

# HealthForumOnline Updates Continuing Education (CE) Course on the Psychological Factors in Stalking

*HealthForumOnline Updates its Online Continuing Education (CE) Course for Mental Health Professionals on the Psychological Factors in Stalking*

JENKINTOWN, PA, USA, May 21, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ --

[HealthForumOnline.com](http://HealthForumOnline.com) (HFO), a nationally-approved (APA, ASWB, NBCC, NYSED Social Work Board) provider of online continuing education (CE) for psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other allied professionals announces recent updates to its online CE course, [The Psychological Factors in Stalking: Victim and Stalker Characteristics](#) to their extensive online CE resource library.

Stalking definitions and terms have undergone much refinement and expansion over the past two decades leading to changes in estimates of stalking frequency, research design and ultimately programs aimed at prevention, detection and clinical and legal interventions (e.g., 1-2). Using the current definition of stalking as unwanted contact that is repetitive and experienced as intrusive and/or threatening by the victim, it is estimated that approximately 5.9 to 7.5 million people have experienced stalking in the United States (1-2). Put another way, approximately 14 in 1,000 Americans are stalked in a given year, with 46% experiencing at least one stalking event weekly.

Alarmingly, re-examination of earlier data using newer stalking definitions suggest over 1 to 5.3 million Americans are stalked each year (1-2). A recent international study across 12 countries supports the universality of this experience, despite cultural differences (3).

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*Michelle Rodoletz, Ph.D.,  
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The Psychological Factors in Stalking

One third of stalkers stalk more than one person at a time, 50% are serial stalkers, and 78% use multiple methods of stalking, in part facilitated by advancing technology (e.g., 4-6). The overwhelming majority of stalking victims have had some form of prior relationship with their stalker (e.g., 7-8). Approximately, 50% of victims report being stalked for one year or less, 15% for 1-2 years, 25% for 2-5 years and 10% for over 10 years – with the average stalking duration

lasting 20 months (e.g., 4-8). These statistics reveal how persistent and obsessed a stalker can be.

While stalker characteristics vary, they are generally characterized as rejected, incompetent or predatory in type, the latter associated with criminal history and high rates of violence. Versatile in their methods, stalkers may engage in approach behaviors where they have direct physical or visual proximity to the victim, with or without aggression; and/or prefer to have indirect, yet unwanted, contact with the victim, such as cyber stalking, surveillance, and other means of indirect intimidation and aggression (4).

The burdens to the victim are many from pragmatic (e.g., scheduling, financial expense), to serious physical and emotional harm, at times lethal. Approximately 33% of stalking victims are assaulted and 6% are murdered (e.g., 9). Emotionally, stalking victims and survivors experience long-term disruption and significant psychological trauma, including lost peace of mind, restricted freedoms, escalating fear and depleted coping. Many experience helplessness (40%), depression (56%), sleep disorders (41.5%) or turn to drugs or suicide (25%; e.g., 9). Anxiety disorders such as Stalking Trauma Syndrome and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often emerge.

As part of a multi-disciplinary team, mental health professionals can help prevent additional harm to stalking victims, as well as reform perpetrators. For example, comprehensive psychological assessments guide diagnosis among victims and stalkers and help predict violent behavior; risk assessment is a complex, nuanced task that relies on professional judgment and experience along with careful clinical data analysis (e.g., 4-6). Psychoeducational interventions can emotionally and behaviorally “inoculate” victims and reduce behavior in perpetrators. This online CE course provides up-to-date information about assessing psychological injury among victims, assisting law enforcement with risk assessment, and providing clinically relevant interventions to those involved in stalking.

Psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other allied health professionals can choose from [HFO's over 20 categories](#) of continuing education (CE) topics related to health psychology and behavioral medicine (i.e., ethics, cancer adaptation, women's health, cultural diversity, eating disorders, reproduction/sexuality, aging/gerontology, pediatric behavioral medicine, assessment, chemical dependency, chronic/acute illness, clinical intervention, group therapy, infectious disease, long-term care, neuropsychology, pain management, spirituality, LGBT issues) containing over 100 online CE courses that are fast, convenient and cost-effective. All HFO courses are available online or as downloadable PDFs. Participants print their own CE certificates and can review updates for free even after they have completed the CE activity and generated their CE certificate.

For more information on this course or a complete listing of titles in our online CE resource library, visit [HealthForumOnline.com](http://HealthForumOnline.com).

About HealthForumOnline:

HealthForumOnline.com (HFO) a nationally-approved provider of CE courses by the American Psychological Association, the National Board of Certified Counselors, the Association of Social Work Boards, and the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work. HFO's CE Program's Advisory Committee and authors are comprised of over 60 nationally-recognized experts in psychology and behavioral medicine.

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