



COVID-19, Social Determinants of Health & Human Trafficking

Melanie Blow COO Stop Abuse Campaign, founding member RRCAHT
Dr. Celia McIntosh DNP, RN, FNP-C, PMHNP-BC, President RRCAHT

8/26/2020
7:00pm



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Rochester Regional Coalition Against Human Trafficking



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The Rochester Regional Coalition Against Human Trafficking (RRCAHT) is dedicated to eliminating human trafficking in our communities through education, advocacy, and networking with individuals and organizations.

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Presenter: Melanie Blow



Melanie Blow is the Chief Operations Officer for the Stop Abuse Campaign, a national organization that prevents Adverse Childhood Experiences through public education and public policy. As a member of RRCAHT's steering committee, and uses her experience to help RRCAHT manage its media and communications goals. Melanie also sits on the Trauma Informed Community Initiative of Western NY, the Downstate Crime Victims Coalition (the only member west of the Hudson) and is a member of the public policy committee of the Association of Professionals Against Child Abuse.



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Presenter: Dr. Celia McIntosh



Dr. Celia McIntosh is a Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner who completed her Masters and Doctorate degrees (DNP) at the St. John Fisher College; she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the College at Brockport State University of NY and her Associate of Applied Science in nursing from Monroe community College (MCC). Dr. McIntosh specialty areas include neurology. Her interest includes health policy, advocacy, human trafficking, psychological trauma, and child sexual assault. She joined the Rochester Regional Coalition against Human Trafficking Coalition (RRCAHT) in 2014 in an effort to bridge her love for nursing, law and advocacy. As a member of the coalition she worked on the visibility subcommittee. She has been the current chair of RRCAHT since June 2016. Dr. McIntosh is passionate about increasing awareness about human trafficking, ending human trafficking and becoming a voice for policy and social change in the fight against human trafficking.



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Objectives



- Define human trafficking with a brief overview
- Discuss the impact of social determinants of health and the relation to human trafficking
- Discuss how human trafficking is affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Discuss some organizational strategies to assist client/patient during this pandemic

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Human Trafficking



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Trafficking Defined

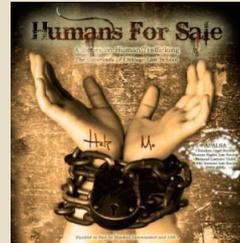


The Definition of Trafficking

The **Federal** term

“Severe forms of trafficking in persons” means:

- A. Sex trafficking, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age
- B. The recruitment, harboring, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery



Source: uchicago.edu

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Trafficking Defined

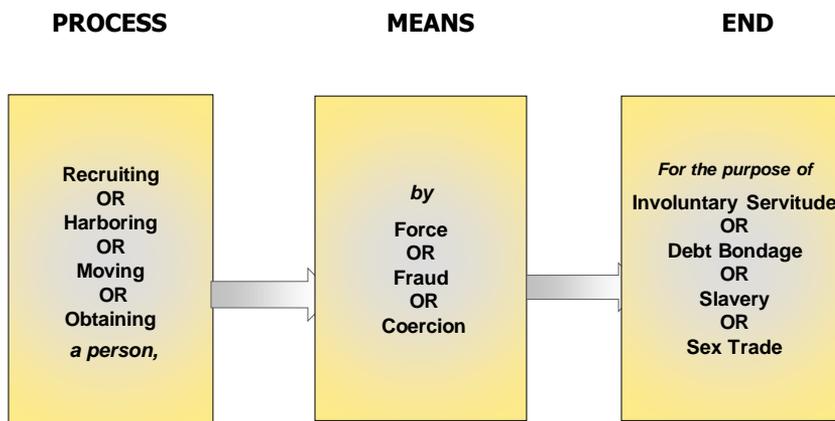


- There are three categories of human trafficking victims:
 - Those under 18 years involved in commercial sex acts
 - Those 18 years or over involved in commercial sex acts through force, fraud or coercion
 - Those forced to perform labor and/or services in conditions of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery through force, fraud or coercion



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Three Elements of Trafficking

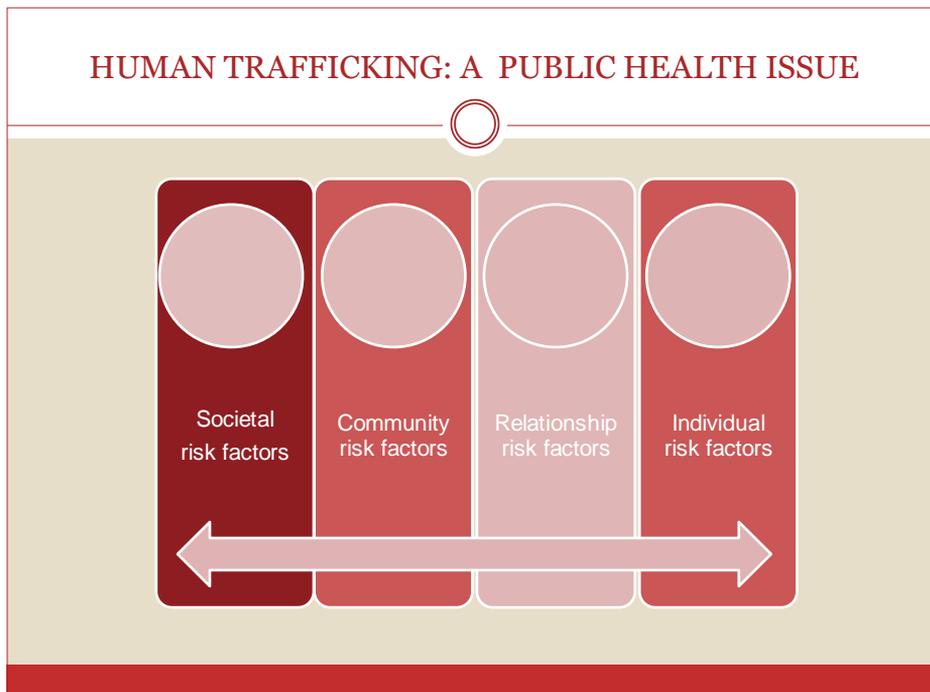


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Trafficking

- Ongoing, based on a relationship between trafficker and victim
- No consent
- Crime against individual

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Child Sexual Abuse vs Child Sex Trafficking

- Trafficking involves money being paid for sexual contact with a child
- Most sexual abuse is non-commercial, offenders rely on a relationship with the child and their family for sexual access
- Child sex trafficking represents a small percent of child sexual abuse

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Similar Means of Abuse in Trafficking & Domestic Violence



- Abuse can range from physical abuse to non-physical abuse
- Non-physical abuse can create a blend of loyalty, fear and dependence on the trafficker that makes it difficult for the victim to leave the situation
- It is important to note that force does not have to be present for the situation to be trafficking

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Red Flags: Indicators of Trafficking



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed to leave living or working environment • No possession of personal or financial documents, or ID • Frequent mobility, does not know address • Paid little/nothing • Unusually fearful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minor providing commercial sex • Signs of physical abuse, malnourishment, lack of healthcare • Story is very inconsistent, and claims they are just here to visit |
|---|---|

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Common Traits of Trafficking Sites



- Signs of drug use
- Health and safety violations
- Overcrowding (e.g., workers sleeping on floors)
- Workers reluctant to speak to visitors
- Signs of fear, disorientation, physical abuse
- Presence of single person answering all visitors' questions, not allowing other workers to speak
- Presence of women or very young workers who appear to be unaccompanied by friends or family



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HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE



Human Trafficking During Covid19 Pandemic



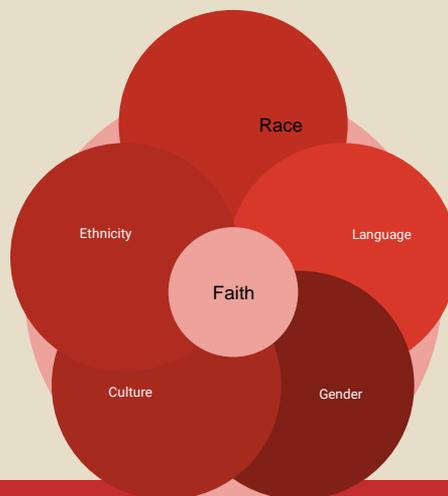
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Societal Effect of COVID 19

- New public social mandates
 - Social distancing
 - Shelter in place orders
 - School/business closure
 - Event/meeting cancellations
 - Expanded online communication
 - Increased unemployment, poverty
 - Increased homelessness & vulnerability

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Human Trafficking Intersectionality



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Social Determinants of Human Trafficking



- Human Trafficking is a much bigger problem than traffickers. It is caused by social determinants of health, including:
- Poverty
- Health Disparities
- Social Justice
- Environmental
- Education
- Mental Health

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How is Human Trafficking Affected by the COVID -19 Pandemic



- Poverty - increased at record levels, record unemployment
- Health Disparities- leads to decreased screening
- Child Abuse/trauma- child abuse likely increasing, helpful CPS interventions decreasing
- Social Justice/Discrimination- systematic racism is being made obvious now
- Mental Illness- increased demand for mental health services

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Trafficking and Pathogens



- Trafficking victims often forced into substandard housing, or work in crowded/ unsafe conditions
- Little access to health care, PPE/other tools of risk mitigation
- Co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues that further compromise their ability to fight off disease.
- Those with the least control over their life have the least control over their health, are hit harder by infectious diseases and can serve as a reservoirs.

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What about trafficking victims?



- Closure of diversionary courts
- Telemedicine makes it harder to build trust and evaluate patients
- Suspension/ reduction of outreach activities and homeless shelters*
- Increased use of food banks and thrift stores means less access to food and essentials
- Health care harder to access, especially without a cell phone

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What Can we Do



- We need to elevate issues concerning child welfare, economic justice and social justice to the level of public health emergencies. Because they are.

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Preventing Trafficking amidst COVID-19



- Assess high risk individuals
- Address social determinants of health
- Connect individuals with resources they need
- Educate other healthcare/service professionals
- Build health system protocols

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Organizational Strategies during the Pandemic



- Expand digital engagement with clients
- Evaluate for client needs and vulnerabilities
- Help develop a safety plan for client and family
- Have a transition plan for care or services
- Be mindful of trauma and build trust

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References



Retrieved from

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Questions?



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