



CYBER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS (CVAWG)



Cyberstalking



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STALKING DEFINITION

Stalking is the intentional and repeated engagement in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing them to fear for their safety.



Questions for participants:

Do you know what is Stalking?

Have you heard this term before?

What do you think it means?

Can you imagine what it looks like?

How did it make you or them feel?

Information to be shared:

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul, 11.V.2011) first referred to the term harassment as follows:

Stalking is the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety, is criminalised (art. 34).

CYBERSTALKING DEFINITION



Cyberstalking is the intentional and repeated engagement in threatening conduct, directed at another person, using digital technologies and causing them to fear for their safety.



Information to be shared:

Subsequently, the DIRECTIVE (EU) 2024/1385 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, included provisions on Cyberstalking.

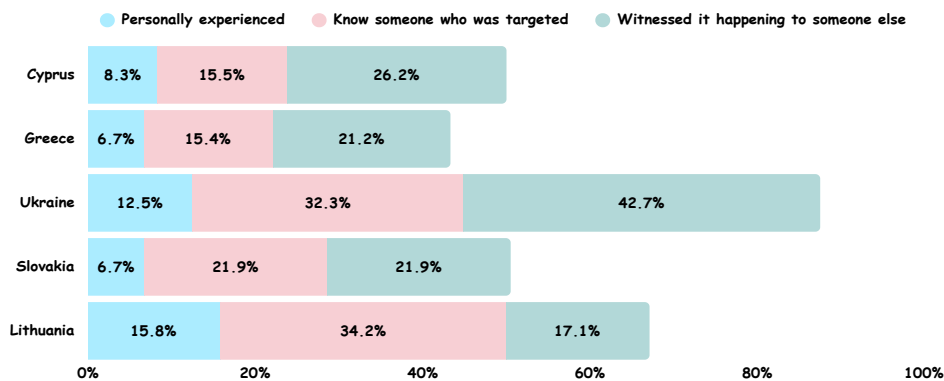
The offence of cyber stalking covers repeated or continuous surveillance, by means of ICT, of the victim without the victim's consent or a legal authorisation.

Cyber stalking is a modern form of violence which is often perpetrated against family members or persons living in the same household as the offender but is also perpetrated by ex-partners or acquaintances. Typically, technology is misused by the offender to intensify coercive and controlling behaviour, manipulation and surveillance, thereby increasing the victim's fear, anxiety and gradual isolation from friends, family and work.

PREVALENCE OF CYBERSTALKING



CyberEqual Survey



According to recent studies, nearly 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced some form of gender-based violence.



And with the rise of digital technology, many face violence online too, from harmful messages to threats.

The CVAWG survey was implemented in the context of the 'CyberEqual' project, a project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, aiming to map the prevalence of Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls in Cyprus, Greece, Ukraine, Slovakia and Lithuania. 467 women, aged 15 to 35 years old, participated in the study 76% of them reporting having experienced, witnessed, or knowing someone who experienced CVAWG.

In terms of Cyberstalking the prevalence per country is shown in the current figure.

These numbers show that CVAWG isn't just happening in one place; it's a global problem affecting millions across different countries and communities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

	Europe	Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence
	Cyprus Greece Ukraine Slovakia Lithuania	
		



Partners should include their country's legislation on the threat addressed (replace the question mark, the flag and keep their country's name on the box). Another slide maybe added if necessary.

The DIRECTIVE (EU) 2024/1385 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, included provisions on Cyberstalking.

1. In detail, It describes Cyberstalking as a crime and stresses that national legal systems should criminalize the phenomenon.

According to the Directive the Criminal liability should be limited to situations in which monitoring is likely to cause serious harm to the victim. When assessing whether an act is likely to cause serious harm, the focus should be on whether the act would typically cause harm to a victim.

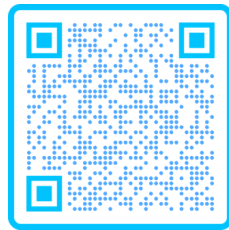
2. The Directive also stresses that Member States should, in addition to in-person reporting, provide for the possibility of reporting violence against women or domestic violence electronically or through other accessible and secure ICTs, at least as regards the cybercrimes of non-consensual disclosure of personal or manipulated material, online harassment, cyberbullying and online incitement to violence or hatred, as defined in this Directive. Victims should be able to upload material relevant to their report, such as screenshots of the alleged violent behaviour.

UNDERSTANDING CYBERSTALKING

REMINDER

Cyberstalking is the repeated use of electronic communications to harass, frighten, or control a person.

By what means can cyberstalking be achieved?

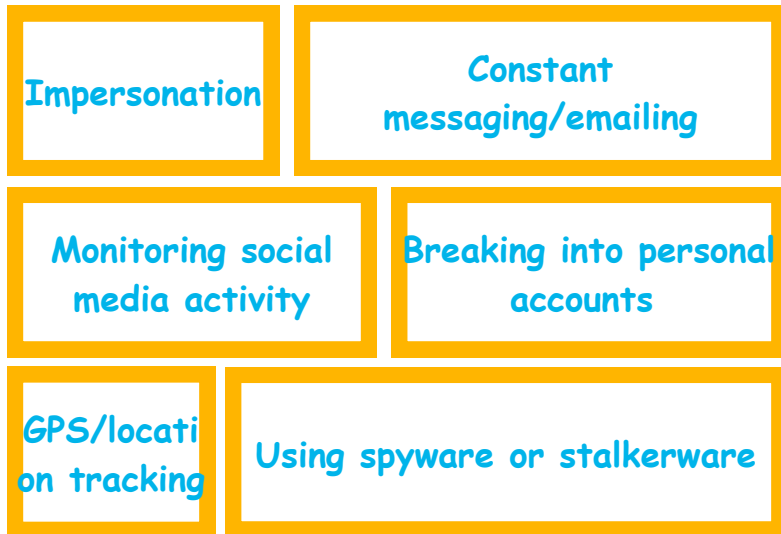


Ask participants to join the Slido and respond to the question.

Alternatively, ask a number of them to respond in person.

****The QR code will need to be replaced to include the link of the Slido created by each trainer****

UNDERSTANDING CYBERSTALKING



Cyberstalking Means

Cyberstalking can be perpetrated through various means, which highlight the diverse and intrusive ways technology can be misused.

First, impersonation. This involves creating fake profiles or accounts to deceive and manipulate the victim or their acquaintances.

Next, constant messaging or emailing can bombard the victim, causing distress and fear. It's relentless and can feel inescapable.

Monitoring social media activity is another method. By keeping tabs on everything a victim posts, a stalker can gather personal information and use it to their advantage.

GPS or location tracking allows stalkers to know a victim's whereabouts at all times. This is not only invasive but also very unsettling.

Breaking into personal accounts is a severe invasion of privacy, compromising emails, social media, or even financial information.

Finally, using spyware or stalkerware, a more technical approach, allows for real-time surveillance of a victim's activities without their knowledge.

Each of these methods can severely impact a victim's sense of safety and well-being. It's crucial to understand these tactics to better protect yourselves and others from cyberstalking.

Identify factors that can contribute to cyberstalking.



Group 1: Individual / Personal Factors

Group 2: Technological Factors

Group 3: Societal / Structural Factors



Divide the participants into three groups.

Group 1 will focus on Individual / Personal Factors.

Group 2 will focus on Technological Factors.

Group 3 will focus on Societal / Structural Factors.

Task for each group:

Identify examples of factors that can contribute to cyberstalking.

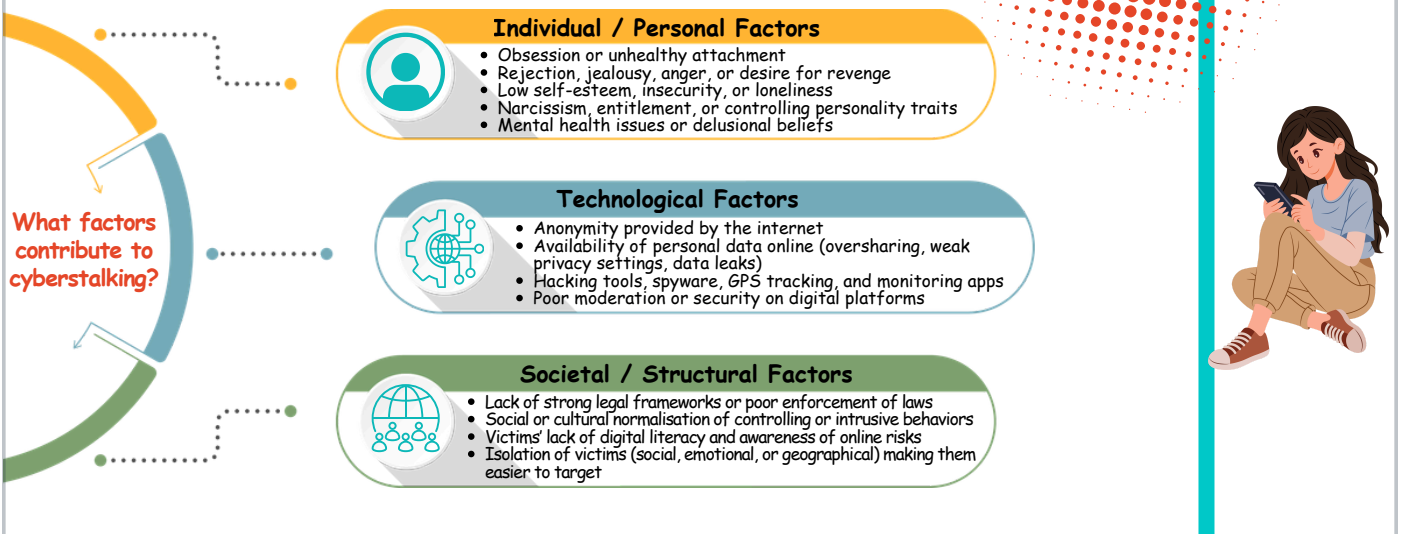
Discuss why these factors make cyberstalking possible or more likely.

Time allocation:

Discussion within groups: 10 minutes

Presentation of results: 2–3 minutes per group

UNDERSTANDING CYBERSTALKING



Let's delve into the factors that contribute to cyberstalking. First, we have the individual or personal factors. These can include an obsession or unhealthy attachment, feelings of rejection, jealousy, anger, or a desire for revenge. Individuals with low self-esteem, insecurity, or loneliness may also be prone to such behaviors. Narcissism, entitlement, or controlling personality traits, as well as mental health issues or delusional beliefs, can contribute significantly.

Next, let's consider the technological factors. The anonymity provided by the internet can embolden perpetrators. The availability of personal data online—whether through oversharing, weak privacy settings, or data leaks—adds to the risk. Furthermore, the presence of hacking tools, spyware, GPS tracking, and monitoring apps, as well as poor moderation or security on digital platforms, can facilitate these harmful actions.

Lastly, we have the societal and structural factors. One major issue is the lack of strong legal frameworks or the poor enforcement of existing laws. This can create an environment where cyberstalking is not properly addressed. Additionally, there's the social or cultural normalization of controlling or intrusive behaviors, which can further perpetuate this issue.

Another factor is the victims' lack of digital literacy and awareness of online risks. This can make individuals more vulnerable to cyberstalking. Victims may also experience isolation, social, emotional, or geographical, which can make them easier targets.

Understanding these factors is crucial in addressing the issue of cyberstalking. Let's now move to see how these factors impact individuals in real-life scenarios.

IMPACT OF CYBERSTALKING

Case Study

Kate's Story

A Victorian woman, referred to as "Kate," endured 18 months of cyberstalking by her ex-partner, who hacked her phones and computers, created fake social media and dating profiles in her name, and left her describing the ordeal as "living in a personal hell."

The harassment forced her to quit her job, relocate to a rural farm, and change her daily habits, such as conducting bank visits in person and receiving emails through a trusted third party, in an effort to protect herself.

Despite reporting the abuse to police and the Australian Cyber Security Centre, she was told investigations could take months or even years due to cybercrime backlogs.

Experts noted that while most online stalking tends to be low-tech, some other cases are unusually sophisticated, highlighting the severe psychological, professional, and lifestyle impacts victims of cyberstalking can face, along with systemic barriers to timely protection.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-18/cyber-stalking-victim-says-phones-computers-hacked-by-ex-partner/12894584>



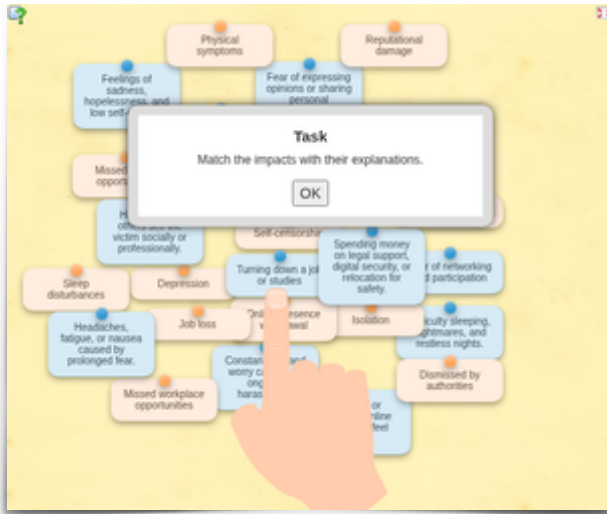
Let's take a closer look at the real-life impact of cyberstalking through Kate's story. Kate, a Victorian woman, experienced 18 harrowing months of cyberstalking by her ex-partner. He hacked her phones and computers, and even created fake social media and dating profiles in her name. Kate described this period as "living in a personal hell."

This relentless harassment forced significant changes in her life. She had to quit her job and relocate to a rural area for safety. Everyday activities, like visiting the bank or checking emails, became strategic tasks to protect herself from further harm. Despite her efforts to seek help from the police and the Australian Cyber Security Centre, Kate was told that investigations might take months or even years due to backlogs in handling cybercrime.

Experts point out that while many cases of online stalking are low-tech, some can be quite sophisticated. This highlights not only the severe psychological and professional toll on victims but also the systemic barriers they face in obtaining timely protection.

Kate's story is a poignant reminder of the layered impacts cyberstalking can have and the urgent need for more robust support systems.

IMPACT OF CYBERSTALKING



Let's match the impacts with their explanations!



Drawing from Kate's experience, let's dive deeper into exploring the impact of cyberstalking through an interactive game.

Match the Impact Cards (orange) with the corresponding Description Cards (blue) in order to correctly identify and understand the consequences of cyberstalking.

The activity takes place directly on the slide:

Drag an Impact Card onto a Description Card after receiving input from the participants.

If the match is correct, both cards will automatically disappear from the screen.

If the match is incorrect, the cards will turn red. The facilitator should then unlink them by clicking the space between the two cards, and try again.

Once all cards have been correctly matched, the facilitator will guide a group discussion (next slide), elaborating on each impact factor and encouraging participants to reflect on how these consequences affect victims of cyberstalking both individually and socially.

IMPACT OF CYBERSTALKING



Anxiety

Constant fear and worry caused by ongoing harassment

Depression

Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and low self-esteem

Sleep disturbances

Difficulty sleeping, nightmares, and restless nights

Isolation

Avoiding friends, family, and social gatherings

Self-censorship

Limiting or stopping online activity to feel safer

Online presence withdrawal

Fear of expressing opinions or sharing personal information

Missed workplace opportunities

Turning down a job or studies

Missed social opportunities

Fear of networking and participation

Job loss

Quitting or being fired due to stress

Dismissed by authorities

Reports of stalking treated as unimportant or "not serious"

Financial costs

Spending money on legal support, digital security, or relocation for safety

Physical symptoms

Headaches, fatigue, or nausea caused by prolonged fear

Reputational damage

Harm on how others see the victim socially or professionally



Guide a discussion, elaborating on each impact factor and encouraging participants to reflect on how these consequences affect victims of cyberstalking both personally and socially.

It is important to emphasize that cyberstalking

1. primarily targets women, simply because of their gender
2. is often combined with other forms of CVAWG, in order to achieve the goal

COPING WITH CYBERSTALKING

Stay Safe

1

- Strengthen privacy settings on all social media accounts.
- Use strong, unique passwords and enable two-factor authentication.
- Block and report the stalker on every platform.
- Keep evidence (screenshots, messages, emails, logs) for potential legal use.
- Limit sharing of new personal details (location, contact info, routines).
- Contact authorities or a cybercrime unit if harassment escalates.
- Withdraw temporarily from social media, if needed
- Avoid excessive monitoring of devices

- Seek professional counseling or therapy to cope with the trauma.
- Practice stress-relief techniques such as journaling, meditation, exercise, or mindfulness.
- Remind yourself: the stalking is not your fault.
- Maintain routines and self-care practices to regain a sense of normalcy.
- Avoid self-blaming.

2

Stay Healthy

Get Support

3

- Confide in trusted friends, family, or colleagues for emotional support.
- Join peer support groups (online or offline) for victims of cyber harassment.
- Inform your workplace or school so they can provide protection or accommodations.
- Reach out to NGOs, hotlines, or online safety organizations for guidance.



Now that we've explored the impacts of cyberstalking, let's focus on how we can cope and reclaim control.

Firstly, strengthening your digital security is crucial. [Pause briefly] Adjust your privacy settings on social media, use strong, unique passwords, and enable two-factor authentication to protect your accounts. Remember to block and report the stalker on every platform. Keeping evidence, like screenshots and messages, can be vital if legal action is necessary. [Emphasize] Limit sharing personal details and contact authorities if things escalate.

Next, it's important to prioritize your health and well-being. Consider seeking professional counseling or therapy to work through the trauma. Engage in stress-relief practices such as journaling, meditation, or exercise. [Pause for empathy] Always remind yourself that the stalking is not your fault and practice self-care to maintain normalcy.

Lastly, don't hesitate to reach out for support. Confide in trusted friends, family, or colleagues. Joining peer support groups can provide comfort and shared experiences. Inform your workplace or school for added protection, and reach out to NGOs or hotlines for further assistance.

Remember, you are not alone. With the right steps, support, and resources, you can navigate through this challenging time.

REPORTING OF CYBERSTALKING



Report to police

Report to the cybercrime unit, or national hotline.

Cyprus

Office for Combating Cybercrime (O.C.C.)



+357 22808200



Cyber-Crime Online Reporting Form



cybercrime@police.gov.cy

Report to online platforms

Report to platforms such as Instagram, X, Tik Tok, Facebook etc.

On each platform, follow the instructions available for reporting the incident(s) and request the content to be removed.

** Remember to keep screenshots before requesting removal.*



** Each partner should replace the country, police unit and contact details.

In the unfortunate event of cyberstalking, it's crucial to report the harassment to the appropriate authorities. This can help stop the stalker and provide you with the support you need.

First, consider reporting the incident to your local police. They can guide you on the next steps and help keep you safe.

Alternatively, report the stalking behavior directly on the online platforms where it occurs. Most social media sites, like Instagram, X, TikTok, and Facebook, have mechanisms to report abuse. Follow each platform's instructions for reporting and request the removal of harmful content.

Don't forget to keep screenshots before requesting content removal, as they can serve as valuable evidence.

PREVENTION OF CYBERSTALKING

Is your digital life secure?



- I use strong, unique passwords and change them regularly.
- I enable two-factor authentication on all my accounts.
- I adjust privacy settings on social media to control who sees my posts, photos, and details.
- I avoid oversharing personal information online (e.g., location, routines, workplace).
- I turn off geotagging and location-sharing features on apps.
- I keep my devices updated and use security software (antivirus, anti-spyware).
- I am cautious when accepting friend requests or messages from strangers.
- I think carefully before posting content that could be misused (photos, updates).
- I use separate accounts for personal and professional life where possible.
- I keep communication with acquaintances professional and avoid sharing private details.
- I can recognize early warning signs of stalking (e.g., repeated unwanted contact, fake profiles).
- I stay informed about platform safety features (blocking, reporting, security checks).



Browse through the prevention measures for cyberstalking and ask participants to scan the QR code to complete their self-assessment checklist.

*Alternatively, print the checklist, hand it out to them and ask them to complete it.

Highlight that they can take measures to safeguard their online life by addressing those points that have not been checked by them.



THE CYBERSTALKING QUIZ



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



The social media is the exclusive medium used for cyberstalking.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

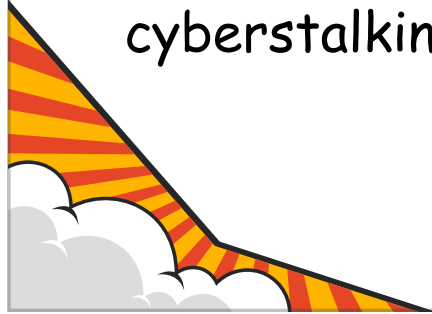
QUIZ!



The social media is the exclusive medium used for cyberstalking.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



Cyberstalking is monitoring & harassment.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



Cyberstalking is monitoring & harassment.

A: TRUE



B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker is looking for personal data.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker is looking for personal data.

A: TRUE



B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

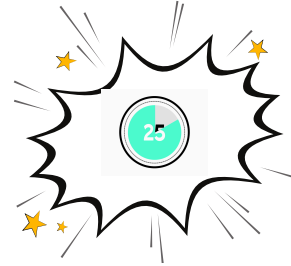
QUIZ!



A survivor's location is personal data.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A survivor's location is personal data.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



The person who experiences cyberstalking feels flattered.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

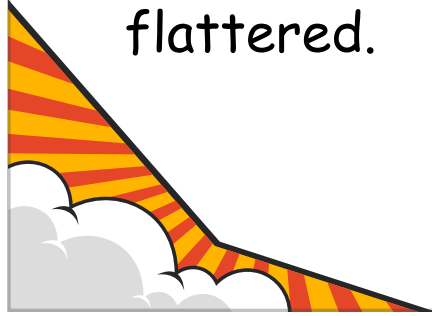
QUIZ!



The person who experiences cyberstalking feels flattered.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker is in flirty mood.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker is in
flirty mood.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker doesn't know his illegal behavior is unwanted/not accepted by the survivor.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



A cyberstalker doesn't know his illegal behavior is unwanted/not accepted by the survivor.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



Cyberstalking is a crime.

A: TRUE

B: FALSE



CYBERSTALKING

QUIZ!



Cyberstalking is a crime.

A: TRUE

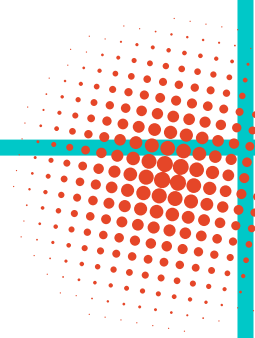


B: FALSE





THANK YOU!



CVAWG IS REAL VIOLENCE!



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