

Human Trafficking During the COVID-19 Crisis: A Provider's Perspective

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[Human trafficking](#) involves individuals being compelled to work, provide services or engage in commercial sex through the use of force, fraud or coercion. COVID-19 has negatively impacted the [screening](#) and identification of human trafficking victims as well as [reduced survivors' access](#) to the mechanisms associated with successful recovery (e.g., case workers, social workers and legal assistance). In addition, strained finances could mean that human traffickers have more pressure to make money and [target individuals and children at risk](#) for being trafficked.

Policymakers could consider increasing the levels of support and awareness of the challenges COVID-19 adds to the lives of not only victims of human trafficking, but also those responsible for helping them.

- Provide online materials - training, education, protocols, and assessments - for individuals (e.g., health professionals, first responders, providers) working with patients at high risk of human trafficking. Broader areas of the health field industry need to be aware of the connection between COVID-19 and human trafficking. Online materials and resources could help providers better respond to human trafficking, connect survivors with necessary resources, and manage their own experiences with vicarious trauma.
- Expand digital avenues for innovative engagement with clients. Engaging with isolated victims of human trafficking regularly via secure telecommunication may promote their safety and use of harm reduction strategies.
- Support initiatives to meet the [basic needs](#) of victims and survivors of human trafficking.
- Promote partnerships between anti-trafficking and disaster agencies to create and implement disaster protocols and first aid psychology to protect both victims/survivors of human trafficking and the larger community during the COVID-19 crisis.

Resources for human trafficking victims:

- Office on Trafficking in Persons: An Office of the Administration for Children & Families (ACF)
- National Human Trafficking Hotline: Call 1-888-3737-888 or text INFO or HELP to "BEFREE" (233733)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.HOPE (4673)
- StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-762-8483
- Trans LifeLine staffed exclusively by trans operators with policy against non-consensual active rescue: 1-877-565-8860
- National Parent Helpline emotional support and advocacy for parents: 1-855-427-2736

