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Attitudes, Beliefs, and Responses to Stalking: A Law Enforcement Perspective

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### **Attitudes, Beliefs, and Responses to Stalking: A Law Enforcement Perspective**

A large discrepancy exists between the victim-reported rates of stalking and the rates at which stalking offenders are arrested and prosecuted. Approximately 3.4 million adults are stalked annually according to victim surveys, however this is not reflected in law enforcement data of those charged or convicted with stalking. One of the most significant reductions in these numbers is a failure to report the crime to law enforcement. Only 10.3% to 55% of stalking incidents are reported (Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009; Bjerregard, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Rates of arrest, prosecution, and conviction of stalking offenders are even lower than reporting rates (Jordan et al. 2003; Storey & Hart, 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). This discrepancy is important because of the potential impact police intervention can have on stalking situations; non-violent stalking behaviors tend to precede physical assaults and the threat of physical violence as part of stalking behavior most often predicts actual physical violence (Roberts, 2004). Law enforcement intervention can effectively reduce the chances of any violence occurring. A significant first step to understanding and fixing this discrepancy is to identify law enforcement's attitudes, perceptions and intervention methods in response to stalking victimization.

The legal definition of stalking is important because it plays a large role in the criminal justice system's ability to pursue stalking perpetrators. Stalking is "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear" (pp. 43-44) as defined by the National Criminal Justice Association Project (1993). This definition comes from The Model Anti-Stalking Code developed for states to use as a model for their own anti-stalking legislation. These statutes, however, are only helpful

if used. If victims do not report the crime, law enforcement cannot enforce statutes. It is also possible that law enforcement may not utilize the statutes efficiently even when approached by stalking victims (Pearce & Esteal, 1999; van der Aa & Groenen, 2011).

### **Victims' Decision to Contact Law Enforcement**

Rates of police reports being filed for stalking incidents do not reflect the estimated rates of actual stalking occurrences. The percentage of incident reports filed ranges from 10.3% to 55.0% (Baum et al., 2009; Bjerregard, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Three common themes found among failure to report are the relationship between seriousness of offense and likelihood of reporting, the effects of the relationship between the offender and the victim on reporting, and the effect of the offender having a prior criminal record on the victim's decision to report (Reyns & Englebrecht, 2010; Skogan, 1976; Skogan, 1984).

The more severe stalking offenses are, the more likely it is that victims will report the incident to law enforcement officials (Reyns & Englebracht, 2010; Skogan, 1976; Skogan, 1984). Victims are more likely to report any type of crime when they have experienced a major loss, whether it is money, safety, time at work or a serious injury (Reyns & Englebracht, 2010). Ultimately, law enforcement is likely to only receive reports on cases that victims feels are extreme (Skogan, 1984). Many victims express that their reasons for not contacting law enforcement include the fact that they did not believe their case to be "that serious" or it did not fit their own idea of what stalking really is (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

The victim's prior relationship with the offender can also affect their decision to contact law enforcement. Intimate partner stalking victims are less likely to report a case than are victims whose stalker was not a former significant other (Reyns, & Englebrecht, 2010). Victims' previous or current relationship with their perpetrator affects their perception of stalking

behavior. Dunn's (1999) study of sorority women showed a lower rating of fright and annoyance following threatening behaviors for those whose perpetrator was a former intimate partner as opposed to a one-time date. The incorporation of a romantic gesture such as bringing flowers decreases the fear and annoyance felt toward both one-time dates and former intimate partners even when their attention is unwanted by the victim. A thin line exists between socially accepted romantic pursuit methods and stalking methods which can cause confusion for victims; the distinction often comes after the victim has rejected efforts of the perpetrator yet the perpetrator has continued their pursuits (Emerson, Ferris, & Gardner, 1998).

Yet another factor affecting one's decision to contact law enforcement is the existence of a prior criminal record for the perpetrator. There is an increased likelihood of contacting law enforcement when and if the perpetrator has a prior criminal record. Reyns and Englebrecht (2010) reported that victims are two times as likely to contact police when they are aware of their offender having a prior criminal record. This increased chance of reporting may be due to victims feeling more threatened by an individual who has previously been in trouble with law enforcement. In addition, the chance of contacting law enforcement increases as the level of fear felt by the victim increases; it is likely that victims whose offender has a prior criminal record will experience a higher level of fear, also increasing the probability of involving law enforcement.

A lack of response by law enforcement may be another cause of low report rates. Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found that just over 50% of stalking cases were reported to police but police took no action in only 18.9% of the reports. If victims feel that nothing will be done, they are more likely to avoid reporting to save themselves the difficulties that sometimes come along with putting yourself through the legal system.

## **Response of Law Enforcement Officers**

The majority of the current research on stalking is from the victims' perspective. Because of this, the research available may reflect only those actions that were taken by law enforcement and made known to the victim, leaving out actions taken that victims were not made aware of.

**Actions of law enforcement.** According to victims, one of the most common law enforcement responses to stalking is filing a formal report (Baum et al., 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). While this action this may not lead to an arrest, it documents stalking behavior necessary for future prosecution by showing a pattern of behavior. Formal reports are incredibly important as one of the most documented reasons for not prosecuting stalkers is a lack of evidence (Pearce & Esteal, 1999; van der Aa & Groenen, 2011). The most common preventative method used by law enforcement is an official police warning after seeing official reports previously filed on the perpetrator (Baum et al., 2009; Storey & Hart, 2011). Law enforcement officers may also recommend obtaining a protective or restraining order to victims. Twenty percent of victims in a nation-wide study reported that law enforcement at least suggested this method (Baum et al., 2009). Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found that 28% of women and 10% of men reported obtaining protective or restraining orders; subsequently, 69% and 81% of these orders respectively were reportedly violated leading one to believe that these legal orders are not the most effective. Law enforcement officers often also employ extra-legal methods when dealing with stalking incidents (Storey & Hart, 2011; van der Aa & Groenen, 2011).

Storey and Hart (2011) found that law enforcement employed a number of tactics meant to combat stalking that were extra-legal in nature. They found that officers involved in one incident gave an informational packet to victims as a resource for when they traveled out of the country; this resource was intended to inform authorities of their situation if the perpetrator

continued stalking them overseas. The authors also found that some officers developed a rapport with the perpetrators or their families in order to keep track of their activities. In addition to the use of legal tactics, officers also reported the utilizing extra-legal tactic of involving mental health professionals in the case. Twelve and a half percent of stalking victims reported that they were referred to victim services and 23% reported being provided with self-protective advice by law enforcement officers. Baum et al. (2009) also reported similar numbers of victims reporting that officers provided them with self-protection advice.

It is important to identify why responses to stalking vary given this range of responses from law enforcement. Kamphuis et al. (2005) is the only study to examine stalking perceptions with law enforcement and health professionals. The authors found that different professionals from a range of countries have very different perceptions of what constitutes stalking behavior. Law enforcement officers normalized stalking behavior more so than did medical general practitioners. In fact, the authors found that officers who endorsed stereotyped beliefs about stalking - aka "stalking myths" – were more likely to view stalking as simply a nuisance or blame the victims by saying that they somehow encouraged the pursuit. When these myths are endorsed, officers are less inclined to intervene when faced with a stalking situation; however, officers still reported that it was their job to deal with stalking more frequently than did general practitioners. The researchers also cited differences in law enforcement's endorsement of stalking myths between countries leading us to believe that culture can impact the recognition and definition of stalking.

Statistics relating to a lack of response to stalking behavior by law enforcement are somewhat discouraging. Reasons for a lack of action by law enforcement officers are, at this point, unknown and can only be speculated upon by victims of stalking. Percentages of cases in

which no action was taken by an officer range from 16.7% to 20.0% (Baum et al., 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). A lack of response from law enforcement officers can be due to their misperception of the behavior as non-stalking or their personal endorsements of stalking myths such as believing that no real crime has been committed as seen in Kamphuis et al. (2005). This possibility was reinforced by Farrell, Wyckoff and Weisburd's (2001) finding that only one in five patrol officers had a solid understanding of what stalking is even following a new stalking protocol training. Officers' misperceptions or personal endorsements of stalking myths are further perceived by victims of stalking as a reason for an officer's inaction (van der Aa and Groenen, 2011). Stalking victims in van der Aa and Groenen's study also reported believing that officers trivialized their experiences and refused to take an official report. Klein et al. (2009) found that many officers were failing to identify an incident as stalking for unknown reasons, such that "For every incident identified by police as stalking during the study period, they did not identify almost 21 other cases of stalking (p.30)."

Many stalking situations do not make it any further than a report being filed and a warning being issued to the perpetrator. However, estimates of the arrests of perpetrators range from 7.7% to 63.0% (Baum et al., 2009; Bjerregaard, 2000; Jordan, et al., 2003; Klein et al., 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). The number of perpetrators being prosecuted is even smaller. Bjerregaard (2000) reported that only 9.0% of perpetrators who are arrested are subsequently prosecuted; the largest recorded estimate of perpetrators being prosecuted has only been around 21.0% (Baum et al., 2009). Of those who are prosecuted, few are actually charged with the crime of stalking. Often, perpetrators are charged with non-stalking crimes instead, such as violation of a restraining order, harassment, or other domestic violence charges (Jordan et al., 2003; Melton, 2005; Pearce & Estel, 1999; Storey & Hart, 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2001).

Conviction and dismissal rates of stalking cases are also disappointing. Jordan et al. (2003) found that cases of stalking had an overall conviction rate of 28.5%. In the same study, 55.2% of those originally charged with a felony and 62.0% of those originally charged with a misdemeanor received a dismissal of their court case. Of those cases that were not dismissed, 6.8% of misdemeanor and 28.0% of felony cases respectively were reduced to lesser charges or other offenses altogether. Following conviction, the literature shows that the incarceration rate of stalking offenders also varies widely, ranging from 8.0% to 63.0% (Baum et al., 2009; Bjerregaard (2000); Klein et al., 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

Little to no research has been completed on law enforcement's perception of the effectiveness of their actions. The majority of literature is from the victims' perspective. Baum et al. (2009) reported that about half of all victims who reported their stalking incident to law enforcement were satisfied with the criminal justice response they received however only 28.2% of victims reported that their situation got better after contacting police.

## **Hypotheses**

Given the literature reviewed above, we have two main hypotheses with the first having four prongs. The first hypothesis developed revolves around the endorsement of stalking myths. We hypothesized that those who endorse stalking myths will a) have a low knowledge accuracy, b) will use fewer helping strategies, c) will find those helping strategies less effective, and d) will report that characteristics of the relationship between the victim and offender are a significant challenge to handling stalking cases.

Our second hypothesis is that law enforcement officers will endorse more stalking myths than will victim advocates.

## **Method**

## Participants

Participants were all members of the justice system and were involved in a domestic violence training course at the time of the study. Specific participant demographics can be found in Table 1.

## Procedure

A Sergeant in a County Sheriff's office agreed to assist in recruiting participants. The Sergeant conducts training sessions on domestic violence with law enforcement personnel and victim service personnel. After his training session was ending, the sergeant described the study and passed around a sign-up sheet asking the trainees if they would be willing to participate in a study on their attitudes, beliefs, intervention methods, and the effectiveness of those methods when responding to stalking victimization. In return for participating in the survey, participants were entered for a chance to win an iPad in a drawing. Those who indicated that they were willing provided their name and email address. An email was sent to each willing respondent explaining the study and the link to the online survey. Participants then proceeded to the online survey, gave informed consent, and were debriefed at the end of the survey.

## Materials

**Stalking Knowledge.** Following demographics, participants answered a 20-item true/false test measuring accuracy of knowledge about stalking, which was designed for the purpose of this study. An example of an item to be judged is "most stalking victims are acquainted with their stalker," which is true.

**Stalking Myth Scale** (Kamphuis et al., 2005 and Sinclair, 2006). Participants rated their endorsement of 30 statements using a 7-point Likert scale, with 0 as *completely false* and 6 as *completely true*. Examples of these statements are "People often say one thing but mean

another” and “Stalking is just an extreme form of courtship.” The scale is reliable with a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .90$ .

**Experience with stalking cases.** Participants rated their amount of experience with stalking cases using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *none* to *a lot* as well as the extent to which they felt stalking is a problem in their area using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* to *extremely*. They then completed two separate 26-item subscales measuring participants’ judgments about the 1) frequency with which certain protective actions are used, and 2) the effectiveness of each action. Some examples include “Create a safety plan with victim”, “Restraining order”, “Mental health referral for stalker”, and “Charged with stalking.” The responses about frequency were recorded using a 0% to 100% frequency range; the effectiveness response scale was a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* to *extremely*.

**Open-ended questions.** Respondents answered three open-ended questions consisting of 1) What are 2-4 things that you think the justice system does well in addressing stalking cases, 2) What are 2-4 things that you think the justice system could do better when dealing with stalking cases, and 3) What do you think are the 2-4 primary challenges facing law enforcement in handling stalking cases?

**Challenges.** Participants rated the level of challenge presented when intervening in stalking cases using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *slightly* to *extremely*. The potential challenges were as follows: 1) Victim not credible 2) Victim not cooperative 3) Victim and perpetrator acquainted 4) Victim and perpetrator are current or former intimates 5) It is hard to tell when something qualified as “stalking” 6) There are other applicable descriptions for what is called “stalking” (e.g., harassment, domestic violence) 7) Most “stalking” behaviors are not illegal 8) It can be hard to tell the difference between “stalking” and attempts to rekindle a

relationship 9) Any “threats” alleged stalkers make are often vague (not explicit) 10) Anti-stalking laws are difficult to interpret 11) Victim fear is difficult to gauge 12) It is hard to define a “course of conduct” 13) Proving that an offender INTENDED to cause fear is not easy 14) Witnesses are rare and 15) Evidence is hard to obtain.

### **Results**

Two principal components analyses were conducted on the 26-item subscale measuring the participants’ experience with the use and effectiveness of responses to stalking. We limited the factors to those with eigenvalues over one. Based on the combined responses of both law enforcement officers and victim advocates, three factors were identified for the use of responses and three other factors were for effectiveness of responses to stalking. See Tables 3 and 4 for factor loadings.

The first factor from the use of responses to stalking was labeled “Formal Strategies” and consisted of responses to stalking such as arresting, formally charging, and prosecuting offenders. Altogether, Formal Strategies had eight items ( $\alpha = .95$ ) and accounted for 45.10% of the variance. This factor described responses to stalking behavior which are typically court related and involve official members of the judicial system. Factor two, titled “Informal Strategies” accounted for 15.55% of the variance and had nine items ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Informal Strategies describes actions taken by officers which are less intensive than formal actions yet show more concern for the victim as these actions are somewhat optional for the officers. Examples of factor two are warning the stalking, completing a threat assessment and bringing the stalker in for a non-custodial interview. The third and final factor of the analysis on usefulness of the responses was labeled “victim safety planning.” It contained four items and accounted for 6.92% of the variance ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Items falling into this factor were concentrated on increasing the

victim's safety and helping the victim to develop a safety plan for the future. Items here included encouraging victim to collect documentation of the stalking and to solicit help from friends and family.

The second analysis was conducted on the effectiveness of responses to stalking. Here, three factors were identified beginning with "formal strategies." This factor accounted for 27.84% of the variance and contained six items ( $\alpha = .93$ ). Yet again, "formal strategies" included those responses which were most serious such as arrest, prosecution and conviction of offender. The second factor was labeled "case assessment," not to be confused with challenges to case assessment, and included responses such as victim interview and threat assessment. This factor contained four items ( $\alpha = .80$ ) accounting for 10.87% of the variance. Factor three included responses concentrated on preventing the perpetrator from committing further stalking behavior. Some examples of these items are warning the stalking, conducting a non-custodial interview with the stalking and conducting a knock and talk with the offender. Factor three only had three items in it ( $\alpha = .73$ ) and accounted for 9.94% of the variance.

Based on the current literature, we hypothesized that participants who endorse stalking myths will score low on accuracy of stalking knowledge and that those with more years of experience in their profession will endorse fewer stalking myths than those with less experience. Additionally, we hypothesized that law enforcement officers will endorse more stalking myths than victim advocates.

Because half of the sample were law enforcement officers and the other half were victim advocates, we split the sample by those two groups to compare differences. Therefore, all results will be given separately by these groups or directly comparing the two groups.

**Hypothesis 1a-d:**

**Total sample.** As seen in Tables 5 and 6, this hypothesis was partially supported. The first hypothesis was that those that endorse stalking myths will be less accurate in their knowledge of stalking, use fewer helping strategies, rate them as less effective, and report victim-perpetrator characteristics as a main challenge to handling stalking cases

**Law Enforcement.** As seen in table 5, hypothesis 1a was not supported. Law enforcement officers who endorsed stalking myths as also tended to have accurate stalking knowledge,  $r = .22, p > .05$ . As hypothesized, law enforcement participants who endorsed stalking myths 1b) reported using fewer informal helping strategies and 1d) also saw the perpetrator/victim relationship as a challenge to case assessment. However, 1c) there was no significant correlation between stalking myth endorsement and effectiveness of using any of the helping strategies (e.g., factor 1, 2, & 3). See Table 4.

**Victim advocates:** Less support for this hypothesis was found among the victim advocates. The first hypothesis that endorsement of stalking myths is related to lower accuracy of stalking knowledge was not supported in the victim advocates sub-group either ( $r = -.25$ ). As with law enforcement officers, victim advocates' accuracy of stalking knowledge was unrelated to any other factor. Victim advocates who endorsed stalking myths also identified the relationship between the victim and perpetrator as a challenge to effectively handling stalking situations however no relationship was found between stalking myth endorsement and the use of informal helping strategies or endorsement and the effectiveness of any helping strategies for this subpopulation.

## **Hypothesis 2**

We used t-tests to test the hypothesis that law enforcement officers would endorse more stalking myths than victim advocates. As seen in table 7, this hypothesis was supported,  $t(49) =$

2.45,  $p = .02$ . Unexpectedly, there were no other significant differences between law enforcement officers and victim advocates. Both groups scored the same on their level of knowledge accuracy, challenges attributed to victim-perpetrator characteristics, and challenges due to labeling difficulties.

Post hoc correlations were run to compare all the variables. As presented in Table 5, if officers used Informal Tactics, they were also likely to use Formal Tactics and Victim Safety Planning Strategies. Officers who use informal tactics did not use the perpetrator-centered tactics and also believed that labeling a situation as stalking was not a problem for them.

Officers who believed that formal tactics were effective also believed that their informal tactics were effective, as well as their case assessments were successful methods for handling stalking cases. Officers also believed that the challenges were related to one another. Surprisingly, accuracy of stalking knowledge was not correlated to any of the criterion variables.

Victim advocates differed from law enforcement officers in that they revealed no negative correlations among factors.

Victim advocates who supported the use of formal strategies also supported the use of developing safety plans with victims and informal strategies. Subsequently, those who supported the use of informal strategies believed that they were effective methods of combating stalking as were case assessment strategies. Victim advocates who supported the use of informal strategies were also more likely to believe that the relationship between the victim and offender poses difficulty when handling stalking situations and those who felt that formal strategies were effective also believed that informal perpetrator prevention strategies (e.g., warning stalker) were effective.

## **Discussion**

Generally, law enforcement officers and victim advocates shared similar responses. One hypothesized difference was supported in that law enforcement officers did endorse more stalking myths than did victim advocates. However, neither group actually agreed with the stalking myths; it was more so that both groups disagreed with the myths yet victim advocates disagreed more strongly than did law enforcement officers. While law enforcement did not endorse the myths, they did have a slightly higher level of agreement than did victim advocates. For example, when given a myth, victim advocates would accurately answer “completely false” while law enforcement would select “somewhat false.” Neither group strongly endorsed these stereotypical beliefs about stalking. They didn’t blame the victim strongly nor did they strongly minimize the severity of stalking.

Participants who endorsed stalking myths also reported that the victim perpetrator relationship obscured the assessment of the case because they believed that victims weren’t credible or cooperative and that the existence of a relationship made it more difficult to intervene in stalking cases. It may be that respondents are correct in their assertion; victims are less likely to report and participate in the legal process when their perpetrator was a partner or otherwise known individual (Reyns, & Englebrecht, 2010). Research has also shown that a relationship between the victim and offender makes it difficult for people to make a clear distinction between unwanted vs. desired behavior from a partner or acquaintance (Dunn, 1999). Maybe this isn’t necessarily what victim advocates and law enforcement believe, but it’s what they’ve seen happen to victims. So it’s knowledge of it, not endorsement of it. Neither victim advocates nor law enforcement endorsed stereotypical stalking myths, which reinforces the conclusion that these challenges are not something they believe, but something they’ve seen others do.

Knowledge accuracy and effectiveness of helping strategies were unrelated to endorsement of stalking myths, which means hypotheses 1a and 1c were not supported. In fact, accuracy of stalking knowledge was unrelated to any other criterion variables. This unexpected lack of a relationship could have happened for a multitude of reasons. Participants may have been responding in a socially desirable manner or a lack of context may have caused them to misunderstand the questionnaire. Victim advocates may have answered not that they believed that the victim-offender relationship was an issue, but that others would see it as such. They recognize it, but don't endorse it themselves. It is also possible that the accuracy of stalking knowledge scale may not have measured the same constructs as the stalking myth scale did which would explain how the respondents had sufficient knowledge accuracy yet still endorsed stalking myths. The accuracy measured was likely not in line with the myths provided in the scale.

### **Limitations of the study**

The current study was limited in its scope and generalizability due to its low number of participants and self-selecting convenience sample. Because of the low sample sizes, it is possible some analyses were false negatives. While the sample was one of convenience, we made efforts to involve a range of participants through an attractive incentive, as described by local law enforcement. Most participants were offered the chance to participate because they were attending a domestic violence training seminar, which their training required. Even so, the domestic violence training emphasized not blaming the victim, which is exactly what participants did when they endorsed stereotypical views of stalking via stalking myths. (Perhaps the training didn't generalize from domestic violence to stalking, or the training wasn't as effective in that regard.

### **Suggestions for future research**

It may be beneficial to investigate the use and comprehension of stalking legislature by law enforcement as officers in our study identified having difficulty determining what constituted stalking and how best to assess each situation. Determining the knowledge base of current law enforcement pertaining to stalking legislation and its enforcement could assist in developing improved stalking training for law enforcement and better prepare officers to handle stalking cases.

### **Implications for real life**

If law enforcement feel that working with the victim is more effective than informal ways of preventing the perpetrator, then officers may not go through the perpetrator intervention efforts as they believe them to be ineffective. Victims may not want to go the full formal route of charging the perpetrator, who is often a current or former romantic partner, and then victims may be even *less likely* to report incidents to law enforcement (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Or if they do report it, they may not pursue formal charges, which makes them look “uncooperative” in the eyes of law enforcement.

### **Basic conclusions**

While training on domestic violence may generalize to stalking, we really need more stalking-specific intervention and training for law enforcement professionals, especially in the helpful use of informal strategies. Maybe officers don't realize how helpful the informal strategies are. Victims may see them as much more helpful than formal strategies while law enforcement may define being helpful as the success of formal helping strategies such as arresting and formally charging the perpetrator. So victims and law enforcement may not have the same ideas of what it is they want to happen and the effectiveness of those strategies.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Demographic Factor	Law Enforcement		Victim Advocate	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	12	48.0	6	22.2
Female	13	52.0	21	77.8
<b>Race</b>				
White	21	87.5	14	51.9
African American	2	8.3	11	40.7
Native American	1	4.0	1	3.7
Missing	1	4.0	1	3.7
<b>Region Type</b>				
Urban	3	12.0	1	3.7
Town (population under 50,000)	13	52.0	10	37.0
Suburban	3	12.0	6	22.2

Rural	6	24.0	9	33.3
Agency Type				
City	14	56.0	1	3.7
County	10	40.0	16	59.3
State	1	4.0	5	18.5
Other	0	0	6	22.2
Duties Description				
Administration	8	32.0	N/A	N/A
Criminal Investigation	10	40.0		
Patrol	7	28.0		
Does your agency have a special division for stalking cases?				
Not applicable to me	2	8.0	7	25.9
No	17	68.0	10	37.0
Yes, it is a part of the domestic violence unit	4	16.0	6	22.2
Yes, it is a part of a sex crimes unit	0	0.0	3	11.1
Yes, it is a part of another specialize unit (specify below)	1	4.0	1	3.7

Name of Specialized Unit				
Criminal Investigation	2	8.0	N/A	N/A
Major Crimes	1	4.0		
Member of Special Division on Stalking				
Yes	23	92.0	N/A	N/A
No	2	8.0		
Have you had special training on any of the following				
Stalking	2	8.0	4	14.8
Domestic Violence	16	64.0	18	66.7
Sexual Assault	5	20.0	4	14.8
None of the above	2	8.0	1	3.7

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*Note.* While one law enforcement respondent said their agency had a different specialized unit for stalking, three respondents named different units. Also, one victim advocate reported that their stalking division was a part of another specialized unit however they did not specify what the unit was.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Law Enforcement and Victim Advocates

Descriptive Factor	Law Enforcement				Victim Advocates			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Age	38.00	7.96	28	46	40.75	14.53	23	60
# years in profession	12.27	7.34	3	25	19	8.40	1	33
Training assistance	54.36	34.29	0	91	45.88	29.06	9	100

Table 3. Component Loadings and Means for Use of Response

Use of responses by factors	Factor loadings	<i>M</i>
<b>Formal Strategies</b>		
Mental Health referral for stalker	.65	33.31
Arrest	.79	46.21
Formally charge stalker	.76	46.21
Charge stalker with more serious offense	.78	37.83
Prosecuted	.92	44.48
Convicted	.93	37.31
Served time	.89	26.34
Mandated Counseling	.71	39.72
<b>Informal Strategies</b>		
Create a safety plan with victim	.58	54.79
Provide victim with resources (e.g. counseling, referrals, information)	.37	69.59
Victim relocation	.68	48.59
File report	.56	69.69
Warrant and investigation	.64	63.62
Threat assessment determination	.84	57.34
Warn stalker	.83	51.24
Knock and talk	.84	45.41
Bring stalker to police station for non-custodial interview	.65	35.10

## Victim Safety Planning

Encourage victim to collect documentation	.87	78.59
Encourage victim to solicit help from friends/family	.89	78.72

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Table 4. Component Loadings and Means for Effectiveness of Response

Effectiveness of responses by factors	Factor loadings	<i>M</i>
Formal Strategies		
Arrest	.88	3.65
Formally charged with stalking	.84	3.73
Prosecuted	.82	3.96
Convicted	.88	4.06
Served Time	.86	3.69
Case Assessment		
Victim interview	.68	3.88
File report	.81	4.10
Warrant and investigation	.75	3.90
Threat assessment determination	.68	3.81
Informal Perpetrator Prevention		
Warn stalker	.90	3.04
Knock and talk	.87	3.00
Bring stalker to police station for non-custodial interview	.56	3.33

Table 5. Pearson Correlations for Full Sample

	SMS	Accuracy	Formal Use	Informal Use	Vic Safety Use	Formal Eff	Informal Eff	Informal Perp Prev Eff	Case Assess Eff	Ch. Vic-perp char.	Ch. Label Diff	Ch. Case Assess
SMS	1.00											
AccuKnow	-.25	1.00										
Formal Use	.20	-.24	1.00									
Informal Use	.14	-.10	.50**	1.00								
Vic Safety Use	.02	.10	.42*	.70**	1.00							
Formal Eff	-.13	.13	.11	-.04	-.03	1.00						
Informal Eff	.27	.02	.42*	.51**	.29	.37	1.00					
Informal Perp Prev Eff	-.35	.26	-.02	.06	.07	.49*	.18	1.00				
Case Assess Eff	.21	-.07	.18	.40*	.36	.26	.74**	.09	1.00			
Ch. Vic-perp char.	.54**	-.17	.20	.52**	.35	.02	.29	-.09	.26	1.00		
Ch. Label Diff	.25	-.11	-.09	.13	.20	.20	.26	-.00	.36	.36	1.00	
Ch. Case Assess	.13	-.21	-.11	.17	.30	.10	.00	-.21	.27	.38	.74**	1.00

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*Note.* SMS = Stalking Myth Scale, AccuKnow = Accuracy of Stalking knowledge, Ch. = Challenges due to...

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 5. Pearson Correlations Among Law Enforcement Sub-Population

	SMS	Accuracy	Formal Use	Informal Use	Vic Safety Use	Formal Eff	Informal Eff	Informal Perp Prev Eff	Case Assess Eff	Ch. Vic-perp char.	Ch. Label Diff	Ch. Case Assess
SMS	1.00											
AccuKnow	.22	1.00										
Formal Use	-.30	-.37	1.00									
Informal Use	-.46*	-.35	.76**	1.00								
Vic Safety Use	-.21	-.36	.54**	.81**	1.00							
Formal Eff	-.16	.12	-.04	.14	.14	1.00						
Informal Eff	-.16	-.27	.10	.17	.17	.50*	1.00					
Informal Perp Prev Eff	.33	.04	-.43*	-.14	.15	.12	-.01	1.00				
Case Assess Eff	-.46*	-.40	.15	.36	.36	.60**	.73**	-.05	1.00			
Ch. Vic-perp char.	.64**	.22	-.33	-.37	-.18	.07	.11	.39	-.09	1.00		
Ch. Label Diff	.40	.10	-.46*	-.40	-.13	.03	.09	.42	-.08	.73**	1.00	
Ch. Case Assess	.09	.15	-.38	-.09	.07	.37	.39	.16	.27	.51*	.63**	1.00

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*Note.* SMS = Stalking Myth Scale, AccuKnow = Accuracy of Stalking knowledge, Ch. = Challenges due to...

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .00$

Table 6. Pearson Correlations among Victim Advocate Sub-Population

	SMS	Accuracy	Formal Use	Informal Use	Vic Safety Use	Formal Eff	Informal Eff	Informal Perp Prev Eff	Case Assess Eff	Ch. Vic-perp char.	Ch. Label Diff	Ch. Case Assess
SMS	1.00											
Accuracy	-.25	1.00										
Formal Use	.20	-.24	1.00									
Informal Use	.14	-.10	.50**	1.00								
Vic Safety Use	-.02	.10	.42*	.70**	1.00							
Formal Eff	-.13	.13	.11	-.04	-.03	1.00						
Informal Eff	.22	.02	.42*	.51**	.29	.37	1.00					
Informal Perp Prev Eff	-.35	.26	-.02	.06	.07	.49*	.18	1.00				
Case Assess Eff	.21	-.07	.18	.40*	.34	.26	.74**	.09	1.00			
Ch. Vic-perp char.	.54*	-.17	.20	.52**	.35	.02	.29	-.09	.26	1.00		
Ch. Label Diff	.25	-.11	-.09	.13	.20	.20	.26	-.01	.36	.36	1.00	
Ch. Case Assess	.13	-.21	-.11	.17	.30	.10	.00	-.21	.27	.37	.74**	1.00

Note. SMS = Stalking Myth Scale, AccuKnow = Accuracy of Stalking knowledge, Ch. = Challenges due to...

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 7. t-test Comparing Law Enforcement to Victim Advocates**

Variables	Law Enforcement		Victim Advocate		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
SMS	2.42	.74	1.95	.61	2.45	49	.02
Accuracy	12.76	1.48	12.59	1.76	.37	50	.71
Formal Use	38.99	30.60	39.43	22.52	-.06	46	.95
Informal Use	57.41	31.05	55.61	24.35	.23	47	.82
Vic Safety Use	77.35	24.95	68.13	23.37	1.32	46	.19
Formal Eff	3.70	.77	3.83	.81	-.55	47	.59
Informal Eff	4.00	.73	3.96	.61	.20	47	.84
Informal	3.17	.90	3.10	.83	.29	47	.77

Perp Prev Eff							
Case Assess Eff	3.88	.79	4.12	.70	-1.09	47	.28
Ch. Vic-perp char.	3.13	.92	3.37	.88	-.93	44	.36
Ch. Label Diff	2.62	.82	2.73	.84	-.45	44	.65
Ch. Case Assess	2.90	.80	2.93	.90	-.11	44	.91

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