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[Home](#) > [Help me stop stalking my ex and his new partner](#)

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## Help me stop stalking my ex and his new partner <sup>[1]</sup>

Alice,

I'm in desperate need of help! I have a great boyfriend but my ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend constantly plague me. I literally stalk them, unable to let go. I have tried any means possible to learn about what is going on with their lives and I just want to move on. I'm a 21-year-old grad student right now and am on my break, so I have ample time to brood over this issue. Please help me get over this obsession!

Thanks,  
Crazy ex-girlfriend

### Answer

Dear Crazy ex-girlfriend,

Ending a relationship can be an incredibly painful and disorienting experience. Suddenly the person you spent the most time with, confided in and looked forward to sharing moments and milestones with is gone. Very often a big void can arise in place of the person, even if someone new has come into your life. With that being said, stalking is considered a crime in all 50 states in the U.S., whether done in person or online. The fact that you're looking for help to change this behavior is a good sign that you're moving forward towards refocusing on yourself, your current partner, and more fully engaging in and enjoying your life.

The [Stalking Resource Center](#) <sup>[2]</sup> defines stalking as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear." It's worth noting that the legal definition and criminal laws around the behavior are different in each [state](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. Stalking is a serious issue that impacts millions of people every year and with the increase in the availability and engagement with technology today, it's easier than ever to keep tabs on what someone's doing or where someone is going. If the behavior you're exhibiting falls within the [purview of stalking](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, it's wise that you take steps to change the behavior.

Based on what you've described, it sounds like you're struggling to deal with your breakup. When a relationship ends, it's common to experience denial, anger, fear, self-blame, and sadness, and it's not always easy to know what to do with these difficult feelings. One way to start processing

your feelings is with a bit of self-reflection. It might be useful to ask yourself some questions about why you're so compelled to know about your ex and their life. Are you dissatisfied with your current relationship or life situation? Was your friend group tied to your previous relationship? Are you looking for some closure from the relationship? This type of self-inquiry coupled with reaching out to others may help you walk away and be free of this past relationship.

Another approach you may want to try is building your resiliency, which Mayo Clinic defines as "the ability to adapt well to stress, adversity, trauma or tragedy." Research has shown that people who are able to feel a loss, mourn, and then move back into their daily lives are often happier and healthier. They also tend to avoid developing conditions like depression, anxiety, and even heart disease and diabetes. To move on from a place of sadness or obsession and build resiliency, you may want to try some of the following strategies:

- **Seek out support.** Put energy into positive relationships with family and friends, who can listen to your concerns and offer support.
- **Nurture attitudes of hopefulness and optimism.** While you can't change past events, look toward the future. For example, you may try focusing on the positive aspects of your current relationship.
- **Take time for reflection and look for lessons.** Review past experiences and think about how you've changed as a result. If you feel worse as a result of your experiences, think about what changes could help. How have you coped with hardships in the past? Build on what helped you through those rough times and try to avoid actions that didn't help.
- **Take extra good care of yourself.** Tend to your own needs and feelings, both physically and emotionally. This includes participating in activities and hobbies you enjoy, being physically active, getting plenty of sleep, and eating well.
- **Work toward goals.** Do something every day that gives you a sense of accomplishment, even if they are small. What are some goals you have?
- **Write in a journal.** A journal can be a healthy place to brood and articulate your feelings honestly and privately. The process of putting your thoughts into writing can also help you move beyond destructive feelings and come up with positive ideas for moving forward.

List adapted from *Resilience: Build skills to endure hardship* [5] by Mayo Clinic.

It might be helpful to set a goal of doing things with your new partner that you really enjoy or noticing what you appreciate about them and expressing your affection. Relying on your friends and family to keep you on track could also be a good motivator. In addition, many people find it comforting and useful to nourish their spiritual side in times of stress or pain. If you find you have a hard time moving on even after trying some of these strategies and seeking support from friends and family, you may want to seek help from a mental health professional. They can help you to find strategies to help you move on from your ex.

Good luck,

Alice!

Category:

Relationships [6]

Nonconsensual Relationships [7]

[Moving On](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

## Related questions

[Why did she break up with me?](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

[Girlfriend broke it off — Am I stalking?](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

[Miss ex-girlfriend, or is it something else?](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

## Resources

[Sexual Violence Response & Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CPS\) \(Morningside\)](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

[Alice! Health Promotion \(Morningside\)](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

[Mental Health Services \(CUIMC\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

[Center for Student Wellness \(CUIMC\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

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## Footer menu

- ▼ [Contact Alice!](#)
  - [Content Use](#)
  - [Media Inquiries](#)
  - [Comments & Corrections](#)
- ▼ [Syndication & Licensing](#)
  - [Licensing Q&As](#)
  - [Get Alice! on Your Website](#)
  - [Full Site Syndication](#)
  - [Link to Go Ask Alice!](#)

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### Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/help-me-stop-stalking-my-ex-and-his-new-partner-0>

[2] <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>

[3] <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center/stalking-laws/criminal-stalking-laws-by-state>

- [4] <http://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center/stalking-information#what>
- [5] <http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/resilience-training/in-depth/resilience/art-20046311?pg=2>
- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/relationships>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/nonconsensual-relationships>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/moving>
- [9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/why-did-she-break-me-0>
- [10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/girlfriend-broke-it-%E2%80%94-am-i-stalking-0>
- [11] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/miss-ex-girlfriend-or-it-something-else-0>
- [12] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/sexual-violence-response-rape-crisisanti-violence-support-center>
- [13] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/counseling-and-psychological-services-cps-morningside>
- [14] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/alice-health-promotion-morningside>
- [15] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/mental-health-services-cuimc>
- [16] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/center-student-wellness-cuimc>