

2018

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Same-Sex and Opposite-Sex Stalking in the United States: An Exploration of the Correlates of Informal and Formal Coping Strategies of the Victims

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to explore the correlates of informal and formal coping strategies in same-sex and opposite-sex stalking contexts. More specifically, using four sex dyads - female victims who were stalked by a male (M-F), male victims who were stalked by a female (F-M), female victims who were stalked by a female (F-F), and male victims who were stalked by a male (M-M) - this study examined the effects of three incident and four victim and offender characteristic variables on six informal and formal coping strategies. The results reveal more similarities than differences in terms of victim help-seeking behaviors among same-sex and opposite-sex stalking cases. However, there were also notable differences among the four sex dyads.

Keywords: Stalking, Formal Coping Strategies, Informal Coping Strategies, Same-Sex Stalking, Opposite-Sex Stalking, Victims.

Introduction

In the U.S., stalking has been demonstrated to be a significant criminal justice and public health problem. According to a recent study involving a nationally representative sample, about 15% of surveyed women and 6% of surveyed men reported that they have been a victim of stalking during their lifetimes and approximately 4% of women and 2% of men stated that they were stalked in the past 12 months (Breiding et al., 2014). The lifetime prevalence rates of stalking among college population samples are even higher, ranging between 7% and 28% (Geitsman et al., 2013; Noble & Fox, 2013). Findings from prior research also indicate that stalking has substantial and dire psychological, social, and economical consequences for victims as well as there is a strong link between stalking and other forms of violence, particularly violence in intimate relationships (Brewster, 2002; McFarland et al., 1999; Storey et al., 2009; Thompson, Dennison, & Stewart, 2012; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998). There is also evidence that stalking is an underreported

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offense with only half of all stalking cases reported to the police (Baum et al., 2009; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998).

Stalking can be difficult to define because it consists of a series of often-legal behavior such as emailing, leaving phone messages, and giving gifts. Additionally, legal definitions of stalking vary widely from state to state and the ambiguity in definitions of stalking makes it challenging to enforce. Notwithstanding this fact, there are three key elements that present in most legal definitions of stalking: 1) a pattern of repeated unwanted behavior or harassment imposed on another (i.e., a single act is insufficient); 2) the unwanted behavior or harassment induces fear or distress in the victim; and 3) there is intent on the part of the perpetrator to cause harm (Dennison & Thompson, 2002; Mullen, Pathé, & Purcell, 2009).

Since the first passage of anti-stalking legislation by the California Legislature in 1990, interests in this crime have culminated in a sizable and growing body of research (For a comprehensive literature review on stalking, see Meloy, 1999; 2002; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). While the extant scholarship has greatly improved our knowledge of the prevalence of victimization, offending, and nature of stalking, an important void in the extant literature is that prior research has focused almost exclusively on heterosexual couple stalking. There is a dearth of research on same-sex couple stalking and given the evidence that sexual minority individuals are significantly more likely to become victims of crime relative to heterosexual individuals (Edwards et al., 2015; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2017), exploring and determining if stalking has similar or differential impacts in opposite-sex and same-sex contexts is pertinent and germane.

The goal of this research is to expand the scholarships on stalking and interpersonal violence by examining the correlates of formal and informal coping strategies among victims in same-sex and opposite-sex stalking contexts. Specifically, using three incident characteristics (Stalking Type, Victim-Offender Relationship, and Intimidation), three victim characteristics (Victim Age, Victim Race, and Victim Marital Status), and one offender characteristics (Perpetrator Race), this study examines whether factors that are related to victims' decisions to contact the police (Police Reportage) as well as victims' decisions to engage in five informal coping strategies (Move, Change Daily Activities, Take Protective Measures, Enlist Help from Others, and Multiple Strategies) are similar or different among four sex dyads of stalking victims (Male/Female; Female/Male; Female/Female; and Male/Male). To the best of the author's knowledge, to date, no study has examined formal and informal help-seeking behaviors among same-sex couple stalking. Findings generated from this study could have significant policy implications in preventing and combating the crime of stalking.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. First, I present a review of prior literature on stalking victimization among sexual-minority and heterosexual individuals and the correlates of formal and informal coping strategies for the crime of stalking. Next, I describe the data and methods employed in the current study. Lastly, I summarize the results and discuss the findings.

Review of Literature

Stalking Victimization among Sexual-Minority and Heterosexual Individuals

Stalking has been conceptualized as an extension of intimate partner violence (IPV) based on the findings that the most common perpetrators of stalking are former intimate

partners (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) as well as many stalking episodes occur within an interpersonal relationship (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). In a large scale research study involving 8,000 adult women and 8,000 adult men in the U.S., Tjaden and Theonnes (1998) found that 81% of women in heterosexual marital or cohabitating relationships who had been physically abused by a former partner were also stalked by that partner. Similarly, in a study involving a sample of university students in South Carolina, Davis and colleagues (2000) found that about 40% of the participants reported that they engaged in at least one stalking behavior following the dissolution of a romantic relationship. Prior research on IPV involving nationally representative samples also reveal that same-sex and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) couples have similar or higher rates of partner abuse relative to heterosexual couples (Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013). There is also evidence that LGB individuals are significantly more likely to report experiencing higher rates of harassment as well as significantly more likely to be bullied, discriminated against, physically and sexually assaulted, verbally and emotionally abused, and threatened relative to heterosexual individuals (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Research examining interpersonal violence among sexual minority and heterosexual college students also uncover similar findings with sexual minority students reporting higher rates of physical dating violence and sexual assault relative to heterosexual students (Edwards et al., 2015; Rothman, Exner & Baughman, 2011).

Pertaining to the crime of stalking, to date, only a handful of studies have explored stalking victimization and perpetration among sexual minority individuals. One plausible explanation for the dearth of research on this topic is the difficulties and barriers encountered by researchers studying this marginalized population. Nevertheless, according to limited extant research, relative to heterosexual individuals, LGBTQ individuals appear to have higher risks of becoming a victim of stalking. In a recent study involving a large sample of college students, Edwards and colleagues (2015) found more than half (55.5%) of sexual minority students in their study reported experiencing unwanted pursuits (i.e., stalking) while only over a third (39.9%) of heterosexual students reported similar experience. Similarly, drawing data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), Walters and colleagues (2013) found that bisexual women reported significantly higher rates of stalking (36.6%) relative to heterosexual women (15.5%). In another study involving a matched sample of heterosexual and LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer) individuals, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they have experienced each of 47 intrusive activities (e.g., being followed, being spied on, receiving unwanted letters, etc.). The authors found LGBTIQ individuals were significantly more likely than heterosexual individuals to experience 22 out of the 47 intrusive behaviors as well as all 22 behaviors were rated by LGBTIQ individuals as their worst experiences (Sheridan, Scott, & Campbell, 2016). Prior research on same-sex and opposite-sex couple stalking also reveal that about half of male victims are stalked by other men and one in six female victims are stalked by other women (Baum et al., 2009). Further, although opposite-sex stalker motivations appear to stem from a prior intimate relationship, same-sex stalker motivations tend to stem from a grievance against the victim (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). In terms of stalking behavior and impact, female stalkers generally display similar tactics and behavior as their male counterparts but same-sex stalkers are less likely than opposite-sex stalkers to follow or approach their victims. Also, male stalkers of both opposite-sex and same-sex stalking are

more likely than female stalkers to employ technology in their stalking agenda and make sexual assault threats, while female stalkers are more likely than male stalkers to abuse their victims' pets. There is also evidence that male victims of both same-sex and opposite-sex stalking are more likely than female victims to adopt an aggressive coping style and female victims are more likely than male victims to report feeling fearful (Englebretch & Reysn, 2011; Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Meloy, Mohandie, & Green, 2011; Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2000; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2001; Sheridan, North, & Scott, 2014; Strand & McEwan, 2011; 2012).

Correlates of Formal and Informal Coping Strategies to Stalking

According to extant research, in responding to the crime of stalking, victims tend to employ an array of tactics and strategies. In addition to formal tactics such as contacting the police, obtaining a restraining order, and pressing charges against the perpetrator, victims of stalking also employ informal strategies including changing day-to-day activities, enlisting the help of family or friends, trying to reason with the perpetrator, and avoiding certain people and places to cope with their victimization (Baum et al., 2009; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2004; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998).

To date, only a handful of studies have examined the correlates of formal and informal responses to the crime of stalking. With regard to police reportage, findings from prior research reveal that incident characteristics including offense seriousness, threats made, physical injury, victim-offender relationship, offender's prior criminal record, other crimes committed by the stalker, and victim characteristics including gender, age, level of education, feeling fearful, financial loss, and victim acknowledgment are significant predictors of the likelihood of victims reporting their victimization to the police (Ménard & Cox, 2016; Ngo & Paternoster, 2016; Reysn & Englebrecht, 2010; 2014). However, it is noteworthy that pertaining to the effect of victim-offender relationship on police reportage, the evidence is mixed with some studies indicating that victims who are stalked by an intimate are more likely to contact the police (Jasinski & Mustaine, 2001), other studies reporting a null effect of victim-offender relationship on police reportage (Reysn & Englebrecht, 2010) and still, some studies showing that victims who are stalked by an intimate are *less* likely to report their victimization to the police (Jordan, Wilcox, & Pritchard, 2007).

With regard to informal coping strategies for the crime of stalking, findings from prior research indicate that incident characteristics including threats made, cyber-stalking, and victim characteristics including gender, age, race, marital status, feeling fearful, financial loss, and victim acknowledgment are significant predictors of the likelihood of victims reaching out to their informal support networks to cope with their victimization (Ngo & Paternoster, 2016; Reysn & Englebretch, 2014). There is also evidence that victims who are stalked by a stranger are less likely to employ informal coping tactics (Reysn & Englebretch, 2014) and victims who experience negative emotional symptoms (i.e., anger, depression, helplessness, and suicidal ideation) are more likely to seek informal coping strategies (Ngo & Paternoster, 2016). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, to date, no study has explored the correlates of formal and informal coping strategies among same-sex couple stalking and thus, the question regarding whether victim help-seeking decisions among same-sex and opposite-sex couple stalking are similar or different remains unanswered.

Data and Methods

Data for the current study came from the 2006 Stalking Victimization Supplement (SVS) of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS; for further details on the NCVS data collection and methodology, see Lynch & Addington, 2006). The 2006 SVS was a one-time supplement to the annual NCVS and designed to measure the prevalence, characteristics, and consequences of nonfatal stalking. While NCVS interviews are normally conducted with each household member age 12 and older, only household members aged 18 or older were given an SVS interview.

The SVS was administered to approximately 65,270 individuals with a response rate of 83%. The SVS contains questions about victims' experiences of unwanted contact or harassing behavior during the previous 12 months, victim-offender relationship, and other crimes and injuries committed against the victim in conjunction with the unwanted contact or harassing behavior. The SVS also solicited questions about victims' perceptions of criminal justice responses and any costs incurred by the victim due to the unwanted contact or harassing activities directed at the victim (for further details on the SVS data collection and methodology, see Baum et al., 2009).

1. Sample

For the present study, individuals were identified as victims of stalking if they indicated that they experienced any of the following activities on more than one occasion in the past 12 months of the 2006 SVS as well as these activities frightened, concerned, angered, or annoyed them: being followed or spied on; someone waiting outside/inside their home, school, workplace; someone showing up at places even though that person has no business being there; receiving unwanted phone calls or messages; receiving unwanted letters, emails, or other forms of communication; receiving unwanted items, presents or flowers; and someone posting information or spreading rumors about them both online and offline (Note that this study employed the behavioral conceptual definition of stalking which has been adopted extensively by researchers and scholars studying stalking; See Ngo & Paternoster, 2016; Reyns & Englebretch, 2014; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014).

A total of 1,599 respondents met the above criteria and they comprised the original sample for this study. After deleting cases with missing data, the sample was reduced to 942 respondents. Table 1 breaks down the four sex dyads for the final sample according to stalker-victim prior relationship (i.e., Male-Female, Female-Male, Female-Female, and Male-Male). Table 1 also displays the corresponding demographic variables for the four groups. According to Table 1, the majority of stalkers and victims from the four sex dyads were white, the mean age of the victims ranged from 37 years to 40 years, and the majority of the victims in the M/M and F-F sex dyads were married while the majority of the victims in the M-F and F-M sex dyads were single or widowed.

2. Measures

Outcome variables: Six outcome measures consist of five informal coping strategies (*Move, Change Daily Activities, Take Protective Measure, Enlist Help from Others, and Multiple Informal Strategies*) and one formal strategy (*Police Reporting*) were created for the study. Respondents were asked if they had to move as a result of their victimization (*Move*), change their day-to-day activities such as taking time off from work/school, change or quit a job/school, avoid relatives, friends, or holiday celebration (*Change Daily Activities*),

take protective measures such as getting a gun, take self-defense classes, change their telephone numbers (*Take Protective Measures*), enlist the help from others such as friends, an attorney, or a family member to protect themselves (*Enlist Help of Others*), or report their victimization to the police (*Report to Police*). The above measures were coded with 1= the victim employed this strategy and 0 = the victim did not employ this strategy. Further, the informal coping measures (*Move, Change Daily Activities, Take Protective Measure, Enlist Help from Others, and Multiple Informal Strategies*) were combined to create the *Multiple Informal Strategies* variable with 1= the victim employed more than one informal strategy and 0 = the victim employed only one strategy. The descriptive statistics for the above variables for the four sex dyads are presented in Table 1.

Incident Characteristics: Three incident characteristic variables (*Stalking Type, Victim-Offender Relationship, and Intimidation*) were constructed for the study. The measure of *Stalking Type* was created using victims' responses to the question asking if they had experienced any of the following activities in the last 12 months: 1) being followed and spied on; 2) someone waiting outside or inside their home/school/workplace; 3) someone showing up at places where they were even though the person had no business of being there; 4) someone leaving unwanted items, presents, flowers; 5) receiving unwanted phone calls and unwanted phone messages; 6) receiving unsolicited letter/e-mails/other form of written communication; and 7) someone posting information or spreading rumors about them online and offline. The responses were coded 1 = the victim experienced this activity and 0 = the victim did not experience this activity. Further, items 1 through 3 were combined to create the indicator of "approach stalking" while items 4 through 7 were combined to create the indicator of "non-approach stalking." These two indicators, "approach stalking" and "non-approach stalking," were then combined and recoded to create the variable of *Stalking Type* with 1 = the victim experienced approach stalking, 2 = the victim experienced non-approach stalking and 3 = the victim experienced both approach and non-approach stalking. The descriptive statistics for the variable *Stalking Type* for the four sex dyads are provided in Table 1.

The measure of *Victim-Offender Relationship* was created using victims' responses to the question, "What was the relationship of the person who did (this/these) things to you when the contacts or behavior first began?" The response options include spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend, parent or step-parent, own child or step-child, brother/sister, step-brother/step-sister, other relatives, friend or ex-friend, roommate or housemate, schoolmate, neighbor, customer/client, student, patient, co-worker, supervisor, acquaintance, and stranger. The responses were combined to create four categories for the variable *Victim-Offender Relationship* with 1 = intimate perpetrator (i.e., current and former spouse, boyfriend/ex-boyfriend, and girlfriend/ex-girlfriend), 2 = family perpetrator (i.e., parent or step-parent, own child or step-child, brother/sister, step-brother/step-sister, other relatives), 3 = acquaintance perpetrator (i.e., friend or ex-friend, roommate or housemate, schoolmate, neighbor, customer/client, student, patient, co-worker, supervisor, and acquaintance), and 4 = stranger perpetrator (i.e., stranger). The descriptive statistics for this variable for the four sex dyads are listed in Table 1. For the measure of *Intimidation*, victim responses to the question, "In order to frighten or intimidate you, did this person attack or attempt to attack a child, another family member, a friend or co-worker, a pet," were combined and recoded into a dichotomous variable

with 1 = the stalker intimidated the victim and 0 = the stalker did not intimidate the victim. The descriptive statistics for this variable for the four sex dyads are shown in Table 1.

Victim Characteristics: Three victim characteristic measures (*Victim Age*, *Victim Race*, and *Victim Marital Status*) were constructed for the study. *Victim Age* was coded as a continuous variable, and *Victim Race* was coded as a dichotomous variable with 1 = white and 0 = non-white. *Victim Marital Status* has three response categories with 1 = married, 2 = divorced/separated, and 3 = single/widowed. The descriptive statistics for the above variables for the four sex dyads are presented in Table 1.

Offender Characteristics: One offender characteristic measure (*Perpetrator Race*) was created for the study. This variable was coded as a dichotomous variable with 1 = white and 0 = non-white. The descriptive statistics for the variable *Perpetrator Race* for the four sex dyads are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables for the Four Sex Dyads (N=942)

	Male-Female (N=476)	Male-Male (N=123)	Female-Male (N=144)	Female-Female (N=199)
Race (Perpetrator/ Victim)				
White	71.2 / 83.6		78.5 / 79.2	85.4 / 86.4
Black	13.9 / 10.1	78.9 / 91.1	12.5 / 15.9	9.5 / 9.0
Other race	14.9 / 4.0	6.5 / 3.3	9.0 / 1.4	5.0 / 1.5
		14.6 / 5.7		
Stalking Victims				
Age – Mean (S.D.)	37 (13.92)		37 (12.85)	39 (14.48)
Marital Status		40 (13.77)		
Married	26.7	47.2	27.1	43.2
Divorced	31.3	13.8	33.3	23.1
Single/Widow	41.0	39.0	38.2	33.2

Table 1 (continued)

Incident Characteristics				
Stalking Type				
Approach	25.8	38.2	22.2	29.6
Non-Approach	12.2	14.6	13.9	12.1
Both	62.0	47.2	63.9	58.3
Offender-Victim Relationship				
Intimate	39.5	0.8	50.7	3.5
Family	6.5	9.8	6.9	16.6
Acquaintance	42.2	75.6	37.5	69.3
Stranger	9.7	8.9	4.9	9.0
Intimidation ^a	31.3	32.5	30.6	33.2
Informal Coping^a				
Move	16.8	2.4	9.0	11.1
Change Daily Activities	50.4	27.6	38.2	39.2
Take Protective Measures	40.5	18.7	28.5	35.2
Enlist Help from Others	74.4	48.0	58.3	72.9
Multiple Informal Strategies	57.6	27.6	38.2	50.8
Formal Coping^a				
Police Reporting	37.6	28.5	25.0	34.2

^aNote: 1=Yes; 0=No

3. Analytic strategy

To determine the correlates for the six informal and formal coping measures (*Move*, *Change Daily Activities*, *Take Protective Measure*, *Enlist Help from Others*, *Multiple Informal Strategies*, and *Police Reporting*), six models were estimated and in each model, three incident characteristic variables (*Stalking Type*, *Victim-Offender Relationship*, and *Intimidation*) and four victim and offender demographic characteristic variables (*Victim Age*, *Victim Race*, *Victim Marital Status*, and *Perpetrator Race*) were regressed on each of the six informal and formal coping measures. Further, the above six models were estimated four times for each of the four sex dyads (M-F, F-M, F-F, and M-M). Given that the outcome variables for the above 24 models (6 models X 4 sex dyads) were dichotomous variables; all of the models were estimated using logistic regression.

Results

Table 2 displays the results for the six logistic regression models for the M-F sex dyad (i.e., female victims who were stalked by a male).

Table 2. Logistic Regressions of Informal and Formal Coping Strategies on Incident and Demographic Variables among Male-Female Dyad(N=476)

Measures	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Move Change	Daily Activities	Take Protective
Stalking Type	1.071 (.175)	1.613*(.120)	
Victim-Offender	.558*(.143)	2.361*(.140)	
Relationship Intimidation	2.410**(271)	.798***(.099)	.858
Age	.959**(013)	(.120)	
Race-Victim	1.054 (.320)	2.783*(.223)	2.013**(226)
Race-Perpetrator	.895 (.206)	.988 (.008)	
Marital Status	.847 (.188)	.983***(.008)	
Constant	2.465 (.931)	.917 (.224)	1.139 (.233)
Model X ²	62.357*	1.005 (.144)	.961
		(.151)	
		.952 (.131)	
		1.018(.138)	
		.761 (.654)	.151
			(.713)
		68.739*	
		85.968*	
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Enlist Help from Others	Multiple Strategies	Police Reporting
Stalking Type	1.195 (.130)	1.765*(.121)	1.230(.140)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship Intimidation	.810(.112)	.778***(.101)	.966
Age	4.957*(.334)	3.262*(.243)	(.103)
Race-Victim	.987(.008)		3.513*(.222)
Race-Perpetrator		.986 (.008)	
Marital Status	.811 (.232)	.999(.008)	
Constant	.705***(.151)	1.032 (.228)	.929
Model X ²	1.049 (.143)	(.237)	
		.871 (.147)	1.003
		.930 (.135)	(.156)
			1.115(.137)
	7.188**(724)	1.081 (.665)	.224***(.694)
	63.527*	89.387*	
		43.802*	

NOTE: Entries are odds ratio; standard errors are in parentheses
 * p<.001; ** p<.01; *** p<.05

Table 3. Logistic Regressions of Informal and Formal Coping Strategies on Incident and Demographic Variables Among Female-Male Dyad_(N=144)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Move	Change Daily Activities	Take Protective
Measures			
Stalking Type	2.044 (.516)	1.300(.247)	2.579**(346)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	.564 (.390)	.771 (.206)	.617***(.237)
Intimidation	.997(.648)	4.001**(402)	1.043 (.448)
Age	1.051 (.034)	1.017 (0.18)	1.029 (.020)
Race-Victim	.929 (.925)	1.247 (.492)	.823 (.489)
Race-Perpetrator	.756 (.695)	.924 (.352)	2.501***(.366)
Marital Status	3.436 (.870)	.727 (.292)	.873 (.310)
Constant	.001 (2.899)	.294 (1.354)	.014** (1.586)
Model X ²	11.971	22.144**	25.627**
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Enlist Help from Others	Multiple Strategies	Police Reporting
Stalking Type	1.363 (.239)	1.644(.265)	1.186 (.312)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	.813 (.200)	.573***(.220)	.574***(.269)
Intimidation	2.836***(.435)	2.225 (.419)	4.514**(465)
Age	1.028 (.018)	1.041***(.018)	1.032 (.021)
Race-Victim	.965 (.522)	1.382 (.466)	.706 (.667)
Race-Perpetrator	.725 (.334)	1.240 (.352)	1.900(.642)
Marital Status	.603 (.282)	.608 (.299)	.478***(.373)
Constant	1.259 (.862)	.127 (1.410)	.265 (1.694)
Model X ²	25.826**	30.543*	27.337*

NOTE: Entries are odds ratio; standard errors are in parentheses
 *p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05

According to Table 2, the measure of *Intimidation* was significantly related to all six informal and formal coping strategies (Models 1 through 6 of Table 2) while the measure of *Stalking Type* was significantly related to *Change Daily Activities*, *Take Protective Measures*, and *Multiple Informal Strategies* (Models 2, 3, and 5 of Table 2). Similar to the *Stalking Type* variable, the measure of *Victim-Offender Relationship* was significantly related to *Move*, *Change Daily Activities*, and *Multiple Informal Strategies* (Models 1, 2, and 5 of Table 2). Also, all of the above associations were in the expected direction in that victims who were intimidated by their stalkers were more likely to employ both informal and formal coping strategies relative to victims whose stalkers did not intimidate them, victims who experienced both approach and non-approach stalking were more likely to change their daily activities, take protective measures, and employ more than one informal coping tactic relative to victims who only experienced approach or non-approach stalking, and victims who were stalked by a stranger were more likely to move, change their daily activities, and employ multiple informal coping tactics relative to victims who were stalked

by an intimate, family member, or acquaintance (Table 2).

Table 4. Logistic Regressions of Informal and Formal Coping Strategies on Incident and Demographic Variables among Female-Female Dyad(N=199)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Move	Change Daily Activities	Take Protective Measures
Stalking Type	1.112 (.306)	1.321 (.193)	1.591 ^{***} (.198)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	.598 (.365)	.504 ^{***} (.283)	.543 ^{***} (.275)
Intimidation	2.476 (.499)	6.401 [*] (.358)	3.489 [*] (.351)
Age	.961 (.022)	1.010 (.012)	.989 (.013)
Race-Victim	1.449 (.591)	1.081 (.525)	.804 (.509)
Race-Perpetrator	.721 (.538)	.906 (.355)	.542 (.425)
Marital Status	1.683 (.308)	1.339 (.199)	.657 ^{***} (.206)
Constant	.351 (1.795)	.479 (1.259)	5.512 (1.287)
Model X ²	18.987 ^{**}	47.490 [*]	38.910 [*]
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Enlist Help from Others	Multiple Strategies	Police Reporting
Stalking Type	1.282 (.193)	1.493 ^{***} (.187)	.349 (.189)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	.408 ^{***} (.350)	.405 ^{**} (.306)	.906 (.261)
Intimidation	3.632 ^{**} (.434)	6.877 [*] (.379)	2.642 ^{**} (.339)
Age	1.024 (.013)	1.007 (0.12)	.970 ^{***} (.013)
Race-Victim	1.073 (.507)	.910 (.472)	1.133 (1.458)
Race-Perpetrator	.593 (.355)	1.067 (.350)	1.372 (.343)
Marital Status	1.417 (.211)	1.006 (.198)	.829 (.199)
Constant	5.603 (1.471)	2.277 (1.313)	.920 (1.231)
Model X ²	30.814 [*]	54.070 [*]	12.301 ^{**}

NOTE: Entries are odds ratio; standard errors are in parentheses

*p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05

Table 3 displays the results for the six logistic regression models for the F-M dyad (i.e., male victims who were stalked by a female). According to Table 3, while both measures of *Intimidation* and *Victim-Offender Relationship* were significantly related to *Police Reporting* (Model 6 of Table 3), *Intimidation* was significantly related to *Change Daily Activities* and *Enlist Help from Others* (Models 2 and 4 of Table 3) while *Victim-Offender Relationship* was significantly related to *Take Protective Measures* and *Multiple Informal Strategies* (Models 3 and 5 of Table 3).

Also, all of the associations were in the expected direction in that victims whose stalkers intimidated them and victims who were stalked by a stranger were more likely to contact the police relative to victims whose stalkers did not intimidate them and victims who were stalked by an intimate, family member, or acquaintance. Similarly, victims whose stalkers intimidated them were more likely to change their daily activities and enlist help from others relative to victims whose stalkers did not intimidate them. Similarly, victims who were stalked by a stranger were more likely to take protective measures and employ

multiple informal coping strategies relative to victims who were stalked by an intimate, family member, or acquaintance (Table 3).

Table 5. Logistic Regressions of Informal and Formal Coping Strategies on Incident and Demographic Variables among Male-Male Dyad (N=123)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Move	Change Daily Activities	Take Protective Measures
Stalking Type	1.197 (.745)	1.904**(.266)	2.922**(.360)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	1.149 (1.306)	.586 (.494)	.510 (.529)
Intimidation	4.215 ⁻⁶ (4.142 ⁻³)	6.194*(.487)	6.792**(.595)
Age	1.017 (.053)	.974 (0.21)	.990 (.024)
Race-Victim	.041 (7.754 ⁻³)	.736 (.620)	1.470 (.508)
Race-Perpetrator	1.792 (.755)	.760 (.371)	1.396 (.385)
Marital Status	1.469 (.870)	.629 (.305)	.520 (.364)
Constant	.000 (9.872 ⁻³)	2.898 (2.094)	.113 (2.235)
Model X ²	8.437	27.047*	26.664*
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Enlist Help from Others	Multiple Strategies	Police Reporting
Stalking Type	.949 (.212)	2.454**(.284)	.752(.246)
Victim-Offender			
Relationship	1.499 (.356)	.723 (.473)	1.496 (.478)
Intimidation	2.372*** (.416)	6.803*(.500)	4.916**(.471)
Age	1.019 (.017)	.979 (0.21)	1.014 (.019)
Race-Victim	1.980 (.429)	1.140 (.482)	2.187 (.456)
Race-Perpetrator	.687 (.285)	1.026 (.342)	.689 (.372)
Marital Status	.984 (.247)	.679 (.315)	1.222 (.286)
Constant	.087 (1.631)	.254 (1.934)	.029 (1.958)
Model X ²	10.826	29.578*	15.378***

NOTE: Entries are odds ratio; standard errors are in parentheses

*p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05

The results from Table 3 also indicate that victims who were single or widowed were more likely to contact the police relative to victims who were married or divorced (Model 6 of Table 3), older victims were more likely to employ multiple informal coping strategies relative to younger victims (Model 5 of Table 3), and victims whose stalkers were white were more likely to take protective measures relative to victims whose stalkers were non-white (Model 3 of Table 3).

Table 4 displays the results for the six logistic regression models for the F-F dyad (i.e., female victims who were stalked by a female). According to Table 4, the measure of *Intimidation* was significantly related to all six informal and formal coping strategies except for the strategy of *Move* (Models 2 through 6 of Table 4). Further, while the measure of *Victim-Offender Relationship* was not related to the formal strategy of *Police Reporting*, it was significantly related to all five informal coping strategies except for the strategy of *Move* (Models 2 through 5 of Table 4). On the other hand, the measure of *Stalking Type* was

significantly related to *Take Protective Measures* and *Multiple Informal Strategies* (Models 3 and 5 of Table 4). Accordingly, victims whose stalkers intimidated them were more likely to employ both formal and informal coping strategies relative to victims whose stalkers did not intimidate them while victims who were stalked by a stranger were more likely to employ informal coping strategies relative to victims who were stalked by an intimate, family member, or acquaintance. Additionally, victims who experienced both approach and non-approach stalking were more likely to take protective measures and employ multiple informal coping tactics relative to victims who only experienced approach or non-approach stalking (Table 4).

The results from Table 4 also indicate that older victims were more likely to contact the police relative to younger victims (Model 6 of Table 4) and victims who were single or widowed were more likely to take protective measures relative to victims who were married or divorced (Model 3 of Table 4).

Table 5 displays the results for the six logistic regression models for the M-M dyad (i.e., male victims who were stalked by a male). According to Table 5, the measure of *Intimidation* was significantly related to all six informal and formal coping strategies except for the strategy of *Move* (Models 2 through 6 of Table 5) and the measure of *Stalking Type* was significantly related to *Change Daily Activities*, *Take Protective Measures*, and *Multiple Informal Strategies* (Models 2, 3, and 5 of Table 5). That is, victims whose stalkers intimidated them were more likely to employ both formal and informal coping strategies relative to victims whose stalkers did not intimidate them and victims who experienced both approach and non-approach stalking were more likely to change their daily activities, take protective measures, and employ multiple informal coping tactics relative to victims who only experienced approach or non-approach stalking. It is noteworthy that the measure of *Victim-Offender Relationship* was not related to any of the informal or formal coping strategies as well as none of the victim and offender characteristic measures was related to the informal and formal coping strategies (Table 5).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to explore the correlates of informal and formal coping strategies in same-sex and opposite-sex stalking contexts. More specifically, using four sex dyads – female victims who were stalked by a male (M-F), male victims who were stalked by a female (F-M), female victims who were stalked by a female (F-F), and male victims who were stalked by a male (M-M) – this study examined the effects of three incident and four victim and offender characteristic variables on six informal and formal coping strategies. The focus of the current study was to determine whether victim help-seeking behaviors are similar or different among same-sex and opposite-sex couple stalking.

Overall, this study uncovered more similarities than differences in terms of victim help-seeking behaviors among same-sex and opposite-sex stalking cases. In particular, this study found that regardless of the type of sex dyads, victims whose stalkers intimidated them were significantly more likely to contact the police as well as reach out to their informal support networks to cope with their victimization. It is noteworthy that this finding aligns with findings from prior research that report that threats made by the perpetrator is a robust correlate of both formal and informal coping tactics (Jordan, Wilcox, & Pritchard, 2007; Reyns & Englebretch, 2010). Similarly, regardless of the type of sex dyads, this study

found that victims who experienced both approach and non-approach stalking were more likely to turn to family and friends for help. This finding appears to provide support for findings from prior research that indicate that many crime victims do not contact the police after victimization but instead, seeking support from family and friends (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2011; Buhi, Clayton, & Surrency, 2009; Coker et al., 2000; Kaukinen, 2004; Truman & Planty, 2012). Further, except for the M-M sex dyad (male victims who were stalked by a male), this study found that victims who were stalked by a stranger were more likely to turn to their informal support networks for help. While this finding appears to parallel findings from prior research that found that crime victims are *less* likely to contact the police when the offender is a stranger (Bachman, 1998; Felson, Messner, & Hoskin, 1999), it contradicts findings from research on sexual assault victimization that found that victims are *more* likely to contact the police when the perpetrator is a stranger (Felson & Paré, 2005; Fisher et al., 2003; Weiss, 2009). Given the equivocal findings on the association between victim-offender relationship and police reportage, the author encourages future research to further explore this topic.

This study also uncovered several notable differences in terms of victim help-seeking behaviors among same-sex and opposite-sex couple stalking. First, among the four sex dyads, the M-M dyad (male victims who were stalked by a male) appears to be the group that are *less* likely to adopt formal as well as informal coping tactics (see Table 1). This finding is perhaps not surprising given the evidence that male victims of stalking are *less* likely to express feeling fearful or give up social activities relative to female victims (Sheridan, North, & Scott, 2014). Certainly, if a crime victim is not concerned about his/her victimization, s/he would be less likely to seek help or protection. Second, among opposite-sex couple stalking, single/widowed male victims who were stalked by a female were more likely to contact the police while among same-sex couple stalking, older female victims who were stalked by a woman were more likely to engage in similar formal tactic. Third, except for the M-M sex dyad (male victims who were stalked by a male), three of the four victim and offender characteristic variables (*Victim Age, Victim Marital Status, and Perpetrator Race*) were significantly related to the likelihood of victims turning to informal social support networks for help. The above findings, i.e., age and marital status of the victim and the race of the perpetrator *but* not the race of the victim exhibited a significant impact on victims' decision to seek formal and informal help – warrant further examination. While to date, there is a sizable and growing body of research examining how victim and offender characteristics influence victim decision-making for the crimes of domestic violence and sexual assaults, there is a dearth of similar research for the crime of stalking. Accordingly, the author encourages researchers and scholars to undertake research examining the connection between age, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic levels and victims' decisions to adopt formal and informal coping tactics among opposite-sex couple stalking as well as same-sex couple stalking.

Finally, it is important to note that this study is not without limitations. First, data for the current study were drawn from the 2006 SVS of the NCVS and hence, this study possesses the same shortcomings associated with the NCVS including proxy interviews, false reports, over reporting and/or underreporting, telescoping, and memory failure and decay. Second, this study employed data that are over ten years old so the author encourages researchers and scholars to further explore this topic using more recent data. Third, this study only included a limited number of predictors when there is evidence that

other variables are also relevant and pertinent in determining the correlates of formal and informal coping strategies (e.g., offense seriousness, physical injury, offender prior criminal record). Fourth, due to the small sample sizes of three of the four sex dyads (F-M, F-F, and M-M), findings from this study cannot be generalized to the larger populations. The author encourages researchers and scholars to consider novel methods to gather data on stalking victimization as well as perpetration among sexual minority individuals. Notwithstanding the above limitations, the author hopes this study will serve as a catalyst for more research and studies on the topic of stalking.

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