

Juvenile Assessment Center
of Lee County
2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 258-3450
www.swfjac.org

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The JAC Perspective



The Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County ... assisting youth and their families to seek the treatment and programs they need to lead productive, crime free lives.

Free drug testing kits are available at the JAC 24 hours a day for parents to use with their youth.

Law enforcement should call ahead to

**258-3461
or 258-3471**

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC or to confirm that a youth is eligible for a civil citation.



The JAC of Lee County is operated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

When the Story Doesn't Add Up

She says that she was staying at a friend's house, but her story about where she is staying doesn't quite add up. She's carrying a phone that someone else "gave her." She avoids eye contact. You notice bruises. She has someone older with her who seems to speak for her. These are just some of the signs that someone might be a victim of human trafficking. Human trafficking includes both forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation (also known as sex trafficking). A commercial sex act is one in which anything of value is exchanged. This can include money, drugs, clothing, shelter, or food, regardless of whether the exchange benefits the victim or a third party. This includes "survival sex." Under federal statutes sex trafficking of an adult is defined as when a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion.



However, when a minor is induced to perform a commercial sex act, no evidence of force or coercion is necessary for the case to be prosecuted. Even if the trafficked teen consented to the commercial sex, it is not relevant to the crime because they are a minor. Commercial sex acts may include prostitution, as well as, performance in pornographic materials, bars, strip clubs, or parties. It is not only found in underground markets. It can occur in legal, legitimate business settings. (This article will focus on sex trafficking of minors.) It is a common misperception that sex trafficking is a crime only found in other countries or in big cities. Human trafficking occurs in many locations. Sometimes it even happens on school campuses. The trafficker may even be another student. Both males
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What May be Hiding in Plain Site?

A soda can in the cup caddy of a teen's car may seem innocent enough. The highlighter in his book bag seems like a practical study tool for him to have. Then there's the baseball cap that he insisted on having that he ordered online. This all could mean nothing. Then again, sometimes kids hide things, drugs for example, in plain site. There is a whole industry devoted to making products to hide drugs. What looks like a regular soda or soft drink can may be a "diversion safe." One can screw it open and there is an empty space where a teen could hide

drugs, money, or drug paraphernalia. There is a product that looks like an ordinary highlighter but its parts can be screwed together so that it can be used as a pipe. Specialty clothing can be purchased with hidden compartments, such as in the head band of a baseball cap or in the waist band of a pair of jeans. On average, it takes parents about two years to discover that their child has a drug problem. Parents need to stay curious about what their kids are doing. Sometimes teen problem behavior is happening in plain site.

When the Story Doesn't Add Up (cont.)

and females are trafficked for sexual exploitation, but it is predominately girls who are. People of all income levels can be victims. Physical force is sometimes used but often more subtle forms of coercion are utilized including psychological forms of control such as threats or feigned affection. Drugs can be another means to control the victim's behavior. It is often difficult to recognize victims of sex trafficking. The victims often do not seek help as they may not self identify as being victims of a crime.

Those most likely to become victims are those with any set of

experiences that lead to greater emotional or physical vulnerability such as having experienced violence and trauma in the past. This includes victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or social discrimination, and runaway or homeless youth.

Some of the signs of someone who is a victim of sex trafficking include:

- Academic changes, becoming academically unengaged;
- Performing under grade level;
- Avoids eye contact;
- Has gaps in memory;

- Resists being touched;
- Visible bruises;
- Appears malnourished;
- Signs of drug or alcohol addiction;
- Low self esteem, depression, anxiety, or fear;
- Sudden outbursts of anger;
- Has a much older partner or significant other;
- Lives in an unstable or abusive home; and
- Has a sexual online profile.

Keeping Secrets

It is normal for kids to have secrets, but when you add technology and internet access to the mix, there are lots of ways that kids can get into trouble. It is a good idea for parents to try to keep up in monitoring their child's phone and online activity because sometimes kids can be breaking the law, cyberbullying, sexting, or exchanging text messages with much older and inappropriate contacts. Gone are the days when parents could insist on being "friended" on Facebook by their tween or teen as a way to stay on top of their online activity. For kids, Facebook has become more of a family gathering than the private party they want it to be. The kids have moved on. One type of application parents need to be aware of is fake apps or decoy apps. There are dozens of smart phone apps that are designed to help keep secrets. They are generally disguised to look like some other application – a calculator, a game, or other



benign application. They function like a calculator or game, but once a password is entered they are unlocked and the user has the ability to hide messages, call logs, photos, and videos. Some have a decoy mode. Using a decoy password one is able to open up an account with curated data to show someone else (such as a parent) only what one wants them to see. There is another password that accesses one's secret data. Many of the apps have legitimate uses such as storing passwords, scanning and storing legal documents, or other personal information. Many of these apps are available for

download and the majority are free. Kids are quickly catching on to using these secret apps to hide their mobile activity and behavior that their parents don't approve of. In recent surveys 67% of older teens (ages 15 and above) and 50% of younger teens are using them. Some of the key words found in the names of these fake apps are "hide," "secret," "vault," "lock," and "keep safe." However, a parent looking at the phone will likely only see the icon and not the name of the app. The icons may look like a padlock or a vault, but more likely it is an ordinary looking icon that does not stand out. If a child has several calculator icons on his/her phone, there is a good likelihood that one or two might be a fake or decoy app. If a parent has concerns about their child's phone use they may want to set up parental controls. There is also technology available now to help parents monitor what is going on with their child's phone.