

STALKING FACTSHEET FOR STUDENTS

swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity

MADE BY THE SAFER COMMUNITY TEAM

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UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY

Creating a safe and respectful Swinburne community.

What is stalking?

Stalking occurs when someone repeatedly imposes unwanted communication and/or contact on a person that causes them to feel fear or distress.

Stalking can be perpetrated physically as well as through technology (cyberstalking). Stalking is a crime in all Australian states and territories. The majority of stalking reports are being pursued by someone they know. Stalkers often want to exert power and control over the victim in order to punish them. This may be a result of relationship breakdown or rejection.

Examples of physical stalking:

- Showing up uninvited to your house, school or work.
- Approaching or following you.
- Vandalising or damaging your personal property.
- Physically and/or verbally threatening you or your loved ones.
- Sending or leaving unwanted letters or gifts.
- Arranging to meet you under false pretences.
- Starting false legal action against you.

Examples of cyberstalking:

- Repeatedly sending you unwanted emails, text messages, and voicemails.
- Using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices or tracking apps to track your location and following you without permission.
- Keeping you under surveillance via closed-circuit TV cameras.
- Harassing, humiliating or threatening you on social media sites.
- Hacking into your email or internet accounts to impersonate you.

What to do if you are experiencing stalking?

1 TAKE ACTION EARLY

- It is recommended that victims give a single clear message to their stalker that their attention is unwanted and needs to stop.
- Following the single clear message, stop all contact with the stalker.
- Do not negotiate or reason with the stalker.
- Do not respond to contact of any form from the stalker as this encourages the stalking to continue (even if you respond negatively).
- Block the stalker's email and phone number.
- Block the stalker on social media and report all unwanted messages and posts to the social media site.
- Screen phone calls, especially those from private numbers.

2 INCREASE YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

- Take all threats seriously and contact the police immediately.
- Always have your phone with you and save emergency contact numbers in it.
- Make a safety plan including safe places you can go in an emergency. It might be homes of family or friends that the stalker doesn't know the addresses of.
- Keep your location private by turning off location services on your phone. Don't make posts on social media.
- Vary your travel routine or route, including using different shops.
- Change passwords and increase privacy settings on social media. Ensure your profiles are set to private.
- Use the private browsing setting in your internet browser to ensure your search history can't be viewed.
- Get a free home security check through your local police station and follow their recommendations.

3 SEEK ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Tell trusted people in your support network that you are being stalked and seek their advice. This may include friends, family, neighbours, work mates, or peers/staff at university.
- Request that trusted people avoid contact with the stalker and do not provide them with any information about you such as your location.
- Seek help from professional support services (e.g. counselling).

4 COLLECT EVIDENCE AND REPORT THE BEHAVIOUR

- Keep all items or letters received from the stalker. Date them and lock in a secure place.
- Save a history of all phone calls, text messages, emails, social media posts, comments and messages. Take screen shots where possible.
- Keep a logbook of all unwanted stalker activity with dates and times. This includes all instances of contact and being followed or under surveillance, both physically or using technology.
- Report any inappropriate online behaviour to social media sites.

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Some statistics (Australia)

- 1 in 10 Australians experience stalking – around 600,000 people a year.
- 75% of stalking victims are women.
- 80–85% of stalkers are male.
- 66% of women who report stalking know their stalker.

(Women's Information and Referral Exchange, 2013)

Support on campus

SAFER COMMUNITY

Safer Community offers advice, support, intervention, and risk management for students who experience or witness concerning behaviours on or off campus. These concerning behaviours include stalking, bullying, harassment, family violence, and sexual assault or harassment. To report concerning behaviour email Safer Community or complete the online incident reporting form. safercommunity@swinburne.edu.au
swinburne.edu.au/incident-reporting-form

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE

Swinburne Student Life provides policy advice, support and guidance in academic issues, and advocates for best outcomes in complaints, grievances, appeals and misconduct hearings.
03 9214 5445
studentlife@swin.edu.au
swinburne.edu.au/advocacy

SWINBURN SECURITY

Contact campus security services for emergencies on campus or for a security officer escort.
03 9214 3333

STUDENT COUNSELLING

If you are struggling with a personal, emotional or mental health difficulty, whether related to your studies or your life away from university, counselling may help. Register and make an appointment with Swinburne's counselling services.
03 9214 8483
swinburne.edu.au/counselling

CRISIS LINE – OUT OF HOURS

The Swinburne crisis line is available to help 24 hours a day on weekends and public holidays, and outside business hours on weekdays (before 9am and after 5pm).
Call **1300 854 144**
Text **0488 884 145**

Support off campus

POLICE

National emergency response and reporting.
In emergencies call **000**
police.vic.gov.au

LIFELINE

24/7 phone crisis support.
13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

WIRE (WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND REFERRAL EXCHANGE)

Free information, support and referral services for women.
1300 134 130
wire.org.au

MAGISTRATES COURT OF VICTORIA

Information about applying for a personal safety intervention order.
magistratescourt.vic.gov.au

MEN'S REFERRAL SERVICE (NO TO VIOLENCE)

Advice and support for men concerned about their anger or violence towards their family.
1300 766 491
ntvmrs.org.au

The information contained in this flyer was correct at the time of publication, October 2019. The university reserves the right to alter or amend the material contained in this guide.

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