

Stalking and neurodivergence - what you need to know

For neurodivergent individuals, experiences of stalking can be especially distressing. Differences in social communication, sensory processing, and routine can make it more challenging to recognise, respond to, or report stalking behaviours.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding all people, it's vital to understand how stalking impacts neurodivergent young people and how we can support them effectively.

Why neurodivergent people may be at higher risk

Neurodivergent individuals, including those with autism, ADHD, or learning difficulties, may be more vulnerable to stalking for several reasons:

- **Difficulty interpreting social cues:** Challenges in recognising manipulative or obsessive behaviours can prevent them from identifying early warning signs.
- **Increased trust:** Some neurodivergent young people may take others' words at face value, making them more susceptible to deception or coercion.
- **Fixed routines:** Predictable routines can be exploited by stalkers to monitor or make unwanted contact.

Signs to look out for

Stalking can take many forms, and it's essential to be vigilant for behaviours such as:

- **Repeated unwanted contact:** Excessive messages, emails, or attempts to connect on social media.
- **Monitoring and following:** Reporting being followed online or offline, or noticing someone turning up repeatedly at the same places.
- **Emotional distress:** Sudden anxiety, reluctance to attend school, or a decline in focus and performance.

How organisations can help neurodivergent people

1. Create a safe space to talk

Designate trusted staff members who understand neurodivergence and can offer a supportive, non-judgemental ear. Some students may need more time to process and share their experiences.

2. Use clear and direct communication

Provide straightforward information about what stalking is, why it's wrong, and how to report it. Visual aids or social stories can be particularly effective.

3. Offer personalised safety plans

Work with people and their family to develop strategies that address specific needs, such as adjustments to routines or safe routes to and from school.

4. Signpost to specialist support

Encourage contact with organisations like:

- [National Stalking Helpline](#): 0808 802 0300
- [Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service](#): 020 3866 4107
- [Somerset Domestic Abuse](#): 0800 69 49 999

Protecting neurodivergent people

Understanding the unique challenges faced by neurodivergent people in recognising and responding to stalking is essential. By offering tailored support, we can ensure that all young people feel safe and empowered.

For further resources and information, read our latest blog: [Understanding stalking – beyond the myths](#)

**#SENDSupport #Neurodivergence #StalkingAwareness
#SomersetStalkingAwareness**

Ends

Meta description: Learn how stalking impacts neurodivergent individuals and how to provide effective support. Discover why neurodivergent people may be at higher risk and the signs to look out for, along with practical steps for organizations to safeguard and empower them.

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