

Some Possible Options for Dealing with Concerns about Stalking and People who “Won’t Let Go”

(May be used with permission from the MIT Ombuds Office, MIT, Room 10-213, Cambridge, MA 02139)

1. There are many offices that can help:

Discuss the matter where no case records will be kept: Chaplains, Mediation@MIT, the Ombuds Office, REFS (for graduate students).

Discuss the matter with resources who will protect your privacy as much as they can: Academic Advisers; Faculty Mediators; GRTs and Housemasters; Personal Assistance Program (Medical), Mental Health and other Medical Department Health Care Practitioners; Student Support Services (DSL); Undergraduate and Graduate Advisers; MIT Work-Life Center. The MIT Program for Violence Prevention and Response (VPR) is located at MIT Medical—vpradvocate@med.mit.edu. Their focus is preventing and dealing with sexual violence, intimate partner violence and stalking.

Discuss the matter where privacy will be protected as much as possible and where appropriate administrative action can be taken: Relevant supervisors and line management—and administrators in departments, labs and centers; DSL (including the COD), DUE and ODGE (including the International Students Office and the International Scholars Office); General Counsel, HR, MIT Police, Stopit@MIT.

2. There are many options:

--Consider getting help immediately. Don't be concerned that you might be "bothering" people. Please talk with someone on this list if you are not sure who is following or stalking or emailing or telephoning you.

--Seek appropriate counseling and medical support immediately if you are under stress.

--Talk about the matter with trusted family, friends or resources as above; please do not feel you must deal with it on your own.

--Consider the possibility that a person may *pose a risk* without making a threat. Immediately consider the many possible steps to protect yourself—such as talking with a relevant supervisor or MIT Police or stopit@mit.edu; changing your locks and being careful about locking your doors; changing your mode of dress in some appropriate way; changing your public persona on Facebook or in DLC directories; refusing to drink or fight with a problematic acquaintance; changing a parking lot or travel schedule; asking a friend to accompany you in problematic circumstances; asking for MIT Police escort; carrying a whistle and cell phone programmed for assistance; asking for a room change or discussing with a resource person finding a “safe house,” and many more;

--Consider reading the resource materials listed under #3 below;

--Consider taking careful notes about what is happening. You can mail these notes to yourself if you wish to keep a completely private record. See <http://web.mit.edu/ombud/self-help/index.html>, “Keeping notes.”

--Report the circumstances anonymously if it seems this might be helpful (see *Guidelines* under #3, below, for information.)

--Consider taking a direct approach with the apparent offender—in person, together with an accompanying person, and/or in a letter. If you wish to do this, you may wish first to consult with a resource person to see if they think this is a safe thing to do. See <http://web.mit.edu/ombud/self-help/index.html>, “Drafting a letter.”

--Consider writing some notes to discuss with an adviser or resource person.

--Consider asking for appropriate third-party intervention by a relevant supervisor or manager, or asking for facilitation, shuttle diplomacy or mediation.

--Consider asking a resource person for a generic approach like a study break discussion in the dorm, or for appropriate systems change such as greatly increased lighting or safer schedules.

--Consider asking a resource person for all the formal options within MIT.

--**Finally, if the apparent offender is at MIT and has made a threat, or harmed you, or put you in fear, please consult with the MIT Police.** If the apparent offender is not at MIT and the stalking behavior also is not at MIT, but the offender has made a threat, or harmed you, or put you in fear, please consult with MIT Police about your contacting relevant local police, getting a court order or taking other legal action.

--Consider external resources listed in the *Guidelines for Raising Complaints about Harassment* (see below).

3. Check out resources on the web:

--BSAT—Behavioral Situational Assessment Team:
<http://web.mit.edu/bsat/>.

--Guidelines for Raising Complaints about Harassment:
<http://web.mit.edu/communications/hq>.

--Ombuds Office Self-Help—see a number of articles:
<http://web.mit.edu/ombud/self-help/index.html>.

--Read an external resource such as: *Stalking Victimization in the United States, 2009*: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/svus.htm>.