

Why is there an uptick of human trafficking during major events?

January 31 2020, by Ayleen Barbel Fattal



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Human trafficking can occur at any time and at any place throughout the world, but major festivals and events including the Super Bowl are known to result in an increase of human trafficking activity. Anti-

trafficking expert Sandy Skelaney has organized victim outreach efforts during the previous two Super Bowl games hosted in Miami. Skelaney is an adjunct lecturer who teaches sex trafficking courses in the FIU Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs and she is the faculty advisor for FIU's Student Alliance Fighting Exploitation. Skelaney provided FIU News with insights into the rise of human trafficking during major events.

What is human trafficking?

Human [trafficking](#) is any form of recruitment, obtaining, transferring, transporting or harboring of somebody by the means of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or labor exploitation.

Why is there an uptick of human trafficking during major events?

The biggest driver of demand for commercial sex is transient male populations: sports events, audiences, tourists, business travelers, migrant laborers, truck drivers and the military. There will be an increase in incidents of trafficking around big events like the Super Bowl due to the increase in demand. Anywhere there is demand for commercial sex or cheap labor, you will find people being exploited in those industries.

Who is likely to be targeted by traffickers?

While anyone can become victim of trafficking, some people are more at risk of being trafficked than others. Traffickers exploit layers of vulnerability—age, gender, being a member of a marginalized social group, isolation or loneliness, being in poverty, homelessness, having a history of sexual or physical abuse, having a criminal record, being

jobless, being in an unfamiliar environment, not speaking the language or not having legal documentation. Since much of the trafficking recruitment happens through deception and false promises of job offers or a romantic relationship, or a manipulation of someone's needs, vulnerable people will often be those who are desperate to survive, improve their economic status, get famous or get taken care of or loved by a partner.

What are some common misconceptions about human trafficking?

- Not all [human trafficking](#) is sex trafficking. There will also be an increase in labor trafficking associated with an increase in the demand for cheap labor during the Super Bowl.
- Not all sex trafficking happens to women and girls. Boys, men and transgender individuals are also trafficked and are often overlooked as potential victims.
- Not all provocatively dressed women are sex workers.
- Not all prostitution is sex trafficking. However, trafficking does exist in every aspect and venue of the sex industry.

What resources are available to help people who are being trafficked?

The [Women's Fund Miami-Dade](#) is coordinating outreach and awareness activities with the Miami Super Bowl Host Committee and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office. Their campaign includes a rapid response local text or call trafficking hotline, 305-FIX-STOP (305-349-7867) that connects victims or [community members](#) who report trafficking crimes to local rapid response resources. The best thing someone can do to help prevent trafficking is to be mindful of the people around you. Understand that fueling an exploitative industry by being a consumer of

it perpetuates the abuse of victims.

Provided by Florida International University

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