Detect Stalkerware On A Phone You Share

Plain-English how-to. ~30 minutes. The exact signs, the technical checks, and how to act safely if you find it.

How to detect stalkerware on iOS and Android, and what to do safely if you find it.
Print, share, and re-run quarterly.

Do This Right Now

#	STEP
1.	If in abuse context — call NDVH 1-800-799-7233 BEFORE doing technical checks.
2.	Look for behavioral signs: battery drain, data spike, overheating, knowledge they shouldn't have.
3.	Check device admins / profiles / accessibility services / installed apps / permissions.
4.	Run a reputable scanner (Malwarebytes, TrendMicro).
5.	Document evidence with screenshots before any removal.
6.	Plan removal with a DV advocate if applicable; otherwise factory reset.
7.	Restore essentials manually rather than from full cloud backup.
8.	Change all critical account passwords from a clean device after removal.

Why This Matters

- Stalkerware is a documented tool in intimate-partner abuse. The Coalition Against Stalkerware and the Safety Net project at NNEDV b
- The FTC has taken enforcement action against multiple stalkerware vendors for facilitating illegal surveillance. Stalkerware installation
- Detection without a safety plan can escalate abuse. If you suspect stalkerware and you're in a controlling relationship, please call the