Lurking versus **Stalking** versus **Lingering** (A lively discussion)

So, sometimes it might feel more comfortable to just stand back away from others in a group and watch or listen. The problem is that standing too far away or in an unexpected way can be perceived as threatening OR it might cause others to feel uneasy or confused. We usually call this lurking or if it's really intense and unwanted…stalking. Then there is the matter of lingering….what is that anyway?

It can be a little complicated when you are trying to figure out if others might think you are lurking or stalking or lingering - so a visit to Ms. Wiki(pedia) for the latest definition is in order.

LURK = When someone listens to people (at a close distance) but rarely or never participates. In the internet culture, it means reading posts, message boards, newsgroups, etc. (and people know you are there) but you never participate. People may feel like you are spying on them. Also…it can be defined as hanging around in a barely discernible way that could be perceived as a threat (even if it's not).

Would these examples be considered lurking? Can you think of examples?

- Standing a few feet away from a group at school or work while occasionally looking at the group? What if you are partially behind something like a door or tree?
- Listening to others' conversations on public transportation (bus, BART)? What if you are looking at them?
- Texting/playing on your cell phone near a group of others who are talking?

STALK = is a term commonly used to refer to unwanted and obsessive attention by an individual or group to another person. According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, "Virtually any unwanted contact between two people that directly or *indirectly* communicates a threat or places the victim in fear can be considered stalking."

Would these examples be considered stalking? Any other examples?

- Sending multiple texts to a person at school? What if they don't respond? How about Facebook?
- Going over to your neighbor's house every day? (What if they asked you not to?)
- Repeatedly asking someone if they will go out with you?
- Staring at another person for a prolonged period of time? (How long is too long)?

LINGER = is defined as a person who is slow to leave when it's time to walk away.

People can linger with their bodies (stay near another person when the conversation has ended) or with their eyes (look too long at another person's eyes or a part of their body). Lingering tends to make people feel uncomfortable or confused, too.

Would these be examples of lingering? Can you think of others?

- Standing in the doorway of a teacher/office worker quietly waiting for them to notice you?
- Standing in place when the other person looks away or ends the exchange or walks away?

How is observing different than lingering, lurking, or stalking? Or is it? What would a scale of lingering, observing, lurking, or stalking look like?

(Okay) ←→ **(Yikes!)**

Observe **Linger** **Lurk** **Stalk**

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