

## How can Ryerson help?

Ryerson can provide you with the support you need to take action and will listen to your concerns and feelings. Specifically, we can:

- Discuss your options.
- Provide assistance with contacting the police.
- Provide accompaniment to court dates.
- Assist with personal safety strategies.
- Recommend self-defence courses.
- Provide referrals to appropriate on-campus or community services.
- Assist you in contacting the Ryerson Safe House.

## What can be done to inform others about stalking?

### You can:

- Offer support to the victim or target.
- Raise awareness of the issues, the problems and the need to support victims.
- Be aware of how the media depict violence and stalking as “normal.”
- Challenge descriptions of stalking behaviour as cute, harmless and/or charming.
- Join with other people to advocate for stronger anti-stalking laws.

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## Where Can I go for Help?

### Inside Ryerson:

- Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services (416) 979-5349
- Campus Security (416) 979-5001
- Centre for Student Development and Counselling (416) 979-5195
- Ryerson Women's Centre (416) 596-9838
- RyeSAC (Students' Union) (416) 597-0723

### Outside Ryerson:

#### 24-Hour Emergency Numbers

- Assaulted Women's Help Line (416) 863-0511
- Emergency (police, ambulance, fire) 911
- Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (416) 597-8808

#### Sexual Assault Care Centres

- Lakeridge Health Oshawa (905) 576-8711
- Mississauga Hospital (905) 848-7493
- Scarborough Grace Hospital (416) 495-2555
- Women's College Hospital Sexual Assault Care Centre (Toronto) (416) 323-6040
- York Central Hospital 1-800-521-6004

#### Community Agencies

- Adelaide Resource Centre for Women (416) 392-9243
- Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic (416) 323-9149
- Distress Centre (416) 408-4357
- Gerstein Centre (416) 929-5200
- Hostel Services, Central Intake (416) 397-5637
- METRAC (416) 392-3135
- Native Women's Resource Centre (416) 963-9963
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre (416) 465-6021
- Women's Health in Women's Hands (416) 593-7655

Contents of this brochure are based, in part, on information generously provided by Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC).

**RYERSON UNIVERSITY**

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# Stalking Criminal Harassment



# taking action

**DISCRIMINATION  
& HARASSMENT  
PREVENTION  
SERVICES**

## What is stalking/criminal harassment?

Stalking is harassing, abusive and at times violent behaviour experienced by both men and women. The majority of stalkers are men and the majority of victims/targets are women. Stalking is used to scare, threaten and control a victim.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada stalking is referred to as “criminal harassment.” It occurs when an individual develops an emotional obsession with someone whom they target with unwanted actions or contact. Stalking often starts out with small incidents that escalate, becoming more frequent and possibly threatening. One of the key elements of stalking is the victim’s fear for their safety or the safety of others.

## What does stalking look like? What are the danger signs?

Stalking is not a single event but a pattern of actions that makes the person being targeted feel frightened and controlled. Over time, these actions may become more aggressive and dangerous – sometimes even life threatening.

### Actions that constitute stalking may include:

- Repeated telephone calls, letters or e-mails.
- Sending unwanted gifts (e.g. flowers).
- Showing up uninvited at places the target frequents (i.e. home, work, entertainment)
- Stealing mail.
- Following, watching, tracking.
- Threatening harm to the person being stalked, family or friends.
- Harassing the target’s employer and/or colleagues.
- Vandalizing the target’s car and/or home.
- Threatening or harming pets.
- Physical and/or sexual assault.
- Kidnapping, holding hostage.

### To try to gain control over someone, a stalker might:

- Act angry or hostile.
- Appear caring or, alternatively, jealous.
- Seem unable to cope with rejection.
- Feel romantically obsessed.
- Be vindictive.
- Threaten suicide.
- Be preoccupied with power.

Stalking may include any of the above behaviours, or any other repeated behaviours that annoy or frighten you.

If you have been, or are being stalked, it is important to remember that it is not your fault. You did nothing to deserve it.

### The resulting emotional and physical stress you may be feeling is normal and may manifest itself in the form of:

- A sense of loss of control over your life.
- Feelings of shame.
- Depression.
- Guilt or humiliation.
- Poor concentration.
- Anxiety or panic attacks.
- Feelings of vulnerability.
- Cutting yourself off from friends and family.
- Pessimism about your future.
- Flash-backs of stalking incidents.
- Constant fear.
- Trouble sleeping.

These are just some examples of how you may be feeling or acting but it is not a complete list. How you react to being stalked is unique. It is important to trust your instincts regarding the seriousness of the situation, even if friends or family downplay what you are experiencing. Remember, you are the best person to judge your situation.

## What can I do if I am being stalked?

Remember that you are not alone and there are ways to get help.

Here are some suggestions that may help you gain some control:

- If practical, clearly communicate – preferably **not** in person (in writing, by e-mail, etc.) – to the stalker that you do not want any contact with them. Once communicated, avoid **any** further communication – even if they try to contact you – since this is highly likely to encourage continued harassment.
- Contact Ryerson’s Safety and Security Services, or Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services, or the Center for Student Development and Counselling.
- Contact the police as soon as possible. Ask the police to conduct a risk assessment of your situation.
- Keep track of all stalking events and anything the stalker gives you such as tapes, letters, e-mails or gifts.
- Develop a personal safety plan.
- Tell your friends and family about what is happening to you. Breaking the silence is essential for your safety.
- Learn about the law prohibiting criminal harassment and how it can help through the following organizations:
  - Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) at [www.metrac.org](http://www.metrac.org)
  - Ontario Women’s Justice Network (OWJN) at [www.owjn.org](http://www.owjn.org)
  - Department of Justice Canada at [www.canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/hpcp/part3.html](http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/hpcp/part3.html)

