

Study shows how texas campus police tackle stalking

October 21 2014



Created in 1995 to study the impact of crime on victims and their relatives and on society as a whole, the Crime Victims' Institute evaluates the effectiveness of criminal justice policy and juvenile justice policy in preventing the victimization of society by criminal acts and helps develop policies to assist the criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system in preventing the criminal victimization of society. Credit: Harriet McHale/SHSU

One out of every five female students experience stalking victimization during their college career, but many of those cases are not reported to police, according to a study by the Crime Victims' Institute (CVI) at Sam Houston State University.

The rate of stalking on college campuses is higher than those experienced by the general public, according to research. Many of the [victims](#) fail to report the incidents because they feel the situation was too minor, feared revenge, saw it as a private or personal matter, or thought [police](#) would not believe their stories, according to "Stalking on College Campuses: Perceptions & Approaches of Campus Law Enforcement Officers."

To help bridge the gap between victims and [campus](#) police, the Crime Victims' Institute at the College of Criminal Justice investigated the issue of campus police response to stalking by surveying 56 officers from higher education institutions across Texas. It is the second part of a series examining stalking in Texas and responses to this crime. The first study, "Stalking in Texas – 2014," provided an overview on data, policies, procedures and practices on stalking in the state. Both studies can be found at the Crime Victims' Institute website at <http://www.crimevictimsinstitute.org/publications/>.

"Given the prevalence of stalking on campus and also the complexities of complying with multiple federal regulations, it is important for campus administrators and police departments to consider how their policies and practices are operating and ways in which they could be improved," said Nicole Wilkes, co-author of the report.

Several federal mandates regulate how campuses should respond to stalking and gender-based violence, including Title IX, the Clery Act and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act.

While the vast majority of officers agreed that stalking was a problem on college campuses, less than half believed it was an issue at their own institutions. Seven out of ten surveyed said their campuses did not have specific policies and procedures on investigating stalking cases, and few officers said they collaborated with outside agencies involved in assisting stalking victims. Less than half of the officers reported being involved with an on-campus group to improve response to stalking. However, the overwhelming majority of campus police surveyed said they want to be involved in improving the campuses' responses to preventing and responding to stalking.

"More attention to this issue is needed to prevent these crimes from occurring and/or escalating," the report said. Authors also recommend that college and university campuses in Texas and throughout the nation should capitalize on campus law enforcement officers' desire to be involved with improving their campus's response through building partnerships and effective strategies for responding to campus violence.

Provided by Sam Houston State University

Citation: Study shows how texas campus police tackle stalking (2014, October 21) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-10-texas-campus-police-tackle-stalking.html>

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