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.

**Employability Strategies for Persons with FASD**

Presenter: Brian Mader and Annette Cutknife
Date: March 11, 2010

**Session Goals**

- Identify employment issues and strategies
- Understand the challenge of change or transition for persons with FASD

**Understanding and Helping Adults with FASD**
Who Is the Target Group?

- Adult
  - Over age 16
  - Out of the regular school system
- Resides in Alberta
- Has a need for supports
  - Employment
  - Training
  - Financial

Areas of Concern for Adults with FASD

- Transitions
  - School to work / training
  - Confinement to competitive employment / training
- Career and occupational planning
- Educational planning
- Income supports
- Employment

General Characteristics of Adults with FASD

- Primary disabilities
- Secondary disabilities
- Secondary disabilities: presenting issues
Secondary Disabilities
- Problems with Mental Health (PMH)
- Disrupted Educational experiences (DE)
- Trouble With the Law (TWL)
- In-Patient Treatment or Confinement (IPT/IPC)
- Problems with Substance Abuse (SA)

Secondary Disabilities
- Inappropriate Sexual Behaviours (ISB)
- Problems With Employment (PWE)
- Dependent Living (DL)
- Having children they cannot care for
- Early death

Presentation Issues for Adults with FASD
- Developmental
- Adaptive functioning
- Self direction and advocacy skills
- Insight
- Boredom
- Frustration
- Immediate gratification
Presentation Issues for Adults with FASD

- Negative peer influences
- High risk behavior
- Victimization
- Housing and transience

Presentation Issues for Adults with FASD

- Compliance
- Relationships
- Increased care away from biological family
- Undiagnosed, or partially diagnosed

Adults with FASD: Secondary Disability Issues 1998-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study/Date Description</th>
<th>Data Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FADU – University of Washington, Seattle 1996</td>
<td>91 individuals were 21 yrs of age or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASC (#1) West Survey 1998-2002</td>
<td>71 individuals aged 16-45</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASC (#2) West Roll up 2000-2001</td>
<td>40 Individuals 16-35</td>
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Secondary Disability Comparison Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Disability</th>
<th>FADU</th>
<th>CASC #1</th>
<th>CASC #2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMH</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWL</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWE</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CASC 1 and CASC 2 Outcome Observations

- Most common: Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)
- IQ within normal range
- IQ is not accurate indicator of potential

CASC 1 and CASC 2 Outcome Observations

- Salient deficits in areas of
  - Memory
  - Executive functioning
  - Mental/psychological and/or
  - Psychiatric functioning
  - Neurobehavioural concerns
Employability Interventions: Working with Adults with FASD

Memory Issues
- Impaired working memory
- Teflon memory
- Flow through memory
- Storage and retrieval
- Impaired forgetting

Executive Functioning Skills / Deficits
- Inhibition
- Shifting mental set
- Emotional regulation
- Initiation and activation
- Planning skills
- Organizational skills
- Monitoring skills
- Working memory
**Things to Remember**

- Most adults with FASD
  - are undiagnosed
  - cannot explain their condition to you (nor their behavior)
  - overestimate modest skills, and deny deficits or impairments
  - talk the talk but CAN’T walk the talk

**Things to Remember**

- Keep language simple, concrete and plain
- Interview the supports of the adult with FASD
- Build employment interventions into a 24/7 management plan, build a team around a client
- Employment and educational histories likely sporadic and often end badly – learn from this
- Do a comprehensive employability interview
- Advocate when required

**Things to Remember**

- Employability needs to be integrated into a full life plan (24/7)
- Address safety concerns for the
  - Adult
  - Employer
  - Community

Safety supports
Support Team
Adult with FASD
Employment/Life Supports
Difficult Transitions
- School to work (K-12 to work)
- Confinement to work
- Work to work or job to job
- Training to work (Adult training)
- Work to training (Adult training)

Transition Planning
Transitions should be
- Planned in advance, started early
- Planned to address full needs

Plans should address the shift from preventing secondary disabilities to managing secondary disabilities.

Supports
Financial Supports
- Access to income support programs needs to be viewed as positive and preventative
Supports

Coordinated Community Supports
- Are essential to employability / training success

Supports

Transitional and Ongoing Supports
- Need to be flexible
- Need to include a variety of people with direct interest in the adult with FASD

Observations and Learnings
**Labour Market Issues**
- Problems faced in the competitive labour market
  - Problems getting hired
  - Problems holding a job
  - Getting fired
  - Losing a job without understanding why
  - Problems gaining skills for a job

**Learnings from Employment Experiences**
- Easily frustrated (75%)
- Poor task comprehension (57%)
- Poor judgment (55%)
- Social problems (54%)
- Unreliable (44%)
- Anger management (44%)
- Problems with supervisor (40%)
- Lying (33%)

**Strategies Not Solutions**
Strategies Not Solutions

- Move to non-competitive, supported work model
- Use positive life and employment support
- Expect issues to surface and have a contingency plan in mind
- Inform and train employers
- Direct job placement / solid job development
- Focused skill development and training where it is required

Strategies Not Solutions

- Job carving
- Long-term and flexible client centered support
- Honourable entrances and exits

Strategies Not Solutions

- Focused training
  - Remember practical
  - Remember short term
- Training accommodations
- Job specific skills
- Modest or temporary success is a good outcome
Strategies Not Solutions

Remember it's “our” job to make adults with FASD look good and do their best

Strategies Not Solutions

- CAMS (Compensations, Modifications and Accommodations)
- Use strategies that work….discard those that don’t
- Anticipate outcomes
- Review disability literature and websites

Best Resource:
Job Accommodations Network (JAN) www.jan.wvu.edu
Reference

➢ Contact Information

Contact Information

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For Information on Upcoming Sessions in the Series:
www.fasd-cmc.alberta.ca

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

Thank You!