

Stalking? What does that mean?

Stalking-offences are as old as man, but gained major media attention by the often-spectacular accounts of celebrity stalking in the US during the late 80ies. However, surveys show that today most stalking victims aren't celebrities, but average citizens. Especially the so called „Ex-Partner-Stalking“ is very frequent and under certain circumstances the most dangerous type of stalking.

Stalking is now being defined as „**the wilful, malicious, and repeated following or harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety**“ (Meloy 1995).

Often „Stalking“ is linked to other offences, such as insults, bodily harm, damage to property, breach of domestic peace, etc... Also breach of a preliminary injunction according to the Act on Protection against Violence is an offence.

Since the new amendment of the German Criminal Code (§ 238 - Stalking) has come into effect on March 3rd, 2007, stalking is now a distinct criminal offence in Germany.

In order to secure effective law enforcement, proof of the series of stalking actions is very important. Persons concerned should therefore keep detailed account of all offences (What? Who?, Where?, When?). It can also be important to press charges on the offender in a timely manner.

What is the Stalking-KIT?

In order to offer prompt crisis talks to victims and offenders separately, the Täter-Opfer-Ausgleich Bremen (TOA), in close cooperation with police and public prosecution, has set up the **Stalking-KIT** (Krisen-Interventions-Team Stalking/ Crisis Intervention Team): Prompt psychosocial care, relieving one-on-one interviews and arrangements of further support through other institutions are important for people involved in stalking-cases. You as the accused will get the same support as the victims: offer of one-on-one interviews and the possibility to solve the conflict extra judicially – as long as you comply to certain rules, especially not to contact the victim in any way.

Encounters between the conflict parties are generally **not** intended in stalking-conflicts!

Prior aims of the **Stalking-KIT**:

- Protection and support for the victim!
- Restriction of the stalking-behaviour (averting of danger)!
- Psychosocial support as well as relieving sessions for all persons concerned

The **Stalking-KIT** is working:

- As a low threshold service
- In timely manner
- result- and ressource - oriented
- free of charge

Continuative conflict management (e.g. supporting clients who want to break up, or supporting clients in finding extra judicial conflict resolutions) can put aside further judicial intervention in some cases. Working with the KIT

does not mean that charges pressed are being abandoned or that pending criminal proceedings are automatically being settled!

Who does the Stalking-KIT mostly cooperate with?

The Stalking-KIT is a particularly suitable **addition** to other institutions like

- * police stations with their particular regional Stalking-agents
- * other helpdesks such as counselling on addiction to alcohol, drugs, etc.
- * psychotherapeutic or medical interventions, as well as the one-on-one-interviews and group-sessions offered by the
- * psycho-social services, as well as
- * other institutions like AfSD, SDdJ (Social Services in Germany), etc.

Depending on the case, close cooperation with different institutions and authorities is warranted.

Principles of praxis

The work of the Stalking-KIT complies with the following principles:

1. Coping with the acute crisis: offering relieving interviews and support in resolving conflicts.

2. Reality check, restoration: Your experience of the situation is to be brought in line with objective conditions in order to develop a realistic estimation of situations and new strategies of more appropriate behaviour.

3. Strengthening of self-esteem: You will regain your capacity to act, without gearing your life and actions towards the victim.

4. Offering relieving one-on-one interviews: Talking about what has happened can mean a considerable relief for you and can help averting further destructive actions. Frequent sessions can be relieving and stabilizing for you.

5. Inducing a change: Through the offered support and the development of alternative strategies of acting you can alter your behaviour and thereby deescalate the conflict.

Procedure of the Stalking-KIT

Contact: You can contact us personally. If we come to hear about your problem through others, we will write to you!

Declaration of protection: You will sign a declaration of protection saying that you will leave the victim alone. The criminal proceeding will be pending as long as you are working with the KIT.

Sessions: Sessions take place separately in locations within your reach. You can always bring a person of your trust.

We always work in a **mixed-gender team:** Sessions with female clients are led by the female psychologist, sessions with male clients by the male psychologist of the team.

Further judicial interventions can be initiated, if necessary.

Scope and procedure of sessions and the intervention process

Results of these sessions can be declarations of protection and agreements of behaviour towards each other, as well as possible reactions in case of non-compliance to these agreements. These first results are set out in a written contract or declaration and signed as soon as possible.

Your declaration or contract will be sent to the investigating police officers or public prosecutors and courts.

If necessary, we can arrange further ambulant or stationary counselling or treatment for you.

Your conflict will only be finally settled by us, when all agreements are being complied to and when we receive confirmation of the law enforcement authorities or other services about the ultimate settlement of the case.

One year after this confirmation, the file will be destroyed due to data protection.

Contact:

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Stalking and Domestic Violence

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