



Workshop: Stalking & Digital Relationships

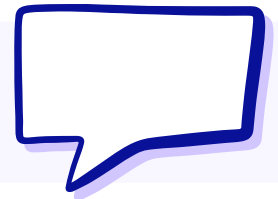
I SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES



LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- ▶ Describe and give examples of stalking.
- ▶ Recognize when behaviors in pop culture and movies are harmful and not “romantic.”
- ▶ Restate in their own words why digital boundaries are important to set in a relationship.
- ▶ Contrast healthy digital behaviors versus unhealthy ones.

II SAMPLE INTRODUCTION



“Some of you may have seen romantic comedy movies like “[Say Anything](#),” where the guy shows up in the middle of the night with a boombox outside of his ex-girlfriend’s window to play her “their song.” This portrays this act as really romantic. However, behaviors like this are actually more alarming than might often be thought and raise the question of: When does being “persistent” cross the line towards abuse? This is why today we’re going to talk about stalking and how talking about expectations in digital relationships can be an important first step.”



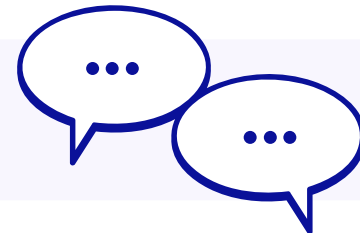
III SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Who can tell me what they think “stalking” means? Who do you think it happens to?
- What are some examples of stalking?
- Where do you draw the line between being “persistent” and “stalking?”
- Do you feel like sharing your location with someone you’re dating is necessary? What about friends? Family?
- Do you feel like if you’re dating someone they should respond to you right away? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about your partner having the password to your phone or social media accounts?



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS



- Defining stalking: [[SPARC](#)]
 - What is it? “A pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress.”
 - Stalking can happen to anyone of any gender, but “the majority of stalking victims are female. It is estimated that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will experience stalking in their lifetime.”
 - Stalking is serious. It can lead to mental health challenges, difficulty in school, and even suicide.
- While being somewhat “persistent” is OK, it’s critical to understand that repeated unwanted behavior is not OK. We can understand this boundary by asking someone if our behavior is OK with them and reading body language.
- It is a reality that men are [more likely](#) to stalk than women. This is not to black, shame, or attack, Rather, let’s ask why this is the case? For example, men learn from places like the media, TV, and movies that “never giving up” is romantic.
- Stalking can be misinterpreted or reframed as a way to “show love.” This is manipulative, though. Let’s walk through with some other examples of harmful, stalking behavior: [[One Love Foundation | Inside the Mind of a Stalker](#)]



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS (CONT.)



- [Guilting you or inventing] emergencies to elicit sympathy. Example: “Why are you doing this to me? Don’t you care about me?”
 - [Making] empty promises to prolong contact. Example: “This is the last time, I swear. I just need closure.”
 - [Blackmailing], no matter how far of a stretch. Example: “I’ll tell your boss about the time you called in sick.”
 - [Twisting] your words to suit their agenda. Example: “I know that you really do love me and that your friends are just trying to brainwash you against me.”
 - [Giving] expensive or elaborate gifts with strings attached. Example: “After all I’ve done for you...”
- Trust how you feel and be aware of your actions or those of friends. If someone continually violates your boundaries, showing up unannounced and texting you nonstop when you haven’t replied, these are warning signs.
- There are resources on campus for you or anyone you know experiencing uncomfortable repeated contact or stalking.
- One way we can prevent stalking is by respecting digital boundaries, communicating proactively, and teaching our friends to do the same: For example:
- How often do you feel comfortable texting/calling?
 - At what point do we feel comfortable tagging each other in photos?
 - Are there conversations you would rather have in person than over text?



V SAMPLE ACTIVITIES



**EPISODE OR VIDEO
SCREENING: “YOU” OR
“THERE’S SOMETHING
ABOUT MARY”:**

Screen an episode of “You” or the film, “There’s Something About Mary.” Discuss the relationship dynamics and where stalking was present.

Sample Discussion Questions ([SPARC Discussion Guides](#)):

- What kind of behaviors in the film would be considered stalking?
- Are there ways that the film portrayed stalking in a positive light?
- Do you think if this were happening in real life and not a movie people would gloss over it as much?

**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES:
DIGITAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Set up to two circles or rows of chairs facing each other. Instruct participants to sit in the chairs and that you will have a few rounds of one-on-one discussions for 3-4 minutes each using a prompt. Rotate partners after each prompt so that everyone has the chance to connect with different people. Ensure both individuals have the chance to share during each round.

Sample Prompts:

- Have you ever experienced or heard of uncomfortable or unwanted messages over Instagram or Snapchat? If so, what was uncomfortable about them?
- What do you wish was different about digital communication around dating?
- How do you feel about location sharing with a romantic partner? What are the pros and cons?



VI WORKSHOP RESOURCE LIBRARY



- **Video:** Relationship and Technology - AMAZE
- **Video:** Stalking Awareness Videos | Stalking Awareness & Prevention | SPARC
- **Article:** On-Campus Resources for Stalking: How Safe Do You Feel On Campus? - One Love Foundation
- **Article:** Inside the Mind of a Stalker - One Love Foundation
- **Article:** 10 "Romantic" Movies that Present Stalking as Love - Screen Rant
- **Article:** How often should you communicate digitally? - One Love Foundation
- **Article:** The Psychology of Stalking - VICE
- **Research:** Majoring in stalking: Exploring stalking experiences between college students and the general public | Crime Victims' Institute College of Criminal Justice Sam Houston State University