

Supporting loved ones experiencing stalking

The majority of stalking victims confide in a friend, family member, or a trusted individual about their circumstances before seeking professional or legal assistance. If a stalking victim reaches out to you, your response can significantly impact their feelings of validation and their decision to seek help.

1. Believe and validate victims

- Don't question or minimize what they tell you.
- For example, don't say "well maybe they just miss you" or "they probably didn't realize it was bothering you."
- Instead, say "that sounds scary" or "I can see why that would be upsetting."

2. Focus on the offender's actions, not the victim's responses

- Even well-intentioned friends can accidentally blame victims.
- Don't ask questions such as "why did you respond to that text message?"
- Focus on the stalker's actions, for instance, "It is not right that they kept texting you."
- Nothing the victim did justifies the stalker's behavior.
 - **Remind victims that this is not their fault.**

3. Support the victim, encourage help-seeking, and document the stalking.

- Thank them for trusting you enough to have the conversation.
- Help the victim think through options – like learning more about stalking on the SPARC website, reaching out to local service providers, or calling police.
 - Victims may or may not want to take action. **Respect their choices.**

4. **Respect the victim's privacy and choices**

- Do not share any information about the victim with the stalker.
- Ask the victim who else they have told and respect their wishes about who to share this information with.

5. **Refer them to resources to make an individual safety plan and learn more about stalking**

- **Title IX at HSC**
 - Website: unthsc.edu/title-ix
 - Email: TitleIX@unthsc.edu
- **Care Team**
 - 24/7 Line: 817-735-2740
 - Email: CareTeam@unthsc.edu
- **HSC Police**
 - Non-Emergency: 817-735-2210
 - Emergency: 817-735-2600
- **CoerciveControl.org**
 - Offers the Stalking & Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP) for risk assessment and safety suggestions for victims.
- **SPARC-referred resources**

6. **Check in with the victim**

- Stalking cases can be prolonged, with victims' feelings and needs evolving.
- Regularly check in and offer support, asking how to help them feel safer.
- Inquire about their preferred method of contact, as stalkers may monitor digital communications.