

Lee

Lee is 16. He was arrested with a group of other kids at midnight, driving 80 MPH on the freeway. All had been drinking, and several marijuana joints were found in the van. Lee had been truant from home on and off for several weeks; his mother didn't know where he was, but thought he had perhaps gone to visit a 20-year old "friend," a man Lee had met a few weeks earlier in the next town. She was worried about Lee's whereabouts and called the police, who notified the children's service agency. At the juvenile court hearing after his arrest, the children services agency was given protective supervision of Lee.

History

Lee was the 4th of 6 children, born and raised on a farm. His family had enough money to get by, but they rarely had extra. Lee's father was an alcoholic and most nights would drink himself into a stupor. Occasionally he would be verbally abusive, but there is no evidence of physical abuse. Two years ago, Lee's father died of alcohol-related illness. Lee's mother couldn't manage the farm and moved with Lee and two younger siblings into the city. She survives on a minimum-wage job and food stamps.

Characteristics

Lee is a quiet, generally cooperative youth. He is easy to get along with, almost to the point of over-compliance and passivity. He readily agrees with others and conforms quickly to their demands, particularly when he views them to be in power. He typically over-estimates other people's power and sees himself as having almost none. He has very poor self-esteem and feels entirely inadequate in comparison to people around him. To adults, he appears helpless and in need of protection.

He is dependent on others to meet his needs. He craves social approval and acceptance. He yields quickly to peer group pressure when with peers, and to adult authority when he's with adults. He will comply with whoever is in control at the moment in order to be accepted and viewed in a positive light.

His thinking ability is very concrete, and he views the world in simplistic, concrete terms. He has limited perspective-taking ability. He knows that people are different, but he evaluates them based upon observable behaviors, and he has no insight into other people's feelings. His mother is "nice, she cooks good meals." His father "was a drunk and worked a farm." He is "friendly, not so good in school." He knows his mother gets mad when he runs away from home,

but he really likes to be with Tom, his 20-year old friend. Tom is "cool - he has his own car and rents a neat apartment."

He knows right from wrong; he knows it's wrong to skip school, and it's good to go to church and sit quietly. He shouldn't fail in school, and he should get a good job when he grows up. It's wrong to hurt other people. It's important to be nice. He doesn't like "being in trouble" at all.

He understands his own feelings in concrete terms. He knows he gets mad, sometimes he's happy, sometimes he's sad. He doesn't think it bothers anyone when he gets mad. He is impulsive. He knows he shouldn't run away, and he should be in school. He should get better grades. But none of this changes his behavior. He was in the van with the other kids because "it seemed like it would be fun and all the others were going."

He is viewed by peers as a "tag-along" and peers often use him. He will do whatever he's told, because he craves social acceptance. He is only marginally accepted, however, and at times is scapegoated.