



# Stalking Awareness:

Recognising the signs & staying safe



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# National Stalking Consortium



The National Stalking Consortium is a collaborative effort among organisations dedicated to addressing stalking issues. Established in 2014, its primary goal is to enhance support for stalking victims throughout the UK. Comprising various third-sector groups, the Consortium aims to strengthen assistance for victims across both statutory and voluntary sectors. Its initiatives are shaped by the experiences of stalking survivors and solid academic research.

Led by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, the National Stalking Consortium unites 21 specialized stalking organisations, alongside individual members, including victims and scholars from around the UK. The Consortium meets quarterly, playing a vital role in sharing best practices, identifying trends in stalking behaviour, and ensuring that the needs of victims remain a top priority for both frontline and statutory services nationwide by providing a cohesive voice within the sector.

Every year, the Consortium organises a National Stalking Awareness Week (NSAW) campaign to raise awareness of issues affecting stalking victims and to advocate for improvements in provisions from decision-makers within the criminal justice system and government. Campaign themes have included “Bridging the Gap” between victims and advocates, “Standing Together” with young victims, and “Join Forces Against Stalking” to encourage a collaborative approach.

## 523,000

*young people are stalked every year  
in England and Wales alone*



# Overview of Stalking

## Stalking

The classification of stalking as a criminal offence is relatively recent, originating in the early 1990s. Prior to this, it was referred to by various names and often dismissed by many. However, increased awareness and advocacy have led to significant changes in how stalking is perceived and handled legally. Recognising the severe impact stalking can have on victims' lives, legislation was enacted to protect individuals and provide strict penalties for perpetrators. This shift has been crucial in acknowledging stalking as a serious violation of personal boundaries and privacy.

Stalking is a pattern of behaviour that involves unwanted and obsessive attention by an individual towards another person. It can manifest in various forms, including repeated phone calls, following, sending unsolicited messages, or even monitoring someone's activities. The psychological impact on victims can be profound, leading to feelings of fear, anxiety, and helplessness.

## Our Mission

Our mission at The National Stalking Consortium is to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to recognise, prevent, and address stalking effectively. We strive to collaborate with law enforcement, educational professionals, and community organisations to deliver educational programs, workshops, and resources, to foster a culture of awareness and empathy, where individuals feel supported and informed.

We believe by understanding the root causes and psychological factors involved, we can develop more effective prevention and intervention methods. This holistic approach is essential in driving meaningful change and ensuring that all individuals can live free from the threat of stalking.

Together, we can make a difference by promoting safety, understanding, and compassion within our communities, and ultimately, by working towards a future where stalking is no longer a prevalent issue.

## Importance of Education

Understanding stalking is essential for young people, as it poses serious risks to victims. By being able to identify the early signs of stalking and having strategies to safeguard themselves and others, they can take action. We aim to collaborate with schools, universities, and community organisations to establish a network of informed individuals ready to take proactive measures against stalking. By promoting open communication and support, we strive to diminish the stigma associated with stalking and encourage victims to seek assistance without fear of judgment. Furthermore, offenders may not always realise the harm in their behaviours and will often need behavioural therapy to address the underlying issues that contribute to their harmful actions. By raising awareness of the actions of stalkers this may allow someone to recognise their own behaviours and break the cycle before it begins.



# Facilitator Notes

## 1. Intro

Play as students enter: Blondie's 'One Way or Another' ([https://www.youtube.com/watchv=\\_zBwRDEFMRY](https://www.youtube.com/watchv=_zBwRDEFMRY)) or 'Every Step You Take' by The Police can be played as students enter the assembly space (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMOGaugKpzs>).

Once you have played the songs: Today we're going to be talking about how we can recognise and respond to stalking... You've just been listening to a song that might seem familiar to many of you. At first glance, you might think these are love songs. After all, they're catchy, memorable, and often played in romantic movies, but actually this is a song about stalking and obsession, and this can be very dangerous - especially if we don't know about the signs to look out for. Stalking is a serious issue that affects many individuals and can create a profound sense of fear and helplessness.

As we delve into this discussion, we will learn how to identify some of the signs of stalking and the steps we can take to protect ourselves and support others who might be experiencing similar situations.

## 2. Facts you need to know

Stalking is characterised by a pattern of repeated, unwanted actions that can leave you feeling uncomfortable and anxious. Each year, approximately 523,000 young individuals aged 16 to 24 encounter stalking. Among those who have experienced such behaviours, only 28% recognise that they may be associated with stalking. This indicates that nearly three-quarters of individuals exposed to stalking behaviours are unaware of their nature. It is crucial to engage in conversations about this issue to ensure the safety of ourselves and those around us. We should trust our instincts and take any feelings of unease seriously. Sharing your concerns with a trusted friend, family member, or authority figure can provide support and guidance. Additionally, documenting incidents can be crucial if legal action becomes necessary.

## 3. Quote

Often, stalking behaviors are misunderstood and may be downplayed or trivialised, particularly when they involve young individuals like yourself. The quote here reflects the feelings of a girl who faced stalking from a boy of a similar age. Despite her certainty about the situation, her worries were not taken seriously. Stalking is not just a harmless crush or an expression of affection. It's important to recognise that when someone feels threatened or uncomfortable, their feelings are valid and should be taken seriously. It is crucial to discuss these matters with both adults and children to prevent such misconceptions. Open communication and education are key in changing perceptions and ensuring that everyone understands the gravity of these actions. Remember, it's okay to speak up and seek help if you or someone you know is experiencing similar situations. By raising awareness and fostering understanding, we can create a safer environment for everyone."



# Facilitator Notes

## 4. Real-life stalking examples

Let's start by talking about examples of stalking in everyday life. Can you think of any?

(Pause for responses.)

1

### Some examples might surprise you

It is alarming how modern technology has made it easier for people to track and monitor others without their consent. Apps like Snapchat Maps, BeReal Maps, and Life360 allow individuals to locate and follow others in real-time, often without their knowledge.

2

### Normalised by celebrities

These actions are further normalised by the behaviour of celebrities, such as when Kim Kardashian publicly admitted to hacking into her ex's voicemail. While these incidents may be dismissed as harmless or even humorous, they set a dangerous precedent. We even see this humour reinforced in memes about obsessive behaviours.

3

### Films & TV

Films and tv series often portray stalking behaviours as romantic or desirable. A persistent admirer showing up uninvited or following someone around is frequently framed as love, when in reality, it's unhealthy and invasive.

4

### Pop Culture

In popular culture, stalking is often glamorised, and this reinforces and normalises unhealthy relationship behaviours which are not ok. 'No doesn't mean no'.

When we normalise these behaviours, we are saying people aren't supposed to be upset by them but that just isn't the case. You are allowed to feel uncomfortable or concerned by someone's repeated behaviours and you are allowed to say so.





# Facilitator Notes

## 5. What is Stalking?

Stalking is defined as a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviours that lead to feelings of discomfort and unease. Each year, around 523,000 young people aged 16-24 become victims of stalking.

What does this definition entail?

- A pattern refers to actions that occur repeatedly. These may not always be identical behaviours, but they share the same intent: to gain your attention.
- Research indicates that stalking victims typically experience around 100 incidents before they feel comfortable speaking out. We aim to encourage individuals to seek support much earlier.
- Unwanted means that you do not wish for this person to be involved in your life in the manner they desire. This can become complex if you're part of the same social circle or classes, but it's essential that your 'no' is acknowledged and respected.

It's crucial to remember that stalking is a crime and has been illegal since 2012. It may take time for us to recognise the risks involved, but if you are facing patterns of unwanted, repeated behaviour from someone, seeking help as soon as possible is vital.

## 6. Is this Stalking?

- Read the quote aloud
  1. Raise your hand if you believe Taylor might feel uncomfortable and embarrassed.
- Then ask
  2. Raise your hand if you think Taylor could feel flattered.

This is a great moment to discuss how we often overlook such behaviors, considering them trivial or unimportant. Sometimes, we might think (or hear) things like "it's just a crush," "you should feel flattered," or "it's not a big deal," etc

If Taylor is experiencing discomfort or embarrassment, we should encourage her to reach out to someone to share her feelings and create an environment where Taylor feels safe and supported in expressing her emotions. Ask yourself, how can we be better listeners and allies? Should we offer to accompany them to speak with a trusted adult or help them find resources? Remember, acknowledging someone's feelings and providing support can make a significant difference. By doing this we can help individuals like Taylor understand their feelings are valid and that seeking help is a positive step.

## 7. Is this Stalking?

- Read the quote out loud
  1. Hands up if you think Taylor may feel scared and overwhelmed
- Then ask
  2. Hands up if you think Taylor may feel amused and unconcerned.

For many years stalking was not taken seriously and was often the subject of jokes - this deeply ingrained attitude can be hard to ignore if others treat it in this way.

Taylor may be feeling really scared - It's important to acknowledge that everyone's feelings and reactions to such situations are valid, and we should never dismiss someone's fear or discomfort. If Taylor feels scared, it's crucial to take her feelings seriously and provide her with the necessary support and guidance. Encourage open discussions about boundaries and the importance of respecting them. Remember, changing societal attitudes begins with small, supportive actions that reinforce the seriousness of stalking and the importance of personal safety. Let's work together to ensure that everyone feels respected, heard, and safe in their communities.





# Facilitator Notes

## 8. Is this Stalking?

- Read the quote out loud
1. Hands up if you think Taylor may feel flattered by the attention
    - Then ask:
  2. Hands up if you think Taylor may feel uncomfortable and uneasy
- Use this as an opportunity to say that Alex's behaviours are becoming more fixated and worrying. Encourage participants to reflect on how persistent attention can shift from seemingly harmless to potentially harmful. It's essential to recognise the signs early and understand that seeking help is a proactive and courageous step. Discuss with the group how societal norms can sometimes minimize such behaviours, but emphasise the importance of trusting one's instincts and feelings. Ask the group to think about how they would support a friend in Taylor's situation. Would they offer to accompany her to speak with a counsellor or a trusted adult? Encourage them to brainstorm ways to be allies and advocates for those who might be experiencing discomfort or distress.

## 9. Stalking behaviours

Stalking behaviours refer to any repetitive and unwanted actions that create feelings of unease or insecurity in someone. These behaviours can occur in various settings, including online, offline, or even in random encounters.

For instance, in an online context, repeated unsolicited messages or comments on social media can be considered stalking. Offline, it might involve someone showing up uninvited at places you frequent, like your workplace or home. A random encounter could involve someone persistently trying to engage in conversation despite clear indications of disinterest or discomfort.

Encourage students to share any examples they might know of, and discuss the impact these actions can have on an individual's sense of safety and well-being. Remind them that recognising these behaviours is the first step in addressing and preventing them. Even if one action seems small, when repeated, they can build up and become extremely distressing.

## 10. What if I?

It's completely natural to experience strong emotions, particularly during your teenage years. However, it's crucial to recognise that you have control over your actions.

If you notice yourself becoming overly focused on someone—such as sending numerous messages, appearing uninvited, or closely monitoring their social media—it can lead to feelings of discomfort and insecurity for them.

If someone requests that you stop, please listen to their feelings, and don't hesitate to seek guidance from a trusted adult, like a teacher, nurse, or counsellor, if you're uncertain about your behaviour. Taking proactive steps to understand and manage your emotions is an important part of personal growth. By doing so, you not only respect others' boundaries but also cultivate healthier relationships. Remember, acknowledging when your actions may be crossing a line is a sign of maturity and empathy.

Open communication is key. If you feel unsure about how your actions are being perceived, having a respectful conversation can provide clarity and help maintain mutual respect. It's also helpful to engage in self-reflection and consider how you would feel if roles were reversed.

Finally, always prioritise kindness and understanding, both towards others and yourself. Mistakes happen, but learning from them and striving to do better is what truly counts.



# Facilitator Notes

## 11. If you're being stalked

If you ever find that someone's repeated actions are making you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or anxious, it's crucial to take such behaviour seriously from the start. Remember, it's never your fault.

- Begin by documenting the behaviours. Keep a detailed record of incidents by noting down dates, times, and specifics in a diary. Preserve any evidence, such as screenshots, messages, or emails. This will help you create a clear understanding of the situation. For assistance with this process, you can visit the Alice Ruggles Trust website to download a free diary designed for tracking these occurrences.
- Next, confide in someone you trust. Share your experiences with a supportive friend, family member, teacher, or school counsellor. You can also contact a helpline, such as the National Stalking Helpline, which is available to listen and provide guidance. Consider discussing the situation with your school or workplace to see if there are any specific measures they can implement to enhance your safety. This might include adjusting your schedule, changing your route, or having a designated contact person who is aware of your situation.
- Lastly, if you're feeling concerned, don't hesitate to report the behaviours to the police.
- Always remember, you're not alone in this—there are individuals and resources ready to support you. Surround yourself with a strong support network that understands and validates your feelings, ensuring that you have allies in your journey to feeling secure again.

By taking these steps, you're actively safeguarding your peace of mind and reinforcing your right to live without fear or intrusion. Remember, seeking help is a courageous act, and you deserve to feel safe and respected in all aspects of your life.

## 12. Talking to GP

There are lots of people that you can talk to about your worries - if you are experiencing stalking behaviours. These might be your parents or carers, an older sibling, a staff member at school or the police.

You may be finding it hard to cope physically/mentally/emotionally and if this is the case then you can speak to your GP about your worries. They can offer a range of help.

- Read through slide...



# Facilitator Notes

## 13. Remember...

If someone refuses to accept your 'no' or ignores your request to 'stop', here are some additional points to consider:

**1**

### **Set clear boundaries**

Reiterate your boundaries firmly and clearly. Make sure the other person understands that their behavior is unacceptable.

**3**

### **Document behaviour**

Keeping a record of incidents can be helpful, especially if you need to escalate the matter to someone in authority.

**5**

### **Know your options**

Familiarise yourself with resources available for assistance, whether it's counselling, hotlines, or legal options, depending on the severity of the situation.

**2**

### **Seek support**

Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, or authorities for support. Sharing your experience can provide you with guidance and strength.

**4**

### **Trust your gut**

If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, take those feelings seriously. Your instincts are crucial in these situations.

**6**

### **Remember your wellbeing is important**

After a stressful encounter, take time for yourself to recharge and process the experience. If the situation has a lasting impact on you, seeking help from a mental health professional might be beneficial. Always prioritise your safety and well-being in any interaction.



# Sources of Support

List of support services that you can use to signpost stalking victims to for help, advice and support:

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- ✓ **School: teacher, nurse, counsellor.**
- ✓ **Alice Ruggles Trust:**  
**[alicerugglestrust.org](http://alicerugglestrust.org)**
- ✓ **Paladin Service - Stalking support and specialist young people services:**  
**[www.paladinservice.co.uk](http://www.paladinservice.co.uk)**  
**020 3866 4107**  
**[info@paladinservice.co.uk](mailto:info@paladinservice.co.uk)**
- ✓ **Suzy Lamplugh Trust - National Stalking Helpline:**  
**<https://www.suzylamplugh.org>**  
**0808 802 0300**  
**[info@suzylamplugh.org](mailto:info@suzylamplugh.org)**
- ✓ **Respect - Offers support to those exhibiting controlling behaviours:**  
**0808 802 4040**
- ✓ **Men's Advice Line - Offers support to men with controlling partners:**  
**0808 801 0327**
- ✓ **The CyberHelpline - Offers support for victims of cyber-crime and online harms:**  
**<https://www.thecyberhelpline.com>**
- ✓ **Victim Care and Advice Service - Offers support to people recovering from the effects of crime:**  
**0800 138 2020**
- ✓ **Hollie Guard - Free personal safety app:**  
**[www.hollieguard.com](http://www.hollieguard.com)**
- ✓ **Healthcare Professional**

