that can be installed on a computer.
- 78 percent of stalkers use more than one approach
- 46 percent of stalking victims experience at least one unwanted contact a week

If you believe you are victim of stalking or harassment please call the DOVE Program at 218-935-5554 or the 24 hour Crisis Line at 1-877-830-DOVE (3683) for more information, confidential services, and support.