



## Addressing Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is any threatening or harassing behaviors that an individual repeatedly engages in using the internet, email, or other forms of electronic communication, including texting. It shares many characteristics with 'off line' stalking, including the fact that it is one person's attempt at exerting control over another.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the majority of cyberstalking victims are women and perpetrators are men, although same-sex and female to male cyberstalking do occur. As with other forms of stalking, the victim and perpetrator often know each other, the stalking may begin after the relationship has ended and online threats and harassment can lead to more serious behaviors including violence.

### **Actions Cyberstalkers Take:**

- Call, text, email you repeatedly
- Use software to send messages to victims at regular intervals through the day and night
- Post your contact information on public sites to have others unknowingly threaten and/or harass you
- Use cameras and other technology to track you and monitor your phone and computer (remember, GPS devices are in cell phones)
- Research you online, through chat rooms, etc.

### **Stalking May Cause You to:**

- Feel fearful, angry, frustrated, depressed, helpless
- Become nervous, anxious, stressed
- Change your eating and sleeping patterns
- Isolate from family and friend, especially if they don't take the situation seriously
- Live in shock, disbelief and hypervigilance

### **How to Help:**

- In an emergency call 911
- Call 239.775.1101, TTY 239.775.4265 for 24-hour confidential support and safety planning
- Don't blame the victim and take the stalking seriously; 76% of intimate partner femicide (murder) victims had been stalked by their intimate partner (Stalking Resource Center)
- Be there when your friend needs you

### **If You Are Being Cyberstalked:**

- Call local law enforcement; in an emergency call 911
- Ask the cyberstalker to stop contacting you
- Don't communicate with the cyberstalker or respond to messages or attempts to contact you
- If the cyberstalker continues to contact you, contact his or her Internet Service Provider (ISP) and/or cell phone company to file a complaint
- Call your local domestic violence center for support and safety planning: 239.775.1101, TTY 239.775.4265
- Save all emails, texts, voice messages, etc. in their original formats and printout hardcopy versions as evidence

- Keep a log of the calls or emails you've made to your internet provider, cell phone company and/or law enforcement
- Tell family, friends, roommates, coworkers about the stalking, including security staff at your school or place of employment

### **Tips to Prevent Cyberstalking:**

- Use a gender-neutral username/email address
- Don't share personal information on your social networking sites, online, in emails
- Change your preferences so only those you approve of as family/friends can view your profiles
- Be cautious when using "Check In" or "location" apps on phones, Facebook, Foursquare and other sites as it makes it much easier for a cyberstalker to locate you at home or in public
- Lurk on message boards/in chat rooms before you start to post to see what the site is about and be careful what you post
- Don't reveal personal things about yourself
- If you decide to meet an online acquaintance in-person, always go to a public place and take a friend or family member with you

For more information on Cyberstalking, please visit: Cyberangels ([www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org)), CyberGuards ([www.cyberguards.com](http://www.cyberguards.com)), or The National Center for Victims of Crime ([www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)).

Locally, contact The Shelter for Abused Women & Children for free and confidential support:

*24-hour crisis line:* 239.775.1101

*TTY:* 293.775.4265

239.775.3862 Administration

[www.naplesshelter.org](http://www.naplesshelter.org)

Facebook: TheShelterNaples

Twitter: TheShelterTweet

YouTube: TheShelterNaples