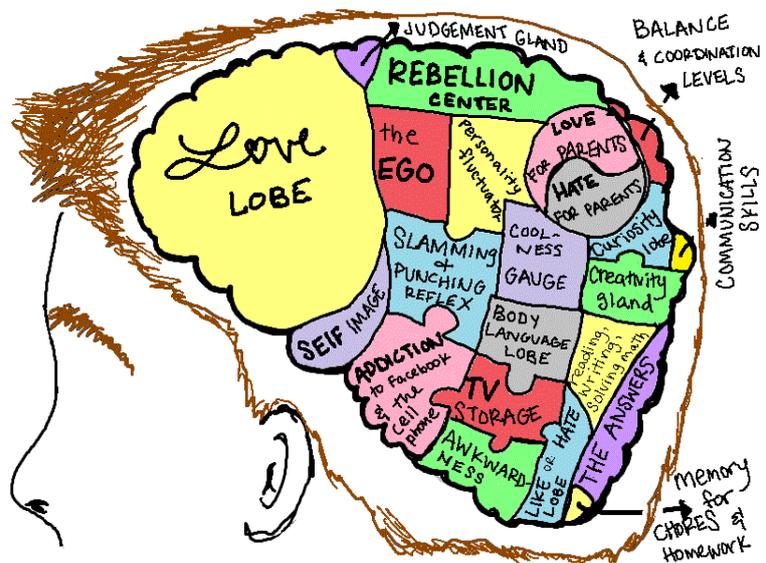


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THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



We recognise children and teenagers will take risks, it is part of growing up, but we would like to help them take safe risks, and be able to make good choices.

The teen brain is developing, this article describes how the brain is still maturing.

Understanding the Teen Brain

It doesn't matter how smart your teen is or how well he or she scored on the SAT or ACT. Good judgment isn't something he or she can excel in, at least not yet.

The rational part of a teen's brain isn't fully developed and won't be until he or she is 25 years old or so.

In fact, recent research has found that adult and teen brains work differently. Adults think with the prefrontal cortex, the brain's rational part, but teens process information with the amygdala, the emotional part. And it's the prefrontal cortex that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long-term consequences.

The connections between the emotional part of the brain and the decision-making center are in development in teen brains. That's why when they've been under the influence of overwhelming emotional input, teens can't explain later what they were thinking. They weren't thinking as much as they were feeling.

Taken from an article published in Stanford Children's Health, please follow the link to read more: <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=understanding-the-teen-brain-1-3051>

An interesting TED Talk related to risk taking and adolescents https://www.ted.com/talks/kashfia_rahman_how_risk_taking_changes_a_teenager_s_brain/transcript?language=en

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It is important for parents and carers to talk to your children/young people about these issues and ensure they have the opportunity to talk to someone if they are worried or concerned, for themselves or their friends.

We are aware that a minority of children and young people are carrying knives or weapons and are involved in drugs. The reasons for them carrying a weapon are mixed, some feel they need to protect themselves, some feel all children are carrying a weapon and therefore they should as well and a very few are carrying with intent.

We need your help, please take the time to talk to your child.

County Lines

'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. These dealers will use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users. Heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine are the most common drugs being supplied and ordered. In most instances, the users or customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

In some cases the dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from. This is known as cuckooing.

People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

As we have seen in child sexual exploitation, children often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality. So it's

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important that we all play our part to understand county lines and speak out if we have concerns.'

Taken from the National Crime Agency, follow the link to find out more:

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

Helpful Websites

The Children's Society useful information for parents

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/tackling-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines>

The Children's Society - Child Exploitation Stages of Recruitment

https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/children_at_risk.pdf

Capturing and Reporting Intelligence for families, professionals and the Community

<https://www.csepoliceandprevention.org.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance%20Cap%20Intel%20Toolkit.pdf>

Crimestoppers Fearless information

Crimestoppers is an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously.

When you contact the charity, your anonymity is guaranteed - you can contact them 24/7 on **0800 555 111** or by using the simple anonymous online form;

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>

<https://www.fearless.org/en>

<https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/weapons>

<https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/gangs>

Video

Video - EastEnders stabbing story line

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfYZhWAwGgc>

Fearless Don't Let It Be Too Late

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/about-the-charity/who-we-work-with/trusts-and-foundations/helping-young-people>

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Street language and Signs and Symptoms in your Home (SPACE)



SPACE

Stop & Prevent Adolescent Criminal Exploitation

SPACE is a self-funded organisation founded in January 2018, in response to the national prevalence of **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** and the **County Lines** phenomenon which has entrenched thousands of young children and people into serious violence and organised crime.

Its primary mission is to:

*Raise awareness through unique perspective of lived-experience insight, as well as law-enforcement

For more information please visit: www.bespaceaware.co.uk

County Lines Indicators developed by SPACE.

- Withdrawal to bedroom - secrecy - obsession about closed door.
- Withdrawal from normal activities & interests
- Sudden interest / obsession with drill music, designer labels, weights, postcodes & 'boundaries
- Knowledge of areas with no legitimate links.
- Increasingly lying / manipulative / argumentative / aggressive / angry.
- Physically aggressive if plans disrupted or met with obstacles.
- Leaving home suddenly without explanation.
- Rapid / extreme change in language - well-spoken & respectful - coarse & offensive.
- Rapid / extreme change in appearance - smart-'street'.
- Using coached responses e.g. 'right to remain silent' or 'no comment'.
- Outright denials when questioned despite evidence to contrary.
- Significant decline in school results / performance / behaviour.

Presence of Unexplained Items

- Traces of white substance (kitchen surface / rolling pin).
- Scrunched up cling film & foil.

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- Paracetamol sheets missing / needing replenishing too quickly without explanation.
- Packets of (secreted) white substance.
- Lighters / cigarettes / debit cards in unknown identities, explained as 'just found on road'.
- Multiple mobiles / knives / mobile chargers / dongles / cash / mobile data cards (Lycamobile).
- Notes with crime-orientated rap lyrics & street slang ('8 ways in, only 1 way out'). (see Drill music in this document)
- Notes of social media sexualised female identities.
- After-shaves / perfumes / trainers / stationery items (gifted / stolen).
- Condoms & Vaseline (plugging - storing items/drugs in the anus or vagina).
- Train tickets & unpaid fare notices.
- Balaclava/ Face bandana (personal use or holding for others).

Escalation Indicators

- Absence from school or disappearing during school.
- Frequently leaving classes for the toilet (to make calls).
- Isolation from peers at school.
- 'New' circle of school friends with negative behaviours / drug associations.
- Temporary or permanent exclusion from school.
- Total withdrawal & detachment from family.
- Disinterest in seeing peers / cousins - 'nothing in common'.
- Sudden interest in parents' salary & mortgage payments.
- Obsessively & repeatedly demanding (re mobile, 'need' to go out etc.).
- Maintains 'story' despite lacking total credibility.
- Not divulging where going, with whom or how travelling.
- Deleting all traceable info from mobile.
- Excessive receipt of unexplained texts / phone calls at all hours.
- Unexplained use of Tor & DePop app on mobile.
- Unexplained use of Uber app on mobile & suspected use of taxis.
- Complete change / negative attitude towards school / authority.
- Being hugely anti-Police ('Feds / Pigs').
- From shyness & lack of eye-contact-to bravado / squaring up / rudeness.
- Total lack of empathy towards those lied to or stolen from.
- (Persistently) going missing or being found out-of-area.
- Returning from missing dishevelled / smelly / unwashed / gaunt / exhausted.
- Cash / old or spare family mobiles & chargers / knives missing from home.
- Knives being found in home / garden / car.
- Very defensive/argumentative regarding Muslims.
- Authoritarian toward siblings (clothes or make-up).
- Radicalisation concerns.
- Viewing family as enemy & associates as family.
- Obliterating identifying information from train (season) ticket.

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- Deliberately avoiding possession of train ID card.
- Using public transport without paying fares.
- Oyster card used by others / not using own / using others'.
- Debit card missing - used by associates for money laundering.
- Removing name labels from uniform items.
- Removing age labels from clothing.
- Suspected misuse of drugs/alcohol, & smoking.
- Involvement in crime.
- Direct involvement with gang members.
- Use of false identities, dates of birth, & addresses.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Involvement with older individuals / dropping friends from school.
- Found in cars in unexplained areas with unknown people ('hitch-hiking from party').
- Unexplained injuries & suspicion of physical assaults.
- Use of clip-on gold tooth & handbag shoulder chains as neck chains.
- Wearing 2 layers of clothing from home to avoid Police detection.
- Wearing winter hats / gloves all year (identification & fingerprint evasion).

Drill Music -do you know what your children are listening to?



Picture taken from Tony Thorne Language and Innovation website see below

According to Tony Thorne

*“UK Drill (music), a successor to the ultra-hard-edged Trap Rap (from The Trap, slang nickname for the local area where drugs are dealt) that appeared first in Chicago in the 2000s. Drill (the word can signify shooting but has many other slang senses) has been adopted and adapted by **hyperlocal urban communities** in the poorer parts of London and, despite their claims, doesn't just evoke the harsh realities of life on inner-city estates, but often glamorises it and seems to promote an ethos of territoriality, boastful masculinity and murderous retaliatory violence.”*

To find out what the lyrics in Drill music actually mean click on this link and read the full article:

<https://language-and-innovation.com/2018/04/19/a-drill-dictionary/>

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Funky Friday contains lyrics directly related to County Lines and drug dealing

Caution contains swearing and inappropriate language

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=you+tube+funky+friday&view=detail&mid=0EE66F481F44DF0B84CE0EE66F481F44DF0B84CE&FORM=VIRE>

Should you be concerned for your child or your child's friend please contact:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead in your child's school
- MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) 01793 466903 Out of Hours 01793 436699
- Fearless Crimestoppers When you contact the charity, your anonymity is guaranteed - you can contact them 24/7 on **0800 555 111** or by using the simple anonymous online form; <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>
- If you have non urgent information to share with the Police call 101
- If you feel your child is in immediate danger call 999

If your child would like to talk to someone please help them to contact:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or a trusted teacher in school
- Fearless Crimestoppers allows children and adults to pass on information anonymously <https://www.fearless.org/en/anonymous>
- ChildLine 0800 1111
- Police 999 if in immediate danger