



International Centre
FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Collision of Crises: The Impact of COVID 19 on Human Trafficking

Jordan Greenbaum, MD

International Centre for Missing
and Exploited Children



Objectives

Be familiar with the risk factors for human trafficking

Understand how HT risk factors may be exacerbated by COVID 19 mitigation efforts

Be familiar with strategies professionals can use to mitigate risk and protect children

A word about words....

What is Human Trafficking?

Action

Recruits
Harbors
Entices
Transports
Provides Obtains or
maintains a person
OR
[patronizes /solicits
sex]

Means

Force
OR
Fraud
OR
Coercion

Purpose

Involuntary servitude
OR
Debt Bondage
OR
Slavery
OR
Sexual exploitation

What is Human Trafficking?

Action

Recruits
Harbors
Entices
Transports
Provides Obtains or
maintains a person
OR
[patronizes /solicits
sex]

Means

Force
OR
Fraud
OR
Coercion

Purpose

Involuntary servitude
OR
Debt Bondage
OR
Slavery
OR
Sexual exploitation

Trafficking in the U.S.

No reliable estimates of prevalence/incidence

30? 30,000? 3,000,000?
300?

When we think of trafficking, we think of....

Sex Trafficking

- Foreign victims
- Girls/Women
- Paid sex ('prostitution')
- Men as traffickers

Labor Trafficking

- Foreign victims
- Boys/Men
- Farm work

But What About.....

Sex Trafficking

Boys/Men as victims

Transgender victims

Americans as victims

Female traffickers

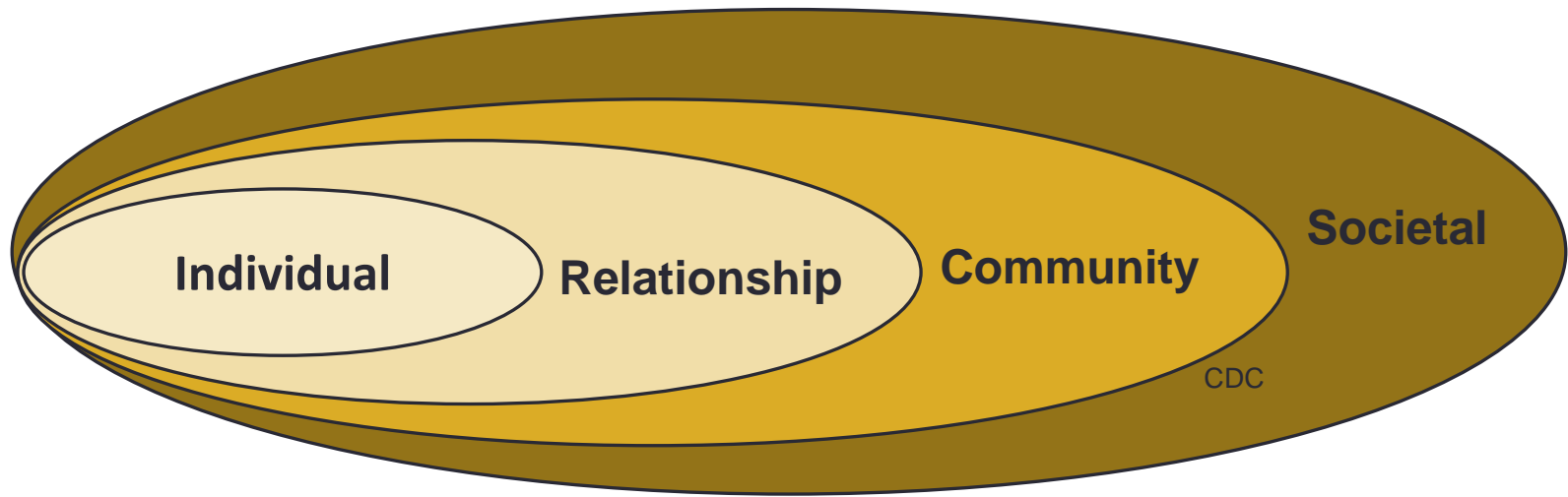
Minors as 'recruiters'

Labor Trafficking

Girls/Women as victims

Construction,
Hospitality, Service
work, Domestic work,
Landscaping, Forced
Criminality

Who's at Risk for Human Trafficking?



Individual

Hx maltreatment
Homeless/runaway
LGBTQ+ status
Substance misuse
Hx with JJ, CPS
Unaccompanied
minor

Relationship

Family violence
Familial poverty
Family dysfunction
Forced migration

Community

Tolerance of sexual
exploitation
High crime rate
Lack of community
resources/support
Transient male
populations

Societal

Gender-based
violence &
discrimination
Cultural practices
Natural disasters
Political/social
upheaval

What Are Their Risk Factors?

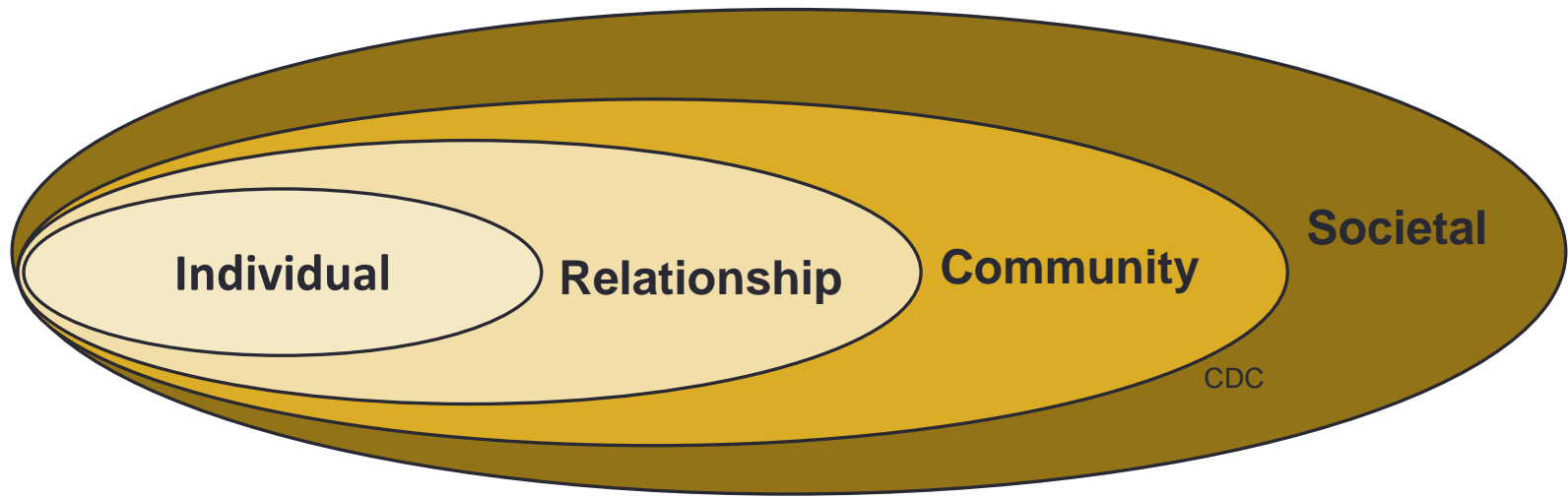
Hector is a 17 yo male from a small village near Villa Nueva. His parents worry about gang violence, especially since Hector has mild cognitive delays. His mother works with an employment recruiter who promises a job in a restaurant in Houston.

Pat is a 14 yo transgender youth who faces peer ostracism and family rejection of her gender identity. She has few friends. Her parents want her to 'just get a girlfriend and be normal.'

Keisha is a 15 yo female living with both working parents, and an older brother. She enjoys school and her friends and already has plans for college.

Paul is a 9 yo male who lives with his mother and 3 younger siblings. Mother has a job as a waitress at a local diner; the family receives federal benefits to help cover costs.

Will Any of the HT Risk Factors
Increase During the COVID
Pandemic?



Individual

Hx maltreatment
Homeless/runaway
LGBTQ+ status
Substance misuse
Hx with JJ, CPS
Unaccompanied
minor

Relationship

Family violence
Familial poverty
Family dysfunction
Forced migration

Community

Tolerance of sexual
exploitation
High crime rate
Lack of community
resources/support
Transient male
populations

Societal

Gender-based
violence &
discrimination
Cultural practices
Natural disasters
Political/social
upheaval

Impact of COVID 19

Social distancing and other mitigation efforts:

- Schools closed
- Non-essential businesses closed
- Shelter-in-place orders

All of This Leads to...



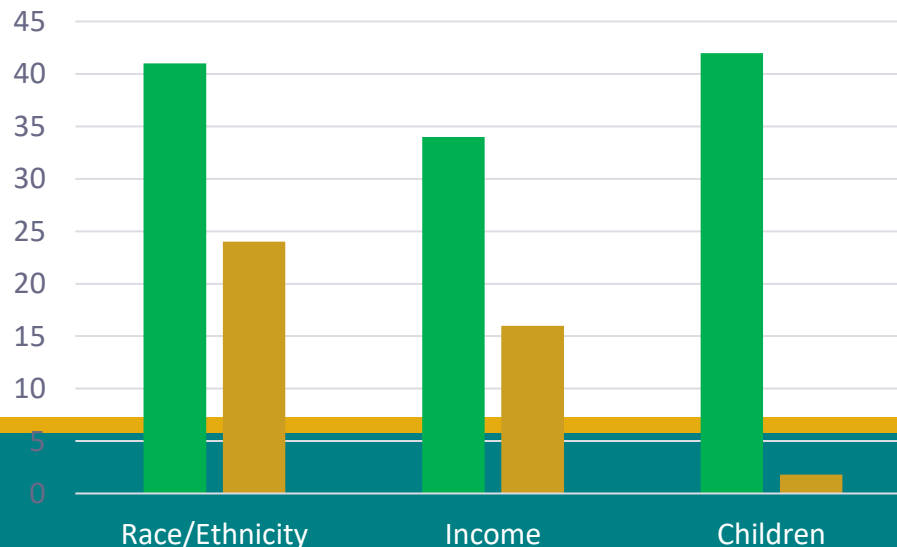
Jeff Kawalsky/AFP; Getty images

Unemployment, Financial Stressors

SUNY School Public Health survey in NYC, 3/23/20:

Respondent or household member lost job within last 2 weeks:

- 41% of **Latinx/Hispanic** community respondents (vs. 24% Caucasian and Asian respondents)
- 34% of **households with annual earnings under \$50K:** (vs. 28% of respondents earning 50-100K and 16% of those earning over 100K).
- 42% of **families with two or more children** reported household job losses (vs. 27% of those with one child or less).



What about Paul and his mother?

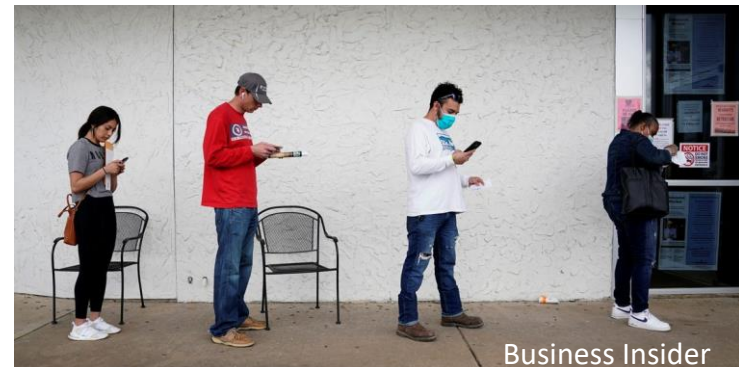
Job Losses

Early April:

- US unemployment rate reached 13%¹
- 6.6 million people lost their jobs in US¹

>17 million applied for unemployment in prior 4 weeks¹

Women and young people at especially high risk²



Food insecurity



Nearly 35 million children receive 1-2 free meals at school

Schools closed—No free meals

Federal relief allows lunches to continue, even home delivery

States and school districts creative with programming

But strategies are unproven

- Equitable distribution?
- Wide reach?
- Will stigma affect participation?

Increased 'Family Time'

Potential increases in:

- Intimate partner violence
- Limited shelter services

Surge In Domestic Violence Cases In San Francisco Since COVID-19 Stay Home Order

©CBS SFBayArea

MSN, 4/12/20

A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide

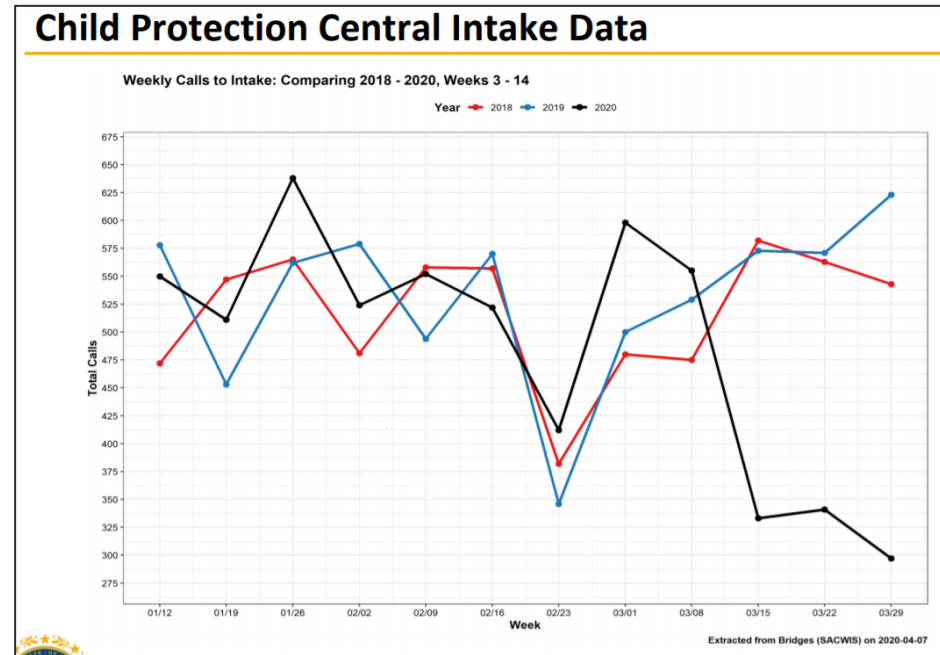
NY Times, 4/6/20, Taub

What is Keisha's family situation?

Increased 'Family Time'

Potential Increases in Child Abuse and Neglect

- Sex offender in home
- Increased stress and violence
- COVID as a trauma trigger
- Loss of mandated reporters
- Challenges in CPS investigation and intervention



NH DHHS, 2020

New Hampshire DCYF Data

State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Trend in Data during COVID-19

Division for Children, Youth and Families

April 7, 2020



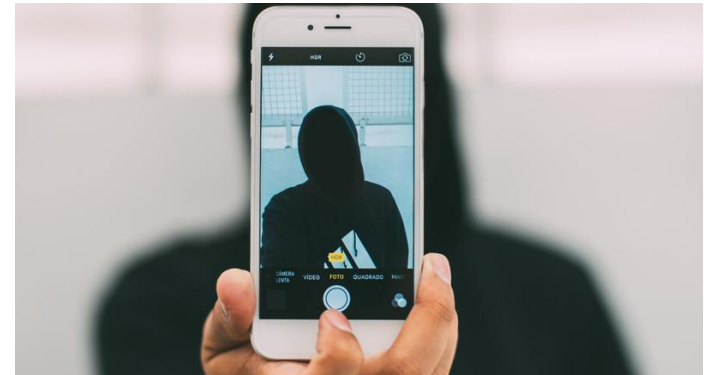
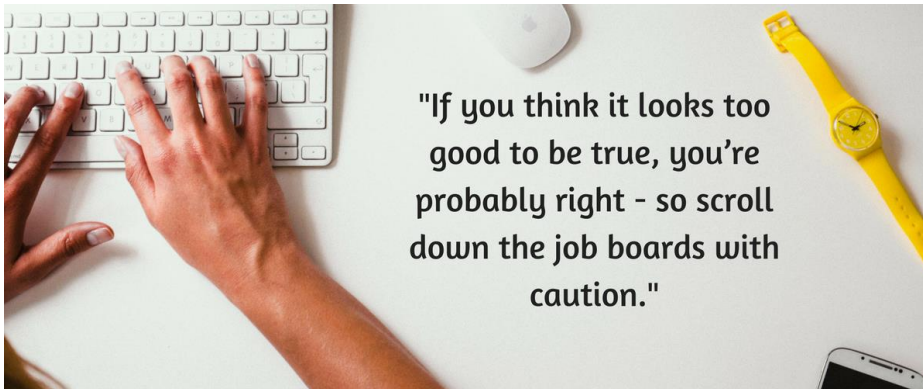
Change in number of reports by reporter category for most recent week

Category	% change from overall composite	% change from Week 13 to 14	# from Week 14
School/Childcare	-58%	13%	45
CPSW	7%	36%	19
Mental Health	-36%	13%	27
Other	-28%	-14%	25
Social Worker (incl. school social workers)	-44%	24%	21
Law Enforcement	-27%	-25%	75
Court/Probation/GAL	13%	8%	13
Parent/Guardian/Family	-44%	-33%	37
Anonymous/Unknown	-40%	13%	17
Medical	-55%	6%	18
Other Comm. Agency	-28%	-17%	15
Total	-39%	-9%	312

Online and Telephone Risks

- Increased internet use by children
 - Online solicitation
 - Child sexual abuse materials
 - Recruitment for sex or labor trafficking

Think about Pat
and Keisha, or
even Paul...



Scenarios

Hector is a victim of labor trafficking. His traffickers house him in a crowded room above the restaurant. When business closes, he is told to leave, but is not given his passport. He is homeless and jobless.

Pat is a 14 yo transgender youth who faces peer ostracism and family rejection of her gender identity. During the shelter-in-place period, Pat is cyber-bullied, and increasingly harassed by her parents. She finally runs away. She has no money, until a man approaches her with an offer...

Scenarios

Keisha is now at home, both parents working and preoccupied, Keisha is online, meets a 25 year old who wants a relationship.....

Paul is a 9 yo male who lives with his mother and 3 younger siblings. Mother loses her job when the diner closes and the family faces eviction and hunger. She decides to allow the landlord to 'visit' her son in exchange for rent. She also takes a job at a shipping company, with long hours and below minimum-wage salary.

What Can We Do?

Encourage adults and children to stay connected to family, friends

Increase family awareness of risks for exploitation/trafficking

Offer support

Talk to Parents and Children

Understand that some behavior may be due to anxiety around COVID

Encourage child to tell trusted adult if they suspect a peer is being abused or exploited

Talk to child about online safety; set safety features on i-phones, laptops, etc.

Talk to children about what they are doing online

Discuss healthy relationships

Talk about common labor/sex trafficking recruitment strategies

What Can We Do?

Check in on high-risk families

- How are they impacted by COVID?
- If using videoconferencing, be observant for signs of abuse/trafficking

Screen for violence and HT

Work with vulnerable youth/adults to develop safety plan



What Can We Do?

Offer resources for:

- LGBTQ+ support
- IPV support
- Stressed parents (hotlines; online tips)
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center
 - 1-888-373-7888
 - Text: BeFree
- Suicide hotlines
- Teen hotlines
- Apps for coping with stress
- Online AA meetings



Latin American
Association

Reporting Suspicions

If suspect imminent danger: Call 911

Follow mandatory reporting laws and your organization's policy on child protection

Respect client rights

Community Advocacy

Advocate for school lunch programs that are effective and acceptable

Advocate for moratoria on rent and eviction, emergency access to safe housing

When social distancing is lifted, provide job incentives to hire most vulnerable, marginalized

Increase public awareness of labor rights, common exploitative situations, and where to go for help if being exploited



Resources

International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children



- Child protection during COVID crisis
 - <https://www.icmec.org/child-protection-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>
 - **For educators:** <https://www.icmec.org/child-protection-during-covid-19-response/>
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (child maltreatment resources)
 - <https://www.apsac.org/covid-19>
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center
 - 1-888-373-7888; Text: BeFree
- Internet Watch Foundation (www.iwf.org)
- Polaris Project (www.polarisproject.org)



Conclusions

Reason to expect rise in labor and sex trafficking of children and adults during and after COVID pandemic

Consequences of pandemic mitigation efforts exacerbate risk for exploitation

Professionals have a role to play in primary and secondary prevention



A poster with a grid of 12 images showing various human faces, some behind bars, and a central yellow banner with the text "HUMAN TRAFFICKING". Below the grid, there is text in English and Spanish providing information on how to seek help for human trafficking victims.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

If you or someone you know is being forced to engage in an activity and cannot leave,

whether it is prostitution, housework, farm work, factory work, retail work, restaurant work, or any other activity, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at **888-373-7888** or text **INFO** or **HELP** to **233-733** to access help and services. Victims of slavery and human trafficking are protected under United States and Florida law.

Si usted o alguien que conoce está siendo obligado a participar en una actividad y no puede dejarla,

ya sea prostitución, tareas domésticas, labores agrícolas, labores en una fábrica, labores en un comercio minorista, labores en un restaurante o cualquier otra actividad, comuníquese con el Centro Nacional de Recursos contra la Trata de Personas (National Human Trafficking Resource Center) llamando al **888-373-7888** o envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra **INFO** o **HELP (AYUDA)** al **233-733** para acceder a asistencia y servicios. Las víctimas de la esclavitud y de la trata de personas están protegidas por la leyes de Florida y de los Estados Unidos.

For more information, visit the Florida Department of Health's website at <http://www.floridadoh.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/human-trafficking/index.html>

Para obtener más información, visite el sitio web del Departamento de Salud de Florida (Florida Department of Health) en <http://www.floridadoh.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/human-trafficking/index.html>

Thank you!

Jordan Greenbaum, MD
International Centre for Missing and
Exploited Children
Tel: +1 404-785-3829
Email: Jordan.greenbaum@choa.org

www.icmec.org

