


**Screening:
Fitting the Puzzle Pieces
Together**

Presenter: Valerie J. Massey, Ph.D
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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.



Session Outline

- **Characteristics Of Individuals Affected By FASD**
- **Considerations In Screening Clients Affected With FASD**
- **Comparisons In Screening Children Versus Adults**
- **Developing Intervention Strategies**
- **Areas To Be Included In An Intervention Plan**

**Characteristics of Individuals
Affected with FASD**

Understanding the Impacts

Section Outline

- Sensory Difficulties
- Challenges with Planning
- Memory and Learning Difficulties
- Information Processing Challenges
- Abstract Thinking and Judgment
- Behavioral Regulation
- Secondary Characteristics
- Secondary Behaviours
- Secondary Disabilities

Sensory Difficulties

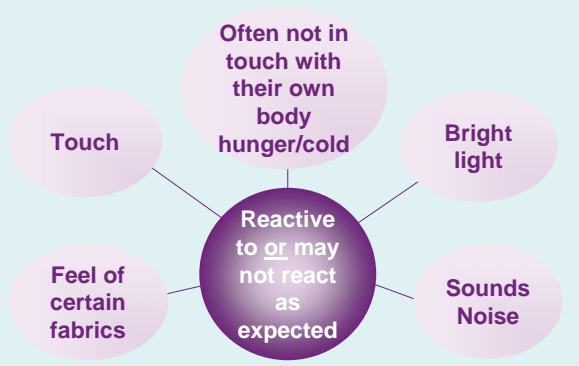
Inappropriate activity levels

- An energizer bunny 

OR

- A complete couch potato 

Sensory Difficulties - Unusual Reactivity



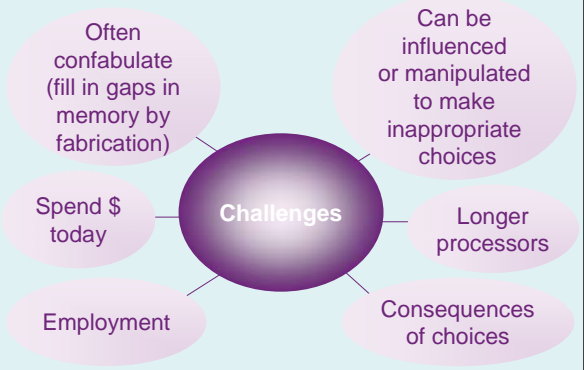
Challenges with Planning

- Live in the moment, impulsive
- Life is planned one day at a time
- Poor time concept - late or misses appointments
- Do things by rote
- Challenged by complex tasks or multiple step directions

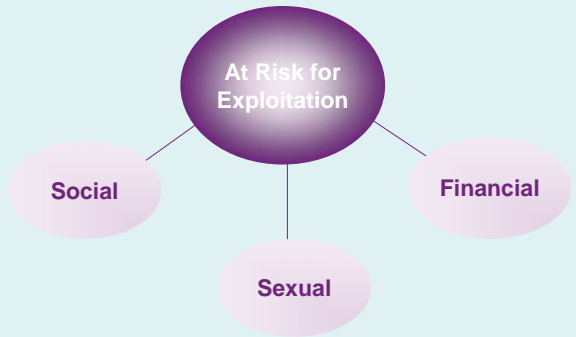
Memory and Learning Difficulties

- Poor short term and auditory memory
- Difficulty learning new things with inconsistent retrieval of information (ex. In school, they may not know today what they knew yesterday and have problems retrieving information from long term memory)

Information Processing Challenges



Information Processing Challenges



Abstract Thinking and Judgment

Challenges:

- Abstract thinking
- Making good decisions
- Evaluating pros and cons
- Predicting outcomes
- Generalizing
- Complex parenting responsibilities



Abstract Thinking & Judgment

Challenges (continued):

- Justice system process and understanding charges
- Financial issues
- Paperwork
- Difficulty following directions



Behavioral Regulation

Possible Challenges:

- Anger
- Mood swings
- Impulsive, compulsive, inattentive and/or perseverative
- Frustrated, possible tantrum, aggression
- Flat affect or a variable and labile mood

Behavioral Regulation

Possible Challenges (continued):

- Distractible
- Act without thinking--unable to tell you why
- Rituals or get stuck on an idea or use of certain words
- Lack of inhibition and often inappropriate in social situations

Secondary Characteristics

These characteristics develop over time from a chronic poor "fit" with their environment

- Fatigue or frustration
- Anxious or fearful (ex. new situations)
- Poor self concept
- Rigid, resistant or argumentative
- Appear to not care, may show no facial expressions or shut down

Secondary Behaviours

- Isolation
- Depression
- Self-destructive patterns
- Suicidal ideation or attempts
- Aggression
- Truancy issues
- Pattern of running away
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour

Secondary Disabilities

- Mental health issues
- Justice issues (either victim or perpetrator)
- Substance abuse
- Disrupted education
- Confined to institutions (prison, treatment centres, or psychiatric units)

Considerations in Screening Clients Affected with FASD:

Nothing Replaces A Good Interview

Section Outline

- Work with the Individual or Work with the Supports?
- Determine the Quality and Consistency of Support

Work with the Individual or Work with the Supports?

- Often inadequate supports
- Burned out or limited
- Follow through with intervention
- “Burned their bridges”
- Poor understanding of FASD - viewed as a “problem” or “fault”
- A need for external supports re: good choices

Client success is often a factor of the effectiveness of their current support systems

Determine the Quality and Consistency of Support

- The right supports
- Succession of people
- Understanding of the issues
- “Burn out” level
- Best interest vs take advantage
- Trusting relationship
- Adequate resources

Adequate supports today may be inadequate tomorrow

Comparisons in Screening For Children versus Adults:

Areas of Need for Building Appropriate Individualized Treatment Plans

Section Outline

- Overall Principles for Screening in Children and Adults
- Overall Principles for Working with Children and Adults
- Similarities in Working with Children and Adults
- Differences in Working with Children and Adults

Overall Principles for Screening in Children and Adults

Not effective

- Cognitive based
- Insight oriented approach

Overall Principles for Screening in Children and Adults

Effective

- Good supports
- Consistency
- Structure
- Quick deterioration if they are removed

Overall Principles for Screening in Children and Adults

The issues are “hard-wired”

- You will not change the basic level of functioning

Overall Principles for Working with Children and Adults

A case management approach

- Both formal and informal supports is most effective

It is important to educate the support network

- Realistic expectations

A team approach is crucial in screening

Similarities in Working with Children and Adults

- Work with client’s support network AND client
- Build on strengths and accommodate for deficits
- Build structure, routine and consistency into your intervention plans
 - Repetition and modeling encouragement
- Teach how to manage daily living

Differences in Working with Children and Adults

With Children:

- Work with the supports
- Focus on behaviour management, life skills and educational planning and accommodations

With Adults:

- Work directly with the client, but try to get “buy in” to enlist the help of supports
- Focus is on life management issues such as finances, housing, job, medical issues, family life, etc.

Differences in Working with Children and Adults

With Children:

- Key intervention role: educating supports in best practices for management of FASD affected individuals

With Adults:

- Key intervention role: case management to address crises and set in place appropriate supports for long term functioning

Developing Intervention Strategies

Section Outline

- Obtain an Accurate and Detailed Diagnosis
- The Function of a Good Diagnosis
- Assess Supports and Familiarity with FASD Best Practices
- Identify Immediate and Long Term Needs
- Interventions Build on Strengths and Accommodate for Deficits
- Enlist Supports in Implementing the Intervention Plan
- Build In Follow-Up Plans

Obtain an Accurate and Detailed Diagnosis

A diagnosis consistent with the Alberta Clinical Practice Guidelines and National Standards

A medical diagnosis and needs to be provided by qualified professionals

Must include:

- Confirmation of maternal alcohol consumption from a reliable source
- Detailed reports on cognitive functioning as well as specific strengths and deficits

The Function of a Good Diagnosis

- Rules out other possible disorders and medical conditions
- Detailed description of strengths and deficits
- Becomes the basis for intervention planning
- Differentiate permanent deficits from learned patterns

Assess Supports and Familiarity with FASD Best Practices

- Clients frequently have inconsistent supports
- Good supports tend to become burned out over time
- Many supports have limited familiarity with best practices for FASD
- Clients tend not to follow through with agency supports even when offered meaningful services

Identify Immediate and Long Term Needs

- Clients tend to move from crisis to crisis and tend to show up when life isn't working
- It is important to deal with immediate crises so as to get "buy in" to begin long term interventions
- Clients are not good at carrying through on long term plans
- What a client really needs, is not necessarily what they are wanting at the moment

Identify Immediate and Long Term Needs

- Clients may not be ready for some interventions even if they may prove beneficial
- Good long term intervention plans will involve reliable supports

Interventions Build on Strengths and Accommodate for Deficits

- Understanding a client's abilities allows the plan to set them up for success rather than failure
- Clients need to hear that they are good at something
- Expectations on the client need to be within their capabilities
- Intervention plans need to be realistic for the client's individual situation and community

Enlist Supports in Implementing the Intervention Plan

- Access both informal and formal supports (such as family, friends, agencies & other professionals)
- Identify who will be responsible to ensure there is follow through
- Give the client as much responsibility as they can handle and assist them where needed
- Define who will assist the client to take the next steps to implement the plan

Build In Follow-Up Plans

- Clients often need lifelong supports
- Assist clients to know when next to access help
- Try to create regular connections with the client to monitor needs and encourage them
- Be flexible as your plans will often need revision
- Connect family members to good referral sources and support agencies
- Expect clients to have recurrent struggles needing your support and plan for them

Areas to be Included in an Intervention Plan

Section Outline

Assistance Options For:

- Medical Interventions
- Financial Interventions
- Housing Interventions
- Parenting and Family Interventions
- Employment Interventions
- Education Interventions
- Legal Interventions
- Substance Abuse Interventions
- Mental Health Interventions

Medical Interventions

- Connect with a family doctor and get a physical
- Support the client to follow up with recommendations from physical exam such as blood work, tests, specialist appointments, etc.
- Assist the client to book the appointment
- Go with them to the appointment
- We have seen brain tumors diagnosed, suspected diabetes, possible cancer relapse as well as numerous other medical concerns

Financial Interventions

- Learning the basics of handling money and budgeting
- Rent and utilities automatically deducted every month
- Payment weekly rather than monthly

Financial Interventions

- Assist in the mechanics of applying for PDD supports or AISH
- Informal or formal trustee and guardian
- We have seen a client lose a large lump sum settlement in one month because of people around taking advantage

Housing Interventions

- To find suitable housing
- Supported living situation
- Apply for low income housing or advocate for suitable housing
- Assist finding a place to get out of an unhealthy living arrangement
- Have rent and utilities automatically deducted from their income

Parenting and Family Interventions

- Involve children's services to ensure appropriate care of children
- In home support workers
- Children may need to be placed in care with ongoing access available to the parents
- May need couple's therapy

Parenting and Family Interventions

- Assistance in learning how to access resources and support agencies
- Arrange respite services
- Teach how to build in leisure and recreational activities for the family

Employment Interventions

- Connect with EI or a job counsellor
- External financial supports
- Job coach
- A supported employment situation
- Advocacy to assist them in dealing with employment issues
- Possibly unable to work
- Connect to meaningful volunteer opportunities

Education Interventions

- An accurate diagnosis
- Assist school staff in implementing best practices for FASD
- Assist in development of an individual education plan
- Ensuring client is not placed in inappropriate post secondary education or upgrading

Education Interventions

- Advocate for clients to be placed in appropriate learning opportunities
- Connect clients with appropriate life skills and community learning opportunities
- Assist client in literacy learning

Legal Interventions

- Locate a lawyer
- Help them navigate the justice system
- Educate justice staff on FASD characteristics and best practices
- Ensure client understands charges and legal requirements

Legal Interventions

- Advocate for realistic probation orders and assist in fulfilling the requirements
- If imprisoned, advocate for adequate supervision in protective custody or mental health unit

Substance Abuse Interventions

- Assist client to get into a detox or treatment centre
- Support client in choosing appropriate associates and supports
- Accompany client to AADAC or another addictions counsellor

Substance Abuse Interventions

- Help client to structure income so that it is not impulsively spent or available to others to spend on substances or other addictions
- Direct client to positive recreational outlets not involving substances

Mental Health Interventions

- Can only do limited insight oriented therapy but can benefit from medications and supportive therapy
- May benefit from a more directive, problem solving approach with empathetic support
- At times need to be admitted to psychiatric units and need to be followed up and supported

Mental Health Interventions

- Need practical, concrete techniques to help them cope with depressive and anxiety symptoms
- Children can sometimes benefit from play therapy to help them learn to express their feelings
- Provide an outlet to talk about traumas and hurt in their lives

Concluding Remarks

- The Magnitude of the Problem
- Practice Good Self-Care

The Magnitude of the Problem

- FASD is a complex medical diagnosis resulting in significant primary and secondary disabilities
- FASD has multiple societal issues that are factors in the cause, prevention and treatment of affected individuals
- You may not be able to help everyone or do as much as you would like to do for clients
- You can't do everything but you can do something

Practice Good Self-Care

- FASD is a lifelong condition
- Clients affected by FASD tend to have multiple crises over time and will quickly regress if good supports are removed
- Working with FASD affected clients can be demanding and emotionally draining
- Work as part of a team and don't take it all on yourself

Practice Good Self-Care

- Practice healthy self care patterns
- Expect the unexpected with clients and be satisfied to do what you can for them
- Focus on what you are able to provide rather than what you cannot provide
- Caring, being involved and doing what you can makes you a champion

**See Handout for Information on
Upcoming Sessions in the Series**

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

Thank You!
