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**“Should we call campus security?”:
A qualitative analysis of staff response to stalking on campus**

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Abstract

Generally, people acknowledge stalking as something that happens to others when news highlights it. However, every year thousands of victims are stalked globally. An old behaviour and new crime (Meloy, 1999), stalking has been an ancient parasitic disease typically preying on women for its survival in society. Women in the ages of 18-25 are at the highest risk of being stalked either by an unknown or a well-known perpetrator. There are very few studies conducted in New Zealand universities pertaining to assessing and managing stalking. The current study has explored how staff identify, assess and report on stalking incidents in a New Zealand university context. Eight university staff participated in semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of managing stalking on campus. Any potential barriers to management and reporting were discussed. Analyzing the qualitative data through thematic analysis showed six themes; 'Identifying Stalking', 'Evaluating Safety', 'The Reporting Loop', 'Who gets Involved', 'Where is the Information?' and 'Barriers to Support'. Results indicate that participants have a functional understanding of identifying, assessing and responding to stalking incidents. Complications of reporting processes and work culture have an impact on individual response management of incidents. As New Zealand rates high among OECD countries in violence against women, future research in this area is essential.

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My colleagues and all the staff at Massey University who have made this research possible. Special gratitude to the participants without whom this study would be lifeless. Your encouragement has been a premium fuel to take me through this road.

A very special mention of my kids, I learn so much from you every single day. My husband, Thank You for being my significant other in every way imaginable. Your encouragement is priceless.

In my two-year research journey, I have not only become more familiar with stalking but violence against women in general. Countless news articles, crime reports, numerous published research on femicide from all corners of the globe has often made me question, are women safe anywhere? In the year 2024, a woman either in North or South America, UK, China, Afghanistan, India, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, could go out for work, an errand or a jog with no guarantee of her safe return home. A perpetrator can be anyone. A woman could be wearing long trousers, wear a high visibility jacket or call someone just before leaving a party, take a taxi, have her phone on her, watch her drink. Principally, 'do everything that she is supposed to do' yet not return home safely. This research journey has been an emotional ride. A promising life taken away mindlessly, creates ripple effects of grief that spread far and wide.

I would like to dedicate my thesis to the people who have experienced stalking at some point in their lives. Know that your experience and your story matters.

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Introduction

Love and intimate relationships are essential components of a healthy and happy life (Gómez-López et al., 2019), they contribute towards some of the greatest joys in an individual's life like stability, security, contentment and some of the severest problems like depression, stalking, suicide, homicide (Vengelisti & Perlman, 2018). Among the pathologies of love, stalking is one of the most underrated problems that exists in society (Hoffman & Sheridan, 2005). Stalking has prevailed for centuries in society, often referred to as 'old behaviour, new crime' (Meloy, 1999). Characterized by obsessive following, persistent threatening behaviours with an intent to harm an individual (Mester et al., 2006). Stalking victims suffer from chronic social, economical, medical and psychological consequences that persist through a lifetime (Owens, 2015).

Understanding stalking is best understood on a spectrum. It can range anywhere from a casual joke of stalking someone on social media, through to 1 in 3 women being stalked at least once in their life (Rummler, 2022). In January to September 2022 alone, 1250 reports were filed of harassment and stalking in New Zealand (NZ) (Harris, 2023); these numbers represent just the reported incidents whereas the actual number could be much higher. While society is familiar with stalking, the topic does not get any societal attention until the media highlights an incident or a trend (Fazio, 2011). Identifying and managing stalking encompasses various challenges from an individual perspective, social outlook to legal difficulties.

Vague availability of stalking information in NZ

There is a paucity of published data on stalking cases within NZ (Stewart, 2020). Prior to 2020, the only recorded information concerned NZ politicians being at the highest risk level of stalking and harassment. Over half of the members of parliament reported stalking incidents

and regularly receive threats of rape and sexual violation via letters sent to their home addresses (Every-Palmer et al. 2015). Amidst scarcity of NZ stalking prevalence data, an internet search on ‘first case of stalking in New Zealand’ yields results only from the year 2020 onwards. The search results do not show a convicted stalker but calls to the government by women’s advocacy agencies to prompt anti-stalking laws, as NZ does not currently have any anti-stalking laws (Franks, 2021).

Contrary to generic stalking search results, a direct search under the names of Kerry Mitchell and Glenn Green show extensive information of their stalking perpetration (Wilkinson, 2023; Couchman, 2016). Within NZ, stalking as a term is repeatedly used interchangeably with harassment. Many components of stalking feature under the Harassment Act 1997 however the harassment laws in New Zealand are inadequate to address stalking (Mossman, 2012). It is important to note that reporting stalking is only a part of the issue and most challenges occur once the reporting has been done and support or intervention is required.

Background of stalking in education settings

Hoang (2018) describes how young women are sexualized at university campuses in everything they do, from the clothes they wear to the classes they choose. Unwanted attention prevails, as an unaccounted part and parcel of a women’s growing up experience especially at university campuses (Aiken & Velkar, 2019). Most victims who report stalking are likely to be women in the age group of 18-25 years, also indicating that men engage in stalking more than women (Schneider & Tress, 2005). Many of the women belonging to this age group attend higher education and university campuses can be a focal point of stalking related activities (Hattersley, 2023).

The strict adherence to class schedules, location accessibility, student contact being easily available on classroom portals; could potentially be contributing factors of women being

at the highest risk of stalking while on campus (Stermac et al., 2018). University students are often dismissive about their experiences especially if it is related to an ex-partner and are less likely to pick up any risks. The ones that do get reported are often not taken seriously (Hoagland, 2021). A combination of all these factors, lead to stalking cases either not being reported or not being actioned appropriately once reported.

Stalking on campuses can be perpetuated by students or staff, underlying reasons for under-reporting could be attributed to multiple factors. Power dynamics with staff, not wanting to cause any trouble, or not wanting to lose new friends or simply completing the degree and graduating with least disruptions. In NZ, universities have been reported to not address sensitive incidences like stalking and harassment and potentially have things buried (Harris, 2022). Reports show that more than 1 in 4 university students enrolled at a NZ University experience elements of sexual advances during their studies and a fewer than a third get reported (Russell, 2020).

Theoretical Framework: Integrative Contextual Development model

The topic of the study is an under-rated area of research, finding a theoretical framework that does justice to unpacking stalking in its complexities was considered critical. While there are many models that aim to understand stalking, they tend to focus on etiology and escalation of violence (Thompson et al., 2020). The Integrative Contextual Development (ICD) Model of Male Stalking by White & Kowalski (White & Kowalski, 2000) comes closest to examining multiple variables in the contextual understanding of stalking (White et.al., 2000). Based on research data, the model offers clinical insights about men stalking more than women and reviewing stalking as a cluster of violent behaviours against women. This eclectic approach suggests that stalking can be best understood as a multiplied form of violence with factors recognized at five levels i.e. sociocultural, interpersonal, dyadic, situational and intrapersonal.

A significant contribution of the model brings in gendered phenomenon; meaning that stalking in its meaning, motives, behaviour and consequences are different for men and women (Douglas & Dutton, 2001).

Previous stalking theories and analysis models have focused on typology of stalkers or models of aggression and attachment theories to explain stalking; the ICD model demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of stalking and stalkers by accounting for contextual factors and gendered phenomenon; making it a robust stalking model for research (Canter & Ιωάννου, 2004; Caputo, 2013). Some of these understandings within the model are vital as it presents stalking within the scope of psychiatric diagnoses, historical constructs of relentless romance as perceived by men and gendering of violence (White et al., 2004).

The reason for the model entitled as a male model is due to the high prevalence of male stalkers. Although titled as a developmental model of male stalking, the model addresses stalking behaviors in both genders. The variables within the model enable understanding of the behaviour and its manifestations in other genders as well, emphasizing that women also engage and perpetuate stalking behaviours (White et.al, 2000). As women step away from stereotypical gendered roles to individual, independent statuses; there is an increase in stalking from women reported. However, there are differences between the motives, fear induction, threat and frequency of stalking perpetuated by women. Even with women contributing to stalking, the prevalence of stalking highly contributed by men.

The model accounts for social and development factors corresponding to stalking, it reviews the impact of media including news and movies on sociocultural acceptance of stalking behaviors. An integrative approach utilized in this model is beneficial for the current study to highlight and discuss how various causal factors interact individually and socially while understanding stalking. Parkhill et al. (2022) demonstrates the strengths of the ICD model as

compared to other stalking research frameworks, as the ICD model combines essential components of stalking theories and relevant research findings. One of the highlights within the model is that it differentiates between Obsessive Relational Intrusions (ORI) and stalking on a behaviour dimension, ranging from its definitions, frequency, impact and legal difficulties.

This indicates that some stalkers can present with behaviours, commonly known as harassment related behaviours like repeatedly sending emails, texts (obsessive intrusions) but not demonstrate harmful or threatening behaviours or inculcate any fear in the victim. Understanding this spectrum is important for this study to know participant's perceptions of these behaviors in relation to stalking, this is important as merely the presence of ORI's does not constitute as stalking as per legal definitions, if there is no threat or fear for safety (Shultz-Ross, 2003). As one of the research aims of the current study is to know if participants can identify stalking, it would be worth noting if participants would associate the presence of ORI's as synonymous to stalking or would demonstrate a broader understanding of stalking that must have components of threat and fear for safety.

Stalking management within universities

Most universities maintain their reputation through the historical heritage they retain. Addressing any amendments within institutional policies are a challenging and complicated matter, synonymous to the fable of the blind men and the elephant (Kogan et al., 2007); signifying that individuals are bound by limited perspectives and beliefs in responding to situations. Stalking at universities are presumed to be common among students however contradictory data further suggests that staff are equally impacted by stalking from their students (Washburn, 2015). Student stalkers tend to visit faculty offices, staff car parks, cafes on campus and usually make unprofessional requests to academic or professional staff (Morgan & Kavanaugh, 2011). Stalking can present as many behaviours on a spectrum that can

encompass dating, relationship concerns and domestic violence, across heterosexual and LGBTQI+ communities on campuses (Brady et al., 2017). These interpersonal issues are not viewed as concerns that the university needs to manage but something that students need to sort personally. Universities frequently rely on local police and community services to address these 'interpersonal' issues (Pettegrew, 2023).

Managing risks on campus

In the absence of policies, universities tend to offer resources on harassment and/ or workplace violence. These risks and threats on campus are often left to academic administrators (Regehr et al., 2017), who are not trained to manage them. As violence against women and men continue to increase on campus. Universities can find it challenging to manage prominent threats i.e. a shooter on campus versus perceived threat on campus i.e. a violent ex-partner on campus. Unambiguous understanding and responding to campus threats can sometimes lead to conflict between duties of care and protection towards students and employees.

The famous *Tarasoff v Regents of University of California* is a prominent case that highlights the complexities faced by universities against internal threats that can also be perceived as interpersonal issues (Adi & Mathbout, 2018; Regehr & Kanani, 2006). In this case, Tatiana Tarasoff was stalked by an acquaintance on campus that ultimately resulted in her death. The supreme court ruling in this case, entitled the *Tarasoff* ruling (1976) found the University of California staff were aware of the danger to her life and failed to inform the student and her family about the impending danger. The university additionally, failed to take reasonable measures to manage the active risk on campus to her life (Gorshkalova & Munakomi, 2023). Most universities have multi-departmental teams responsible to manage risk situations, however the high-risk ones like a shooter on campus or threat of suicide tends to take priority than non-immediate threats like stalking (Scalora et al., 2010). Campus threat,

assessment and response data are primarily based on U.S universities, there is limited information on managing stalking in Australia and New Zealand.

Organizational set-up

Knowing about an organization structure and set-up is important, as it formulates response management for issues known within the organization. The current study is undertaken at Massey University, that currently has three campuses in New Zealand and includes a large Distance based campus as well. The oldest campus of Massey is at Manawatu followed by Wellington and Auckland. Massey has over 20,000 enrolled students within New Zealand and internationally who are enrolled via Distance (Massey.ac.nz). Many programs are taught online and post Covid-19, many taught programs are progressively offered online or in a blended (taught and online) delivery model.

Information on how student services are managed within the university are documented in a few ways, i.e. operational manuals, intranet guidelines and employee accounts based on their experiences. As part of preliminary research, a few staff from student services were asked about processes within student services on management of sensitive cases/ incidents. The most common responses obtained through verbal individual accounts of internal employees, were maintenance of student incidents via campus-based registrars. There is limited information available on how complex student issues were managed in previous years; this can be attributed to limited documentation, availability of these documents and staff attrition. Sadly, in the absence of information it leaves room for a lot of hearsay on how cases were internally managed earlier.

As NZ is an attractive education destination, as student numbers grew the demand for efficient systems and student support grew simultaneously. Policies and procedures became visible on websites and intranet, creating new opportunities for student services to become

transparent for students and staff. As services changed, the procedures were updated to meet growing student demands. Usually, there is a dedicated department or a person to be contacted for any issues that students face. It was only around 2017-2019 that software systems were introduced to support student case management systems that included privacy and confidentiality features.

Management of sensitive student matters prior to systems implementation

Any education institution including universities have two distinct operational structures i.e. academic and professional services. There are teams assigned that ensure smoother running of academic services like teaching and there are professional services that assist students in both academic and non-academic matters like student support. Earlier, campus-based registrars-maintained information regarding issues and complaints on physical files which later moved to spreadsheets and word documents. Verbal accounts of staff suggests that confidential documents containing sensitive student matters were available only to a handful of staff and would need senior management authorization. Student data protection is prioritized and restricting information was a reliable way of ensuring data and privacy protection.

The roles of campus-based registrars were disestablished; clinicians or professionals like managers gradually became the preferred go-to person for any complex matters including campus threats, sexual harm, suicide, harassment/ violence on campus. This go-to manager would typically have an educational or professional background in health and social sciences along with the operational knowledge of managing sensitive complaints/ reports. Gradually, more student concerns were raised, it became mandatory for the student support managers to be registered professionals including social workers, counsellors, psychologists, nurses.

Student Associations

Understanding the organizational setting of a tertiary institution is key as it presents an internal workflow of how processes transition. Universities are unique in operational structure as they accommodate contracted yet independent units like Student Associations. This means that these associations are present on campus but maintain an independent status. Student associations receive a blend of internal and external funding. Their staff are not employed by the university and their operational structures include student led clubs (Ansell, 2023). Student associations have dedicated buildings/ offices present on campuses for student support but are not entitled to share information with the university. Basically, student associations can independently manage and advocate student concerns and issues without sharing any internal information with the university. These associations work alongside community organizations and their referrals may or may not necessarily include the university in their processes. In this way, students have opportunities to raise concerns or complain about the university, without worrying about its impact on their privacy or their academic performance.

Studies suggest that many students prefer to approach student unions/ associations for reporting sensitive concerns related to stalking, unfair treatment, service complaints, academic misconduct, sexual harassment; as the associations are perceived as trustworthy and impartial (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). Students tend to feel secure about raising concerns knowing that their information will not be shared within the university if they go through student associations. This could indicate that potential student disclosures or complaints get managed internally within the associations, without any investigation, case details with the wider university. However, recent legislative changes require student associations to work collaboratively with the wider university to ensure students have a secure and wholistic learning environment.

Student Medical Centers

Student Health and medical centers are a part of university operations that are solely focused on the health and wellbeing needs of its enrolled students. In NZ, these campus-based medical centers are part of local district health boards (DHBs), providing primary health care through GPs, nurses, psychologists, counsellors, health practitioners; that are funded by the Ministry of Health (Tewhatoru.govt.nz). These centers maintain student information on a central DHB system and may link students to internal university services or community services contingent on the presenting need of the student. Previously, the medical centers held the independent discretion of information sharing within the university about student matters under the Health Information Privacy Code, 2020 (health.govt.nz).

Isolation of services

Within the organizational set-up, not having access to student concerns from medical centers and student associations could potentially lead to isolation of services. For instance, if a student is a victim of a sexual assault and consults a doctor at the medical center or student association to get rape kits and access support services. The student information stays protected within that service and the student is supported appropriately. Student associated data may feature in the local DHB system or student association internal data but not necessarily within the university system. This restriction of information certainly helps the privacy of the student however, could have a harmful impact on the student's academic journey. E.g. if the student misses a test or an assignment submission due to the sexual assault and may need on-going support. Keeping all these factors in mind, the bigger question remains, how would universities be equipped to effectively manage sensitive incidents if information is largely unavailable to them?

Updated Code of Pastoral Care, NZ

In January 2021, the New Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners was introduced, referred to as the Pastoral Code. This legislative change occurred due to Mason Pendrous at University of Canterbury, whose death remained undetected for weeks (Leask, 2021). While this code existed before, it was primarily focused on international students, post the updated Code in 2021 it includes all students, domestic, international and distance based. All universities in NZ promptly implemented systems to support the wellbeing and safety of students (Ministry of Education, 2022). Part of the legislative requirements of the code now mandates provisions of a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students enrolled at a university.

Presently, universities are being proactive with identifying, assessing and managing student concerns, which includes residential halls on campus and student associations. All units are expected to maintain a high level of care and safety for students and communicate with families if any serious concerns are noticed. The code does include compliance and auditing as part of its legislation and any education provider found to be in breach of the code requirements can be fined for up to \$350,000; with an additional \$100,000 fine if any breaches of the code result in serious harm or death of a student (Bateman & Macdonald., 2019). Compliance to the code includes training staff and maintaining appropriate database to monitor student concerns. The Code mandates NZ universities to manage sensitive complaints or concerns in a trackable, transparent way that was previously expected but not mandated, making staff and students accountable.

Stalking reports in NZ universities

A study conducted by Hughes & Dixon (2005) in the University of Auckland highlighted the increase of students and staff, who are at a high risk of being stalked yet barely

any research exists on its prevalence in NZ. A similar study found that few stalking reports associated with a handful of senior staff members at AUT (Auckland University of Technology) went largely unreported for five years (Johnston, 2020). The victims who came forward with persistent allegations did not have their complaints properly investigated. Moral stigma associated with reporting abusive behaviours against lecturers/ supervisors endures as a blockade to reporting and accessing support (Yan & Yam, 2024).

Stalking information on university websites

Students enduring stalking associated behaviours who may consider options to get support would rely on primary sources of information to guide their decision making via websites or staff. A quick search of ‘stalking’ on the websites of major universities in NZ was done. The reason for the website search was twofold; one what would a student find on the website. Second, if universities have provided data on their own primary source of information about managing sensitive matters or given guidance to students about options to take if their university experience takes a sour turn. The following table presents the initial findings of the search.

Table 1.1

NZ universities website search results when searching for stalking

| Universities in New Zealand | Stalking information on website by keyword search ‘stalking’ | Search results |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| University of Otago | Information on Harassment, stalking and sexual violence | Te Whare Tāwharau services |
| University of Waikato | Information on Cybercrime, community and sexual violence | Student Health |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Massey University | No relevant information | No relevant information |
| University of Auckland | Family and relationship violence | Women’s life matter (link) & emergency service number |
| University of Canterbury | No relevant information | No relevant information |
| Victoria University of Wellington | Domestic and family violence | Safer communities and Shine |
| Auckland University of Technology | Preventing Harassment policy including physical stalking or monitoring | Policy document for Bullying & Harassment |

Note. Data collected by author on 23rd August 2023

This search shows that among seven prominent universities in NZ, four have violence related support information available on their website. One has stalking associated with harassment that leads to policy document for bullying & harassment. Two others do not have any relevant information for stalking or support services. The presence of scarce information about stalking and safety aspects implies a gap within universities to recognize stalking prevalence and provide appropriate support to students and staff. The present study focuses on the recognizing, reporting and support services process from a staff’s perspective within a university in NZ.

Is stalking common in today’s time?

Stalking can be misconstrued as prevalent when Jack the ripper existed; whilst today’s modern society and strong social media visibility possibly does not leave room for a stranger

lurking around the corner (Knight & Watson, 2017). Nevertheless, stalking cases are frequently featured in the news and media across the globe (Flowers et al., 2022). Time and again, media has been the driving factor for most stalking cases to get the due publicity, recognition and investigations the cases deserve. A key factor that the current study intends to raise within the NZ context is the understanding of stalking and the problems of reporting it. The original thoughts for the current study were influenced by an influx of media reports mentioning NZ universities do not report sensitive incidents. Working within the university sector for a few years within a student support role prompted the exploration of the current research.

Why is the current study valuable?

Stalking in NZ is an underestimated area of violence and crime that plagues society. Current NZ based statistics from Women's refuge, associate stalking as part of intimate partner violence (Thorburn 2019), not as an independent crime. Attitudes of violence against women within NZ in any form are unlikely to change until the distinct types of violence are understood. While NZ has the highest rate of intimate partner violence against women among other developed countries (Hager, 2020), research on stalking remains scarce. The current study attempts to take a novice step in learning about stalking management within an institution in NZ. It is evident that intrusive behaviours like stalking occur within university environments but there is not enough research to know how stalking is identified and managed. The interest to research about stalking stemmed from recent news reports that highlighted bureaucratic systems within New Zealand universities that do not manage sensitive issues appropriately (Duff, 2019). To the best of my knowledge, the current study is the first find out about the understanding of stalking within a New Zealand university and how it is managed from a staff perspective. The aim of the current research is divided into three parts namely, prior understanding of stalking, the reporting process of stalking and support available.

Literature Review

History

Dating back to Hippocratic times, stalking was associated primarily with Erotomania or de Clerambault Syndrome; characterized by a consistent delusion one believes that a person is in love with them, when in reality they are not (Kelly, 2005; Jordan & Howe., 1980). Pathologies of affection have existed among women, men, heterosexual, and rainbow communities in both eastern and western societies for as long as love has existed (Mullen & Pathé, 1994). Stalking in the early 1800s was associated with instances of a jilted lover phenomenon that emerged in society (Hancy, 2015). For individuals who believed their perceived love is rejected; abandonment rage potentially invokes a range of violent emotions and motivations connected with rejection, neglect and hopelessness whilst still feeling true love, romance, attraction and desirability (Fisher, 2014). Anyone believed to stand in the way of their delusional love also become victims of violence (Mullen & Pathé., 1994). Somewhere on the continuum of relationship, intimacy, jealousy, intrusion, possessiveness, rejection lies the phenomena of stalking (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003).

Social conditioning of stalking

Stalking has existed in society for long yet not recognized as a social problem; like an unspoken part of social and cultural awareness (Nicol, 2006). This signifies that it is an age-old phenomenon yet simultaneously considered a new phenomenon. Media influence like movies, romantic books, television programmes, have historically portrayed benign stalking as romantic pursuit that demonstrates infinite love (Simon, 2023). In many societies, men are positively reinforced to stalk women as their justification of love, with the conjecture being that 'no' from a woman just means that the man must try harder (Liez, 2021). This social acceptability often leads to men thinking that it is appropriate for women's boundaries to be

violated. Traditionally, young men in society when faced with romantic rejection, were encouraged to pester women with romantic gestures by way of giving unexpected regular gifts, flowers, follow them around indicating that having regular contact and making the woman feel like the center of the man's universe. This would eventually mean that the woman would realize 'his love' and respond favorably (Angyal, 2016). Conventionally, women are socially conditioned to believe that persistent romantic pursuit by men, even after a rejection is flattering and women should 'enjoy the attention' (Persaud, 2013).

While social conditioning prepares men and women for love and romance; stalking and harassment is left to independent individual discretion to unpack. When women receive beautiful gifts at work, it can be socially perceived as a romantic gesture, however for a stalking victim, the gifts represent a sense of control their stalker exercises by letting them know, they are 'within reach' (Gilliam, 2018). Studies suggest that in many western countries like U.S, stalking is normalized and romanticized till date (Becker et al., 2020).

Changes in the social perception of stalking

Historically, stalking and erotomania were used interchangeably, stalking has undergone a few cycles of metamorphosis to establish its presence in today's time. The perception of stalking has changed only in the last 30 years, it was not something that was openly talked about before or considered as a problem (Parkhill et al., 2022). In the early 1970s-80s, stalking was interpreted as an elitist problem to be reserved only for the rich and famous. The highly publicized murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer in 1989 by her stalker, Robert Bardo (stalking duration- two years) highlighted a national focus in the US and across the globe on men and women who experience harassment, life threat and live constantly in fear of their stalkers; on an everyday basis (Gilligan, 1992). Media played a vital role in the public recognition of stalking and continues to do so today.

Eventually public concerns grew as non-famous people started speaking about their experiences of stalking, it was no longer perceived as a celebrity problem or a price of fame (Sauerwein, 2005) but something that impacted people more commonly in society too. Stalking was not just limited to strangers engaging in pursuit of a potential love interest but also included ex-partners, colleagues. The spectrum of stalking behaviours covered a range from seemingly harmless behaviours like sending flowers and letters, through to the extreme end of fatal acts of violence like sexual assault and murder (Holmes, 1993). Over time, stalking started to emerge as a substantial social problem, as late 1980s- 1990s showed an increased number of reported cases in many countries including U.S, UK and Europe (Budd et al., 1998).

Recognizing stalking as a crime

In the United States, stalking was not classified as a crime until early 1990s. By the end of the century, all 50 states had anti-stalking laws (Ngo, 2015). Many European countries like Italy, Germany, Spain and others recognized stalking as a crime only when highlighted by mainstream media which was prompted by celebrity stalking cases between 1993-1996 (Fazio, 2011). Although, stalking has been present in society for ages, stalking received criminal and legal attention only from 1990 onwards. From Hippocratic times to current date, stalking has maintained its grip on society. Currently an Erotomaniac type of Delusion Disorder persists in society through social media use (Faden et al., 2017).

Understanding Stalking

Community attitudes influence opinions of everyday minor or intrusive behaviours that impact members of society. Stalking related behaviours like gifting flowers, cards can be socially perceived as harmless. Social attitudes habitually play a key role in determining normalizing of stalking behaviour or supporting violence-related beliefs (Cullen-Rosenthal & Fileborn, 2023). During the initial stages of stalking, victims themselves tend to perceive

intrusive behaviours as naive or tend to minimize them. This underestimation of the behaviour can lead to misinterpreting stalking as part of gestures that show affection or coping mechanisms especially post a break-up (Panicker, 2016). It is only when the behavior gets threatening enough to make the victims feel unsafe, stalking is recognized and reported. Stalking behaviour paradigm can appear simple but be complicated to define, prove or prosecute (Sinclair & Frieze, 2000).

Complications in describing stalking

As stalking behaviours manifest in versatile ways, it becomes immensely challenging to define stalking. On a broad spectrum of legal terminology and clinical definition, stalking is defined differently. Unpacking which behaviours really constitute as stalking and the ones that do not, is a difficult task. Despite several global efforts, there is no single widely accepted definition of stalking (Purcell et al., 2008). Individual experienced based definitions differ from legal definitions (Davis, 2000). This means that an individual may encounter some attributes of stalking and lack other associated features, which makes it problematic to standardize a definition and assess it. For instance, a woman may receive every day or receive unsuspecting calls but not have evidence of being physically followed. The variations within the parameters of stalking increase the complexity of its definition (Morrison, 2007)

Defining stalking

Stalking comprises of a constellation of behaviours. Generally, stalking can be accepted as acts of repeatedly following, threatening and menacing another person with the intention to invoke fear and harm in the victim (Mullen et al., 2008). Although the legal, social definitions and understanding of stalking may vary; researchers, first responders and general population do generally refer to the same phenomenon (Sheridan & Davies, 2003). Meloy & Gothard (1995) define “stalking as deliberate, malicious and repeated following and harassing of

another person that threatens his or her safety” (Meloy & Gothard, 1995, p. 258). Stalkers have a tendency to obsess and pursue. Their pursuit can occur over multiple avenues including physical, electronic and social including third parties e.g. private detectives (Mohandie, 2013). Stalking behaviours can fall anywhere on a spectrum from physical following a person, surveillance, constant calls/ texts, social media and/ or other online contact. The severe end of stalking can lead to kidnapping, revenge seeking, property destruction, breaking and entering, unwanted in-person approaches, threats to harm or kill and physical or sexual assault (Sheridan & Davies, 2010).

Three essential features of stalking

Stalking is interpreted as threatening when the behaviours escalate in frequency, duration and severity (Sheridan et al., 2019). In legal terminology the categorization of stalking mandates the presence of three key features unique to stalking i.e. intent to harm, chronic occurrence and victim’s fear for their safety (Maran et al., 2019). Stalking is demonstrative of recurrent, relentless and persistent behaviour that continues over a period of time. Unlike most crimes, stalking does not constitute a single act of behaviour committed once (Chung & Sheridan., 2021). An underlying common factor encompassing stalking is having a desire to exercise control over a victim and the situation. The intention of causing substantial damage to its victim is a core criterion of stalking. Stalkers may not present as aggressors however would exercise behaviours that present themselves as psychologically and socially damaging for its victim (McEwan et al., 2007).

Prevalence

Stalking prevalence data is primarily U.S based, making it difficult to get accurate data from other countries. An estimated 13.5 million people are stalked in United States alone over a period of 2021- 2022; i.e. 1 in every 3 women and 1 in every 6 men have reported to

experience stalking at some point in their lives (Smith et al., 2022). It is estimated that over 5 million women are stalked each year and about 15% have experienced elements of stalking during their lifetime. This strongly indicates that women are more likely to be stalked. Additionally, 69% of women and 80% of men who are stalking victims were threatened with physical harm (Bailey & Morris, 2018).

New Zealand's most prolific 'serial stalker', Kerryn Mitchell is notoriously known for stalking her ex-partner for 13.5 years. She has been found guilty on several charges including over 80 accounts of breaching protection orders. Being imprisoned has not ceased her behaviour and she proudly mentions in one of her interviews that she will stop stalking her victim "when she is dead" (Morris, 2021). NZ's 'worst stalker' Glenn Green is repeatedly on news on various accounts of either impersonating someone, appealing for his electronic ankle bracelet to be removed or harassing one of his victims amidst 252 friend requests that he sent out to famous people (Hurley, 2017). Research indicates that both female and male stalkers have a similar modus operandi (Davis, 2000). The findings showed that rates of violence did not differ in male or female stalkers however stalking from female perpetrators was not interpreted as threatening (Strand & McEwan, 2012). These differences help the awareness of stereotypes while dealing with stalking, so victims can get help and appropriate support irrespective of their gender (Patrick, 2023).

Stalking under the Harassment Act

In Australia and New Zealand, research has found that 1 in every 10 people have experienced prolonged exposure to stalking (Crime and Justice Statistics, 2017). In NZ legislation, stalking is categorized Harassment (Victimsupport.org.nz); often both terms are used interchangeably. Stalking has not been specifically referenced in NZ's harassment legislation, but behaviours associated with stalking are prohibited in the Harassment Act 1997

(Thorburn & Jury, 2019). There are judicial inconsistencies that cross over restraining orders and protection orders dependent on the threshold of harm. These frameworks are not usually effective with stalking until it reaches a threatening level. Hence, there is a need for stronger legislations regarding stalking.

Duration and Statistics

Studies show that victim experience stalking for an average minimum of 347 days (Bjerregaard, 2000); most cases go on for much longer duration. A national survey in U.S including 8,000 women and men that were victims of stalking documented the average length of stalking to be anywhere between 1.5 years to 10 years (Björklund et al., 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Stalking persisting for a longer duration with high intensity of threats is more likely to cause acute and chronic health conditions for its victims (Dreßing et al., 2020). Based on the timeframes that stalking can prevail in a person's life, most stalkers are well known to their victims.

The prevalence of stalking mostly occurs in an intimate relationship whereby the perpetrator possesses bulk of information about the victim (Dressing et al., 2005). This can include contact details, their route to work/ study, information about their friends, family and bank account details. Studies show that people tend to perceive ex-partners or known acquaintances as non-stalkers or less dangerous as compared to strangers. However, findings present the opposite picture; as familiar people pose a greater threat than strangers (Chung & Sheridan, 2021).

Clinical typology of stalkers:

Mullen was a pioneer in developing a classification model of stalkers based on his work with various stalkers. Among clinical models of stalking classifications available, Mullen's is

widely used. They can be essentially categorized by their behaviour type, their intention and demonstration of behaviour (Mullen et al, 1999).

Table 2.1

Clinical Typology of stalkers

| Type | Intention | Behavior |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Rejected | does not accept the ending of a relationship well | wishes to reconcile by various means. |
| Intimacy | fantasizes having a relationship | carries on a pursuit by maintaining contact to fulfill fantasies of an actual loving relationship. |
| Incompetent | intends to seek a romantic partner | Uses socially inappropriate manners to pursue the romantic partner e.g., indifference, threat, arrogance. |
| Resentful | responds to perceived humiliation/ rejection | inculcates fear and sustaining a sense of power and control. Will rarely resort to physical violence. |
| Predatory | stalk for information in preparation for an attack generally for sexual gratification including sadistic and voyeuristic desires | Some gain pleasure by remaining anonymous. Predatory type of stalkers are considered the most threatening than other categories. |

(Mullen et al., 1999; Youngs et al., 2013).

A recent model of classifying stalkers is the relationship and context-based model (RECON). This model is based on the relationship between the stalker and the victim and the context in which stalking takes place (Mohandie et al., 2006). This means depending on variables like the existing relationship between a stalker and victim and the context of that relationship, one can determine how the stalking behaviour would unfold. The RECON model posits that purely knowing if the stalker is a stranger or an acquaintance is not sufficient as the context and the environment of the stalker and victim is equally important. The focus is on Intimate (prior relationship), Acquaintance (no prior relationship), Public Figure (celebrity) and Private Stranger (observed victims but no relationship or acquaintance) (Crews et al., 2014).

Violent types of stalkers

Consistent with Mullen's (1991) findings, intimate stalkers tend to be the most violent towards their victims and the public figure stalkers are the least likely to cause physical harm, compared to other categories (Mohandie et al., 2006). Exceptions exist within these categories whereby celebrity stalkers can resort to violence. Homicidal celebrity stalkers do succeed in their intentions to kill celebrities or subject violent behaviours towards individuals connected to celebrities. In some cases, if the stalkers fail in fulfilling their intentions, they succeed in completing suicide (Schlesinger & Mesa, 2008). Understanding which type of stalker one is dealing with, may help in assessing risks and threats in stalking situations. While stalkers may exhibit more than one type, they will have a predominant mode of operating towards victims (Racine & Billick., 2013), e.g. a rejected type will constantly pursue a potential relationship.

Psychopathology and behavioural profiles of stalkers

Studies have found neurobiological differences in stalkers, suggesting psychopathological causes that formulate stalking behaviours (Dreßing et al., 2011). A few

studies suggest that there are common biological and psychological factors that impact emotional regulation among stalkers; experiences of falling in love and/ or experiencing romantic rejection or break ups can trigger the serotonergic and dopaminergic systems that lead to negative impulse responses (Marazziti et al., 2015). Irrespective of whether the stalking impacts strangers or former partners, there are similarities in thought processes pertaining to childhood attachment styles, obsessive behaviours and delusions (Creamer & Hand, 2021). History of violent/ aggressive behaviours and cognitive processing disruptions are common factors demonstrated among stalkers. Strong indicators of Personality Disorders- Not Otherwise Specified (NOS), insecure attachment styles and higher than average intelligence levels in most cases explain a high coexistence to stalking behaviours (Wheatley et al., 2020). Studies show cyberstalkers tend to demonstrate high antisocial behaviours (Maran & Begotti, 2022).

Behavioural profiles of stalkers tend to show consistent personality traits. Topmost common factors observed in stalkers is lack of empathy and social skills deficit (Haslem, 2024). A strong indication of high need for control and dominance along with obsessive tendencies coexist. Having pre-existing mental health conditions, stalkers tend to demonstrate high rates of resentment, anger and hostility towards their targets (Sciarrotta et al., 2020). Low emotional stability involving heightened sensitivity to rejection, abandonment and emotional loss are common. These factors are correlated to intimacy deficits, explaining why stalkers tend to face challenges maintaining healthy relationships (Kamphuis et al., 2004). On the contrary, some stalkers display narcissistic and histrionic traits whereby they show a sense of entitlement towards the person they are stalking and entitlement to the relationship (Spitzberg & Veksler, 2007; Haslem, 2024).

Cyberstalking

Stalking entered the age of communication and information technology. Earlier, stalking behaviours i.e. watching, spying on victims or calling their landlines and leaving letters in their mailbox have evolved digitally (Shipley & Bowker, 2014). Cyberstalking is a crime perpetuated using digital technologies that enable remote stalking of a person and their personal whereabouts (Reyns & Fissel, 2020). Bocij et al (2002) define cyberstalking as a compilation of behaviours in which a particular individual or a group of people use information technology to harass one or more individuals. Cyberstalking behaviours can include threatening a person, data theft, computer surveillance and solicitation of sexual acts. Cyberstalking permits real-time updates about a person via GPS or location-based apps. Staying consistent with stalking, the definition of cyberstalking correlates to a cluster of behaviours in which an individual uses information and communications technology to track and pursue another individual (Sheldon et al., 2019).

Characteristics of cyberstalking

Essential features of cyberstalking include persistent non-consensual pursuit, an invasion of an individual's personal privacy, relentless monitoring of their online presence and evidence of threat to a person's safety and of members within their social network (Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002). In cyberstalking, the pursuit can prevail through mediums like mobiles, emails, social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Threats can include intimidations of violence, unwanted sexual advances and reputational damage (Scheiner et al., 2020). Cyberstalking is a developing global issue and is frequently underestimated by society including government (Chang, 2020).

Online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004)

Cyberstalking is a highly organized, repeated form of stalking that results in digital assaults sustained over time (Gautam & Bansal, 2022). The online freedom in cyberspace often gives perpetrators a less inhibited environment to act on their emotions towards their targets. The online disinhibition effect, states that perpetrators can be more severe in their communication on an online platform than a face-to-face environment (Casale et al., 2015; Suler, 2004). Toxic disinhibition leads perpetrators to engage in threatening and blackmailing their victims about leaking their photos, address, personal details on the dark web (Lai & Tsai., 2016).

Prevalence and offending of cyberstalking are under-reported (Roberts, 2008). The biggest challenge with tracing cyberstalking cases is their absence of a geographical location and their presence solely in digital space. In many cases, victims move countries, block their online accounts and maintain anonymous social media presence, still get targeted from stalkers via additional online portals (Mau, 2019). Studies show that victims of cyberstalking are primarily women, subjected to all types of severe online aggression mostly via instant messaging (McDonald, 2012). A major obstacle with getting data of cyberstalking prevalence is its coexistence with cyberbullying and online harassment data (Hinduja, 2023). Begotti et al (2022), highlights how standardized questionnaires to assess cyberstalking have components of harassment, unwanted sexual advances and identity fraud. Like stalking, there are difficulties to differentiate between cyberstalking and harassment.

Law enforcement prioritize immediate threats than perceived threats

Escalating cyberstalking cases poses many complications from the perspective of legislation, jurisdiction through to local police problems. Cyberstalkers can communicate to their victims from anywhere in the world; surpassing any geographical boundaries (Fissel et al., 2022). Enforcement authorities frequently rely on specialist technologically expert teams

to trace the stalker; as the IP addresses constantly change, making the reporting process arduous. Such cases are often at the bottom of the action list for law enforcement authorities as priority is always given to immediate threats like domestic violence and sexual assaults (Dhillon & Smith, 2019). These findings indicate that law enforcement authorities may not respond to stalking cases unless they escalate in risk severity or present as an immediate risk/threat. Similarly, cyberstalking victims affirm lack of support from the criminal justice system and feel significant distrust in the use of technology post the stalking (Stevens et al., 2021).

Risk assessment in stalking

One of the complications accompanying stalking and cyberstalking is the assessment of risk and threat. Stalking behaviours tend to initiate with relatively low-level concerns, i.e. repeated texts, calls, unexpected gifts. These repetitive behaviours do not appear to have a harmful intent or have a criminal conduct associated with them (McKeon et al., 2014); hence most authorities do not recognize the threat until a physical harmful incident occurs (Thompson, 2019). In many cases, a victim could have raised concerns with authorities and expressed their grave fears, feelings of being unsafe however authorities are less likely to take them seriously, due to the absence of imminent risk (Purcell et al., 2001). Frequently, legislators find it challenging to differentiate legitimate pursuit of a relationship and stalking (McEwan et al., 2020). Cases where the perpetrator is not known to the victim potentially means that the victim is not aware of the lurking danger or threat, until an event occurs (Mathieson, 2003). Due to the complexity of stalking behaviours, misunderstandings regarding the characterisations of stalking and their interpretations remain consistent across U.S and other countries till date (Miller, 2001).

No stalking laws in NZ

Many countries do not still recognize stalking and cyberstalking as a punishable offence, New Zealand currently does not have any anti-stalking laws (awc.org.nz). Victims often feel that family court is the last and the most expensive option for them in NZ. Protection order breaches are too frequent as fearing the loss of further control over the victim's life, perpetrators amplify their threats and contest court decisions constantly leading to subsequent and multiple court dates (Franks, 2021). Meaning that the victim is often 'stuck' in the court and legal cycle for years. In the case of Cyberstalking, this requires specialized skilled teams to manage cases which often are controlled by government funding (Moriarty & Roberts, 2008). Technology giants like Google, Facebook, Instagram need to work in tandem with government agencies to assess stalking threats which present a myriad of legal problems (Chang, 2020).

Labor Government's attempt to consider anti-stalking laws in NZ

Farzana Yakubi (21), a 3rd year law student at Auckland University of Technology reported her stalker, Kanwarpal Singh a security personnel employed at AUT to the police twice in December 2022. Farzana reported to the police repetitively that 'she is in danger'. Singh stalked her in-person and online, left evidence like photos, notes and ordered meals to her home address. She blocked all her online/ social media accounts and Singh created new accounts; continuing to reach out. He contacted her friends and family too. Farzana got a protection order. Few weeks after the second police report, Farzana saw Singh one evening after she got off a bus and removed her phone to call the police. Before the call connected, Singh repeatedly stabbed her 12 times and before any help could come, Farzana passed away a few metres away from her home (Gay, 2023).

Ex-prime minister, Chris Hipkins had personally commented on Farzana's case and mentioned the Labour Government would consider anti-stalking laws in New Zealand if re-elected in 2023 elections, as they realized that New Zealand is still behind compared to countries like U.S and Europe to criminalize stalking (O'Brien, 2023). As the National party was elected in 2023, there is currently no information available on their outlook with anti-stalking laws. The labour government is still looking at potentially including stalking to the Crimes Act (Sherwood, 2023).

Role of the media in stalking

Social media and mainstream media like news and crime reports have positively reinforced awareness about stalking in society. In 1990s stalking was identified due to news reporting on the celebrity stalker cases bringing stalking behaviours to the public knowledge (Wilson et al., 2018). Progressively, media played a fundamental role in reporting not just the celebrity stalkers but also the stalkers in offices, playgrounds, stores and beaches. Most cases of stalking would not have grabbed public attention and lead to social changes, if they were not highlighted in mainstream media (Mellins, 2022). While there are criticisms about media that exist about sensationalizing acts of violence against women, in case of stalking; media in general tends to stay factual and data driven (Mellins & Moore, 2022). Various stalking cases covered by media further demonstrate that news articles and crime journalism additionally highlight systemic complications that stalking victims face including legal and police problems (Maran et al., 2020).

Stalking and violence

Traditional stalking and cyberstalking may differ in their methodologies but cause similar detrimental impact on victims and their loved ones. The fear resulting from stalking impacts society as it impacts a home, university or an office. Meta-analyses confirm stalking

victims experience impairments in all areas of life lasting from weeks to decades (Will et al., 2011). Depending on whether the perpetrator is a stranger or a familiar person, the devastating effects of stalking can spread to all areas of a person's life. Conclusive studies report a high correlation between stalking and intimate partner violence (IPV) (McFarlane et al., 1999), highlighting that stalking cases resulted into physical assaults within 12 months of the initial stalking report; some of these physical assaults later have led to lethal or sub-lethal assaults that ended in femicide (Mechanic et al., 2000).

The crippling fear of being victimized triggers heightened trauma responses, psychological disturbances, fear of safety for self and loved ones. The victim constantly thinks about the stalker and lives in fear (Kaur et al., 2021). The manipulation of exerting fear and victimization into the heart of the victim, is the formula most extensively used by stalkers; 29% of victims feel that the stalking will never stop for them and will continue till they die (Baum et al., 2009). Suicidal ideation preoccupies the minds of stalking victims; 78% of victims present a comorbidity of other disorders including insomnia, panic attacks, paranoia, somatic symptoms and chronic fatigue (Purcell et al., 2012). A staggering 46% of women who experience stalking; report violence from their stalkers, out of them 81% report physical injuries from small scrapes, cuts, burns, black eye through to gunshot wounds. Bruises are reported as the most dominant of physical injuries (Brewster, 1998).

Physiological impact of stalking

Starting from the fear of physical harm from the stalker, there is almost a domino effect on the victim's life. Living under constant fear of being contacted, followed and how to respond when a threatening situation presents itself, is perpetually on the mind of the victim, resulting in a prolonged trauma response (Stenswick, 2002). Chronic trauma response can lead to the victim developing mental health issues such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD),

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Traumatic disorders and Depression which are the topmost reported disorders resulting from stalking behaviours (Schneider & Tress, 2005). Sleep disturbances, flashbacks, hypervigilance, inability to focus are other acute consequences of stalking. The emotional impact of these result into fear, shame, guilt, frustration that can spread through a victim's everyday life (Noffsinger, 2015). Diminished appetite, weight loss, reduction in self-care, headaches, muscle tension and exaggerated startle responses swarm the victim (Abrams & Robinson, 2002).

Functional impairments on social and financial health

A general loss of control in one's life is attributed as the most distressing factor in stalking. If perpetrators are known to victims like an ex-partner, the intensity of threats spill over from the victim to others like pets, children, family, close friends (Kamphuis et al., 2001). There are many financial and social implications to coping with an active threat, this can include taking additional leave from work, changing phone numbers, changing schools of kids and relocation. Victims may engage in self-protective actions like purchasing security equipment and firearms (Bouffard et al., 2021). Additional financial losses can include payment for lawyers, property damage, changing jobs, poor credit scores and paying medical bills if violence is involved (Stieger et al, 2008).

Social isolation due to embarrassment or out of protectiveness towards loved ones, can permeate into all interactions related to the victim especially in the presence of a threat. Victims may involve their family and friends to be aware of the stalker's persistent efforts to contact them in order to get to the victim. Threats to others can include physical harm, violence, kidnapping and doxing that fulfill the manipulative behaviors of the stalker. The overall quality of life of a victim is severely compromised (Mechanic et al., 2010). The long-term impact of stalking can bear a heavy toll on public health as stalking co-occurs with associated behaviours

including harassment, IPV and sexual violence. The financial estimates of managing these behaviours that involve multiple services can range anything from \$100 million to \$300 million in U.S alone (Basile et al., 2006).

Recidivism impact

Victims may feel safe when their stalker is convicted and work towards joining their lives back together however, stalking recidivism remains consistently high (Rosenfeld, 2003). A nine year follow up study of convicted stalkers has found that 77% reoffended including violent reoffending like sexual violence (Eke et al., 2011). These findings suggest that convicting stalkers, does not necessarily bring a change in their pre-existing behavior. It is evident that victims impacted by stalking are to be aware of not just past stalking behaviours but also the likelihood of stalking recidivism. Victims seldom feel completely free of the psychological torment of stalking, even when the stalkers are behind bars (Jerath et al., 2022). These factors can be accounted for support and safety planning for victims, as stalking classification models imply once a stalker, always a stalker (Logan & Walker, 2017).

Victim age group

Younger people are stalked significantly more than older counterparts. 42% of victims were pursued by strangers, in most stalking cases the perpetrators are known to the victims (Peterson et al., 2019). Unmarried people have a higher probability of being stalked than married people (Purcell et al., 2002). Numerous studies support that young students in tertiary education are at a greater risk of stalking when compared to general population. 18-25 years age group reports the highest prevalence of stalking (Cass, 2011). Undergraduate students especially women are at the highest risk of cyberstalking with on-line pursuit by strangers being a prime concern (Reyns et al., 2012). As stalking is rampant in society, universities and other education institutions are no exceptions. A substantial number of students mostly women feel

threatened by persistent unwanted attention directed at them by either other students or staff. Sadly, in some institutions, stalking is referred to part of the university experience (Hoagland, 2021). When stalking takes place in a campus setting, it often goes unaddressed. In 83% of cases, victims do not report incidents to authorities (Kaushik, 2005).

Campus rape culture: What does the university have to do with it?. (Orth et al., 2020).

A study by Orth et al. (2020) indicated that increasing cases of rape and sexual assaults on campuses are often perceived as interventions belonging to law enforcement authorities rather than university management. This study highlighted that university management tends to perpetuate rape culture on campuses through policies that blame the victims and allow perpetrators to believe that there are zero consequences for their actions. Prominent research by Fisher et al., (2000) suggested that mean estimates on any given campus of 10,000 students, could expect approximately 356 sexual assaults annually i.e. one in every four women. Recent studies support that the numbers of sexual assaults on campuses have not changed in the last three decades (Payne, 2008); on the contrary, sexual assault rates are higher on campuses than national rates (Garcia et al., 2012). While most of these statistics are U.S and Europe based, Australia is progressing ahead on tackling sexual violence on campus. A national Australian survey conducted in 2021 on student safety on campus, shows that one in twenty students have been sexually assaulted since starting studies (Henry, 2021).

Boys will be boys

Laddism or lad culture, generally defined as a pack mentality among male students usually belonging to sporting groups, often indulging in heavy alcohol consumption, sexist banter, rowdy behaviour and violence against women (Díaz-Fernández & Evans, 2019), are ubiquitous to campus culture across U.K, USA and Europe (Nichols, 2016). Being a lad, bloke, dude, lady's man etc are frequently considered as part of the male identity at university (Jeffries,

2017); it is synonymous to men learning to assert their masculinity and keeping up with social and peer pressure (Jackson & Sundaram, 2018). Often, this means persistently asking a woman out on dates after hearing a 'no', passing sexual comments on a woman's body, clothes, demeanour (Perkins & Warner, 2017). The boys will be boys mentality forms a campus culture that celebrates male sexual conquests (Sills et al., 2016) and perpetuates gender-based sexual violence on university campuses i.e. rape culture (Lewis et al., 2016).

Historically, university response teams do not acknowledge the prevalence of sexual violence on campuses as a university issue, hence do not have ingrained policies and procedures that are made to address rape culture; leaving room for covering up most incidents (Crocker & Sibley, 2020; Bell et al., 2018) or managing them inefficiently. Increasingly, universities are amending their approaches to provide a safer environment for students however, it does present a few challenges along the way. Agreeing on definitions of sexual assaults, consent, dating violence and stalking are complex at the university level (Sabina & Ho, 2014). To tackle the span of the sexual assault's response, campus-based interventions are executed like sexual harm prevention workshops, consent days, safe partying 101 (Bonar et al., 2020). Resources are invested like campus security teams and counsellors in managing the incidents, without bringing about sustainable change in policies (Sabina et al., 2016). Despite the efforts, the university environment continues to remain a culture of silence and dominant academic masculinity (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020).

It is through the utilization of mainstream social media and Twitter handles like #BeenRapedNeverReported (Keller et al., 2016), that has provided a strong platform to victims to share their stories and create online movements against campus rape culture (Keller et al., 2016). Recent years has witnessed a resurgence in radical activism online of victims sharing their direct experience of campus rapes and highlighting institutional limitations (Clark-Parsons, 2019); that has enforced university management to respond appropriately. There is a

global surge in changing campus rape culture to a consent culture however, the visible change in response management, complaints processes and policies and procedures are still a long way to go (Phipps et al., 2017).

Australian Universities initiatives towards campus safety.

In 2021, the Australian University Sector undertook steps to address sexual violence on campus, as their national surveys painted a grim picture of prevalent sexual violence on Australian campuses at 1 out of 20 students impacted (Wahlquist, 2022). Transgender and non-binary students are at a further risk of sexual assaults (Baker & Tuohy, 2022). Nearly 9% of international students are also victims of sexual assaults on campus and do not often get any culturally appropriate support (Packer, 2023). The surveys also express how students lack confidence in their institutions. Only a handful of students experiencing sexual assaults filed a formal complaint (Jenkins, 2022). Most students are unaware of university sexual harm policies or support available within the university (Gray et al., 2024). Most students unfortunately choose to remain anonymous and feel reporting matters is not worth it (Cassidy, 2023).

Heywood et al. (2022), suggests that as Australian universities are autonomous and self-regulating institutions, hence promising standardized deliverable outcomes are very difficult. There are gradual changes being encouraged at the higher education regulation body in Australia to create safer environments. Australian universities are executing to 'stamping out' sexual assaults by legislative changes and acquiring funding (McHugh, 2023). Many universities are considering making consent modules compulsory for students. The same sentiment is seen in NZ to make campuses safer for students however sexual violence is not readily addressed (McCall et al., 2023). The only university that has taken a whole of campus approach to sexual violence in New Zealand is University of Otago (Beres et al., 2019).

'Part of the course': sexual assaults on the rise in Universities in New Zealand

In a research study involving 2700 students at a NZ university, it was found that 36% of total respondents had experienced some form of sexual assault, with 41% of the respondents being women (Duff, 2019). Students often experience unwanted attention from classmates or other students in student bars or clubs which often results in non-consensual sexual coercion. Duff (2019), found that most attempted rapes were not reported due to the fear of labelling e.g. “slut”. However, when students did report incidents to services managers, they were either invalidated, dismissed or told to get over it, it happens.

While this study focussed primarily on sexual assaults, it does provide a window to question how many of these cases were a result of stalking? It was also unclear how many perpetrators were known to the victims or were they all strangers. Women are constantly being followed from clubs, bars, libraries, jogging tracks to their residences or friend’s houses. How many perpetrators were known to the victims or were they all strangers? There is no existing information about this. The capital Wellington, has a street pathway near Victoria University & Massey University close to Boyd Wilson field, nicknamed as ‘stalking/rape alley’ (Johnston, 2020). In recent times, there have been a handful of incidents including two sexual assaults that have resulted from young women walking back from central city to their university campus. Although authorities are aware of this situation, this Wellington ‘serial stalker’ (Johnston, 2018) remains at large. While both Australia and New Zealand are striving hard to make campuses safer, there is emphasis on sexual assaults than stalking and associated behaviours.

Why is the current study important?

There is a plethora of research and policies of dealing with associated behaviours like harassment and sexual violence however data on managing stalking on university campuses remains largely neglected in NZ. The current study wishes to examine how is stalking managed at a university in NZ. Recent research indicates that NZ university culture does not address

stalking formally nor does it take stalking reports within the university systems seriously (Mau, 2022). This study is a step to find out if staff within a university are aware of stalking and how to respond to it or report it. Acknowledging that stalking is a painful and often dangerous experience that has a lifetime impact on its victims, it is important to know how appropriate processes such as recognizing and reporting stalking are addressed.

Current research

The intent of conducting this research is to shed light on a sensitive area. The discomfort of disclosures and the systemic response of an organization are often combined as the biggest hurdles of stalking to not be taken seriously until it reaches a harassment or assault level (Gavey, 1991). The purpose of this research is to examine if university staff have an understanding to identify, assess, report and manage stalking as a behaviour of concern. The study focusses primarily on staff's understanding of stalking and its reporting procedures. The research intends to focus on three pivotal areas:

- a) **Prior understanding:** what do staff know of stalking? Do staff understand cyberstalking. What are the common signs to look for in Stalking behaviour. Getting information of any current or previous Harassment, violence and/or Assault complaints at the university that could have had any prior signs of stalking earlier.
- b) **Reporting:** If a stalking incident is reported, would staff know what to do and how to proceed? Do staff feel they have the appropriate resources, information to pass on the information to appropriate units if applicable. Are staff aware of how to escalate such matters to? Are there clear guidelines on security protocols? How are the reporting on incidents maintained?
- c) **Support and intervention:** services available to staff and/ or student post reporting a stalking incident. What are common responses of staff once made aware of a stalking

incident. Do staff know where to go to gain support or debrief. Are there any barriers to gaining access to supportive services for staff?

Methodology

This chapter entails information about the theoretical underpinnings and research methods used in this study including design, recruitment of participants, data collection techniques and analysis. Detailed insights into the research process including ethical considerations, selection of questions, reflective analysis are discussed.

Participants and Research Design

The aim of the research is to explore university staff's responses to stalking. This study focuses on staff's responses across the three campuses within Massey University. The inclusion criteria for the study involved permanent full-time staff employed for a minimum of one year. This could include academic and professional services. Temp/ contracted staff with employment contracts for less than one year were excluded as the duration of the contract would not be sufficient to provide the organizational understanding of dealing with sensitive matters including stalking. The selection of one year as a cut-off point was done based on introductory and on-going staff training and professional development that permanent staff are expected to perform annually. Experienced staff are more likely to know colleagues and teams, whom they can approach when encountered with unfamiliar student or staff situations. While this may not necessarily apply to all staff, engagement with staff networks are consistent among permanent staff.

Participant recruitment

The recruitment took place via internal staff communication portals across three campuses. This internal channel selected was campus-based email groups that are managed by campus administrators and are a reliable way of reaching staff. An email was sent out by various managers within professional services; following the organization chart and administrator

emails were sent to academic staff, for recruitment purposes. Staff interested in participating were asked to contact the researcher by email.

Eight staff members responded to the emails, see table 3.1 below for participation details. Participants were sent consent forms and an introductory call set up to explain purpose of the study. All participants were made aware of informed consent, confidentiality and were assured that their participation will remain anonymous. Finally, 8 staff were interviewed using a semi-structured format to encourage further conversations to supplement anticipated findings. Since the study, one staff has resigned.

Table 3.1
Participant information

| Participant | Gender | Department | Tenure at university |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Male | Student support | 5 years+ |
| 2 | Female | Student support | 6 years+ |
| 3 | Female | Residential Services | 5 years+ |
| 4 | Female | Student support | 2 years+ |
| 5 | Male | Academic | 6 years+ |
| 6 | Male | Academic | 5 years+ |
| 7 | Male | Operations | 3 years+ |
| 8 | Female | Student support | 4 years+ |

Ethical considerations

The study conducted was deemed low risk as per the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research involving Human Participants (ID- 4000026253). Before the Ethics

application was submitted, the researcher contacted an administrator on the committee for support around some risk questions as part of the application. The Ethics board advisor mentioned an important measure for the research to be deemed low or high risk was assessing if any part of the research posed anticipated risks or threats to a participant's wellbeing outside their everyday job profile. This risk classification factor was managed in two parts. First, the research questions were meant for staff around their experiences to manage stalking incidents within their professional capacity at the university which would have been reported to them or they would have been part of investigations/ complaints. Second, the research did not actively intend or aim to recruit participants who have been firsthand survivors of stalking. If the incidents or disclosures were a part of their professional roles at the university then their response would have been a part of their job profiles.

If the staff did not have any direct experience of managing stalking incidents on campus, then they would be asked if they have been a part of a team that has managed or responded to stalking incidents. If no experience at all then hypothetical questions about stalking and student incident management perspective was asked. Secondly, it was expected that most staff who would voluntarily participate in the research would either have an interest about policies and reporting or would have managed student/ staff cases related to stalking themselves as a part of their job at Massey. Dealing with any reports or incidents pertaining to stalking would be a part of their job profile. After discussion with the Ethics administrator, it was found that this study was not expected to cause unnecessary harm to participants as the questions would ask them about experiences within their professional capacity. Participants were offered access Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in the unlikely event that any distress occurred.

Before the interview, the participants were contacted to be made aware of informed consent, confidentiality and steps to withdraw should anything change during the study. There were no restrictions regarding withdrawal steps from the study including any restrictions of

time frames. Staff could withdraw from the study at any time and for reasons suitable for them. As the research interviewed internal, permanent employees, further emphasis was placed on confidentiality to ensure participants felt comfortable and confident to share their views. Participants names, job titles and departments were denoted by an alphanumeric code to protect their professional identity in all documentation. Participants were made fully aware that during the interview, if there was a current stalking case discussed, that could indicate any form of active risk either to a student or staff within the university, then the supervisor would be informed and steps would be taken to ensure appropriate support is provided to all people involved. All participants agreed and consented to all steps in the research. No questions or doubts were raised.

Data Collection

Staff were contacted prior and asked for a preference of an audio or video call, most staff preferred a video call and consented about recordings. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom as most staff across three campuses followed an office roster system to manage Covid-19 restrictions in 2022. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and categorized into raw data by noting down responses to interview questions. Some staff in the process, provided responses to follow up questions while responding to an individual question. In that case, questions were not repeated or duplicated.

Qualitative Approach: Thematic Analysis

A qualitative approach allows a deeper discovery of individual perceptions and learning in this area and the subjective experiences of human beings within sensitive situations (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The intent here is to uncover knowledge about individual's experience including thoughts and feelings while dealing with circumstances within the work environment and the processes that individuals may experience while making professional judgements of

reporting harmful behaviours. Qualitative research looks beyond the cause and effect and intends to induce learning and knowledge from human experiences (Nowell et al., 2017).

The current qualitative research is dependent on inductive reasoning processes to interpret and construct meanings within the existing dataset. Inductive reasoning will facilitate generation of ideas and correlating individual, social and organizational factors based on the information derived from the interviews (Thorne, 2000). A strong reason for utilizing the inductive method of analysis is to consider facts and be open to data interpretation that may not have been previously considered (Proudfoot, 2022). Inductive reasoning enhances the discovery of diverse perspectives, encourages participant observation, be open to generation of free flow data that creates robustness in qualitative research (Nel, 2020). As the current study wishes to explore participant's responses and experiences within stalking management, an inductive method is suitable.

A popular method of qualitative data analysis to inductively review and structure meanings from a data set by examining its patterns and themes is Thematic Analysis (TA) by (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.78) which consists of classifying, examining and reporting themes and patterns within the data, it would fit well to explore trends within the experiences of the participants at the university. TA enhances meanings out of textual data giving way to firsthand knowledge of the subjective experiences captured in the data (Roberts et al., 2019). By keeping the guidelines of TA in mind and ensuring that the data is handled in a structured manner, an organized and reliable analysis of the data is attainable (Nowell et al., 2017)

Data Analysis

TA supports the researcher to illustrate a complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). As TA provides data insights that can be adapted to participants responses without resorting to preconceived notions of existing theories, it provides an

inductive process to explore the differences and similarities across the participants interviews to discover the themes about stalking in a university context. Using Thematic Analysis allows rich interview accounts to be used to create descriptions of the phenomenon of interest, to theoretically interpret these descriptions for deeper underlying meanings (Alhojailan, 2012). The data analysis phases are followed as per guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2006). There are five essential steps in the TA process from raw data to defining themes. There are many software packages available to assist the TA process including coding and themes generation that are used extensively for research. After careful consideration, the current data was analyzed manually due to the small sample size of eight participants.

Phase one: getting familiar with the dataset.

The initial step of examining the data is to be familiar with it by reading it repeatedly. In the phase of data collection and transcribing the interviews, reading the responses for the first time made me aware of some outlines. Categorizing them into questions and responses, further added to more information and insights. The usual guidelines are to print off all responses and engage in a process of immersion where data is repeatedly read. I wanted to take some time to do this. Hence, I decided to create a Master sheet with all responses of 8 participants to the corresponding questions and grouped them together, to make a more meaningful and structured immersion process.

Phase two: generating codes.

Creating initial codes is phase two of analysis. The aim of coding is to review any features within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Reviewing the data again with coding in mind was an interesting practice, I added a few codes while reading the data again however wanted to be careful not to mix it up with any prospective themes. There was more emphasis given to recurrent patterns than isolated ones. Due to knowing about previous stalking research within university settings, most of which were U.S based, a conscious effort was made to

review the data impartially so deductive reasoning did not trickle in. There were a few codes developed from the readings, potentially 10 which were further organized based on their intent and meanings. Codes were developed into primary themes based on common factors that reflected the understanding of the concept within participant's responses.

Phase three: Formulating and reviewing themes.

Reviewing existing codes into prospective themes constituted as phase three. The aim of this step was to look beyond what the codes are trying to say and exercise a more exploratory lens on the coded data. It began with reviewing codes and categorizing similar codes together. There were some codes that seem to be consistent across the data set. At this stage, I focused on overarching themes and then formulated sub-themes. Bearing in mind that a theme essentially captures more information pertaining to the research purpose. After examining recurring themes that represent a bigger picture, I started naming the themes and reviewing how they fit in the whole dataset. After identifying the first round of themes, part of reviewing them was to create a checklist that would indicate if the themes are supporting the dataset, if they are too specific or too broad and checking if any missing perspective themes are being overlooked in the process.

Phase four: Defining and reporting themes.

As part of reviewing and defining themes, there is a continuous necessity to keep analysing them so accurate and relevant data can be captured. It is essential to not name the themes too vague yet not too narrow and the inductive process guided me; to distinguish correlated aspects of stalking into recognizing discrete steps that individuals take in recognizing and responding to them. There was a constant referring to review phases to be sure not to miss out on any information and be sure of the themes.

Following the guidelines in Clark & Braun (2022), if the data appropriately fits, then over analysing the themes should be avoided. The overarching themes seem to be easier to generate while the subthemes needed a longer reviewing process. There was an intentional effort to capture the data accurately while keeping the themes simple to retain the essence of the participants honest responses. Generation of subthemes was done based on the personalized responses of the participants that is observed in the similarity within responses. The recognition of subthemes was apparent from the coherence of responses and the underlying reasons leading the participant responses. Acknowledging the story the participants articulated through the data formed the essence of the arching themes and subthemes.

Reflections during the TA process

Codes and themes do not emerge on their own, it is the researcher that assigns meaning and associations to them based on the data (Brooks et al, 2014). Forming associations with the data is an inseparable part of the research and data analysis. Right from the step of asking questions at the interview stage, it becomes apparent that some patterns emerged. As good practice, one should aim remain unbiased during the data collection and analysis stage, however it is the ideal way.

In reality, I did find myself jumping ahead and trying to mentally create themes during preliminary stages, nevertheless I tried to be conscious of these thoughts and relied on the data to guide the codes. Once, the coding stage was over and generating themes stage was eminent, I did cross verify whether my thoughts are conditioning the themes or am I being guided by the data to identify the themes. This meant that I had to re-visit my thoughts and the thematizing process a few times, I had to get back to basic questions and what is the story within the data. Clarkson et al. (2023) postulates that while engaging in reflexive practice, a clinician who is employed in the field of current research has a tendency to develop strong feelings about the codes and themes within the dataset. To mitigate this, couple of ways that really helped to

remain objective was to write down my thoughts of the theme and leave it for some time and get support from my supervisor. I would re-visit the responses from the dataset and reflect on my thoughts and biases towards the earlier written theme or considering that the dataset is showing something that I was not earlier noticing. In that way, I relied on the responses leading the way and kept my thoughts and feelings in check.

A consistent thought and possible bias that I had to be aware of is my position within the organization and its impact on the data findings. Reflexive TA is regarded as subjective and places emphasis on self-awareness about any presumptions within the data due to the familiar nature of ways of working in an organization (Smith et al., 2023). I had to be judicious in my approach to ensure that I am not being swayed my presenting findings that will be socially desirable within the organization. Within the confinements of reflexive TA, the subjectivity of the researcher is deemed to benefit the knowledge generation and analytical process (Warner & Groarke, 2022). I wanted the data to hold its honest ground and not be swayed by professional pressures of any kind. Having the supervision support has assisted me to achieve that objectivity. Reviewing the themes repeatedly and visualizing them in the bigger research picture, did help maintain the objectivity of the data and the formulating of the themes.

Deciphering themes

While analysing the data, coding and formulating themes are a core part of the results in the study, an integral part of making sense of the data is exploring the reasons why participants construct their worldviews, that lead to the thought processes behind the responses. As the constructive view demonstrates that in sensitive matters regarding relationships, romance and stalking, our individual opinions are formed based on own experience's or we form them based on observational experiences in the social environment around us (Raskin,

2002). These constructs are frequently influenced by news and media as well, which further lead us into forming our attitudes towards individuals and behaviours.

A critical part of knowing the reasons why people think in a particular way about certain situations and their responses, enables researchers to dive deeper into factors that lead to individual differences in response, reporting and management of incidents like stalking within organizations. Constructive perspective enables the evaluation of the thoughts and perceptions that lead to the themes, can a researcher access qualitative markers that link internal thought processing together. The next section focuses on the responses among participants and their interpretations of the situation. Appraising the worldviews that participants apply from their experiences and knowledge that influences their decision making while faced with incidents or disclosures at hand, can provide us with anecdotal insights into the inner management of sensitive topics within institutions. While there is a range of research findings overseas that are correlate these variables, however the limitations with the current findings include the lack of New Zealand based research to represent these findings. To the best of my knowledge, the current research is the first within a tertiary education institution to examine the differences in understanding stalking management within an institution in NZ and evaluate the reasons correlating to them. The data analysis has shown in-depth understanding of the themes from a constructive lens, to better examine stalking and its components

Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from the dataset, categorized into themes. Themes are presented in two ways first, the introduction of the theme and the second includes statements from the interview transcripts that correspond to the associated theme. Information related to the themes like observations or comments are also included to give a clearer idea of the participant’s responses and to further understand them. Participant responses are noted as per their department and gender as it reinforces similar or different internal practices and dynamics within various business units. There were seven themes and five sub-themes analyzed.

Table 4.1:

Themes and sub-themes

| Themes | Sub-themes |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| What is stalking? | |
| Limited awareness of cyberstalking | Understanding stalking behaviours |
| Evaluating safety | Cultural and gender differences |
| The reporting loop | Staff members involved. |
| Where is the information? | Student support |
| Who gets involved? | Job security |
| Barriers to support | |

Each theme and sub-theme, consists of a brief breakdown and interpretation of participant responses from an evidence-based perspective. There is a personal experience of stalking included by a participant. This personal account is included within theme one identifying stalking, as the participant preferred to disclose their personal experience during the first question of stalking during the interview. As this lived experience is included in the earlier part of the chapter, it highlights noteworthy aspects of stalking from an individual perspective that address multifaceted complications with stalking including gender biases and reporting issues that are later discussed in the chapter.

1. Theme One: What is stalking?

This theme was about discovering the current understanding that participants have about stalking. The responses of the participants are likely to reflect their understanding based on prior knowledge, experience and present knowledge on stalking. Findings within this theme form the base of understanding stalking behaviours which include signs of stalking, participants being able to recognize behaviours that are associated with stalking. There are complexities within stalking behaviours discussed here including individual interpretations of stalking signs, the definition of stalking, in addition to who is more likely to stalk, stranger vs acquaintance? Participants responses within this theme and sub-theme highlight the use of terms like obsession, harassment and unwelcome attention in the context of stalking. Most participants have demonstrated having a basic understanding of behaviours representing stalking e.g. following someone, having a sense of control over another person and obsessive behaviour towards a particular person. Participants commented:

“People can become slightly obsessed with another person. That's like her quite a potent word that comes up for me. This undertone of obsession. people being followed and real life I guess is another thing that kind of comes to mind. I feel like my understanding of it there is like a sexual undertone, but I'm not entirely sure about that because I'm not an expert in it, but I guess

the examples that I've heard of just with my work is kind of has that undertone.” (Student Experience- female)

“It could be basically someone at campus being followed. E.g. one feels that someone is always appearing where that person is at the dining hall, library or it can happen off campus as well. It could be a staff member or a student. A student could be an ex and there could be lot of dramas. Usually, in my experience physical stalking happens in an old relationship, sees someone on campus and follow them around for no reason. Or the student just keeps following them around, keeps bugging them, keeps texting them and bringing them things and just annoys them.” (Estates-male)

Defining stalking is challenging and complicated in many ways. Participant responses indicated the complexities in understanding stalking, as the behaviours present themselves in various ways. A common factor in most responses is the phenomenon of being followed in different areas of the campus, as the first recognizing sign of stalking. One participant response comes close to understanding the full breadth of stalking covering power dynamics, cultural aspects, deliberate attempts and the experience being terrifying for the victim. It demonstrates that stalking is a deliberate act by a perpetrator and not an attention getting act from the recipient's end (Johnston, 2020).

There are some subjective differences in the understanding of stalkers noticed. Participants indicated that stalking could occur in both situations, where the victim is known previously to the stalker and in new situations where both parties don't know each other. This indicates that there is some understanding of behaviours associated with stalking perpetrators. Obsession and pursuit are consistently mentioned as synonymous with stalking within participant responses as shown below.

“Stalking is perhaps when a person has an unhealthy obsession with another person. They may have an unhealthy obsession with a group of people or department. Unwelcomed attention is another element that comes to mind. Unhealthy may be a subjective term so

obsessive may be a better description. I guess, even defining stalking can be very complicated and messy way.” (Student support- male)

“I understand different layers as it is a terrifying experience. For those being stalked, it removes all sense of freedom or safety. It affects a person’s self- belief. I could imagine that it is has something to do with power that it could be motivated by deep lying. Those who stalk others have issues between their ears, so to speak, or that it could also be part of maybe a cultural entitlement. People who are on the receiving end of stalking are made to bend to what is being demanded by the stalker. It is reasonably clear- it is somebody following someone else and it is deliberate. It is not romantic”. (Academic- male).

Spitzberg et al. (2014), explains a strong correlation between obsessive and intrusive behaviours that consist of stalking. Behaviours such as following a person stems often from relentless pursuit of intimacy with a person who has no interest in reciprocating intimacy. Sexual obsession and relentless pursuit comprise of dominant stalking tactics that aims to protect their person of affection by ensuring that other potential suitors are fended off (Duntley & Buss, 2010). Many studies confirm the findings in some of the extracts that identify sexual motivation and stalking prevalence impacting an individual’s mental health. Logan & Landhuis (2023), have found sexual assaults by stalkers are carried out to demonstrate controlling behaviour, jealousy and coercion that has damaging effects on the victim’s self and social identity perception.

1.1. Sub-theme one: understanding stalking behaviours

The sub-theme explains the variations within stalking behaviours and signs associated with stalking recognition. While trying to explain stalking behaviours, there is interchangeability with harassment and unwelcomed attention within some participant responses. Responses within this sub-theme illustrate aspects of stalking and explain it as unwanted attention or harassment. Responses include:

“In simple terms, stalking is unwanted harassment towards another person. It is specifically breaching privacy of someone within their personal space”. (Academic- male)

“In simple terms, behaviours that are considered like unwanted harassment towards another person. So specifically stalking would be breaching privacy of someone within their personal space. In physical space it becomes harassment like following someone repeatedly without their permission.” (Accommodation- female).

“Another type of stalking is, I wonder like things. For example, like if somebody if I notice someone is looking in my house or you know in the car or like maybe it's following me without like I don't know. Like let's say I'm on campus and I go to the cafeteria and notice that guy or like that person, or then I go to the lounge and I notice that person again. So kind of like unwanted attention.” (Student support- female)

Challenges in defining stalking

A common description of stalking was the breaching of someone’s privacy without consent. Studies imply that it is common for non-clinical professionals to consider stalking and harassment as similar. It is rare to have respondents be fully aware of the legal and operational definitions and working knowledge of stalking (Jones & Sheridan, 2009). This synonymizing of unwanted attention and stalking often results in stalking behaviours being mistaken for gestures or rekindling attempts that are grossly underestimated in their severity of stalking (Williams, 2024). Inadequate public knowledge of stalking remains rampant due to stalking behaviours coexisting with Harassment laws. The key difference between stalking and harassment from a legal perspective based on U.S legislation adheres to the impact on victims. Harassment charges including repeatedly bothering or annoying a person however the victim does not necessarily feel threatened for their own safety. Stalking charges are pressed when victims report credible threats relating to physical and/ or psychological harm to themselves and their families (Sharp, 2021).

Legislative difficulties with stalking in NZ

Major legal and social challenges exist within NZ due to the harassment and stalking exchangeability, as there are harassment laws in NZ but not stalking laws. The legal help is

available when evidence for harassment is met and it occurs at least on two separate occasions within a period of 12 months (www.govt.nz). If reported, a restraining order under ‘civil harassment’ can be obtained against the harasser, with a of validity of 1 year unless specified otherwise under The Harassment Act 1997 (www.legislation.govt.nz). Any breaching of restraining orders are managed under the Family Violence Act 2018 (Lenonetti, 2023). It is recommended that an applicant gets legal assistance while undergoing this process. Absence of stalking laws highlights a legislative gap in NZ as compared to other developed countries like US, UK, Australia and European countries that have criminal laws against stalking (Hampson, 2024).

Basic understanding of stalking

Most participants showed a basic understanding of behaviours that comprise of stalking. One response appropriately highlights the common occurrence of a stalking victim from an ex-partner. Another response discusses presence of ORIs as mentioned in the ICD model of stalking. Some key features however were not included in the responses, pertaining to the habitual and repeated nature of stalking and the threat of violence or fear of safety (Rosenfeld, 2004). Stalking is not a one-time event, the understanding of the frequency of stalking behaviours are lacking in the participant responses. The understanding of someone following another person on campus as a one-time event versus a habitual occurrence shows a gap within the knowledge of stalking. This distinction is important as university campuses are common spaces for students, staff and members from the public community as well, some responses vaguely suggest an active intent of following a person in multiple areas around the campus. Most responses allude to the common features of stalking prevalent in society i.e. physically following someone, invading privacy and not seeking permission for these behaviours. Responses do not indicate or differentiate habitual following from a one-time incident.

Recognizing stalking as a habitual behaviour

Frequently, it is the physical following that would be recognized as a first sign of a concerning behaviour that could further lead to either reporting of an incident or escalating it. Understanding that stalking is a habitual behaviour as opposed to a one-time behavior is relevant in the identification of stalking from a reporting and incident management perspective. If a student feels they are being followed around the campus in real time just once versus a student reporting that they are being followed constantly for a week; would be a critical piece of information within stalking recognition.

Moreover, it is significant for staff to dive deeper to ascertain if a disclosure or report coming from a student contains evidence of habitual stalking behaviours and if the student feels unsafe or if any intent to harm is detected. The absence of these critical information aspects is the differentiating factor between harassment and stalking. There is only one response that explicitly addresses stalking as a deliberate act by a perpetrator and not an attention getting act from the recipient's end (Johnston, 2020). Equally, the frequency and safety aspects of stalking behaviours are not mentioned within the participant responses, underlining the gaps in understanding stalking.

Personal experience of a participant described in brief (Academic male)

“Sadly, I have been at the receiving end of stalking and it has been the most horrifying experience of my life. First problem is that people do not believe that men can get stalked. It was not a male fantasy but a very sinister experience, not at all romantic in anyway. I guess the only upside is that as a man, you do not have to physically feel unsafe if you think of being attacked by a woman. It was a cyberstalking case and it was really difficult for IT to take me seriously, as their solution was deleting or blocking the emails. The only time IT took me seriously was when I printed 48 emails in 48 hours, it raised the escalation levels. My line manager supported me in filing a police complaint and post that there has been more staff and security support around. I always have the reference number of my police complaint and

the protection order within arm's reach, just in case I need it. I do not ever wish for anyone else to go through with this experience. I think you also need that the psychological support because stalking comes with high social and psychological costs, and it doesn't matter if you're male, female. I did a lot of research while experiencing the stalking episode and all the reports say exactly the same thing irrespective of gender, everyday functioning gets impaired and the fear itself on a day-to-day basis is debilitating. Symptoms. That's the anxiety, the depression, the lack of sleep. You know, all the things that sort of get in the way of functioning."

Summary of the participant's experience

It can be seen how incredibly distressing this experience has been for the participant. As per his personal account, recognizing that men can be stalked was the initial problem. It was only when the participant reached a heightened responsive state and took active and evidential steps, internal teams worked together to support them. This experience highlights the multiple layers of complexity faced by victims of stalking from an institutional, social, cultural and gender-based viewpoint.

2. Theme two: limited awareness of cyberstalking

The understanding of cyberstalking is discussed within this theme. The responses about cyberstalking are studied to gain a better understanding of participant's knowledge on signs and behaviours associated with cyberstalking. Unlike a physical environment, cyberstalking consists of online evidence of following with an intent to harm, on various virtual platforms which is not easily distinguishable. Most participant responses indicated limited knowledge about cyberstalking and had to be prompted. Nearly all participants made references to keeping a track of someone on social media platforms or looking up someone's information without their knowledge as cyberstalking. Responses included:

"Cyberstalking may have a target and maybe they look up their Facebook contacts or they look up social media or Google their name and more information online. Any attempt contact

through those various media or through email addresses using the information they found online and using those methods to initiate contact with that person.” (Student support-male).

Participants noted permission and social media profile settings to manage privacy controls but also acknowledged that if any information is on a public platform, there are limits to the restrictions that an individual can manage. As shared:

“I guess with online it's really different because there are no boundaries online like there are everyone's information is just all over the place, especially if you're having a public profile on Instagram so. It's kind of like what would actually be stalking and what would just be having a look at someone's profile. Like I I'm not really sure what the boundaries are around that. But I guess kind of like constant messaging and that sort of thing could be classed as it.” (Student experience- female).

“I don't know. You know, like when you hear, for example, you know, somebody stalk me on Facebook, it is a bit, it could be like a joke. But basically, what I understand is that Someone else is looking at information about you probably without your consent. In a way, however, I I'm also, you know, acutely aware that public profile is a public profile, hence the information that you have made public. That's available to anyone who might want to stalk, and then the stalker. I guess they usually would have the access to this information unless they send the friend request and then go a bit deeper. But again, we need to be careful what information we make available and what permissions to give.” (Student experience- female)

Persistent messaging and sharing of intimate photos online were referred as cyberstalking. One participant stated:

“Cyberstalking could be someone bombarding someone with messages. Intimate photos being shared around and all that.” (Estates- male).

As examined within the responses of stalking earlier, the frequency of stalking behaviours i.e. a one-time event versus a habitual, frequent behaviour and the fear for safety aspect that victims experience were similarly missing from participant responses in their understanding of cyberstalking. These findings concur with that showed that the general public typically lacks adequate information in the conceptual recognition of cyberstalking (Kaur et al.,

2021); and often interchange cyberstalking for cyberbullying and cyberharassing (Bryant, 2012). Lack of awareness of cyberstalking poses safety concerns, as university students tend to dismiss harmful online behaviour as harmless or cope with any concerning incidents by blocking the perpetrator's accounts. This paucity in understanding cyberstalking shows that students do not get the support until a threatening incident occurs (Paullet & Chawdhry, 2020).

Harmful Digital Communications Act in NZ

Equivalent to the analysis of stalking legislation, currently NZ does not have any cyberstalking laws under the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 (Act) (www.legislation.govt.nz), cyberbullying and online harassment feature under the Act. An individual can apply for a Harmful Digital Communications order if they are impacted. The court deals with assessing breaches based on the 10 communication principles mentioned in the Act. On the contrary, unauthorized posting of intimate photos and recordings is charged with a criminal offence under the Act, if a person is found guilty they can be fined up to \$50,000 or sentenced to a maximum of two years in prison (www.justice.govt.nz). There is scarcity of NZ based research to suggest if the Act is fit for purpose in the cyberstalking space. However, a handful of studies conducted in the field of intimate partner violence indicates that the Harmful Digital Communications Act of 2015 and the Harassment Act 1997 do not provide the adequate safety required for the victims of digital domestic violence (King, 2017).

The initial part of the current research focussed on assessing prior knowledge or understanding of stalking among participants. The responses show that participants have a clear understanding of stalking from a physical following of an individual part. There is limited awareness of cyberstalking observed. The frequency of the stalking behaviours and the risk to individual aspects were largely missing from the data. Reviewing recent studies and government resources additionally indicate that there is widespread lack of awareness about

stalking within NZ and recent Covid-19 lockdowns in NZ have increased cyberstalking and stalking victimization (Bracewell et al., 2020).

3. Theme three: Evaluating safety.

This theme explores participants to think about their experience in managing stalking incidents directly or indirectly within their tenure at the university in addition to assessing their current responses if students approached them in real time reporting or disclosing a stalking experience/ incident. Responses within this theme shows how participants initially respond to a disclosure, this includes information gathering, asking further questions and determining next steps of response. Cultural and gender differences are mentioned as a sub-theme within the evaluation of safety as participant responses strongly indicate their responses consider demographics as a factor for consideration leading to response steps. The aim of this part of the research is exploring the responses and steps that staff may take once an incident is highlighted. Participants responded:

“So, I would check for immediate safety. That would be my first thing and then if there was some immediate danger, I would get someone else involved straight away. I would ask some more contextual questions, so like what was actually going on for them? What were the behaviours they were experiencing? Did they know the person was a student? What areas, what times? Those kinds of things just to get like a better understanding and then probably make a decision from there. But for me, just especially in my role like I would get someone else involved, I would refer that on. (Student Experience- female).

“I would take the information in the most sensitive manner that I can. Ask them if they are doing ok? I would ask if a support person is needed. I would be happy to bring another colleague of the same gender as the reportee, if need be. If it is a student concerned, they pay a lot of money to be here and if they have experienced a traumatic incident. We have to put the student in the forefront rather than holding a banal argument. So, I would tell them about trust and I how I can foster it, what I can or cannot do. I would make my notes and inform my boss. I would in a way try to protect the person who has come to me, if I know the nature of the disclosure may be compromised.” (Academic- male).

“As soon as we get a call, it is usually from a person who is being stalked or their manager/ department head. We assess as we talk to that person by asking questions. E.g. do you feel threatened, has the person been coming onto campus. Or they are impacted online and see how much of it ticks the boxes. Then we get to a safety plan. So, we have safety plans that we put in place for that person. We also have a risk team that gets involved and we get the police in it too. Especially if it is a cyber stalking case, we need to know if there is anything we can do.” (Estates-male).

Participants described that while trying to respond to a potential stalking disclosure or an incident; they are more likely to check immediate safety for the individual reporting. A sense of evaluating immediate risks and checking for safety before taking any responsive steps is consistent among all eight participant’s responses.

“I would probably ask for evidence. I would like to know how serious it is so that I know whom I can contact. Because if it is unwanted attention of any kind then I would not want it sitting on my hands. I would like to do something but I would need the evidence first. I would ask a whole lot of questions, wanting to know if it is infatuation versus stalking. Has someone approaches the person, talks to them saying that I am interested and if they go away.” (Student Experience-female).

Gathering evidence and assessing for safety once a disclosure comes through is done by asking direct questions and being aware of safety concerns by almost all participants. Responses strongly indicate that most staff will address immediate safety concerns e.g. asking if an individual believes that they are currently being followed or ask direct questions like ‘Do they feel safe’; before deciding on next course of action.

“I think I would go to my manager and ask if there is a policy, this would be my initial response. I would be empathetic and ensure I am listening to them. If I don’t have an answer, I would go and find it and then approach them with what I know.” (Student support- male).

“It has to be a multipronged approach. One is to get officials involved. And another thing I do encourage people have been stalked or aren't going through stalking as is, at least get their friends to start accumulating evidence, because if you want to make a police complaint. You need a very thick folder of evidence to back it up, you can't just waltz up to the Police

Department and say someone is being mean to me. Unsure if other staff will take this seriously, I know I will definitely take a complaint of their stalking very seriously. I would get the university involved as they can offer protection or alternatives e.g. if you do not want to come on campus then what are other options. Then I will take the matters to my line manager.” (Academic- male).

Some staff accept that they may not be in the best professional position or feel confident as a part of their job to ask direct questions, they are willing to involve a colleague who may be better at assessing immediate safety needs. Escalating the disclosures to their line managers is consistent. There is a sense of collaborative approach taken by staff by going that additional step of ensuring safety is not taken lightly. A mutual feeling of professional obligation can be noticed in responses, which show participants invest conscious efforts to prioritize the safety of the person who is potentially experiencing stalking. The participants would feel comfortable concluding the conversation only when the person reporting is feeling that they feel heard and safe post reporting or disclosing after the fact. These findings are further explained in a study conducted in NZ by Austin et al. (2019), explaining that health professionals often undertake mutual helpful behaviours while dealing with critical incidents. The supportive behaviour is intrinsically interpreted to be expected out of them. These helpful behaviours are driven by inherent interconnectedness within an organization.

“I would get as much information as I can get. Assess if the person was known to them, are they a student? I would get a safety plan in place as we need to manage the incident/ report. I would need to ensure the person reporting can safely move around campus.”
(Accommodation- female).

Two responses from different units mention putting a safety plan together as soon as a disclosure comes through, indicating that these units are structured and informed in managing incidents that warrant an immediate safety plan and appropriate escalations to managers. Bonnan-White et al. (2015) has highlighted supportive responses from the first person who receives a distressing disclosure, is positively associated with improved trauma response and

recovery. This means that the victim reporting a matter is more likely to feel positively supported through an overwhelming situation if the first person they talk to has reassuring and non-judgmental. There is a clear understanding within the participants to evaluate safety by asking relevant and direct questions and communicate the next course of action, creating a supportive atmosphere for sensitive disclosures. Andalibi & Forte (2018), demonstrate that when people disclose sensitive and potentially stigmatizing information, the responder's naïve inquiry based on gathering more information and asking questions proves to be positively reinforcing for victims to disclose their experiences in a supportive and empathetic manner.

3.1 Sub-theme: Cultural and gender differences

Participants mentioned when a stalking incident comes to their attention as part of their evaluation of safety, many differences regarding culture and gender were highlighted. This suggests that the demographics of the person disclosing stalking would often determine the approach a responder may take in each situation. This approach might depend on the cultural background and the gender of the person disclosing stalking and the gender and culture of the person perpetuating the stalking. These demographics may influence the response of the staff member to whom the stalking matter is reported. Cultural and gender differences are also discussed from a reporting perspective here and complexities of reporting are discussed later in the chapter.

Most participants agreed that there were underlying differences in a stalking disclosure that would further determine the subsequent supportive steps they would take. Participant responses reflect research findings that indicate a correlation between the cultural, ethnic, gender and racial backgrounds of responders and disclosers that influences response management of deviant behaviours (Moore, 2024). The reason, why culture and gender are integrated together than independently are due to their coexistence in the responses of the participants. Most

responses did not separate the person from their culture or gender but brought them together as factors that may influence responses to stalking situations.

“While reporting stalking especially being Māori is difficult, I think it comes with the effects of colonization in a way. I think talking about stalking may be more open and less stigmatizing than sexual harm. I am sure stalking happens to men. I just imagined men doing it the most, but that's probably just my lens. So yeah, I'm not sure. Not sure about the reporting for if men had experienced it. There would be some stigma around men reporting stalking incidents versus women reporting. Yes, I think so, yeah. Just because me- I think men are meant to be tough and mean to be able to protect themselves physically, maybe even take it as a compliment” (Student Experience- female).

“I do think females especially foreigners may come with shame attached, so don't know if they would feel comfortable reporting incidents. If the stalking is staff to student, then the student might feel that authority pressure so don't know. But I wonder, if it is a female stalking a male. Perhaps, there will be shame angle to the male wanting to report. Because a male is expected to man-up, it is all fine. The university environment is primarily a female environment. Chances are in most office spaces, there is probably no male in your department. If your manager is not the same gender as you then it would be different too.” (Student Experience- female).

“It is shocking that in many countries, women are considered as property. Data does tell us that women from different backgrounds are unlikely to speak up”. (Academic- male)

As the university environment is a hub for young people who often venture out of their home environments for the very first time, it is possible that some students and staff may be less aware of socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This may be true especially if someone has attended a single gendered school and comes into a mixed university environment, which may be a first-time experience for them.

Staying consistent with cross cultural research, participants did feel that victims from non-western backgrounds are less likely to recognize and report stalking (Chan, 2022). Acknowledging these differences are an essential part of the stalking management experience

as it would entail the reasons and the obstacles that individuals might consider while reporting and escalating stalking on campus. An institutional fact to be considered is that the current university has a high number of international students enrolled and recruits staff from diverse backgrounds, hence there is a greater probability of current participants to be more aware of culture and gender differences and its impact within an organization's ecosystem.

"Primarily, 99% of the time only women are stalked. I have experienced just 1 male instance so far". (Estates- male).

"It is going to sound terrible but I do think that social influences especially movies often portray that a women's no is not a NO and they have to persevere or keep at it. However, I feel personality of a person matters as well. For me, sometimes it is that somebody sees a relationship as unfinished or something that could be is just the other person doesn't see it, and if only they could help them see it. So, the person who is stalking, may feel that they are doing something right. For instance, in my personal life I know of a woman who is stalking her ex- boyfriend and feels that – "only if he can see that we could be so great together and I would be so good for him and that we would have a good relationship and be happy". Where from the outside, I could see that she needs to just leave, accept the reality and move on. This is not healthy." (Student Experience- female).

"I do think females are more likely to be victims of stalking while males are perpetrators so to speak. However, if it was the other way around. It would be very difficult for a man to come forward based on assumptions, social expectations and basically it is a pride issue. However, from a social acceptance view it may take longer to take a male complainant seriously. There are unconscious biases at play, I am sure." (Accommodation- female).

"Just guessing really, stalking tends to be male perpetrator led whereas females are if the word is still used- victims. However, it is not necessary as a while ago, I recall a student (female) who was stalking her lecturer and was almost at the point of turning up at his door in Palmerston North. So, I think it can be an issue with whoever received unwelcome attention. Hope that they know that there is support available and there should not be any shame to report or respond to it." (Student Support- male).

Harmless perceptions towards female perpetrators

Participant response touch upon the ‘myth of innocence’ (Denov, 2010) referring to the paradox existing with female perpetrators indicating the common perceptions of females being considered as passive and harmless in societal views. The study shows extensive analysis within family violence that underrecognizes and underestimates women’s aggressive behaviours socially and legally. Stalking research addressing female led perpetrators is restricted within NZ however data from other countries suggest that female stalkers tend to operate frequently within occupational settings and have an increased risk of perpetuating violence (Carabellese et al., 2012).

Variations in stalking perceptions based on gender are acknowledged within legal environments as well. Differences are reported among jurors in cases; in stalking and/ or sexually motivated crimes, female defendants are treated with more leniency than male defendants. Female jurors are more punitive as compared to their male counterparts if the defendant is male (Meaux et al., 2018). Male stalkers are more likely to be severely persecuted than female stalkers (Yamawaki et al., 2020). Hence, studies do imply that there are gender differences in the perception of stalking, which is consistent with the participant responses in the current study.

“I would take the information in the most sensitive manner that I can. Ask them if they are doing ok? I would ask if a support person were needed. I would be happy to bring another colleague of the same gender as the reportee, if need be. If it is a student concerned, they pay a lot of money to be here and if they have experienced a traumatic incident. We have to put the student in the forefront rather than holding a banal argument. So, I would tell them about trust and I how I can foster it, what I can or cannot do. I would make my notes and inform my boss. I would in a way try to protect the person who has come to me, if I know the nature of the disclosure may be compromised”. (Academic- male).

Some of the responses do not address the process involved in stalking but highlight the complications of demographics within the stalking context. A responder's background if matched as similar with the background of the person disclosing, they are likely to understand the social and contextual cues of the stalking behaviour (Brochet et al., 2019). For instance, barriers may reduce and support options may be culturally matched if Asian female responder is dealing with an Asian female victim or if appropriate reporting and supportive measures are available to LGBTQ+ communities (Zane & Ku, 2014). Present findings reflect that the participants are also sensitive to the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds and are likely to identify limitations that specific populations may bring in such sensitive cases.

Gender roles in reporting sensitive matters

There is a high prevalence of stalking in women, perpetuated by men however data indicates that female stalkers exist (Dietz & Martin, 2007). Gender differences and shame associations have been highlighted in the interview process. Factors such as shame and pride were talked about, in context of potential male victims of stalking. Participant responses have uniquely identified issues that could face male victims and their social consequences. In one such response, the participant has highlighted how an education institution set up being predominantly female, would itself present as a barrier to reporting a matter for a male stalking victim. Due to scarcity of NZ based research, it is not possible to validate if one gender dominated presence in a workplace presents to be a barrier for disclosing and reporting sensitive matters if the victim belongs to an opposite gender. However, global research strongly links gender differences as reasons for under reporting of sensitive matters and associates it with victim blaming too (Schoellkopf, 2012).

Gender stereotypes in harmful behaviours.

Current responses indicate views of hegemonic masculinity and femininity within gender theory models, highlighting patriarchal societies and its impact on gender inequality (Jewkes et al., 2015). Masculinity traditionally defined as behaviours by men expressed through dominance, independence, competitiveness, stoicism, aggression and other 'harmful' behaviours (De Boise, 2019). Masculine identities are reflected and maintained by socioeconomic standing, regional cultures and neighborhood dynamics (Wedgwood, 2009). Hegemonic masculinities are associated with power relations within workplaces that further influence workplace cultures (Stergiou-Kita et al., 2017). These masculine power dynamics tend to stay dominant in western and eastern societies. Toxic masculinity is strongly correlated with violence against women (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015).

To understand toxic masculinity and power relations within patriarchal societies, a feminist approach is often adopted to interpret the behaviours of men (Pitt & Fox, 2012). While feminist approaches historically focus on equality and cause-effect relationships of gender and society (Ferguson, 2017), current trends within radical feminism tend to describe female oppression by blaming patriarchal oppression and resorting to man hating, blaming and shaming approaches (Guy-Evans, 2024). From an increasing social media influenced feminist perspective, the 'harmful' behavioural traits associated with traditional masculinity like independence, aggression, stoicism, competitiveness are paradoxically perceived as 'desirable' within feminine context (Prakash et al, 2010).

From a stalking perspective, if a man is stalking, he is a monster and if a woman is stalking, she would have a reason (Frazer & Hutchings, 2019). Understanding gender differences are highly complex in nature, however in general society, misinterpretations of both masculine and feminist approaches are popularly driven by social media channels. While

gender theories intend to explain and understand gender roles and stereotypes; gender constructionism leads to the isolation of attributes associated with masculine and feminine populations (Jule, 2014); further leading to gender inequalities (Waling, 2019). In the current society, social understanding of gender perspectives and equality still have extensive work to be done.

Males are expected to man-up

These findings echo numerous research studies that conclusively show that men are less likely if not unlikely to report stalking due to shame, the fear of not being taken seriously, being dismissed or not believed (Patrick, 2021). The findings strongly reflect the existing literature, that men are less likely to feel as a victim and less probable to seek any help or support. Men are expected to put up a macho-brave face, there is a lot of judgement if men are on the receiving end of stalking, as highlighted by Patrick (2021). Social conditioning forms as a precursor to reporting difficulties, as men are expected to enjoy the attention that could potentially lead to a sexual encounter. Such subtle nuances, although not discussed openly but are acknowledged in a few studies in legal and crime research (Sable et al., 2006). Cases reported against female perpetrators by men are less likely to be persecuted and are likely to get resolved in half the time as compared to male perpetrators (Maran et al., 2020).

4. Theme four: The reporting loop

An essential part of the study revolves around the area of reporting within the university with stalking. As with any internal matters at the university, there are many layers of processes and procedures that need to be kept in mind along with health and safety, operations and reputational matters. This theme explores reporting and procedural steps to manage a stalking incident. It is established that the student is being stalked what would happen next from a reporting and process perspective? There are staff's case management steps included in cases

they have individually managed in the past or currently. How would an incident get reported and if once an incident is reported, would the staff hear anything back if an escalation occurs. Would the staff manage incidents themselves or their line managers would manage it. Additionally, staff were also asked if their individual reporting procedure would be different if they found out that the alleged perpetrator is a staff member? Out of eight participants, five have had some direct or indirect dealings with stalking incidents or related incidents at Massey.

“Yes, I am aware of incidents that have occurred and how they have been managed. I have witnessed the case management myself and noticed colleagues around change. I am aware of an academic staff member who would befriend young students and take them under their wing. Later, power games, gaslighting, abuse of their roles was exercised. By the time it went to the big bosses, I don’t know what happened and I do not think it was resolved. It did go on for several years. It was all corridor conversations”. (Academic- male).

“Yes, I have managed a couple of cases mainly by an ex. A staff member worked on campus and their ex keeps coming onto campus and sometimes the perpetrator involved is a staff member and we cannot trespass them. So, we work with both parties along with all managers involved to ascertain the best outcomes according to a plan”. We manage thorough records of everything and share it internally for security and operational reasons. (Estates- male).

“I am aware of a student who used to target young women and then later started targeting new female staff members in a similar manner. There were a few incidents that would raise a flag however nobody did anything first. Eventually a manager managed the case and part of the recommendation was for the student to continue his studies online. I remember thinking to myself, how is an online environment going to change his behaviour? I do not know what happened after that, but I identified that as a policy gap”. (Student support- male).

Current findings indicate that the point after which the stalking management becomes problematic stems from the reporting process onwards. Consistent with the NZ based research by MacManus & Mau (2019), the current results show that there are irregularities with management of incident reports. Findings from their study potentially shows gaps within NZ universities that underline insufficient reporting systems and unclear policies. The responses from the interviews show similar findings, starting from the initial steps of whom to report matters to within the organization varies and there are noticeable differences in approaches are taken by staff members alongside who else gets involved in the process.

“Under the current system, I don’t know what to do. I think I will talk to my manager first and hopefully they will be able to guide me accordingly. Perhaps, my manager could put this on CRM. But first I would speak to my manager.” (Student experience- female).

“Talk about reporting, in the past, there was one main contact person, a friendly face and they would put all the steps in order as it was within their scope. For now, I am unsure if there is any practice like that. I am sure that there is some system that is coming into place. In my experience there have been a few cases and reporting is a challenge. 3 years ago, a PhD student went on an introductory trip. International students and a fellow PhD student who was very forward, making the girl very uncomfortable. Some cultural differences, some misunderstandings and the female student was terrified of coming onto campus. Nothing was done about it. Another colleague of mine today has raised something of another student who had to move desks and office spaces. This is again a concern that there are multiple cases raised but nobody knows anything whether your own department or another one. We hear things in the corridor but nothing is discussed, talked about. This makes it uncomfortable for colleagues also to share experiences. It would be good to have clarity around all this. This week itself there were two cases in discussion and we don’t know if the stalker is the same person or different.” (Academic- male).

Participant responses within reporting discuss multifaceted challenges that highlight power dynamics within organizations, unclear reporting structures and lack of adequate support within case management of incidents. The only business unit that comparatively has structured processes and clear internal communication is the Estates unit. One of the reasons for this

variance could be that security guards are usually the first responders on campus-based incidents. Security and operations staff are trained to manage and respond to critical incidents, follow operational protocols differently than academic and support services within the university. Whereas responses from other units reflect how reporting and managing of stalking disclosures and incidents are not supported.

Business responsibility

Studies on stalking and cyberstalking talk about ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (Al-Khateeb et al., 2017) that highlight organizations responsibility to implement systems and policies that encourage reporting and intervention of stalking incidents for supportive outcomes for employees. Clear policies and guidelines with incident management encourage victims to not only report incidents but positively reinforce trauma recovery by harnessing social cohesion and peer support intervention (Richins et al, 2020). Despite this, many organizations are often critiqued for underreporting of critical incidents due to ambiguous policies, having male dominated organizational structures and incorporating unempathetic responses to female employees reporting their concerns (Lauwo, 2016). Feeling guilty, ashamed, not being taken seriously, feeling unsupported and having poor response rate from services are common experiences of stalking victims while reporting physical or cyber stalking incidents of stalking to police, rescue services and lawyers (Taylor-Dunn et al, 2018). Incorporating responsible practices within the organization is an entire organization approach and not one department led initiative.

Referring to the personal experience of stalking described by a male participant and the trends observed within the themes, The prevalence of a cyberstalking incident, consisted of all the barriers presented in stalking experiences of male participants. The participant was stalked online by a person unknown to them. The experience was a horrifying ordeal and the relevant departments did not take the initial complaints seriously and offered temporary solutions to no

avail. The stalking recipient had reached a saturation point and decided to take evidential action before the I.T teams took the matter seriously and they got support from their manager to file a police complaint. Once, the official complaint was filed, the management and the I.T teams put online and offline safety measures in place for the impacted participant including a safety response plan. Being aware of the gender and cultural biases along with the unclarity in organizational response, leads to the complexities within reporting procedures. If any complaints are not actioned appropriately, it becomes a reporting failure.

Living in fear everyday: a survivor's life

In the transcripts, the participant has mentioned how this incident transformed their life for the three years that the stalking actively occurred and continues to impact their life till date. The participant felt a sense of panic every time they were out of their house, almost crippling their personal and social life. They were not sure if the stalker is watching them while they were out in a cafe or in a lecture room with 200 students. Logging on to access emails was a major trigger and there was a constant fear of receiving another email. There is no getting away from emails in the workplace, the participant remained in the heightened state of trauma for a long time. The participant clearly stated that he never experienced any remote feelings of a romantic chase or being happy with the attention that he got.

It did take them a substantial amount of time and multiple sources of support to feeling that they are gaining control of their life. The participant encouraged any potential victims to be fact-based and evidence led with their experience towards reporting process either to managers or authorities and be mindful that there are no short cuts to deal with this experience. Currently, almost a decade after the stalking experience; the participant maintains a bare minimum social media and online presence and continues to be vigilant about their online activities. As lived experiences of stalking are prevalent, it is the business, ethical and social

responsibility of the organization to plan and implement reporting structures that can support individuals impacted. This ethical obligation should be recognized at an organizational level in all businesses in NZ.

4.1. Sub-theme: Knowing that the student is doing OK.

A supplementary step to reporting or escalating an incident or matter to either a manager or a responder within the university; is also knowing what has happened post the escalation. The reason why this step plays a key role, is inculcating trust and robustness in the process from the perspective of a reporting staff escalating the incident (Hautz et al., 2017). If the staff reporting feels that they have been updated about the incident they raised, it would give them a sense of progress and step in the right direction as opposed to escalating incidents and never hearing about them again. This is specifically important within staff who have student facing roles. Participants have mentioned the association of student support and moral responsibility strongly during the interviews. A student can approach a staff and disclose a stalking related matter. Perhaps, the staff thought it is best to raise it with their manager and the disclosure has been investigated. If the student approaches the same staff who has zero idea of the process, the internal reporting and escalation procedure appears to be disconnected.

Open and safe communication

Participants responses about student support are regarding transparency, not content of the procedures involving the student. It is vital to distinguish here that updating the original referrer does not mean disclosing sensitive or confidential matters to them but something as basic as the case is in hand, making progress and the student has support options available. This level of communication creates openness and trust within the organizational protocols and the people involved (Lamooji & Koster, 2016). Furthermore, when internal stakeholders are assured of reporting protocols and trust the system, they are more likely to report observations

and incidents. The opposite impact can happen if the reporting staff feel that their escalations are not heard or go into an institutional black hole (Rahnavard, 2020). In this theme, staff mentioned about their expectations of getting updates post an escalation, if they would get a report or update back once the stalking incident or disclosure is away from their hands.

“In my role, it would be helpful but it would not be my expectation especially if the matters relate to sexual harm. So, I would feel that my job is to respond and refer and the specialists can handle the matter. But I also know it can feel like you are left in the dark and maybe you need closure around the situation, as we may face the student again”. (Student experience- female).

“I would hope to hear some update back but not a report as such. It could just be a simple, we are working on it but I would at least like to know that the student is being looked after”. (Student experience- female).

“Yes, we do constantly have to get updates, as plans will change if the situation changes. E.g. it would not be an earlier part of the plan to trespass/ban someone from campus. But if the situation changes then we need to either escalate further or de-escalate. Perhaps get other units involved like university chaplains or community constable”. (Estates- male).

“In my experience, I have received updates directly after incidents affecting me. Post an incident, a manager had come in to ensure that all staff and other students were doing alright and I think this is a very important step even from a student’s perspective, it shows that university cares and this is how university has responded to a difficult incident. I am aware that there have also been incidents that I have not been made aware of, however it is useful to know what the response has been”. (Academic- male).

“No, I do not want to get any updates. I have no emotional connection to this person; I am just someone they confided in. I do not want to hear anything back. I would let the experts handle it”. (Academic- male).

Genuine student care

The participants felt that their primary goal of knowing any status update about a report or incident is to purely know if the student is doing alright and that their concerns are addressed. Knowing what has happened post a student’s concern has been documented and referred on internally is a significant part of the reporting and responding pipeline. Based on the responses, it can be expected that most staff do not want to know details of the investigative process however would like to be kept informed about if the student feels supported and the matter is managed appropriately.

Trusting the escalation process and management

In addition, the current research has shown that most staff have a clear understanding of their professional roles within the university. Participants trust the management of the process when the incident management lies outside their professional remit, implying a strong sense of professional boundaries exercised while dealing with student matters. Participants would ideally like to know that the student has been heard and offered support to and the student’s concerns have been addressed and their wellbeing is supported without any privacy or confidentiality breach. Being left out or not being informed of the final outcome part of the report, does make the participants feel like the student and the staff involved were not adequately supported, if they had to face the student again.

There are some participants that feel that once they have escalated an incident or reported to their manager, they would not like to know anything about the process however most participants would like to have the minimum information of student support. At no point

do any participants like to know about any confidential or sensitive information. All 8 participants are unanimous in their response of, not knowing about the reporting procedures or being privy to information from the incident managers/ other departments involved. Their intention is to purely know the student is offered appropriate support internally within the institution or externally within the community. Not having this information would possibly make the staff doubt the reporting process. This further leads to having apprehensions in reporting subsequent incidents or disclosures as the staff, simply do not know whether the student is getting the support they need or not.

4.2. Sub-theme: What if it was a staff member?

This theme unpacks participant responses when asked about their experience or if they received a disclosure that involved a staff member perpetuating stalking. Participants indicated that if a stalking incident involved a staff member as a perpetrator, they would follow standard procedure, indicating a strong ethical standpoint. Participants commented:

“I am a very very small cog in a big wheel, but it should not make a difference even if it’s a CEO, its not right. I would report this to my manager especially if the person who is the victims is a student or a colleague. If somebody is feeling unsafe at work, it should be taken seriously”. (Student experience- female).

“We have experienced that couple of times before involving staff members. Because we cannot trespass a staff member. We had to get the head of school involved. So we try and negotiate a plan that is agreed by both parties e.g. who can use the parking spaces or shared spaces and when. Of course, if both parties are staff then often the HOD or DVC office get involved and it does become an HR issue. Our team does not get involved with HR issues but we provide a safety plan”. (Estates- male).

“My immediate thoughts are like it doesn’t matter who it is. You would still be looking at immediate safety and put measures in place to make sure the person is safe. So even if it was a staff member perpetuating the behaviour and it was severe, we would get emergency services involved. So, it would not matter who did it. I would probably address it as a complaint against the staff member to my manager. Because my role is very much around the safety of the student. Hence, the management can deal with the staff”. (Accommodation-female).

Preliminary exploration of the current theme implies that contrary to research, almost all participants would report the matter to their manager. Participants denote that a person’s title or staff status should not be put in a privileged or powerful position which will make it easy for them to target others. A deep moral sense of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at a workplace is consistently observed across all the responses irrespective of the staff status. Moral obligation is intricately linked with ethical practice within workplaces that proves to be a great catalyst in professional relationships (Omar et al., 2012). A couple of participants were abreast with recent news in NZ that highlighted sexual misconduct cases within universities that were not reported. The media headlines caused uproar from students and public which evidenced that for years, these universities knew about the incidents and threats to student’s safety however chose not to respond effectively (Russell, 2020). The participants showed a clear understanding of media and news reactions questioning the reputation of the universities when sensitive matters were not managed well.

Power dynamics and work culture

Organizational studies establish a strong correlation between individual silence and power dynamics of managers or people employed in positions of authority (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Individual silence within organizations stems from a combination of cognitive, emotional and behavioural response to managers and work culture. In organizations where

dominance is maintained by the distribution of power within the top tier of employees, the individuals at lower levels recognize that speaking up is unsafe and ineffective (Hinds et al., 2015). Internal power dynamics have a considerable impact on organizational policies and workflow that influence reporting and operating procedures. Often, distribution of authority within powerful titles within the organization leads to either compliance or resistance from internal stakeholders (Safavi & Omidvar, 2016).

5. Theme five: where is the information?

This theme focusses on accessibility of information in response to an incident. Some of the key factors within the responses highlight whether staff know where to get information about reporting an incident or management. Also noting if there is consistency in the participant responses about where to find processes and policy information. Once a stalking or related incident is highlighted, reported and/ or escalated the subsequent stage is to know what the next procedural steps are. In an organization, any process is not set in stone and information gets updated regularly or changed to meet policies or evolving legislative requirements. However, core operation protocols are expected to stay standard within the organization (Catena et al., 2019).

A common finding in the theme is that staff often feel puzzled about where to find relevant information at a critical time. E.g. if a student walks in their office and thinks they are being stalked. Who would be the best person to talk to at that time? Staff have confirmed that they have been through many operational changes within their job roles which often mean that many a times, the plan of action is not ready and they do not know where to find it or how to get one. Participants indicated that operational changes do not necessarily lead to changes in training, relevant documentation and easy availability of these.

Subliminal perceptions in reporting decisions

Participants during the interview have considered factors like days of the week and semester break times, as variations in the reporting process. For instance, a busy working day like Tuesday will have more staff around to contact and call as opposed to a day during semester break or 5 PM on a Friday. In addition to scheduling structures, if the staff earlier responsible for such cases has resigned/ made redundant and replacement staff are not available, the process becomes far more difficult. Changing operational structures are relevant to consider, as subliminal perceptions within staff could lead to similar situations being reported to different sources (Merikle, 2000).

Often, that could determine how same or different the next intervention steps would be. These perceptions are further crucial if the information regarding policies or procedures are not readily available when needed. While these are important steps, the variations stated in the interviews have not been included here, as those are secondary steps in the responding pipeline and is reviewed in the discussion chapter. There is emphasis placed on the first step which is how do staff determine, what happens next in the chain of events when an escalation is warranted.

“Sometime ago, we had a one pager with traffic lights. It was simple and made sense, so easy to refer to and know what to do in a challenging situation, now I wonder where to go for the information?. Information finding is a barrier as there is not much clarity. With everything being online now, I think staff can find it very challenging to find anything. There are so many changes that are not really communicated e.g. I don’t know what the current structure of student’s associations is. If you have a student advocate or a potential women’s representative, back in the days there was a functional student association and it was easily available. Students would gather around and share stuff and not have to deal with the invisible construction of the university.” (Student support- male).

“It would depend on context but I know there was a sexual harassment group on campus so I would even talk to them. I do think finding out where to find someone takes time. Roughly, I would try to start looking. It is a big institution and everything on the website is so confusing but perhaps I could go straight to counselling.” (Academic- male).

“The website is a maze, finding any information on the site is really like finding your way through a maze”. (Academic- male).

Accessing information in time of need

It has been noticed that staff’s responses depending on their tenure of their role fluctuates between directly contacting a known person to looking up information online and not being able to locate appropriate details on the website. The consistent message in this theme is that staff find themselves in difficult situations while trying to manage a complex case and not exactly knowing the correct or appropriate pathway to access an updated institutional response plan. As time has passed and older diaries, paper posters have now given way to web based forms and changing URL links. It is apparent that accessing information creates uncertainty among staff and possibly students as well.

Table 1.2. in chapter 1 provided evidence that universities across NZ do not necessarily have precise information if a student went on the university website and searched by the keyword stalking, demonstrating lack of data on a primary source of information. It does prompt the question about how precise internal information is provided on staff intranet if a quick search is done, which can prompt responsive steps. Current responses from participants indicates that it is difficult to find precise information as a staff member about particular matters like stalking and its management.

Professional remits in response management of disclosures

Within the university context, it is essential to put an organizational structure to staff's profiles, namely if staff are academic, professional or service levels. Professional experience and training often determine how staff are likely to respond to a stalking incident. Often, if incidents occur on campus, they are more likely to be noticed by operations staff or campus security. This is due to their job profiles of campus security teams that keep them engaged in campus monitoring, more than other staff. Campus operations teams which include security, are responsible to respond to incidents once alerted, sometimes making them the first responders on campus. As part of their risk assessment and plan, security teams often have on-call number that students or staff can call if they feel unsafe.

In many countries like U.S, universities and colleges have campus police which is not the case in NZ (Davis, 2022). In NZ, universities tend to contract security agencies who employ trained professionals to provide a safety service to the institution. These campus security teams are critical in operational part of the response management that can provide a safety net for anyone experiencing potential distress or threat on campus. Campus security teams response management includes setting up safety plans, providing a campus guide, duress alarms and in severe threat levels, trespassing individuals from campus. Trespassing individuals from campus is a common practice followed by most universities once staff are aware of individual threats.

Working collectively for student safety outcomes

Like any other organization, any reports of concerning incidents must be escalated to managers who take appropriate actions and involve other staff or units if necessary. This can include involving community constables, police, lawyers, correction officers within NZ context. Often, this can be more difficult operationally. E.g. if a student has a protection order against another student and both are enrolled in the same course and have same classes on

campus. It does present its set of challenges for staff to ensure student safety. In such cases, multiple teams work together parallelly to ensure student and staff safety. While security teams can make safety plans, communicating these to academic and professional units is equally important. Often, teaching staff need to be supported to ensure contact between two individuals is minimized on an everyday basis. Campus operations teams can ensure that students are assigned different car parks and academic staff can establish that students are not placed in the same group for projects. If the same concerns are regarding staff members, the same approach will follow with Human Resources (HR) teams being involved.

Unclear views from the glass ceiling: Moral Accountability & organizational transparency

Absence or lack of clear processes and guidelines leads to ambiguity in management of sensitive disclosures and gaps in reporting processes (Liff & Ward, 2002). If managers and organizations in general, spend less time and resources on training and development of human resources into risk management, an employee's orientation into current practices are determined by workarounds they have developed through trial-and-error methods (Belal & Cooper, 2011). If employees are not provided essential information about clear expectations about managing sensitive situations and escalation processes, the moral accountability of management and the organization is challenged from the stakeholder perspective (Williams & Adams, 2013). Ambiguity in information finding, lack of clarity in processes can habitually lead to lack of motivation, decrease in moral and ethical integrity within employees in professional practice within student care environments (LaSala, 2009).

6. Theme six: who gets involved?

This theme mentions different approaches taken by individual participants when the need for escalation is identified. The reporting theme highlights individual differences within processes and procedures accessibility. The responses noted here are important to review variations within escalations. Understanding the differences within these decision-making steps

from a staff's perspective is crucial to better understand how various staff can get involved in sensitive disclosures. After evaluating safety concerns, the escalation process converges to reporting through several internal escalation points. Participant responses show slight variations from this step onwards. Some opt to involve emergency services if there is imminent risk and then inform relevant staff within the university whereas others feel comfortable with another colleague who may have student support options within the job roles. Reporting to line manager as first point of call has been raised however not in all cases. Reviewing patterns of the themes until this step, it feels that most participants rely on trust and individual preferences to seek support with handling a disclosure/ incident. It is worth noting that escalation point onwards is where individual differences in responding to a potential stalking case start emerging.

“I feel very comfortable approaching the Asst Managers of xxx department, as I know they will have a better idea of dealing with stalking related bits, I may just let my manager know as an fyi but not to action”. (Student experience- female).

“If there is immediate danger, I will call police right away”. (Student experience- female).

“I will inform my line manager, as I feel an escalation is the right step and I feel I don't have the right skill set to be dealing with incidents/ reports of this nature”. (Student experience- female).

Based on the responses, some staff would feel confident to approach the police directly whereas some may escalate to their line manager. Some may escalate to a person more familiar to them or has demonstrated competency in managing a risk related incident although they may not be within their reporting line or even the same business unit. Unlike previous stages in the process, this particular step demonstrates that trust potentially would be a deciding factor of a response step.

“We fill in a form and get the ball rolling so we have a trail of events, in case something goes wrong and ask the person (being stalked) to let their manager and department know”. (Estates- male).

“Anything to do with student safety, I would report immediately and I would initially go to my and determine the correct line of reporting. I don’t think there is one but we could follow up and determine whom to best contact and whom to go to and in all likelihood, it would land up on a senior manager’s desk at some point.” (Academic- male).

“It would depend on the incident. If it was an online behaviour with threatening content as opposed to just suspicions of being stalked. If it was a physical behaviour then escalating things would be a lot quicker to ensure they are safe straight away. If it was very severe, I would involve police immediately as there is risk involved.” (Accommodation- female).

Responses indicate a combination of getting line managers, other managers that a person may feel comfortable with and depending on the severity of the risk, police or campus security would be contacted. There is a differentiation between physical and cyber stalking mentioned that would lead to an appropriate manager or team to be contacted. The responses imply that staff are likely to take an individual process approach rather than a centralized approach guided by the organization’s operational structure. There is reliance on managers to case manage or handle a critical incident, while the responder may just refer on. As managers are expected to case manage from end to end. It would be worth identifying manager’s perspective of current reporting procedures and its management.

A professional mosaic in incident management

One of the key areas to understand the differences in managing incidents could be the professional profiles of the participants. Staff employed in social sciences, humanities roles are more likely to be abreast with knowledge of concerning behaviours and would understand handling incidents even when their job profiles may not include responding to incidents of stalking. University staff hailing from STEM profiles (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), are more likely to need training in recognizing and management of complex matters (Genkova & Schreiber, 2022) such as stalking. Academic staff in social sciences like professors, tutors, administrators who are qualified in mental health fields and as campuses

have medical centres as well, doctors, nurses, counsellors and psychologists are more likely to be in a position to respond effectively in a stalking incident.

Acknowledging differences among staff including their professional profiles, trainings, previous experiences dealing with incidents presents crucial insights into how they are likely to respond in stalking situations. Examining individual and professional differences can offer the internal worldview that is underestimated in decision making while responding to incidents. This is essentially the first step in unfolding differences in responses within a university context, as it is clear that some staff and units are more likely to be actively engaged to support the student while others may need training to do so.

It may not be surprising that certain staff and/ or units may not know how to manage stalking disclosures or may think that it is not a part of their job; essentially suggesting that; they have not received the training to do so. While education institutions like schools and universities do struggle with incorporating trauma sensitive practices within their environments (Ackels, 2022); there is a gradual acknowledgement and shift in thinking about integrating trauma informed practices within the organizational response structures (Banyard et al., 2017). The need for these changes in the future is relevant as the most susceptible group impacted by trauma exposures i.e. young people, who are typically enrolled within education institutions (Stephens, 2020).

Learning and decision making within organizations

Decision making at an employee and organizational level happens at a parallel but not connected ways. Learning and expressing knowledge in various ways i.e. behaving, occurs distinctly at an individual and organizational level (Payler, 2008). It is vital to recognize how learning and knowledge through work experience transpires between an individual (employee) and an organization. So, one can understand the intertwining patterns of decision making that

occurs between the two levels. Formation of a worldview for individuals is complex, relying on self-learning, creating meanings through interactions, knowledge assimilation (Jaeger & Lauritzen, 1992) and making decisions based on the learning experience. Frequently, humans make emotion-dependent meaning and decision making to life experiences and create their self-awareness about whom to trust and how to manage incidents in a professional environment (De La Sienna Servin Ee, et al, 2017).

Incident management at an administrative level versus a management level

In an organization, the executive functions of decision making often falls on the employees at the lowest level of administrative hierarchy (Herbert, 2013); for instance, emergencies are handled by front line staff and not hospital managers. Choo (1996) posits that organizations utilize learning and decision making strategically based on a few critical factors; creating knowledge, providing meaning to events and actions, assessing its internal environment including change management and making decisions based on projected outcomes for the organization. Sociocultural factors heavily influence knowledge construction and worldviews at an individual and organizational level (Linn & Burbules, 1994). Understanding the interconnection of these information processing factors that coherently exist between employees and organizations, could further provide awareness into how learning and decision making is often disconnected within the two levels (Akbar, 2003).

7. Theme seven: Barriers to support

Participant responses within this theme showcases their feedback in feeling supported through a difficult case reporting matter or incident management. Participant's understanding of organizational support included clarity in knowing processes to feel supported with incident reporting and management. Participants have highlighted their sense of support within their professional remit as well as self-identified barriers that obstruct them feeling comfortable and

supported through a disclosure management. A sub-theme of job security has been highlighted as a crucial factor within barriers to support. The concluding part of the interview probed participants to reflect on thinking about any barriers that exist for them while accessing support services within the university. There were a variety of responses for this part. Some participants felt that they have supportive managers and some responses indicated inadequate support from their managers. Responses included:

“I feel like I have been at Massey long enough to feel comfortable to approach people in different departments. However, if a person is new to the organization then potentially they could have barriers to either access support for themselves or have barriers to report incidents. As new staff members may not even know who or how to approach the situation. I had to help a colleague recently with a complex situation as he is new and he was not comfortable approaching others. His manager gave no directions and left him to it. I sensed he had some shame in asking for help”. (Student experience- female).

Training and orientation were mentioned as a problematic area, as new staff were often not trained in responding areas that provided them with clarity on processes. Tenure within a role or within the organization is highlighted, suggesting that experienced employees are aware and comfortable to know whom to approach. This internal knowledge may not be available to a new employee especially if their line manager does not state clear expectations, as mentioned in the response.

I have very strong support from my management and feel very confident. However, I feel some teams get more recognition doing the same escalation work that we do too. We do not get support for professional development, supervision etc as compared to other teams”. (Accommodation- female).

While other participants felt fully supported but they did not always have the opportunity to develop their skills further. Other participants mentioned that some barriers are ingrained as systemic processes and are unlikely to change. These responses varied from gender

dynamics to cultural factors within the university. These individual responses were based on lived experiences or observational accounts of information. Participants stated:

“Being a woman within the university environment is not always easy”. (Student experience-female).

“If you belong to a certain ethnicity, you are more likely to be taken either seriously or lightly, as compared to someone generic like me. That becomes a problem”. (Academic- male).

Professional disparities and individual autonomy

Complex institutional factors were discussed openly. These aspects could be viewed from a subjective and an objective lens. Participants felt comfortable enough to share real concerns that bothered them which otherwise are not usually given a safe space to escalate. On the other hand, a hierarchical structure of a university was described, making it difficult for a staff to navigate support services and juggle privacy and confidentiality simultaneously. Hierarchical structures within organizations tend to have maximum impact on an individual’s autonomy and job performance (Vredenburg & Brender, 1998). As noted in the responses, gender and cultural factors play a vital role in individual perception of barriers to support.

Professional inequalities

Participants conveyed a professional obligation of picking up additional tasks in order to help and support a colleague if their managers are not clear in communication or setting expectations right. This further leads to role ambiguity (Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). Participants feel that as nobody is able to assist or support them or a colleague in a difficult situation, then it may be up to them to help. If staff are faced with information distortion and inadequate training (Junge et al., 2023), they are unlikely to achieve success with any task at hand, especially managing a demanding one such as stalking. Simultaneously, barriers to accessing support can be attributed to professional dissatisfaction due to funding issues, lack of

professional recognition, lack of opportunities. These professional inequalities could be directly tied with motivation and performance. Such underlying thoughts could also be associated with either managing cases within one's unit or referring them to other units who are perceived to be better resourced or get better recognition.

Role of temporal and spatial flexibility

Another factor to be considered in the new ways of working post Covid-19, is the effect of temporal and spatial flexibility on helping behaviours within an organization (Hoeven & Zoonen, 2020). As remote and flexible working becomes commonplace than before, employees tend to work in isolation and exercise independence within their roles as compared to having more collaborative approaches in pre-covid time. The hybrid working models do inhibit the flexibility of discussing complex matters with teams and colleagues in an office environment. The impact of virtual working and isolation can be noticed more among female workers than male (Peters et al., 2009).

Working independently may be advantageous for experienced employees, it may be counterproductive to newer employees who would otherwise benefit from having the physical presence of their teams in office and make communication with reporting matters simpler (Sardeshmuk et al., 2012). Combined with looming organizational restructuring and redundancies means that staff who earlier managed critical matters within the university may possibly no longer be in service and the newer staff have minimum training on reporting matters, particularly with policies and procedures or experience fear of reprisal for reporting (Song et al., 2021).

7.1. Sub-theme: Job security

A startling factor that was highlighted as an underlying factor corresponding to barriers to accessing support in complex situations; is the correlation of reporting a sensitive matter and

job security. Participants felt that if they report anything or against someone then it may lead to undesirable effects which may directly impact their job. Participants stated that:

“There are power dynamics at play and we all know it. Systems work against us, there are only reputational matters of interest not humane matters. Of course, the reputation of a university is very important and I totally support that however, how does one achieve reputation when you put people at the bottom of the power ladder. So things are not linear.” (Academic- male).

“Nobody likes to ruffle feathers; at the end of the day we all want a job in hand. Some people will never say anything, because nobody wants to rock the boat. Everyone wants a job in hand. Sometimes people will not say anything because their job is precious and their team is precious. Job security is certainly a barrier and we are a very small university community.” (Student experience- female).

Perceived risk and support benefit analysis

The responses in this theme suggest that it is better to let things go than to report them sometimes. A combination of these intricate thoughts involving job and financial security along with other factors could possibly be influencing aspects to decision making in the participant's choice of reporting versus not to pursuing anything. Participants felt that they would have ideally liked to respond and support students in most situations that they have experienced. Working at an organization and acknowledging its internal dynamics, often means that the decision of helping versus inaction along with its perceived consequences may possibly determine the intervention and management. This is not because the intent to support or help does not exist on the contrary, the perceived risk outweighs the supportive benefit during the decision-making process (Mather, 2006); based on some participant responses.

While this may not be a general rule applying to all employees but based on the participant's responses there is an association between job security and avoiding any

undesirable reporting matters. Observing these co-dependent factors closely indicates a link between work culture, employee motivation to either make autonomous decisions or engage in passive inaction (Manzoni & Barwoux, 1998). Studies imply that job insecurities adversely affect performance and health and job quality impacting not just an individual employee but the overall work environment while job security tends to mitigate those detrimental effects (Green, 2020). This finding does not imply that prior to Covid-19, reporting of sensitive matters were seamless but prompts to consider if there is a causal relationship between job security and reporting/ escalation of matters.

Impact of organizational restructure on employee morale

Job security was an unexpected finding as there is little data explicitly establishing a correlation between job security and underreporting of sensitive matters like stalking within education institutions. As with any work environment, basic factors often have the highest impact. In the light of Covid and global recession between 2020- 2024, many universities in New Zealand have reported substantial financial losses that has resulted in budget cuts creating organizational restructuring and redundancies. Many NZ Universities and tertiary educational institutions have reported losses up to \$300 million and job cuts impacting about 400-600 people per university (Campbell. 2020). Unemployment and recession go hand in hand which has the highest impact on employee morale (Swift, 2023).

Survivor syndrome

An extensive study done at the University of Otago about the impact of restructure demonstrates significant evidence of a chance process that employees experiences after a considerable restructuring/ downsizing which includes survivor syndrome. A term used to describe staff who survived the restructuring and experience symptoms like financial insecurity, professional fear, guilt, isolation and lack of organizational commitment (Theissen,

2004). As staff fear losing their jobs and financial security, they are likely to go work harder and keep any disruptions to the minimum. Amidst threats of chronic job insecurities and unemployment, staff are more likely to stick to their core jobs, this may imply that highly stressful staff are less likely to recognize or 'pick up' noticeable concerns, may not feel motivated to report or manage them and would not like to interrupt usual workflow (Kirui, 2011).

Discussion

Given the scarcity of NZ based data about universities not reporting sensitive matters and in the absence of such data, the purpose of conducting this research was to explore staff's understanding of managing stalking on campus. There were three key areas of focus, first – to understand staff's prior awareness of stalking, second to explore reporting aspects of stalking within a university and finally to know if staff feel they have enough support and guidance while responding to stalking. This chapter provides qualitative insights into the themes that have emerged from the dataset and explore how they stand with existing research. An in-depth understanding of university ecosystem and how it impacts staff and students are further explored. Certain limitations of the study will be reviewed along with scope for future research in this area.

Pinchevsky (2021) found that college and university campuses are most impacted by interpersonal violence involving stalking, date rape and sexual assaults. This study showed that, most universities tend to increase their personnel resources for educating and creating awareness about rape prevention, substance use and sexual harm. However, regardless of the number of incidents reported, scanty resources are appointed to manage reported incidents. At the onset, the system is set up for receiving inflow of incidents or reports when they occur but no or little attention is paid to effectively managing them once those reports come through. Furthermore, there are bare minimum staff assigned to manage policies and procedures pertaining to stalking, sexual violence and rape. Pinchevsky (2021) highlights a significant response-management gap within educational institution's managing sensitive incidents and reporting structures that causes a chain reaction.

Campuses have a large number of young and vulnerable population that are likely to find themselves in a party culture (Harris & Harper, 2014). The university party culture that

traditionally begins with Toga parties (Tierney, 2008) perpetuates drinking behaviours, use of recreational drugs and engagement in peer pressured sexual activities (Waterman et al., 2020; McCabe et al., 2019). For many young people, this is their first ever experience away from their families. Frequently, the fulfilment of social acceptance becomes more significant than outweighing the risks involved (Harris & Schmalz, 2016). When those party experiences turn sour, universities are not necessarily set up to efficiently manage these incidents well from reporting to resolution.

According to some NZ based media findings, most staff do not officially address or report any campus issues including stalking incidents internally within universities (Harris, 2022). Incidents are raised and managed but there is limited to no information on how they are managed. This is not indicative of universities intentionally not wanting to respond to such issues but highlights that there are systemic barriers that exist within institutions that limit their response capacity to campus incidents. Overall, there is insufficient research to explain why such incidents do not get reported or address any internal organizational reasons that correspond to the under reporting. The current study intended to discover some underlying factors that could better explain this phenomenon within a NZ university.

Participants demonstrate working knowledge of stalking and assessment.

Overall, the current study has found that participating staff at Massey University have a functional understanding of stalking, assessing any immediate risks and are prompt in escalating concerns to line management. Although there are some constraints in defining and understanding stalking completely; the participants demonstrated working knowledge of stalking and its impact on students. The study has found that the area in which stalking becomes problematic to manage in reporting and procedural areas. This includes the early steps of whom to report matters to and knowing how the matter is managed internally. Lastly, participants have discussed the barriers that play a role for them to access support services. While these

barriers may not exist in their team or management, they do occur within the university system. The data reveals that staff are more likely to involve colleagues if they are unsure of how to manage sensitive situations and are more likely to help a stalking victim rather than remain passive. There was a strong sense of moral and professional duty towards student care.

Stalking in a physical environment is better recognized than cyberstalking.

Findings indicate that the participants in the study have some limitations in understanding stalking behaviours and its ripple effects within an educational institution. A common finding was that some participants were clear in their understanding and definition of stalking whereas some staff had vague explanation between stalking and harassment. Consistent with existing studies, it is difficult for most people to understand and define stalking in comparison with harassment (Ireland et al., 2018). Defining cyberstalking was especially difficult for most participants. Out of 8 participants, 7 of them responded to cyberstalking as following or looking up someone's social media profile without their consent or without being their friend on that digital platform. The intent to harm and fear for safety features within cyberstalking were largely missed. Responses within the current study data highlights that understanding and defining stalking in a physical environment is better recognized and would have an appropriate intervention and response as compared to cyberstalking. Moreover, there is a need recognized for increasing awareness and training to better promote understanding, reporting and managing cyberstalking.

Who is likely to stalk: acquaintances versus strangers?

Responses do indicate a combination of who their idea of an alleged perpetrator or stalker could be. Staff who have directly managed a stalking incident have a strong inclination towards a known person like an ex-partner perpetuating stalking. This is based on their professional and personal experience of being directly or indirectly involved in those cases.

Rest of the participants in their responses do indicate a likelihood of stranger's presence in stalking. Most participating staff in their professional capacity did not directly manage a stalking related incident. They have been involved in conversations or disclosures which were later escalated to appropriate professionals to manage. The referrals were due to either, their job roles not including incident management portfolios or knowing of stalking incidents happening to a third party within the university, which gave them the knowledge of the incidents but not have an active presence in managing of the case.

Corridor conversations

Some responses have indicated that in the past there have been stalking related incidents or behaviours managed where staff knew what was happening but there was no communication around it. These incidents were believed to occur in the past few years before specialized managers integrated case management into professional services. One of the biggest concerns highlighted within these corridor conversations were that staff would hear colleagues talk about cases in secrecy and the information would sound similar to existing incidents however there was no way of knowing if everyone was discussing the same case or a different one.

The second issue with not knowing, was that if there was one person perpetuating the same behaviour with other students/ staff, there would be no way of identifying the one person responsible for multiple concerns/ incidents. From a reporting perspective, as processes were managed by a few people behind closed doors, even when a case was reported there was no follow up or update provided to staff who often face the same student or staff on an everyday basis. In conclusion, corridor conversations often led to disconnecting of dots in reporting and case management which if succinctly structured could have been managed in a safe and transparent manner.

Men and women view and respond to stalking differently.

At the outset, the study has found that defining stalking within the participant responses differ among male and female participants. Female participants have used generic associated terms such as obsession, consent, unwanted attention and harassment whereas male participants have used illustrative and action-oriented terms like following someone, being targeted and malicious intent. Research indicates that men and women differ in their perceptions and understandings of stalking (Lambert et al, 2013) independent of previous stalking experience. Women may tend to express concerns by talking to someone about stalking behaviours while men are less likely to report stalking until the behaviours are intrusive and intense (Villacampa & Pujols, 2019).

Differences in demographics such as gender, culture, and social class were found to influence participants reporting on stalking. Nearly 50% of the participants in the current study mentioned differences such as sex, ethnicity, duration within current roles as dominant factors that impact how reporting matters are responded to. Demographics and their differences are an entangled and complicated matter for society and institutions to address and manage nonetheless, they play a vital role in decision making within reporting and overall incident management.

Cultural differences in stalking perceptions

There are also cultural differences in how stalking is viewed. There may be cultural variations around viewing stalking as minor intrusive behaviour and not as a harmful act (Caputo, 2013). Extensive cross-cultural studies by Sheridan et al (2015) infer that individuals from countries scoring lower on individualism scales like Asian and African countries tend to report only severe incidents e.g. forced sexual contact or being spied on but not report mild intrusions e.g. constant texts. On the contrary, individuals from countries scoring higher on individualism scales like European and Nordic countries are more likely to report minor

intrusions e.g. being asked for dates repeatedly. Such studies highlight a key difference in individualistic societies like European countries and collectivist countries like India or China. Social and cultural conditioning plays a vital role in how stalking behaviours are viewed. There are differences that exist amongst collectivist cultures too. Research indicates that men and women from Ghana and Hong Kong are more likely to judge intrusive behaviours on the stalking spectrum compared to their Chinese counterparts (Chan., 2022). These findings indicate that many cultures today have a tendency to view stalking as minor intrusive behaviour and not as a harmful act. These findings validate that victims of stalking frequently do not recognize the initial signs of stalking unless a threatening incident occurs.

Organizational agility (Mukerjee, 2014)

Agility refers to the ability to plan, learn, adapt and be future-oriented (Ulrich & Yeung, 2019). Historically, universities were designed to meet academic needs of individuals and society (Star & Hammer, 2008). The integration of academic and professional services have undergone a transformative process in the last three decades (Radinger-Peer, 2018). Universities are expected to be genuine to their core principles of educating and training young minds to become responsible citizens of society (Arnone, 1998). In the same breath, modern universities are also simultaneously expected to integrate a corporate mindset, become profitable organizations, have competitive strategies, achieve business goals and recruit students through Instagram (Rivera-Rogel et al., 2018). These contradictory social and internal organizational demands can often create numerous fundamental conflicts to the essence of the institution (Laws & Fiedler, 2012).

Limited resources but unlimited expectations

The separation of internal services within universities like medical centres, student associations, student support from its academic operations were traditionally inculcated to

ensure every department is set up to work effectively, within the scope of its competencies (Ahmadvand et al., 2011). However, the same specialized competency-based methods of operation are constantly criticized for not being student centric due to their lack of integrated care (Biswakarma et al., 2021). Students may have strong views about not compromising their privacy yet may also expect that the university should be aware of issues they face and move to resolve them promptly (Abualrub & Stensaker, 2017), with limited to no reciprocal relationships (Byrd et al., 2021). These potentially contradictory beliefs can create a burden on the system to meet those competing expectations (Boulton & Lucas, 2011).

The impact of neoliberal globalization on universities creates a dichotomy of intending to create either perfect institutions or flawed ones (Currie, 2017). In the current economic climate, as student enrolments decrease, university fundings diminish and institutions are left to manage multiple physical and online campuses with reduced university operations and staff (Jongbloed, 2015). Increasingly, student culture is similarly evolving, students tend to take the role of consumers who want to attain degrees from the comfort of their own rooms yet expect universities to flawlessly uphold policies and procedures when things go unplanned (Rolfe, 2010). Adding to this, the global pandemic of Covid-19 has adversely impacted education institutions across the world.

The current study therefore recognizes the traditional hierarchical framework of universities that may have been unhelpful to students. The study further acknowledges the business and ethical responsibilities of universities towards its internal stakeholders and to society. Present findings suggest that changes in reporting, procedures and policy matters are complex undertakings for any institution. Internal policy changes involve time, process and human resource intensive practices that often rely on the mutual partnerships with external bodies and changing governments. Sustainable social and institutional change require a two-way collaboration whereby public and institutions are codependent.

Local universities expected to solve global problems?

Universities are frequently expected to adapt, innovate, technologically advance and be at the frontier of change management more so during unprecedented times (Groenwald, 2018). Procedural amendments to core university related tasks like fees, enrolments and academic conduct are vastly different from protocols that impact student and staff health and wellbeing like stalking. Substantial global social issues like stalking and sexual harm impact student populations the most however these issues additionally need institutional sensitivity in tandem with criminal and legal frameworks, where all elements are inter-dependent.

The original thoughts of conducting this research was influenced by numerous studies and news articles that stated universities in NZ do not handle reporting and management of sensitive incidents like stalking and sexual harm. The present study has indicated complex layers of social and student problems that exist worldwide along with institutional challenges to meet those needs. Through this research journey, a novice suggestion encourages stakeholders to speculate if local universities should be expected to manage global problems.

Post discussion reflections.

At the onset of examining the data, a reliable practice for a researcher is recognizing that participants can subconsciously choose to answer with socially desirable responses i.e. what the interviewer would like to hear (Anderson, 2010). Apart from the verbal responses, the structure of participant responses, reactions, emotions and nonverbal responses were acknowledged as part of the data findings. Interviewing on video conferencing platforms presented a set of challenges including building rapport and connecting in-person however, as covid-19 restrictions within offices were observed in most workplaces in NZ, the online option was the most viable at that time. Engaging in reflective practices does not end as the data

analysis concludes. It is important to mention that at the last leg of the research, the attachment of the data and everything with it is still an active process.

While the results and data analysis chapter focused on presentation of the facts, the reflections at that stage was to ensure that objectivity with the data is maintained. While writing the discussion chapter, as a researcher I felt the dichotomy of wearing an objective researcher hat as well as the subjective, empathetic employee hat. Taking a deep dive into the research discussions prompted me to think about how difficult it is for an employee to get management of sensitive cases and reporting them done appropriately. It is not enough just to have a supportive approach to complex issues. From a systems perspective, all operational factors are mutually dependent for smoother functioning within an institution.

I had to be additionally cautious about keeping my individual ideas and organization barriers away from the facts that are presented. I had to consciously engage in an exploratory analysis rather than a defensive one. It felt difficult to present facts and not think about the individuals who bring their professional expertise to their roles or defend the participants and portray the 'system' as being the negative factor. Acknowledging these thoughts did help in separating the facts presented from my own views as a researcher and an employee. These reflective exercises are crucial in the analysis journey from a humane perspective.

Limitations of the study

The study was conducted to know about staff's management of stalking on campus. Several reported news report unprofessional behaviors at many NZ universities are unreported. One of the intentions of the study was to assess the preparedness of staff to handle one of the trickiest parts of the stalking i.e. managing it from assessment to referral. This is the first study conducted on staff at a NZ based university; as a novel attempt to discover about stalking within universities, there are factors within the study that are limited in their scope. Few limitations of

the study include a larger representative sample, presence of gender and cultural factors within the study. Impact of professional profiles on the management of stalking, representation of other units within the university, reputational correlation of the university and restricted understanding of cyberstalking.

Cyberstalking

The understanding and recognizing of cyberstalking was sparse. Most staff provided mixed messages about cyberstalking; frequently understanding it as ‘following’ people’s activities on social media platforms. However, most participants also felt that just keeping a tab on someone’s activity on Facebook or Instagram is not necessarily cyberstalking. In conclusion, most staff had limited understanding of cyberstalking including how it is different from checking updates on someone’s profile on social media channels. This does prompt the question about how would staff know about managing a cyberstalking case. This is a critical next step in cyberstalking research within NZ, as most universities are moving to an online learning mode.

Job profiles

Stalking as a behaviour and a crime is not completely understood well within professional staff who may not have pastoral care aspects within their job roles, as well as the professional exposure and the relevant work experience to understand stalking as a potential problem within the university community. The study included 8 staff members across three campuses. This may not be presented as a representative sample of staff who would be able to confidently assess and triage stalking cases on campus. Among, the staff members who participated in the study, most had a firsthand experience of managing a stalking case within their tenure at the university or an indirect experience. Their responses were based on situations associated with stalking however some of them were not involved in the management of it. The

probability of the participant's responses being speculative than experienced based were possibly high. These factors limit the generalizability of the findings in the study.

No participation from associations and management

The study did not include any associated staff from the university like student associations, clubs or medical centers. These are potential gaps in assessing and reporting as these associations/ clubs are known to manage university cases without being obligated to share information. Additionally, one of the drawbacks of the study could be attributed to not having any participation from middle and top management within the university. No response was received from middle or top management to participate in the study. As their experience and narrative would have portrayed a different perspective with sensitive student issues or complaints. Absence of managerial participation from the study impacts the findings from a broader institution perspective, as most stalking cases would be managed by a team leader or a manager. Additionally, most cases if not reported to academic or administrative level staff may be known to management and not having representation from that group, is a key aspect that could potentially impact the current findings.

Correlation of institutional reputation and reporting of sensitive matters

Another limitation of the study is excluding out any correlation with university reputation and its influence over governance and policy matters. Downes (2017) argues that a university's reputation is its top selling point to students. Often, one negative scandal can damage the university's standing globally, which can further lead to students not enrolling into the university. Media and news scandals can cost heavy financial losses to the university in addition to reputational damage. From a future research perspective, it would be important to find out if the inverse correlation between organizational reputation and reporting of sensitive matters and its impact to university staff to protect the image of the institution and keep

investigations/ reporting processes behind closed doors. In the absence of such data within NZ, there is no way in establishing the role of potential reputational damage and internal management of sensitive matters.

Recent amendments within current practice not included

All tertiary education providers in NZ are required to provide a Code self-review and attestation from September 2023 onwards to New Zealand Qualification Authority (www.nzqa.govt.nz). This review mandates all education providers to formally submit an organizational performance evaluation in compliance to the Education Code of Practice. Current changes within internal procedures are not included in the findings. The study was conducted over a two-year period between 2022- 2024, any new changes, updates, policies or procedural introduction at Massey were not accounted for in this study. This potentially means that in some instances where staff may have not known about what to do in previous situations, may have received training or professional updates that could have changed those approaches, processes and service provision. There would be a high possibility that if the current study was conducted presently, it may yield different responses from the participants.

Non-representation of LGBTQIA+

All participant responses demonstrate a strong link with current research reflecting stalking being perpetuated by men against women (Mullen & Pathé, 2002). Ongoing research increasingly shows that stalking within LGBTQIA+ groups is rampant and reflects similar patterns of violence as heterosexual stalking (Budd & Mattinson, 2000). Same gendered stalking is less likely to receive police attention, has negligible recognition in community attitudes and legislation and has a detrimental impact on its victims (Strand & McEwan, 2011; Carabellese et al., 2013). Not having representation from these communities, creates a gap in understanding stalking behaviours.

Need for future research about stalking and associated behaviours.

Stalking within New Zealand

New Zealand ranks highest in developed countries regarding violence against women and a high number of cases over 50% go unreported (Leask, 2016). This report mentions, police on an average attended 105,000 violence calls in 2015 i.e. 270 calls/ per day. It would be good to know, how many of those calls are associated with stalking versus other areas of interpersonal violence. While all cases are not stalking related however, there is limited awareness whether there were stalking behaviors preexisting before an actual incident occurred before the call to police. New Zealand has limited studies or research on stalking, most research is U.S based whereby results of those studies may not truly reflect NZ culture. There is a great need for further research to be done in this area within NZ especially within certain populations like Māori and Pasifika who have a higher prevalence of crime against women (McLachlan, 2020).

The dark grey area: student and staff involvement.

A potential area for future research in New Zealand could be stalking within the student and staff relationship area. The University of Otago, student- tutor murder case had sent shock waves throughout NZ as it highlighted the forbidden nature of student- staff intimate involvement (Ellis, 2022). There are many incidents highlighted within media that point to this grey area within university environments that are not discussed openly. However, due to the historic narrative of the forbidden and unprofessional nature of student-staff romantic involvement, it does pave the way for unethical practices to hold its grip on institutional practices. Following the ineffective management of such prohibited relations, Victoria University of Wellington became the first university in NZ to officially ban student and staff relationships in 2022 (Williams, 2022). This ban is being considered among other universities

as well. A well needed research study that examines reasons of students and staff get involved and the internal dynamics that occur within that relationship that impacts both parties within their academic environments would be valuable.

Relationship separation disclosure and violence

Stalking is a part of violence that is subjected to members of society and it does not survive in isolation. With limited research about stalking, a perspective area of research beneficial to New Zealand, could focus on stalking post a relationship breakup. Most fatalities occur when women disclose their decision to leave a volatile relationship and the separation disclosure triggers violent aggression from their partners (Oliffe et al., 2022). In most cases, the aggressor is highly informative of the victim's everyday life. Even during the strictest Covid-19 lockdowns in NZ, hospital referrals reported a sharp spike in the number of domestic violence cases including strangulation and assault cases (Leask, 2020). There is not enough information to examine the prevalence of stalking or cyberstalking in NZ during Covid-19 duration. One could ponder the correlation between the disclosure of a separation and events leading to a fatal incident with stalking in mind. Does the stalking occur pre-separation or the separation disclosure instigate stalking behaviours? A branch of future research could potentially view stalking related behaviours coinciding with a disclosure of a breakup within intimate relationships in NZ.

Conclusion

The current study posits that Massey University staff have a functional knowledge of stalking, are prompt in escalation processes in reporting of incidents and largely feel they have support available to them. Consistent with global literature identifying and defining stalking and cyberstalking was challenging for general staff. Despite internal organizational difficulties, staff demonstrated strong professional duties towards student care by utilizing support networks within the organization and recognizing when community resources need to be involved. The interchangeability of harassment and stalking in New Zealand with no recent legislative changes pertaining to stalking laws are indicative of the social systemic barriers that general public and victims experience in understanding stalking and its management. This research has identified training opportunities with student support staff to be aware of stalking and cyberstalking as it pertains to student safety under the Education Code of Practice, as student population is most likely to be impacted by stalking. This study highlights the ethical, social and business obligation of institutions to upskill staff and maintain organizational transparency. New Zealand consistently ranks highest among developed countries regarding violence against women; with outdated socio-legal frameworks to support its victims. The heart of this research study is to focus on stalking and its associated behaviours by raising awareness of this crime within New Zealand. It is hoped that through this research, the underestimation of stalking is recognized and leads to social changes and better outcomes for its victims and their families impacted, so valuable lives can be saved.

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Appendix A



Participant recruitment sheet

Staff Participants Needed

To explore how Massey University staff manage Stalking

What is the study about?

Stalking adversely affects staff and students. This research study explores how university and staff manage stalking as a behaviour of concern either on-campus or online.

Who can participate?

- ❖ Any permanent staff member at Massey University- any campus
- ❖ Employed for at least 1 year at Massey University

Why participate?

- ❖ You will positively contribute to knowing about an underrated subject.
- ❖ Your input will provide valuable insights into knowing existing processes

What is required?

- ❖ Consent to participating in the research by signing a form. You will be given details.
- ❖ Attend one in-person/ online meeting.
- ❖ You can withdraw from the study at any time.

Doubts?

- ❖ Your participation and responses will remain anonymous and confidential
- ❖ No personal or identifiable information will be used at any stage.

Ready to participate?

Contact Firdose Rizvi, [REDACTED] Advisor (Auckland)

on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Appendix B



Information sheet

“Should we call campus security?”: A qualitative analysis of staff response to stalking on campus

Introduction

Kia ora, my name is Firdose Rizvi and I am conducting a research project towards my Master of Science in Psychology at Massey University, that explores how staff respond to stalking disclosures or incidents on campus or online. I am currently employed as an advisor within Student Experience for a few years now. I am keen on knowing about how threats like stalking are managed from end to end within the university. Currently, there is very limited information about this topic within New Zealand.

Purpose:

Exploring university staff’s protocols for managing stalking

Project process: If you agree to be in this study, you will be involved in the following:

- a) Given information about the project.
- b) Read and sign the consent form
- c) Knowing that your participation will remain anonymous and confidential.
- d) Attend 1 meeting either in-person or online and answer about 10 questions. The interview will be recorded and transcribed.
- e) Be given access to a summary of the project findings once it concludes.

Participant recruitment:

- a) Full-time employee at Massey University
- b) Completed at least 1 year being employed in your current role at Massey.

Data collection:

- a) As this study includes internal employees, complete anonymity is assured.
- b) Your interview recordings will be saved by using an alphanumeric code and will be password protected. Only the supervisor and researcher will have access to this password.
- c) A summary of findings will be sent to you by email.


Participants rights:

You are under no obligation to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- a) Ask any questions about the study at any time during the process.
- b) Withdraw from the study at any time.

Research contacts:

If you have any questions regarding this project, you can contact Firdose Rizvi at

 or the project supervisor, Dr Veronica Hopner at v.hopner@massey.ac.nz or 09 213 6101.

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. It has been approved by the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), on 06 356 9099 x 85271 or email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Appendix C



“Should we call campus security?”: A qualitative analysis of staff response to stalking on campus

Consent Form for participants

Purpose:

Exploring university and staff protocols for managing stalking

Project process: If you agree to be in this study, you will be involved in the following:

- f) Given information about the project.
- g) Read and sign the consent form
- h) Knowing that your participation will remain anonymous and confidential.
- i) Attend 1 meeting either in-person or online and answer about 10 questions.
- j) Be given access to a summary of the project findings once it concludes if requested.

Participant recruitment:

- c) Full-time employee at Massey University
- d) Completed at least 1 year being employed in your current role at Massey.

Data collection:

A summary of findings will be sent to you by email if you request it.

Participants rights:

You are under no obligation to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- c) Ask any questions about the study at any time during the process.
- d) Withdraw from the study at any time.

Research contacts:

If you have any questions regarding this project, you can contact Firdose Rizvi at

████████████████████ or the project supervisor, Dr Veronica Hopner at

v.hopner@massey.ac.nz or 09 213 6101.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. By signing this form I am stating that I understand the above information and I consent to participate in this study conducted at Massey University.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Support available:

Your participation in this study will focus on aspects of your role and should not trigger any responses that are not business as usual. If for any reason, you do feel overwhelmed, worried or stressed about anything at all. Please do let the researcher know.

Alternatively, please do avail [EAP Services](#) that are available for all Massey Staff.

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. It has been approved by the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), on 06 356 9099 x 85271 or email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Appendix D

Interview questions (for all participants)

Q1. What do you understand by Stalking? What is your understanding of cyberstalking?

Q2. In your work experience at Massey, have you come across any incidents/ complaints that you think are stalking related?

Q3. If someone tells you that they are currently experiencing stalking on a Massey campus/ online, how would you go about it?

Q4. When would you report or escalate a stalking incident on campus?

Q5. How would you report a stalking incident on campus?

Q6. Would you know when to get security involved in a stalking incident?

Q7. Do you know the process following reporting of an incident of stalking on campus?

Do you think there are any disparities in process if the perpetrator is staff either at a junior level or senior level?

Q8. Once you have escalated a stalking incident, would you get a report or update back?

Q9. Do you feel you will be supported while dealing with a stalking related case?

Q10. Do you feel there are any barriers to accessing support services for staff in reporting stalking incidents?