



**Stop It Now!**<sup>®</sup>

# **FY20 Annual Report**

July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020



Dear Friends of Stop It Now! –

When we began the 2020 fiscal year, none of us had any idea of the challenges we would face in the coming months. The word “unprecedented” has become a common way to attempt to describe our current environment. We've had to make our way through uncertainty about what is next, how we will care for our families and loved ones, how we can unite as a community and how we can stay healthy and safe. While we have all wondered what tomorrow might bring, one thing has remained constant: our vision that children are entitled to childhoods that are free from trauma from any form of violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation.

This vision continues to lead all that we do at Stop It Now!, and while we and the world around us have had many ups and downs, I'm proud of how Stop It Now! was able to adapt, respond and succeed in our strategic goals in FY20. In a turbulent year, we leveraged our experience to produce new online resources. We earned the trust of new individual donors for gifts of all sizes. And we continued building partnerships that will sustain us for the future.

As always, we believe that the conversations we have about sexual abuse are key to actual prevention, and we brought these conversations to many, on a variety of platforms. From conference presentations to our webinars sharing real stories of adults addressing sexual abuse concerns in their lives, we continued to share the insights, tools and information so that anyone, anywhere, can feel more confident and prepared to address safety planning.

With COVID-19 and the resulting isolation and stressors, our work became more important than ever. We quickly shared resources to help families plan for safety at home, online and while choosing emergency care. We increased visibility of our unique resources for adults who are worried about their own sexual thoughts and behaviors involving children. Through our emails, Helpline contacts and website traffic, we know that these adults faced particular challenges in staying safe.

As we close this fiscal year and enter a new one, we are hopeful – despite the ongoing pandemic and economic uncertainty. We know that prevention conversations are happening and that adults are taking action to protect kids and address their own thoughts and behaviors. We will continue seeking and securing partnerships that amplify our reach and keep more children safe.

Jenny Coleman, MA, LMHC  
Director, Stop It Now!



# Helpline journal article and report share data, stories

In September, the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* published our article, "I Didn't Know Where To Go": An Examination of Stop It Now!'s Sexual Abuse Prevention Helpline. The in-depth analysis of data from December 2012 to March 2018 showcases the vital importance of our Helpline as a tool for adults to seek help in concerning situations where they happen most: in private settings.

In October, we released a report on our Helpline, *23,000 hopeful conversations about child sexual abuse and prevention*. The report shares data, stories and insights that resulted from the sheer presence of this unique prevention resource over the last 24 years. It demonstrates that our Helpline fills an essential need in child sexual abuse prevention – a safe place for adults to get help with extremely sensitive, difficult and often terrifying concerns. Equally important, it demonstrates that people will reach out and act preventatively when there is a place to go. This is primary for prevention: making sure that people have access to accurate information and help when they need it.

The same month, our director presented to the [National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation](#) in Alexandria, VA, held at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) during their annual meeting. We later joined with other coalition members to lobby on Capitol Hill for increased funding for prevention, supporting a successful \$1,000,000 appropriation for funding child sexual abuse in the FY2020 federal budget agreement.

Two additional presentations on the report were canceled due to COVID-19, though Now! has been invited to participate in both in the coming fiscal year.



## 23,000 CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND PREVENTION

The saying "If you build it, they will come" proves accurate in the case of the Helpline. We have watched the numbers of people contacting the Helpline grow, and in 2018, we responded to 1,922 requests for personal help – more requests than in our first five years combined. Since that first phone call, we have responded to 23,002 requests for help, and we have grown from a single toll-free phone line to multiple access points through email, chat, social media and letters.

At the end of 2008, the U.S. economic downturn resulted in the loss of many of our individual donors, and the Helpline closed temporarily. However, even during that period, people continued to contact Now! via email seeking help. And again, during a brief closure for reorganization in 2013, several adults still reached out to us, and volunteers responded to us many inquiries as they could.

As high-profile cases of sexual abuse become public knowledge through media coverage, our Helpline sees an increase in the number of individuals seeking help.



Original Research

## "I Didn't Know Where To Go": An Examination of Stop It Now!'s Sexual Abuse Prevention Helpline

Billie-Jo Grant, PhD,<sup>1,2,3</sup> Ryan T. Shields, PhD,<sup>1</sup> Joan Tabachnick, MPPH,<sup>4</sup> and Jerney Coleman, MA, LMHC<sup>5</sup>

**Abstract**  
This study examines data from Stop It Now!'s Helpline in the United States primarily over a 3-year, 3-month period and offers insights into the needs of individuals and families confronting issues related to child sexual abuse (CSA). Stop It Now!'s Helpline serves the global community by providing support, information, and guidance on topics in need, such as helping to identify and respond to warning signs of sexually abusive behaviors in adults, adolescents, or children. More than 7,000 (94% = 7,122) nonidentifiable user records are the subject of this inquiry and reflect individuals who contacted the Helpline between December 1, 2012, and March 7, 2018. The article also shares the analysis in a larger context through an overview that includes total user counts of the service since its inception in 1995 (N = 21,000). Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of helpline users identified as husbands, family members, or friends/acquaintances of an individual at risk for abuse. The majority of users knew both the person at risk for abuse

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View the journal article and Helpline report [on our website.](#)

## Helpline contacts FY20

1,922 calls, emails, chats, letters and social messages

46% knew both the child and adult at risk

16% called about their own thoughts and behaviors

## Circles of Safety: Primary prevention

As our signature training on primary prevention, Circles of Safety is an important component of our work. In October, we hosted the 2-day training at Klingberg Family Centers in Connecticut. **We reached professionals in youth-serving organizations with the tools to prevent abuse, and we trained many of those attendees to deliver this training in their workplace for staff and constituents.**

In November, the U.S. Center for SafeSport invited Now! to present to their membership of National Governing Bodies of Olympic Sports. We discussed abuse prevention through policies and procedures, warning signs and ways to create sexual safety in sports.

After our first self-hosted trainings last fiscal year, we were thrilled to host the training again, scheduled for April 2020. This training was canceled due to the COVID-19 crisis, but we are eager to resume trainings in the next fiscal year, virtually or in person. In the meantime, we have met with individuals who completed our Train the Trainers session to adapt the workshop to be presented online in their communities.

## Advice columns share expert help

We published eight advice columns this year, offering expert guidance on problematic sexual behaviors in children, speaking up as a survivor, and talking to an adult who doesn't respect boundaries.

Our most popular column from this year has more than 3,300 views. ["Can mom get teen son help without a report being filed?"](#) explores ways to get support for a 13-year-old boy who harmed his younger sister, while also supporting the sister and ensuring everyone's safety. In our response, we offered guidance on accessing therapy, the importance of reporting child sexual abuse and getting complete family support.

## Professional Conferences

Director Jenny Coleman, MA, LMHC, led presentations and trainings in partnership with other experts and thought leaders throughout the year.

### AUGUST 2019

Child sexual abuse prevention for youth serving organizations at the Independent Living Conference, sponsored by the Daniel Memorial Institute.

### OCTOBER 2019

Workshop for the Smith College School for Social Work's professional education program on primary prevention.

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Lessons learned across our programs at Darkness to Light's IGNITE conference.

### DECEMBER 2019

Overview of Now! for the CDC's Child Abuse and Neglect Team.

### FEBRUARY 2020

Tenets of sexual abuse prevention to professionals at the Annual South Carolina Early Childhood Conference.

### MAY 2020

Guest presenter for Safer Society's webinar on preventing child sexual abuse in the COVID-19 era.

## Webinar series grows in popularity

Through our quarterly webinar series, we explore Helpline requests in detail, proactively answering common questions and providing more context for issues around sexual abuse, development and safety. This fiscal year's webinar topics were:

- ["I'm afraid my brother is grooming a child"](#) – assessing safety, setting boundaries and protecting children with conversations and actions with close family members.
- ["What survivors ask"](#) – top resources that survivors of child sexual abuse ask when they call us, including how to protect their children, how to get support for themselves, and how the national response to abuse has changed over time.
- ["Is my child a pedophile?"](#) – a common question about age-appropriate sexual behavior, boundaries and consent among youth age 13 and older. Guest expert Becky Palmer, MS, discussed youth who sexually harm others and how we can help them.
- ["Someone I love sexually abused a child"](#) – overview of the journey and needs of non-offending loved ones. Guest speakers were [Elaine Spangler](#), a woman who took this journey when her husband was convicted of sexual abuse, and Candice Christiansen, LCMHC, CSAT-S the founder and director of [The Global Prevention Project](#).

Attendance of the live webinars doubled from the previous year, and between attendance and recordings, more than 800 adults viewed these webinars. We'll continue using these and other online options in the year ahead.

## Generous donor supports resources for adults

Elaine Spangler generously provided us a grant of \$20,000 to fund programs for people who are struggling with unwanted sexual interests in children. With her support, we are piloting enhanced Helpline services, including a mentorship program for at-risk adults, revisions to our resources and advertising to reach this audience. We'll be working on this project in the coming year and are eager to give adults hope and help so they can make decisions about their behaviors that keep them and children safe.



Elaine spoke on a webinar.  
[View her story here.](#)



This was the third year of our partnership with the Smith College School for Social Work. Graduate-level interns review our Helpline data to find trends and stories. This year, interns focused on people who struggle with sexual thoughts and behaviors toward children, and their work informed our webinar about non-offending loved ones.

# Our COVID-19 Response

As the country shut down in March for a planned 2-week quarantine, Stop It Now! developed immediate resources for families during times of increased stress, reduced childcare and no school. The lockdown presented a vital time to plan for safety and be watchful over new and changing childcare and living arrangements. The initiatives below outline our response to the pandemic.

## Emergency resources

In immediate response to the national quarantine order, we published recommendations and advice for parents learning to navigate the new normal. This included:

- On March 17, we posted [recommendations for finding safe, secure childcare](#). National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Chicago Children's Advocacy Center and others shared our recommendations with their networks. From March to June, the article had more than 2,500 views.
- On March 27, we shared online safety tips as schools, businesses and communities extended their shelter-in-place orders and children and adults spent more time online. Recommendations included maintaining boundaries, talking about internet activity often and setting age-appropriate rules.
- On April 2, we marked the start of Child Abuse Prevention Month with the unique resources we provide for adults with concerning thoughts or behaviors. These isolated adults struggled with less routine, structure and outside supports.



Throughout April, we published **weekly videos** to recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Under the theme "Safety in COVID Times," the videos covered common topics on the Helpline with a special focus on the time of isolation. Jenny and our Helpline Counselors, Mackenzie and Micah, covered topics to help parents recognize signs of vulnerability in their children or in other adults in the home. [View the series on Facebook.](#)

## Resources for adults concerned about their own thoughts and behaviors

Adults who need support to prevent their own potential abusive behaviors struggle with less routine, structure and outside supports. Their boundaries were vulnerable. We heard from more of these adults worried about their own thoughts, including viewing child sexual abuse material (CSAM, often called child pornography), and they were more apt to [specifically refer to COVID-19 as a contributor](#) to their stress and risk.

We created new resources to [serve these adults](#) and the people who care about them, including advice columns on [resources for adults who have not abused](#) and on [staying safe during quarantine](#).

The Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at John Hopkins assembled a list of resources for families to prevent child sexual abuse during the pandemic and, in concert with co-investigator Michael Seto from the Royal Ottawa Healthcare Group and support of the Oak Foundation, a list for individuals concerned about their own sexual feelings involving children. Our resources were prominent in both lists.

### More adults seek help

From March to June 2020, many self-help pages drew more traffic than the same period in 2019. Although our total web traffic fell 3%:

An advice column about [a man's sexual attraction to his step-daughter](#) jumped 750%.

Our [FAQ about CSAM](#) being abusive spiked nearly 500%.

A resource about [getting help to stop looking at CSAM](#) climbed nearly 200%.

Our Online Help Center [hub for adults concerned about themselves](#) increased 150%.

A resource about [age and consent](#) also increased 150%.

## Safety planning at home

Our focus has always been on primary prevention by creating safe environments that stop abuse before it can begin. Shelter-in-place orders created multiple factors that increase the risk of abuse, including increased stress on adults who normally protect children. Throughout the early weeks of the crisis, we emphasized [taking time to create family safety plans](#), check in with children and adults, and [access resources like our Helpline](#) to get support and guidance.

## Black Lives Matter

"We know that we can only truly address prevention when we're willing to look at the intersectionality of systemic racism. Disproportionate numbers of black and brown people experience all types of violence at greater rates. Poverty and inequitable living environments foster vulnerability that increase risks of violence – including sexual abuse and exploitation." [View our full statement](#) on anti-racism and child sexual abuse.

## Intern gains perspective



Intern Natalie Najman from Smith College School for Social Work wrote a lovely recap of her experience and lessons learned:

*"I found an organization that recognized the impact of childhood sexual abuse permeates beyond any single incident. Within this lens, I learned that community engagement is one of the most valuable tools in prevention and recovery. Community engagement can come in many forms: a friend to hold your hand and someone to call when you need to talk, weekly church services or monthly support groups. Community engagement can offer scaffolding when you need it most."*

[View her full perspective.](#)

## Thought-leadership with coalitions

Peers in the prevention field seek out Stop It Now! for our expertise on primary prevention, treatment for adults concerned about their behaviors and prevention policies. During this fiscal year, we participated in:

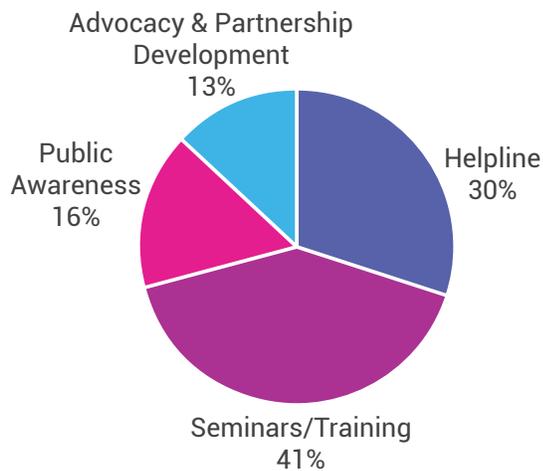
- A task force of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's program advisory council. In this role, we advise on harmful sexual behavior in youth that crosses over to a hands-on sexual offense committed against another youth.
- A committee of the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse to revise the National Plan to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse.
- The Oak Foundation's new "Prevent CSA Capacity Building Initiative." Together with 19 other global partners, we will build our capacity and voices.
- Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers' (ATSA's) Secondary Prevention Project. Our colleagues include renowned researchers and clinicians who serve help seeking non-offending individuals with offense-related sexual interests.
- The international advisory board for the Laboratory of Evolutionary Sexology and Psychopathology of the National Institute of Mental Health in the Czech Republic. This board is part of the Paraphile project, the first program of primary prevention of sexual delinquency in the Czech Republic.
- A subject matter expert in meetings of the National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction, facilitated by the Dept. of Justice.

Parents reached out to us for an article on child-to-child sexual abuse and harassment. The article covers the difference between age-appropriate, safe behaviors and those that cross the line, as well as safety protocols parents should expect from daycares and schools. [View the article.](#)

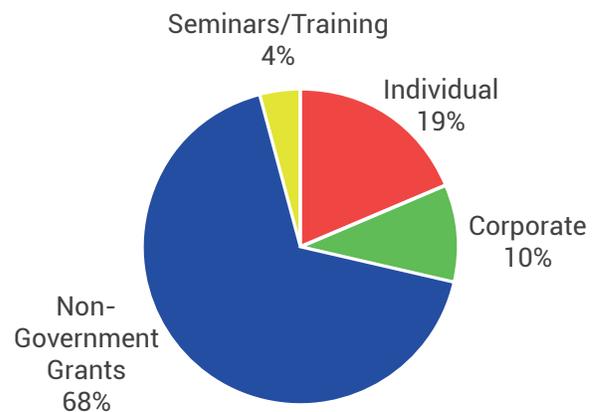


## Finances

Expenses: \$307,106



Revenue: \$307,106



## Building our community

As part of our strategic plan to be financially stable, we continue growing our base of individual and foundation donors. This year's fundraising campaigns yielded \$41,000 from private donors – up from \$30,000 the previous fiscal year! Nearly 250 donors made gifts for #GivingTuesday, birthday fundraisers, a Mother's Day campaign and others. In May, Now! founder Fran Henry contributed \$1,200 – her government subsidy – as a matching gift. Generous supporters exceeded her match, raising a combined total of \$2,572 for our work during an uncertain time.

This is our largest network of individual donors on record, and we're pleased to welcome each member in our community of supporters and steward their generous gifts.

## Website Reach FY20

1,216,366  
visitors

4,277,747  
pageviews

900,000 views of  
Online Help Center

In January, our director was interviewed on Tail of the Bell, a podcast by and for survivors of child sexual abuse. [Listen to the episode on our 360-degree view of prevention.](#)



## Questions about child sexual abuse? Our Helpline is here.

Our confidential, toll-free Helpline is available to anyone who is concerned about a child's sexual safety, including people who are worried about their thoughts or behaviors towards children.



**PHONE**  
1.888.PREVENT



**EMAIL**  
[helpline@stopitnow.org](mailto:helpline@stopitnow.org)



**CHAT**  
[stopitnow.org/chat](https://stopitnow.org/chat)



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