**Stalking News Release/Letter to the Editor**

For Immediate Release Contact: [Name/Title/Agency]
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January Is National Stalking Awareness Month

[Name of Organization] Launches Community Awareness Campaign on Stalking

CITY/STATE — January 2022 marks the eighteenth National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM), an annual call to action to recognize and respond to this traumatic and dangerous crime. It is critical to raise the issue of stalking as a form of interpersonal violence as well as a crime that frequently predicts and co-occurs with physical and sexual assault. Stalking impacts more than 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men in the United States[[1]](#endnote-1) and yet—despite its prevalence and impacts—many victims, families, service providers, criminal justice professionals, and members of the general public underestimate its danger and urgency. Survivors often suffer anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression as a result of their victimization, and many lose time from work and/or relocate.[[2]](#endnote-2),[[3]](#endnote-3) And it’s not only psychological: 1 in 5 stalkers use weapons to threaten or harm victims,[[4]](#endnote-4) and stalking increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by three times.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Stalking is defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear or emotional distress. Stalkers often follow, monitor, and wait for their victims, as well as leave them unwanted gifts, spread rumors about them, and repeatedly call, text, and message them.[[6]](#endnote-6) The majority of stalking victims experience both in-person and technology-facilitated stalking.[[7]](#endnote-7) And the most common types of technology-facilitated abuse—harassment, limiting access to technology, and surveillance—increased during the pandemic.[[8]](#endnote-8)

One of the difficulties of recognizing and responding to stalking is that each individual act may not be a problem or a crime on its own, but each act becomes criminal when part of that pattern of behavior that comprises stalking. And stalking is a crime in federal jurisdictions, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, tribal lands, and the military justice system.

NSAM’s theme of “Know It. Name It. Stop It.” is a call to action for everyone in [name of community] and across the country. The vast majority of victims tell friends or family about their situation first, and how we respond influences whether they seek further help or not.

 “We all have a role to play in identifying stalking, intervening when necessary, and supporting victims and survivors,” said [name and title of local spokesperson (with permission)]. [Your organization’s name] will offer [describe outreach activity] to promote awareness and public education about stalking during the annual observance. For more information, please contact [your name and contact information].

For more information about National Stalking Awareness Month, please visit https://stalkingawareness.org and www.ovw.usdoj.gov. ### [Add your organization’s mission statement here.]

1. Sources:

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3. Baum, K., Catalano, S., & Rand, M. (2009). Stalking Victimization in the United States. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
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7. Truman, J.L., & Morgan, R.E. (2021). Stalking Victimization, 2016. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
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