

# Fact Sheet: Stalking & LGBTQ+ Individuals

Generally, research shows that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely than heterosexual and cisgender individuals to experience stalking.

**What is stalking?** While the legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is: **a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or to suffer substantial emotional distress.** Stalking is a crime under the laws of 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories and the federal government.

## What does LGBTQ+ stand for?

LGBTQ+ is an acronym used as an umbrella term for a range of sexual minority and gender nonconforming identities: lesbian, gay and bisexual (referring to sexual orientation); transgender and queer (referring to gender identity); and the plus sign at the end expands the acronym to include additional sexual orientations and gender identities\* not specifically listed.

\*Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction toward others. Gender identity is the psychological sense of one's gender or lack thereof.

## LGBTQ+ STALKING VICTIMIZATION

- › 1 in 3 bisexual women, 1 in 5 lesbian women and 1 in 6 heterosexual women have experienced stalking victimization in their lifetimes.<sup>A</sup>
- › 1 in 9 gay men, 1 in 14 bisexual men and 1 in 20 heterosexual men have experienced stalking victimization in their lifetimes.<sup>B</sup>
- › Among 18- to 24-year-olds after high school: Nearly 1 in 2 lesbian women and bisexual white women, more than 2 in 5 gay and bisexual white men and men of color and nearly 2 in 5 lesbian and bisexual women of color experience stalking victimization.<sup>C</sup>
- › Active-duty service members identifying as LGBT are four times more likely than non-LGBT service members to experience sexual harassment, two times more likely to experience stalking and two times more likely to experience sexual assault.<sup>D</sup>

## LGBTQ+ STALKING VICTIMIZATION ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- › Among undergraduate students, 1 in 7 transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer and 1 in 10 female students reported experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 17 of all students.<sup>E</sup>
- › Transgender and nonbinary/genderqueer student stalking victims (33%) were more likely than cisgender student victims (28% ciswomen, 29% cismen) to contact a program or resource for help.<sup>F</sup>
- › Since entering college, 1 in 4 of sexual minority students (lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, queer, other not listed) report experiencing stalking, compared to 1 in 6 of heterosexual students.<sup>G</sup>
- › Among college students, bisexual and pansexual women are significantly more likely to experience stalking than heterosexual women, and gay men are significantly more likely to experience stalking than heterosexual men.<sup>H</sup>

## IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- › 46% of stalking victims fear not knowing what will happen next.<sup>I</sup>
- › 29% of stalking victims fear the stalking will never stop.<sup>J</sup>
- › 13% of stalking victims lose time from work due to fear or concern for safety, 12% lose time from work due to getting a protection order or testifying in court, and more than half lose five days of work or more.<sup>K</sup>
- › 11% of stalking victims move as a result of their victimization.<sup>L</sup>
- › Stalking victims suffer much higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia and social dysfunction than people in the general population.<sup>M</sup>
- › LGBTQ+ individuals have higher rates of mental health issues when compared to heterosexual, cisgender individuals, which researchers believe stems from stigma, prejudice and discrimination that heightens stress levels and predisposes them to adverse health outcomes.<sup>N</sup>

**Marginalization:** LGBTQ+ individuals have historically faced—and continue to face—stigma, prejudice, discrimination, violence and a lack of understanding in daily life and when accessing services. They often experience a hostile and stressful environment. Listening, being open and treating victims with respect is essential.<sup>O</sup>

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# Fact Sheet: Stalking & LGBTQ+ Individuals, continued

## STALKING OFFENDERS

- › The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Many victims are stalked by a current or former intimate partner or by an acquaintance.<sup>P</sup>
- › For sexual minority college students the stalker was most likely to be an acquaintance, neighbor, co-worker or roommate.<sup>Q</sup>
- › 64% of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.<sup>R</sup>
- › 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.<sup>S</sup>
- › 19% of stalkers use a weapon to threaten and/or harm their victims.<sup>T</sup>
- › 31% of stalkers have stalked before.<sup>U</sup>

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