A New Framework for Understanding and Assessing Stalking:  

*Moving Forward*

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Perceptions of Stalking

- Stalking can be defined as an unwanted and repeated course of conduct directed toward a specific individual that induces fear or concern for safety
- Many think stalking is harmless, rare, or domestic violence as usual.

Stalking is characterized as

- targeted violence
- psychological warfare
  - Stalking creates an extremely hostile, threatening, and dangerous environment where a target’s total life experience is disrupted

Understanding and communicating about stalking is difficult

- Framework for understanding and assessing stalking
  - Key Components of the framework
    - Intentional course of conduct
    - Makes an implicit or explicit threat that causes reasonable fear or concern for safety
    - Is unwanted

**Intentional Course of Conduct** (show how stalkers are maintaining an unwanted relationship with their target)

- SLII Strategies
  - Surveillance “How is he/she tracking or monitoring him/her?”
  - Life invasion “How has he/she invaded his/her life?”
  - Intimidation “How has he/she tried to intimidate or scare him/her?”
  - Interference through sabotage or attack “What has he/she lost and what is he/she afraid of losing because of the stalker?”

- DIF patterns
  - Duration
  - Intensity
  - Frequency

**Reasonable Fear**

*Implicit and Explicit Threats*

- Someone can pose a threat without saying a word

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• Explicit threats
  o Violence ideation and frequency of threats increase risk of violence and fear

**Fear**
• Surveillance, intensity/frequency of tactics, change in pattern, explicit threats, interference with life, and duration all impact fear
• Fear is multidimensional = physical and sexual harm, harm to close others, social/financial harm, and ongoing control and harassment

• Protective Order Effectiveness Study
  • Fear
  • Impact of Fear
    o Tangible Impact
    o Property damage
    o Hours of lost time*
    o Threats or actual assault of close others

**“Reasonable”**
• Larger context
  o History
    ▪ *Who is the stalker and what is he/she capable of?*
  o Mindset
    ▪ *What is the stalker mindset?*
  o Environment
    ▪ *Is the setting facilitating the stalking?*
  o Vulnerability
    o *How vulnerable is the victim?*
      ▪ Partner Stalkers vs. Non-Partner stalkers

**Unwanted**
• Victim resistance and stalker persistence
• Extraordinary Effort

Five basic STEPS to helping stalking victims
• STEPS: See It/Acknowledge It
• STEPS: Threat
• STEPS: Evidence
• STEPS: Protection
• STEPS: Support
  o Reactions matter
  o It may save their lives

**Summary**
• Nothing good is going to come from stalking
• It takes a community to fully address stalking