

# Crime Victims' Institute



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## Our Mission

The mission of the Crime Victims' Institute is to :

- Conduct research to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages in order to promote a better understanding of victimization
- Improve services to victims
- Assist victims of crime by giving them a voice
- Inform victim-related policymaking at the state and local levels.

**Sam Houston**  
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College of Criminal Justice  
Sam Houston State University

## January—National Stalking Awareness Month

January marks the beginning of National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM). NSAM was initially launched in 2004 following efforts of Debbie Riddle, the sister of murdered stalking victim Peggy Klinke. Riddle believed the unfortunate murder of her sister could be used to help improve law enforcements' response to stalking and therefore save lives. The vision Riddle had for NSAM aligns with this year's theme of "Know It. Name It. Stop It."

Stalking is generally defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Research has indicated that 15.6% of women in Texas and 5.2% of men in the United States experience stalking in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Stalking is a serious crime in which many victims experience a host of economic, social, and physical and mental health difficulties as a result of this crime. Over the past several years, the technology employed by stalkers has generally outpaced the criminal justice systems' training and response, adding to the challenges of responding to this crime.

The Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP), a new research-informed tool for stalking victims and victim service providers, was recently made available online. The goals of SHARP include assessment of the stalking situation, safety,

contextualizing the victim's unique stalking situation, and education about risks and safety. Additional information and access to SHARP can be found at <http://www.cdar.uky.edu/CoerciveControl/sharp.html>.

Recently the Crime Victims' Institute (CVI) has worked on projects related to stalking in Texas. The following article provides an overview of one of the recent stalking research studies. CVI will continue to conduct research on stalking victimization with the goal that findings can be applied to both victim services and the criminal justice response

1. Black, M. L., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Walters, S. G. S. L., Chen, M. T.M., & Stevens, M. R. (2011). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.



Focus on:

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Patrick Brady is currently in his second year of the Ph.D program in criminal justice at Sam Houston State University. He holds a bachelor's degree in Forensic Science from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. Patrick's primary research interests include police response to interpersonal violence, and the role of technology in the facilitation of crime and delinquency. When he is not being a doctoral student, Patrick enjoys eating, watching terrible reality TV shows, exploring the unique state of Texas, and being a gentleman. You can [legally] follow him on Twitter (@\_Patrickology), or contact him via e-mail at patbrady@shsu.edu.



## Is Stalking More Prevalent among College Students?

There currently exists an ongoing debate as to whether college students are at a higher risk for victimization than the general public. According to trends in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the rate of violent crime (e.g., robbery, aggravated assault) among college students (34.4 per 1,000 students) is substantially lower than the rate among the general public (47.3 per 1,000 nonstudents).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that non-students experienced sexual assault at a higher rate than college students (7.6 per 1,000 vs. 6.1 per 1,000, respectively).<sup>2</sup>

Despite these studies showing that the risk for victimization is higher for non-college students, little is known about the similarities and differences in stalking experiences among college students and the general public. To explore this gap in the literature, nationally representative data from the 2006 NCVS Stalking Victimization Survey (SVS) were analyzed to explore prevalence estimates among the two populations in relation to traditional stalking, stalking through the use of technology, and contacting the police.

Inconsistent with the literature, findings indicated that stalking was *more* prevalent among college students, with 4.3% of students experiencing stalking within the past 12 months compared to 2.2% of the general public. Of the individuals who experienced traditional stalking, 29.7% of college students were stalked through the use of technology (e.g., GPS, e-mails, texts), compared

to 19.5% of victims in the general public. Conversely, rates of reporting stalking experiences to the police were much higher for the general public than for college students (32.1% vs. 25.3%, respectively). This finding is alarming considering that 70-75% of stalking victims *did not* contact the police, regardless of whether they were in college or not.

Overall, these findings suggest that more is needed to build the capacity of universities and public safety officials to raise awareness and drastically improve their investigations and response to the crime of stalking. Further information about this report can be found at:

<http://www.crimevictimsinstitute.org/publications>

<sup>1</sup> Hart, T. C. (2013). Violent victimization of college students. Findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey. In B. Fisher & J. Sloan (Eds.), *Campus crime: Legal, social and policy perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 141 - 157). Springfield, IL: C.C. Thomas.

<sup>2</sup> Langton, L. & Sinozich, S. (2014). *Rape and sexual assault among college-age females, 1995-2013*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.





## In the Works....

Look for upcoming publications from the Crime Victims' Institute on:

- Stalking Series
- Human Trafficking Series
- Strangulation
- Crime Victims Compensation Fund
- Evaluation of an Expedited Domestic Violence Court

### Crime Victims' Institute Advisory Board

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Let's discuss it:

In December, the Supreme Court heard the case of *Elonis v. United States*, a case of online harassment that has the potential to impact stalking and domestic violence laws and response. The majority of state stalking laws currently require prosecutors to prove the defendant knowingly engaged in behaviors that would cause reasonable fear or emotional distress regardless of the defendant's subjective intent. If the court rules in favor of *Elonis*, perceived threats in which an argument is made that the defendant meant no harm may no longer be criminal offenses and could also hinder victims' abilities to obtain protective orders.



## January Proclaimed As National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month



## Upcoming Events

### Share your ideas:

We welcome your input. Please send issues or topics you would like to see CVI conduct research on to : [crimevictims@shsu.edu](mailto:crimevictims@shsu.edu)



Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention Forth Worth, TX	02/24-27/15
Prevention of Child Abuse Conference Las Colinas, TX	02/23-24/15
TAASA Annual Conference Austin, TX	03/1-5/15
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Orlando, FL	03/3-7/15
Conference on Crimes Against Women Dallas, TX	03/16-18/15
January - Stalking Awareness Month	
February - Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month	

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.  
**One in three young people experience abuse in their relationships.**  
Visit <http://www.teenDVmonth.org> for more information!



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