

## *The Role of the Grandmother in FASD Care and Support*

**Presenter:** Florence Large and Donita Large

**Date:** December 2, 2009

**Government of Alberta**

The FASD Learning Series is part of the Alberta government's commitment to programs and services for people affected by FASD and those who support them.

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*Grandmothers are a valuable resource in supporting young women and families who are affected by FASD.*

*Knowledge is empowerment.*

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## *Seven Stages of a Woman's Life*

- **Seven Stages of a Woman's Life**
  - Stage I – Baby
  - Stage II – Child
  - Stage III – Pre-teen
  - Stage IV – Teen
  - Stage V – Mother
  - Stage VI – Grandmother
  - Stage VII – Elder

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### Seven Stages of a Woman's Life

There are four stages of life according to the traditional Medicine Wheel

- > Child
- > Youth
- > Adult
- > Elder

The Grandmothers Guide adopted Seven Stages to better address issues from a woman's life.

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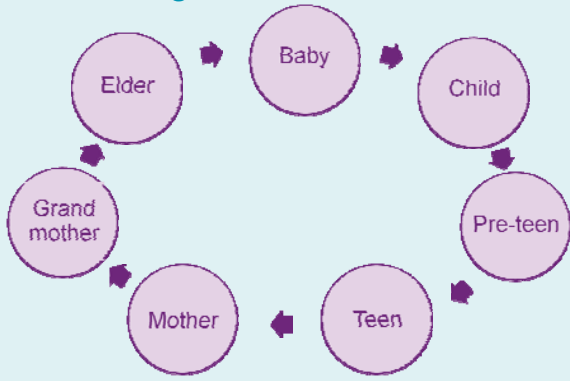
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### Seven Stages of a Woman's Life



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### Stage I – Baby

#### Learning Objective:

- > To create awareness on the importance of attentiveness to a baby's needs from their parents or caregivers

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### Stage I – Baby

Attachment occurs when a child feels confident that their parent will protect them from danger and distress, particularly when:

- Hurt
- Ill
- Upset

The two main patterns of attachment are **secure** and **insecure**.

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### Stage I – Baby: Tips

Tips to help parents and babies develop secure attachments:

- Point out the baby's cues that signal the need for
  - Soothing
  - Holding
  - Food
  - Sleep

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### Stage I – Baby: Tips

Tips to help parents and babies develop secure attachments (continued):

- Emphasize the baby's cues when a baby is feeling
  - Hurt
  - Sick
  - Upset
  - Sad
  - Frightened
  - Lonely

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### Stage I – Baby: Tips

Tips to help parents and babies develop secure attachments (continued):

- Make parents aware that they can help babies feel safe
  - Body contact
  - Affection
  - Gestures

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### Stage I – Baby: Tips

Tips to help parents and babies develop secure attachments (continued):

- Model for parents how to show love and safety when caring for their baby's daily physical needs
  - Feeding
  - Diapering and dressing
  - Sleeping
  - Bathing

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### Stage II – Child

Learning Objectives:

- To create awareness of the affect of negative and positive messages on children
- To assist others in identifying ways to help the troubled child

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### Stage II – Child: Backpack Exercise

Negative messages	Positive messages
Shame	Love
Guilt	Trust
Addictions	Honesty
Gossip	Caring
Apathy	Compassion
Resentment	Prayer
Abuse	Self care
Low self esteem	Fun

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### Stage II – Child: The Sticky Child



This is the child no one knows what to do with

➤ “What does this child need?”

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### Stage III – Pre-teen

Learning Objective:

➤ To create awareness of comfort level when discussing healthy sexuality on a personal level and as a mentor for young women

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### Stage III – Pre-teen: Puberty

- For generations, teachings on puberty and sexuality have been limited in First Nation communities
- Puberty is seen as a confusing time with no one to seek information from, often relying on one's peers for answers
- The term 'sex' is often seen as a dirty word
- Little to no teaching was passed on about sacredness of the body and sharing of one's body in a relationship

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### Stage III – Pre-teen

The discussion of healthy sexuality as a part of one's life is considered a new idea

However, when looking at First Nation traditional teachings such as the rites of passage, sexuality and puberty are old teachings resurfacing

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### Stage III – Pre-teen: Self Discipline

The Pre-Teen stage is the window of opportunity for the grandmothers to teach the youth the importance of an educated choice of becoming sexually active.

Grandmothers who are privileged to teach the young ladies must do it with kindness and compassion.

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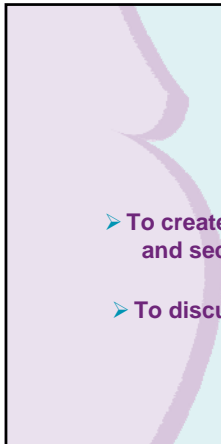
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### Stage IV – Teen

**Learning Objectives:**

- To create awareness of the primary and secondary feelings that teens could be experiencing
- To discuss the effect of addictions on the family

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### Stage IV – Teen: Volcano of Feelings

**Primary feelings**

- The primary feelings are those that are deep within a person and are not usually visible
- These are the feelings as listed within the volcano
- Two examples of primary feelings are guilt and shame

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### Stage IV – Teen: Volcano of Feelings

**Secondary feelings**

- Secondary feelings are those you may see on the surface such as anger and rage
- These are seen outside of the volcano

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### Stage IV – Teen: Addiction

People are addicted when alcohol, drugs and/or other substances or activities interfere in any significant area of their lives, yet continue to use the substance or repeat the activity in spite of damages caused.

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### Stage IV – Teen

Substance addiction is mood altering and causes a physical dependence. Some examples of substances abused are:

- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Nicotine
- Crystal meth
- Solvents
- Caffeine
- Prescription pills
- Cocaine
- Crack

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### Stage IV – Teen

Process addiction is a specific series of actions or interactions that give a high to the addict. Process addiction examples include:

- Bingo
- VLT's
- Slots
- Card playing
- Lottery tickets
- Internet
- TV
- Video games
- Relationships
- Sex

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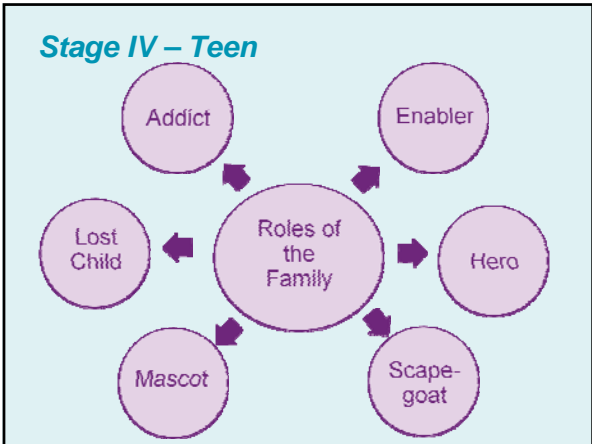
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**Stage V – Mother**

**Learning Objectives:**

- For grandmothers to become knowledgeable about childbirth, midwifery and breast feeding to better advise young mothers and be of support to families
- For grandmothers to become knowledgeable about FASD to better advise young mothers and be of support to families

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**Stage V – Mother**

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – FASD**

**Levels of FASD diagnosis:**

- FAS
- FAE or partial FAS
- ARND
- ARBD

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### Stage V – Mother

#### FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)

A pattern of birth abnormalities that may be found in persons who have a history of prenatal exposure alcohol.

**TIMELINES** - Comparison of capacity in 18 year old individual with FAS in relation to peers in terms of developmental age across several domains

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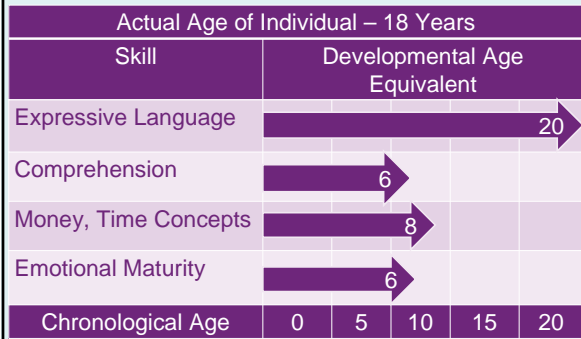
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### Developmental Timelines in FASD



Diane Malbin

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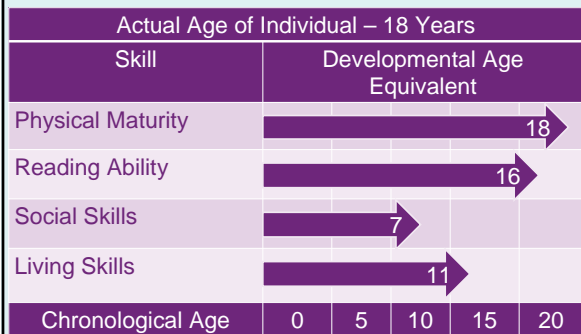
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### Developmental Timelines in FASD



Diane Malbin

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**Stage V – Mother**

**FAE (Fetal Alcohol Effects) or pFAS (Partial FAS)**

- A medical term that used to describe a patient who has one or two characteristics of FAS
- The patient may not have all the facial features but still may have effects of prenatal alcohol damage such as problems with learning and behaviour

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**Stage V – Mother**

**ARND (Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder)**

- An umbrella term used to describe effects in a person who has been exposed to maternal drinking and has no visible signs of FAS
- The patient has a cluster of learning and behaviour problems that cannot be explained by environment alone

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**Stage V – Mother**

**ARBD (Alcohol Related Birth Defects)**

- Describes malformations of the skeletal system and major organ systems, such as defects of
  - Heart
  - Kidneys
  - Bones
  - Auditory system

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**Stage VI – Grandmother**

**Learning Objectives:**

- For grandmothers to realize the need for their own healing
- To discuss the history of colonization and residential school on the role of grandmothers

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**Stage VI - Grandmother**

**Colonization and Residential School**

- In most Indigenous traditional systems the grandmothers were the teachers of the development, care and well-being of women and children

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**Stage VI - Grandmother**

- First Nations grandmothers held strong and powerful roles in their communities as
  - Medicine women
  - Healers
  - Midwives
  - Elders
- With colonization First Nations were introduced to a patriarchal system that was unbeknownst to them

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**Stage VI - Grandmother**

- The colonial goal was to eliminate First Nations culture, physically and ideologically
- With the introduction of European religions, First Nations spirituality was seen as unacceptable and sadly called
  - Evil
  - Pagan
  - Witchcraft
  - Other derogatory words

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**Stage VI - Grandmother**

- The church and government in partnership believed that the best way to Europeanize and Christianize the Native people of Canada was to enforce the residential school system

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**Stage VI - Grandmother**

- The impacts of residential school were overwhelming and the results could be seen in the First Nation communities
  - Violence
  - Poor parenting
  - Lack of nutrition
  - Addiction
  - Poverty
- The list became numerous

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### Stage VI - Grandmother

- The reality for First Nations women is that many remain oppressed
- However in the last twenty years, large numbers of First Nation women have made dramatic steps in leadership, stature and achievement

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### Stage VI - Grandmother

- The grandmothers are finally, once again, being affirmed for their important roles in their communities
- Many are the foundation of their families
- It is only now becoming more apparent that there are grandmothers who need to heal too

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### Stage VII – Elder

#### Learning Objectives:

- To become aware of communication style a person uses when working with young women
- To describe the process of mentorship

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### Stage VII – Elder

We examine communication for the purpose of grandmothers who mentor or counsel young women in their families or communities

- What is expressed verbally comprises 7% of communication and the other 93% of communication is body language and attitude
- Give non-verbal cues such as smiling
- Do not allow the clothing or other personal characteristics to become obstacles to communication

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### Stage VII – Elder

- When talking to another person or talking about oneself, the words “should have”, “would have”, “could have” are judgment words
- Be mindful of loaded words such as “always” or “never”
- Do not interrogate - ask open ended questions

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### Stage VII – Elder

- Where appropriate, talk about things that may have happened to you if they relate to the conversation
- Set limits and boundaries
- Be a living example of honesty

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**Stage VII – Elder**

How do we mentor?

- Be a role model
- Be a good listener
- Be available
- Be patient
- Connect with people
- Teach boundaries
- Share yourself



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**Stage VII – Elder**

How do we mentor? (continued)

- Have a positive attitude
- Be well
- Be responsible
- Be kind
- Allow people to grow and change
- Teach cultural and traditional ways
- Have a centered value system



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**Stage VII – Elder**

How do we mentor? (continued)

- Be non racist
- Be aware of self
- Be giving
- Be even-tempered
- Allow people to learn from mistakes
- Inspire and lead



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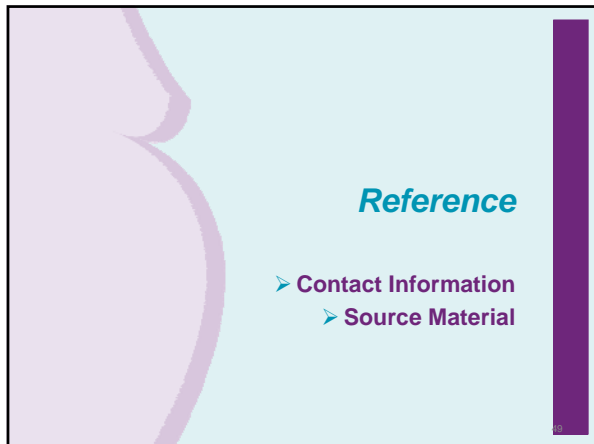
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**Reference**

- Contact Information
- Source Material

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**Source Material**

- Grandmothers Guide Facilitator's Manual
- Lakeland Centre for FASD

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***For Information on Upcoming  
Sessions in the Series:  
[www.fasd-cmc.alberta.ca](http://www.fasd-cmc.alberta.ca)***

***Please Take the Time to Fill Out  
the On-Line Evaluation***

***Thank You!***

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