

Friendship? Dating? Sex? Relationships in the Complex FASD World

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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 Goals

- Explore issues in relationships for persons affected by FASD
- Learn the skill needed to be successful in relationships
- Learn strategies for helping persons affected by FASD be more successful in relationships

Social Skills

- Reading Body Language, Facial Expressions and Subtle Cues
 - Verbal Self-Regulation
 - Prioritizing Needs
- Literal Interpretation of Language
 - Impulsivity Issues
 - Understanding Money
 - Understanding Time

People with an FASD often have social skill problems. For many, they begin in childhood, for others, we begin to notice them in the teenage years, and we all know that they are often present in the complicated world of adulthood.

Think back...

- You are 8 years old. You have just walked into your friend's birthday party.
- What "rules" do you need to follow?



Now...think to a more recent situation...yesterday at your workplace...What social rules did you have to follow there?



Now think about all the other social situations you managed yesterday.

Partners...kids...other drivers on the road...getting your coffee from Tim Horton's...friends...babysitters...

You probably managed many, many situations without even realizing it!

Here are some ways that social skills might be compromised in those with an FASD:

Reading Body Language, Facial Expressions and Subtle Cues...



Impulsivity in many areas...
Verbal Self Regulation

Like when you lose it on the driver in front of you and you suddenly remember that your four year old is in the car too.



Understanding Money



Understanding Time



According to Brenda Smith Myles, Melissa L. Trautman and Ronda L. Schelvan in their book "The Hidden Curriculum"...

"Many assumptions are made regarding the hidden curriculum in a place of employment because adults are assumed to be knowledgeable about workplace mores and, if not immediately competent on these issues, to master them in a short period of time".

Consider the Mechanic Shop



Overall, our relationships in workplaces, in family situations, in our friendships and in public places are all complicated...

Relationships

- Defining Relationships
 - Common Qualities
 - Friendship
 - Dating
- Things to Think About



Connection to Others



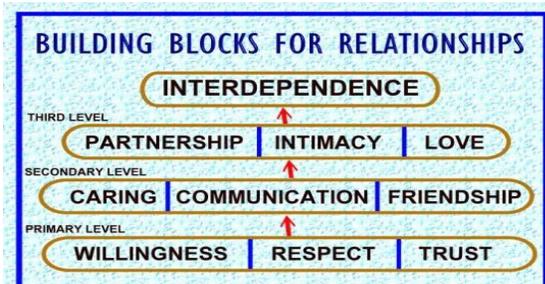
·INTIMACY IS A HUMAN NEED

Relationships

- A connection to others
- A way of seeking intimacy
- Involves many people in our lives: teachers, family members, friends



The skills we learn in relationships are the same skills we use and need in dating



Defining Relationships

Healthy Relationships

- Trust
- Mutual Respect
- Common Interests
- Support
- Unconditional

Unhealthy Relationships

- Jealousy
- No Respect
- Abuse
- Manipulation



Common Qualities

Strengths

- Loyal
- Social
- Accepting
- Non-Judgemental

Challenges

- Difficulties assessing risk
- Poor boundaries
- Lack of empathy
- “Needy”



Friendship

Friend

1. a person attached to another by feelings of affection or personal regard.
2. a person who gives assistance; patron; supporter
3. a person who is on good terms with another; a person who is not hostile



Friendship

Strengths

- Kind
- Funny
- Generous
- Helpful

Challenges

- Personal space
- Maintaining long-term relationships
- Not understanding social etiquette



Dating

- Two people spending time together in a close relationship
- Develops over time
- May consist of friendship, love and intimacy, including sexual activity



Dating

Strengths

- Genuine
- Sharing
- Fun loving

Challenges

- Pressure to have sex
- Concerns regarding pregnancy and STIs
- Abuse – as either the victim or perpetrator



Things to Think About



Permission to Touch



We need to provide opportunities to practice social situations in context or role play if out of context.



Go on dates in groups



Safety Planning
(How and when, NOT why)



Talk out loud about what you are thinking...



Social Stories



Supervision



Enlist Others



As uncomfortable as it might be for you...

Talk about sexuality

Find the Humor



Recognize that support may be needed everywhere and anywhere...for a lifetime...



Resources and Contact Information

Here are some resources...

“The Hidden Curriculum”
“Social Skills Intervention Manual”
www.teachingsexualhealth.ca
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute

Any book about social stories

Contact Information

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**For information on upcoming
sessions in the FASD Learning Series:
www.fasd-cmc.alberta.ca**

**Please take the time to fill out the
on-line evaluation**

Thank You!
