

# Respectful Care giving and Support: Using Strengths-Based Approaches to FASD

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February 2012

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January 2012

# What are we going to explore?

- What are strengths?
- Where do we look for areas of strength?
- How does a strength based approach work for people with FASD?
- What about the neurodevelopmental difficulties?  
How do they fit into a strength-based approach?
- How do we assist a person with FASD to make use of their areas of strength.

# People First Language

- People First: a respectful concept from the broader disAbility community.
- Watching our language when speaking about FASD? Modeling for others? Respectfully challenging others?
- Do words matter that much?

# What is respect?

- Respect – an abstract term which means WHAT?????
- Making respect concrete.
- Showing respect versus talking about respect.

# What are Strengths and How do we Use them?

- Strengths are areas of competency and skills, or potential areas of competency.
- Tapping into these can assist an individual with FASD to feel more positive about themselves, to experience receiving positive praise, or see possibilities for creative outlets or avenues for learning and work.
- Building on positives as a way to incrementally work to a bigger goal works in a respectful way to assist individuals to reach their potential.

# Can we talk about weaknesses and be strength based?

- People who have been diagnosed with an FASD have at least three areas of weakness in their neurodevelopmental functioning.
- But talking about weaknesses isn't strength based. . . Or is it?
- Is it respectful to talk about weaknesses?

# Critique of Strengths-Based Approaches

- Failure to tackle tough issues as you focus on the positives and areas of strength, which leads to these problems erupting in negative ways.
- How do we ameliorate this risk?

# Looking for Strengths:

- Some strengths are easier to see, and are more likely to be noticed:
- E.g.:
  - Art
  - Music
  - Computers

# Looking for Strengths: Hidden

- Strengths may be hidden in strange and scary places.
  - Criminal activities
  - Scary activities
- How can we utilize the strength, but limit the activity that has potential risks?

# Looking for Strengths: Vulnerabilities

- Some areas of strength bring associated vulnerabilities:
  - Mechanical strengths.
  - Strong perceptual learning strengths.
  - Brave and fearless.
  - Quickly make friends.

# Utilize the Strength; Mitigate the Vulnerability

- Acknowledge, praise, build on the area of strength.
- Add supervision.
- Work to teach safe and unsafe use of this strength.
- Provide opportunities for positive use of the area of strength.

# Looking for Strengths: Potential Risks

- Some areas of strength leave the individual with FASD open to risk:
- E.G.
  - Good working with animals.
  - Good working with children.
  - Makes stronger friendships with younger or older people.

# Acknowledge Strength; Mitigate the Risk

- Provide supervision.
- As person with FASD becomes more proficient, reduce supervision, but try and have a buddy system/witness.
- Work to teach safe/good friend from unsafe/bad friend.

# Safe/Good Friends:

- Care about us.
- Are kind and nice to us (define for person).
- Visit when we don't have money as well as when we do.
- Help us be safe and out of trouble.
- Remind us to come home on time, what the rules are, etc.

# Unsafe/bad friends

- Visit only on allowance days, payday, or cheque days.
- Always ask for money or things, but don't give us anything.
- Ask us to do bad things, things that get us in trouble.
- Ask us to take the blame for bad things.
- Scare us to make us do things.

# Utilizing Strengths: Home

- Self esteem is heightened when people feel competent about something.
- Model that none of us are great/perfect at everything.
- Find opportunities for children, youth, adults to engage in areas of strength.
- Give positive feedback to person about their areas of strength.

# Utilizing Strengths: School

- Areas of strength may be helpful in school systems in a number of ways:
  - May indicate alternate avenues of teaching:  
Through art, music, cooking, shops.
  - May assist with course selection.
  - May assist in finding motivators for a student to stay in or return to school.
  - May assist in work program planning.

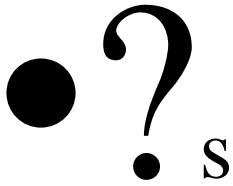
# Utilizing Strengths: Work in Adulthood

- Many individuals with FASD struggle to fit into the standard workplace and its demands.
- Areas of strength may assist in finding work that is a fit for an individual with FASD.
- Areas of strength may indicate an area that person can work part-time or contract with organizational assistance: e.g. art, calligraphy, mechanics, carpentry, yard care, animal grooming, child care.

# Looking for Strengths: Creative, Divergent Thinking

- In the midst of negative events, areas of strength may be lurking that could be redirected:
- E.G.
  - Criminal activities
  - Self-injurious behaviours

# Questions?



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