The Reality
Unfortunately, the reality is that your child could experience relationship violence or stalking. Any of your friends or relatives could be stalked or abused, and unless you witness it, or they tell you what they are experiencing, you might never know it. Sometimes neighbors, friends or family members see signs of stalking or abuse, but do not realize it is abuse, or don’t believe it could happen to someone they know. Studies show that between 25-30% of those in high school or college have already experienced violence in an ongoing intimate relationship. Additionally, persons aged 18-24 years experience the highest rate of stalking. Parents are often the last to know, because children are embarrassed, blame themselves, and want to protect their parents from knowing about something that is so difficult to explain or understand. If your child is experiencing this, it could have started at Michigan State University or could involve abuse from someone they knew when they were in high school.

What is Relationship Violence?
Relationship violence, also referred to as domestic violence, intimate partner violence or abuse, is when one person in an ongoing relationship uses a variety of tactics to control another. These tactics include: physical abuse, threats, stalking behaviors, emotional abuse, isolation from family and friends, sexual abuse and economic control. These tactics often result in convincing victims that the abuse is their fault, silencing and discrediting victims, and keeping victims trapped in the relationship. These controlling and abusive tactics can go on without anyone else knowing it, or the abuse could take place in front of others. Typically, abusers appear to be charming and concerned for victims’ well-being in front of others.

What is Stalking?
Stalking is a series of unwanted actions, including misuse of social media, phone calls/texts/e-mails, following, damage to property, leaving gifts or other items, and other behaviors to control, threaten, harass or frighten the intended victim. Stalking is serious, often violent, and can escalate over time. The majority of stalking occurs in the context of an abusive relationship or when a relationship has ended, although, some victims are stalked by acquaintances or strangers.

Obstacles Facing College Students
Students often do not have enough experience in relationships to know that abusive behavior is not normal or healthy. College students may feel trapped by social networks or fear judgment from peers or family. Away from home for the first time, students can become isolated from their support network. Additionally, students may not have knowledge of the resources and legal remedies that are available to them.

Is My Child Safe at MSU?
Actually, your child may be safer at Michigan State University than if he or she went elsewhere. MSU is the only college or university in the United States that has a shelter and support program on campus for those who experience relationship violence or stalking. MSU Safe Place has offered shelter, counseling, support groups, advocacy services, parent consultation/support, professional
trainings and community education since 1994. An individual does not have to stay at the shelter to receive support. MSU Safe Place can offer legal, safety, housing and financial options and emotional support for MSU students, staff and faculty, and, on a limited basis, to the surrounding community. All services are free and confidential.

**If You Have Questions**
If you would like more information or have questions, contact MSU Safe Place at (517) 355-1100, ext. 2 or at noabuse@msu.edu. You can visit our website at safeplace.msu.edu.

For questions about sexual assault or sexual harassment, call the MSU Center for Survivors at (517) 355-3551 or the Crisis Line at (517) 372-6666, or visit their website at centerforsurvivors.msu.edu to access Crisis Chat services.

If you live outside of the Lansing, Michigan area and want more information about domestic violence or sexual assault resources closest to you, please call the national hotlines listed below.

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
- Statewide Sexual Assault Hotline: (855) VOICES4
- RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network): (800) 656-HOPE (4673)

**Information compiled by:**
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