

SAFE SPACE

January Newsletter, 2014



Stalking Awareness

January, 2014 has been designated as National Stalking Awareness Month by presidential proclamation and is a good time to learn a little bit about this crime and what can be done about it.

One of the best resources for information regarding stalking can be found online at the Stalking Resource Center.

As advocates, the biggest area of concern for us is the connection between stalking and other violent crime. For instance, the Stalking Resource Center reports that 76% of all femicides carried out by an intimate partner are committed against women who have been stalked by that partner. In addition, 1 in 6 women

and 1 in 19 men have experienced stalking at some point in their lifetimes during which they felt very fearful or believed they, or someone close to them, would be hurt or killed. Because most stalking is committed by someone the victim knows and has been close to, it is often very easy for that person to gather personal information and to know what routines their victims follow.

Sadly, orders of protection may not be very effective in cases where stalking occurs because it is often difficult to prove and those who use it to terrorize their victims are often quite good at evading detection. The most important advice to give someone who is experi-

encing stalking, however, is to take it very seriously even if others try to downplay it.

It's crucial for victims of stalking to understand the importance of documenting incidents as they occur. For example, if a victim receives multiple harassing text messages, he or she can capture a screen shot of each using a digital camera or the camera on a friend's phone. This provides evidence of date, time, and content. Also, a log of incidents and behaviors relating to the stalking can be extremely helpful in prosecution. The Stalking Resource Center provides a form and helpful tips for doing this on their site.

<http://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>

What exactly *is* stalking?

While it can be difficult to pin down an exact definition of stalking, most jurisdictions consider it to be a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. The course of conduct mentioned within this definition most often includes a pattern of behavior—repeated calling, texting, threatening, following, etc.—and is directed at a specific person although the repercussions of stalking behavior are often felt by the family and friends of the victim, as well.

The thing that most identifies stalking, however, and separates it from simple harassment is the fear felt by the victim. A victim of stalking may experience anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression along with lost work days and possibly having to move. Because of this, all 50 states have passed stalking legislation and consider it a criminal offense.

(National Center for Victims of Crime)

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SHELTER

- * 24 hr. crisis line
- * (406) 782-8511

ADVOCACY

An advocate can help with:

- * Locating financial resources
- * Court accompaniment
- * Brainstorming plans for getting away

SAFETY

If you feel unsafe in your home but are not quite ready to leave, call us to discuss safety planning options that might keep you safe until you are ready. Crisis line is available 24 hours/day!



"THERE ARE JUST AS MANY JERKS AND SWEET-HEARTS AND DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AND JOCKS AND QUEENS AND EVERY OTHER POLARIZATION YOU CAN POSSIBLY THINK OF WITHIN THE LGBT COMMUNITY AS THERE ARE WITHIN THE HUMAN RACE."

-IO TILLET WRIGHT FROM HER 2012 TED TALK

"For me, I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you.

-Neil deGrasse Tyson



The New Year's Resolution Revisited

Each year, most of us spend some time during the holidays thinking about improvements we want to make in our lives for the upcoming months. Too often, however, our good intentions get derailed almost immediately and we go back to the same old bad habits we seem to always have! This year, why not take some time to set goals and make resolutions that actually have a chance of working? Author Mandy King, writing for MindBodyGreen, has come up with a list of 5 questions to ask yourself about setting goals which may just change the way we think about our resolutions for this year.

1. Is my goal specific? For example, you might say, "I want to be healthier". That's a very general statement whereas "I want to increase my vegetable consumption from three servings to six servings a day" is much more specific.
2. Can I measure my goal? It's pretty hard to measure "wanting to be healthier", but it's simple to measure three servings versus six servings of vegetables. The more measurable a goal is, the easier it is to track it. Similarly, if you track your progress towards achieving a goal, the more likely you are to achieve it.
3. Is your goal within reason? It's not that your goal has to be easy, but if you stretch yourself, is it something you could achieve? For example, "I want to eat six servings of vegetables every day of the year" might be unrealistic but eating six servings three days each week is much more attainable.
4. Is your goal relevant to your desires and life? Is your goal something you want to achieve and are able to work toward? It's worth remembering that your goal should be relevant to *your* life, not anyone else's.
5. Does your goal have a good time frame? To say that you will do this for all of 2014 might be unrealistic. Instead, try for a shorter time period—perhaps the month of January—and when you achieve that, set a new goal.

Reference: King, Mandy. www.mindbodygreen.com . 8 Jan. 2014.