

What's the difference between Harassment and / or stalking? - The key is to think **OBSESSION.**

Why is it difficult to separate stalking and harassment?

- There are similarities in what constitutes harassment and what is stalking.
- They are often discussed together and don't separate.
- There is an overlap, and some people may be a victim of both.
- A lot of the abuse techniques are the same, but become stalking when used more aggressively, more threateningly and more obsessively.
- There is overlap two legal definitions overlap.

Definitions

Stalking – Stalking is harassment that involves a course of conduct that amounts to stalking, either involving the fear of violence or involving serious alarm or distress.

The protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and in the Protection from harassment Act (1997).

Stalking victims may like they have their freedom curtailed and feel constantly like they need to be careful. It causes extreme alarm and distress and it is repeated abuse.

Harassment - Protection from Harassment Act (1997 section 2) explains that harassment causes harm or distress, putting people in fear in any reasonable person and of fear of violence, repeated attempts of imposed communications.

The key differences?

Think stalking if the abuse has become an '**obsession**', **if it indicates fixation, is excessively repeated and aggressive in its nature.**

Data

- SafeLives observed that 57% of all high risk cases of domestic abuse had stalking and harassment. Of which, over half said this was at a severe level. Only 14% said that there was no violence.
- A Suzy Lampard report suggested 25% of all cases of stalking are reported to the police.
- Average stalking case is 15 months and happens 100 times before reported to the police.
- HMIC report on stalking observed that few stalking cases identified and more cases were called harassment.

The table shows the types of behaviour associated with stalking and harassment, with attempts to separate the two, whilst recognising the overlap.

Stalking	Harassment
is an aggravated form of harassment and includes such things as:	is unwanted contact causing alarm or distress including...
Think...	Think...
Higher frequency	Lower in frequency
Higher severity	Lower in severity
Multiple forms of harassment	Fewer forms used
DASH assessment findings	DASH assessment findings
Persistently following someone	Antisocial behaviour
Repeatedly turning up uninvited	Bullying at school or in the workplace

Cyber stalking - Monitoring someone's use of the internet, email or other form of electronic communication via software such as spyware or tracking apps.	Cyber bullying on the internet
Loitering somewhere frequented by the person	Sending abusive text messages
watching or spying on someone	Sending unwanted gifts
Identity theft	Frequent, unwanted communications, e.g. telephone calls, text messages or other contact such as via the internet e.g. social networking sites
Interfering with their property or breaking into victim's home	Damaging the victim's property
Threatening or killing the person's pet	Harassment of people associated with the victim e.g. family members, partner, work colleagues
Threatening physical abuse and or sexual abuse	hang-up telephone calls
and REPEATED Harassment behaviours listed	Attempting to contact victim through friends/family members
	Entering the home when the victim doesn't want them too
	Stealing or reading mail
Sources - Safelives, Manchester City Council, Northumbria PCC, University of South Carolina	