

STALKING FACTSHEET

What to do

Anyone can be a target of stalking. It can be physical, as well as through technology. Stalking is a crime in all Australian states and territories. Stalkers often want to exert power and control over the target. It can cause extreme distress and anxiety, disrupting every aspect of the target's life. Everyone has the right to feel safe. If you or someone you know experiences stalking, take action early to be safe.

WHAT IS STALKING?

Stalking is the intentional, repeated and unwanted following, communication or contact with another person, which can result in distress or fear.

Examples of physical stalking

- Approaching or following you
- Loitering outside your home, or any other place you attend
- Interfering with or damaging your property
- Threatening you and people close to you
- Leaving or sending items, including notes, letters and gifts
- Ordering or cancelling goods or services on your behalf
- Starting false legal action against you
- Physical assault

Examples of cyber-stalking

- Sending repeated messages, emails or voicemails
- Using technology to view or track your location without permission
- Keeping you under surveillance, including CCTV, phone tapping, recording devices or internet/computer spyware
- Unwanted or distressing contact through social media, including messages, comments and posts
- Hacking, using or changing details/passwords of your online accounts, including email, social media, banking and other services

Statistics

1 in 10 Australian adults experience stalking

75% of targets are female and 80% of stalkers are male

66% of targets know their stalker

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STALKED

Take action early

- As early as possible give a single clear message to the person that you don't want any attention or contact from them, and ask them to stop the behaviour immediately
- Cease all contact with the person
- Do not respond to contact of any form from the person (it only serves to prolong the stalking, and even if the interaction is negative it encourages them to continue the behaviour)
- Block the person's email, phone number and social media accounts
- Screen phone calls, especially from unknown numbers
- Increase privacy settings on social media, ensure they are private

Increase your personal safety

- Keep your phone with you and program emergency numbers
- Make a safety plan, including family and friends phone numbers, and safe locations you can go that the person doesn't know
- Keep your location private; do not post on social media, turn off location settings on your phone, and remove any phone finder apps
- Vary your travel routine or route, including using different shops
- Try to stay in public areas and have someone travel with you
- If being digitally stalked, change your passwords, create a new email account, and get a new phone number (SIM card)

Seek advice and support

- Tell people you trust about the behaviour, including family, friends, your workplace and the University
- Ask trusted people to avoid contact with the person, and not to convey contact from the person to you or your location to the person
- Ask for their advice and support about how to deal with the behaviour
- Seek help from a professional support service

Record and report the behaviour

- Keep and date a record of all contact from the person, what happened and when, as well what you did to try and stop the behaviour
- Keep and date any evidence of the behaviour, including emails and messages, screenshots of posts or comments, letters, cards, and gifts
- Report the behaviour to the social media site, e.g. Facebook or Twitter
- Report the behaviour to the University, e.g. teaching staff, Security, Student Matters or Safer Community
- If you feel unsafe or the stalking has occurred for more than 2 weeks, report to the Police
- If you receive a threat, report to the Police immediately
- Consider applying for an intervention order, which prevents forbids the person contacting or approaching you, but it does not deter all stalkers

SAFETY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Get help on campus

VUSafe (App)

All your safety and support services at VU in one app! Features: a silent alarm to Campus Security for immediate assistance, safety notifications, request first aid or a security escort, track the VU shuttle bus, start a virtual safe walk with a friend, report a tip to campus security, campus maps, emergency plans, as well as support services on and off campus. Download free for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

www.vu.edu.au/safety-app

Security Services

Request a security escort, report a concern or incident, or seek emergency assistance on campus.

www.vu.edu.au/security

P: 9919 6666 (Emergency) or 9919 4999 (Enquiry)

Safer Community

Advice, assistance and referrals for students who experience or witness concerning behaviours on or off campus, including bullying, stalking, harassment, family violence, and sexual assault. Read our online resources, and report something concerning by phone, email or online.

www.vu.edu.au/safer-community

P: 9919 5707 E: Safer.Community@vu.edu.au

Student Advocacy

Confidential advice, support and representation to help you progress successfully during your course, for example discuss your progress, prepare for show cause hearings, attend misconduct hearings and advice on special consideration.

www.vu.edu.au/student-advocacy

P: 9919 5400 E: advocacy@vu.edu.au

Student Counselling

A free and confidential support service. You can speak to a counsellor about any concerns affecting your experience at VU or attend workshops to enhance study and personal skills, including time-management, and emotional intelligence.

www.vu.edu.au/counselling

P: 9919 5400

Student Matters

Manage the University complaint resolution process. Students can lodge a complaint in relation to the provision of University services or functions, behaviour of another student, or allegations of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

www.vu.edu.au/complaint-resolution

P: 9919 5007 E: Student.Matters@vu.edu.au

Welfare Services

Senior advisers provide free and confidential support and assistance to help you with a range of issues, including welfare, finance, and housing support. Our international student advisors are available to provide specialist advice for international students.

www.vu.edu.au/welfare

P: 9919 6100

Get help off campus

Police

National emergency response and reporting.

www.police.vic.gov.au

P: 000

bSafe (App)

A personal safety app, including a personal safety network, virtual friend walk, fake call and emergency alert with GPS, video and siren (optional).

Download free for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

WIRE Women's Information

Free information, support and referral services for women.

www.wire.org.au

P: 1300 134 130

Lifeline

24/7 phone crisis support.

www.lifeline.org.au

P: 13 11 14

Men's Referral Service

Advice and support for men concerned about their anger or violence towards their family.

www.ntvmrs.org.au

P: 1300 766 491

Magistrates Court

Information about applying for a personal safety intervention order.

www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au

References

www.wire.org.au/assets/publications/Stalking.pdf

<http://www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch21s07s04s03.php>