



DV NEWS

*A Newsletter of the Domestic Violence Program
of*

**Catholic Charities
of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie Counties**

STALKING

by Pat MacLeod, Domestic Violence and Crime Victim Advocate

What is stalking?

Stalking is the act of one person obsessively following and/or watching another in a manner which makes them uncomfortable which includes acts of contacting them without their consent. This also includes destruction of their property, disparaging their name or character to another, or otherwise interfering with their life on an ongoing basis. Anyone can be victimized by stalking although children and women are specifically at high risk. However, it is not uncommon for males to be stalked.

Ways in which stalking can occur:

Physical – Being followed on foot or by vehicle. Constant vigilance without permission. Memorizing and following another person's schedule as to be where they go on a constant basis. Or, looking at their personal property or canvassing their vehicle without permission. **Virtual** – Monitoring one's cell phone usage and storage, social media page(s), school accounts, financial accounts, employment devices, personal computer, medical accounts, hacking into these systems/pages, attempting to access their personal records through a vendor such as fuel companies, credit cards vendors, E-Z Pass account, phone records, etc. Also, taking photos or video of this person or recording their conversations with others without their knowledge or consent. **By Association** – Keeping tabs on a person without their knowledge or consent through interactions with other unknowing and unwilling parties such as: mutual friends, family members, landlords, banks, schools, health care providers, employers, or the general public.

Who is a likely stalker?

Any person who has an unhealthy obsession with another and feels a sense of entitlement to them or any part of their life. This can be a former or current spouse or intimate partner, a former or current friend, a former or current boyfriend or girlfriend, a former or current classmate, a former or current employer, a former or current education or health care provider, or an unknown or not well known person. Stalking can ultimately result in physical violence or aggression, rape, murder, kidnapping, or other outward expressions of rage and an attempt to control another.

What are the impacts of stalking on the victim?

The trauma of being stalked can lead to anxiety, depression, lack of trust in others, unusual fear of normal routines and places frequented before stalking began or was realized, paranoia, sleep deprivation, short term memory loss, and minimized ability to concentrate for long periods of time. There can also be physical manifestations of stress such as gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, nausea, changes in body temperature, increased heart rate, and loss of appetite, among others.

How Can Stalking Victims Protect Themselves?

There are safety strategies available at <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center/help-for-victims/stalking-safety-planning> that can help in building a safety plan. Additional Resources can be found at: http://www.opdv.ny.gov/professionals/criminal_justice/stalking/stalking-infoguide.pdf; <https://www.nyscadv.org> and <https://ovs.ny.gov/faq>



Domestic Violence Program

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24 Hour Crisis Hotline:
(518) 234-2231
Collect Calls Accepted



CharitiesCCDOS.org



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Welcome OVS Case Manager

Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties welcomes Shawnee Willoughby as OVS Case Manager. Shawnee will be available to inform victims of all crime of compensation they may be eligible for through the New York State Office of Victim Services. She will assist them in gathering their documents related to the crime, completing and submitting their application, and providing support through the ongoing court processes. For more information Shawnee can be reached at 518-234-3581 or shawneew@catholiccharitiessc.org.



Domestic Violence Expert Witness

Expert witnesses in court cases can help clear up questions and misconceptions about victim behavior including issues like:

- Why victims don't leave abusive relationships, or return to them repeatedly
- Why victims don't report crime due to fear of retaliation, minimization, or fear of reaction from family and friends
- How abusive partners use the court system to further abuse their partner and children.

Sura Page, LCSW-R, NCCE, serves as an expert witness for court cases in Otsego County and is willing to serve Schoharie County. She has experience working with both victims and abusive partners. For more information Sura can be reached at (607) 369-4163, or surapage.lcsw@gmail.com.