

Procedures for Responding to Stalking Checklist for Intervening

Please see the F.I.U. Policy Document on Sexual Offenses, Relationship Violence, Stalking for more specific details about each of the following items.

Reporting Obligation and Statement of Confidentiality: Inform student of your reporting obligation and confidentiality issues as soon as it is practically possible (i.e., possibly right after ensuring safety if the person is beginning to reveal specific details). If necessary, interrupt the person to inform them how information may be used BEFORE accepting specific time, date and location details. See Number 6 below for details.

1. **IMMEDIATE RESPONSE SECTION:**

- a. Communicate support, use statements such as "It's not your fault," and "I'm sorry that this happened."
- b. Communicate that stalking is a very serious crime; it should be acted upon to prevent further victimization.

If you are not with the VAC, encourage victim to Contact Victim Advocacy Center and the police department. Encourage student to speak directly with the Victim Advocacy Center advocate, (24-hour hotline: 305-348-3000), ask permission to invite the advocate into the session

- c. and begin transfer of care.
- d. Assess immediate safety of the individual
- e. If you are with police or VAC, conduct an immediate risk assessment

2. Follow these **GENERAL GUIDELINES** **after the immediate response** for making the victim feel safe and comfortable.

See separate section of this Checklist for additional information related to technology aided stalking, including "cyber-stalking."

_____ **Continue to** Communicate support, use statements such as "It's not your fault," and "I'm sorry that this happened."

_____ Let the victim make choices for him or herself. It might be tempting to give advice or make choices for the person, but it is important to let them take control over their own decisions. **Provide options as outlined below.**

_____ Ascertain if the student has contacted the Victim Advocacy Center. If not, encourage the student to speak directly with the Victim Advocacy Center advocate, (24-hour hotline: 305-348-3000), ask permission to invite the advocate into the session

and begin transfer of care. Free and confidential services are available for FIU students, staff, faculty, and university visitors.

_____ Steps should be taken to preserve evidence. Victims of stalking are encouraged to take action to preserve any evidence such as emails or other written correspondence, voice recordings or other messages, even if they do not wish to take any action at the time of the incident(s).

_____ Victims should keep a log of incidents including time, date, place and witnesses, even if they do not wish to take any action at the time the incident(s) occur. This is important since stalking is a pattern of behavior over time, and any future events must be viewed in the context of prior events. Contact the Victim Advocacy Center (305) 348-3000 for guidance.

_____ Provide options as outlined below regarding safety, referrals, medical treatment and counseling.

2. Ensure **SAFETY**

Definition of risk assessment and who should be doing it , indicating priorities of actions

_____ If a stalking incident takes place on University Park Campus:
Contact University Police at 305-348-5911.

_____ If a stalking incident takes place on Biscayne Bay Campus,
Contact University Police at _____.

_____ If a stalking incident takes place off campus: contact area police at 911.

_____ Safety planning is an important process in cases of stalking. The Victim Advocacy Center provides assistance with risk assessment and safety planning for victims of stalking. 24-hour hotline: 305-348-3000.

3. Ask for victim's consent to refer for **MEDICAL EXAM /TREATMENT** if injuries are involved.

_____ Ask if she or he has suffered physical harm.

_____ If a victim appears to need medical attention, but chooses not to go to a hospital, encourage victim to seek appropriate medical attention. Even if some period of time has elapsed since an incident, a medical exam is still recommended. Inform of the importance of medical care to screen/treat for injuries.

_____ University Health Service provides confidential medical care.
Note, however that the University Health Services DOES NOT operate 24 hours a day.

University Health Services

University Park Campus: 305-348-4020

Biscayne Bay Campus: 305-919-5307

4. Offer the victim a referral for **CRIME REPORTING, STALKING RESOURCES** and/or information about **STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION** and other university **RESOURCES**.

_____ Victims of stalking are encouraged to report the incident to law enforcement agencies and contact the Victim Advocacy Center. University personnel should always encourage victims to report incident(s) of stalking to law enforcement agencies with appropriate jurisdiction and avail themselves of all the services and rights to which they are entitled by law.

University Police:

University Park Campus 305-348-2626

Biscayne Bay Campus 305-919-5559

_____ City Police: _____

Miami-Dade Police Department

Injunction Unit: 305-349-5888

_____ Regardless of whether the victim chooses to immediately involve law enforcement officials, the victim is strongly urged to contact the Victim Advocacy Center for assistance with risk assessment, coordinating services, accessing resources, academic and other accommodations and to help the victim safety plan, explore options and consider how to preserve evidence if the victim chooses to pursue legal prosecution at a later date. Services are confidential and free of charge for students, faculty and staff. 24-hour hotline: 305-348-1215.

_____ The Victim Advocacy Center can assist members of the University community in coordination with University Police, in determining whether an incident or incidents constitute stalking, how to maintain a log and preserve evidence, how to make a no-contact statement, risk assessment, safety planning, and considering available options.

_____ A victim may also choose to file a report to the University's Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution if the stalker is a student. An explanation of this procedure can be obtained in the Student Handbook. University Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office: 305-348-3939

_____ Under certain circumstances, if the alleged stalker is a staff or faculty member, a victim/survivor may choose to file a report with the office of Equal Opportunity Programs: 305-348-2785.

_____ If a stalking incident occurs in university housing, victims are also encouraged to contact Residence Hall staff.

_____ University personnel and students should always encourage victims to report incident(s) of stalking to the police and seek assistance from the Victim Advocacy Center, given the potential harm to persons, violations of community standards, and the need to monitor the campus climate.

_____ Any member of the university community may file an anonymous report (that does not identify the parties involved) with the Victim Advocacy Center. This report may be filed regardless of any legal or university disciplinary action. This report provides University staff with information about the incident that may be valuable to their efforts to prevent future incidents and to educate students and others about high-risk situations.

5. Refer for **COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES** with the victim's consent.

_____ Research has shown that follow-up counseling is of significant benefit to a victim of trauma. This counseling may be initiated at any time after an incident (from hours to years). Psychological and Counseling Services is an on-campus resource for students. Counseling services are confidential and free of charge to students.

_____ Faculty and Staff may contact the Office of Employee Assistance 305-348-2469.

University Counseling & Psychological Services:

University Park Campus 305-348-3950
Biscayne Bay Campus 305-919-5305

6. Inform the student about your **REPORTING OBLIGATION, CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES**, and the University's commitment to providing a supportive response.

Note: is the reporting being used for statistics or for supporting the victim, one may not require revealing identities; also consider the liability of the person who knows but does not report)

_____ University officials who have knowledge about stalking incidents are encouraged (**need legal opinion or information on whether reporting is mandatory, then is the word "encourage" enough; additionally make this consistent with #7)** to _____ file an anonymous report with the Victim Advocacy Center (305) 348-1215, in addition to supporting the victim/survivor and referring that person to the Victim Advocacy Center.

_____ The University is committed to providing a supportive response. The Victim Advocacy Center is available to assist with risk assessment, safety planning, and coordination of resources/accommodations. 24-hour hotline: 305-348-3000.

7. **INFORM** (see #6, does this imply mandatory nature or “encouraged” again, is reporting a requirement and to whom?) the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and University Police

Department or designee, of the time, date, and approximate location of the incident so that the victim’s options can be ensured and an incident report can be recorded (for statistical and educational purposes). It is the designee’s job to ensure that accurate statistical information is collected and reported. The designee needs enough information to ensure that duplicate reports are not reported as separate statistics. Please make this report as soon as possible after learning of an incident.

_____ Vice President for Student Affairs 305-348-2797

_____ University Police Department 305-348-2626

Technology aided Stalking

This form of stalking involves offensive, threatening communication through a variety of types of technology, including but not limited to: the Internet, via e-mail, chat rooms, or instant messaging or through other electronic means, such as cellular telephones or pagers.

This type of stalking is methodical, deliberate, and persistent communication that disturbs the recipient. It is equally as serious as conventional stalking and is included in most statutes addressing stalking. (Campus Stalking Guide published in July 2002 by California Coalition Against Sexual Assault-CALCASA)

"Cyber" stalkers easily disguise themselves by adopting several false identities and then harass the target thorough unsolicited e-mails, disturbing private or public messages on bulletin boards or in chat rooms, and communiqués of actual threats of harm.

These measures can include:

- ❑ Send a no contact order to the stalker
- ❑ Tell the harasser to stop: Generally, it is important to advise victims not to communicate with a harasser. However, Working to Halt On-line Abuse (WHO@), an on-line resource for victims of cyber stalking, suggests that the victim make one contact to tell the harasser “Do not contact me in any way in the future.” The victim may want tot send a

copy of the message to the abuse department of the harasser's Internet Service Provider, but should make no future contact.

- ❑ Notify the police of all incidents
- ❑ Notify law enforcement of the threats
- ❑ Complain to the appropriate parties: if you are being harassed via email, complain to the sender's ISP and any email service used to send the messages. Harassment in a chat room or harassment via a web site about someone) should be reported to the server. If you are harassed on any kind of instant messaging service, read the terms of service and harassment policies they've provided and use any contact address given there.
- ❑ Vary routes of travel
- ❑ Use caller ID or a cell phone
- ❑ Obtain a post office box
- ❑ Have the registrar put a hold on all personal information
- ❑ Save all physical evidence
- ❑ Keep accurate logs of incidents
- ❑ Save all communications: it is very important that the person being harassed save all communication from the harasser including e-mails, chat logs, etc.
- ❑ Use a stalking safety log to document all encounters with the stalker
- ❑ Form a contingency plan in the case their safety is compromised
- ❑ Be prepared to leave the area, if necessary
- ❑ Seek help from a Victim Advocate: It's important to safely plan and to receive supportive help for the traumatic impact of all types of stalking.

(*these guidelines have been adapted from literature that is widely available to assist in the efforts to address the topic of stalking such as the website: www.fcasv.org) If an assault takes place on University Park Campus:

RESOURCES

- ❑ W.H.O.A. (Working to Halt Online Abuse)

Web address: www.haltabuse.org

- ❑ National Safe & Strategic Technology Project

Web address: www.nnedv.org

- ❑ Stalking Resource Center's Information Clearing house Index. The Stalking Resource Center's mission is to raise national awareness about stalking and to foster the creation of multidisciplinary responses to the issue.

Web address: www.ncvc.org/src

Phone #: 202-467-8700

Email: src@ncvc.org

- The National Center for Victims of Crime

Web address: <http://www.ncvc.org/src>

- Safety Ed International

Web address: www.safetyed.org