

Supporting Loved Ones Experiencing Stalking

Most victims of stalking talk to a friend, family member, or someone else they know and trust about the situation before pursuing any sort of professional or legal help. If a stalking victim talks to you, your response makes a huge difference in if they feel validated and/or seek help.

These tips can help you respond:

Believe and validate victims.

- Don't question or minimize what they tell you.
- For example, don't say "well maybe they just miss you" or "they probably didn't realize it was bothering you."
- Instead, say "that sounds scary" or "I can see why that would be upsetting."

Focus on the offender's actions, not the victim's responses.

- Even well-intentioned friends can accidentally blame victims.
- Don't ask questions such as "why did you respond to that text message?"
- Focus on the stalker's actions, for instance, "It is not right that they kept texting you."
- Nothing the victim did justifies the stalker's behavior.
 - Remind victims that this is not their fault.

Support the victim and encourage them to seek help and [document the stalking](#).

- Thank them for trusting you enough to have the conversation.
- Help the victim think through options – like learning more about stalking on the SPARC website, reaching out to local service providers, or calling police.
 - Victims may or may not want to take action. Respect their choices.

Respect the victim's privacy.

- Do not share any information about the victim with the stalker.
- Ask the victim who else they have told and respect their wishes about who to share this information with.

Refer them to resources to make an individual safety plan and learn more about stalking.

- Victim Connect. [VictimConnect.org](https://www.victimconnect.org). 855-4-VICTIM.
Victim Connect can refer victims to local services.
- [CoerciveControl.org](https://www.coercivecontrol.org)
A free, research-based assessment -- the Stalking & Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP) -- can help victims determine the risk in their situation and provides suggestions for safety.

- Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center (SPARC) of AEquitas
[StalkingAwareness.org](https://www.stalkingawareness.org)
SPARC provides information on stalking, including some general safety planning suggestions, statistics, and other information.
- National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Safety Net
[TechSafety.org](https://www.techsafety.org)
This free app helps to educate the public about digital privacy and safety tools.

Check In.

- Stalking cases can last a long time, and your loved one's reactions, wants, needs, and feelings might change over time.
- Continue to check in and be a source of support. Ask questions like, "How can I help you feel safer?"
- Ask the victim how they feel the safest being contacted and use that medium to contact them. Some stalkers monitor victims' social media accounts, phones, and/or other forms of digital communication.