

Network News

Summer 2006, Issue II

A Note to Readers

by Beverly Palibroda

Hello Friends. The whirlwind of spring activity for the FASD community in Saskatchewan has slowed down ever so slightly for the summer months. Spring was a really busy time! Regina hosted the Canada Northwest FASD Conference in May. Over 700 speakers, participants, and guests attended the conference with representation from across Canada. Board members, staff, and friends of the Network were involved and in attendance at the event. It was an amazing experience and a great opportunity to get to know others and share information. In addition, at the end of May, the Network offered 2 full-day workshops to over 500 participants. Thanks to the Cognitive Disability Strategy, we were able to offer high quality training at no cost to participants. The funding allowed a wide range of people from various sectors to participate. Dan Dubovsky, the speaker for both days, generously shared his knowledge with participants from all over Saskatchewan.

The Network has lots of plans in store for continued activities and projects over the coming months. Stay tuned for details. In the meantime, please enjoy the summer issue of Network News.

Did You Know???

September 9 is International FASD Awareness Day

10 Regions throughout Saskatchewan have FASD committees. Many are planning special events to mark the day. To get involved, or to receive information about a committee in your area, contact the Network office.

The Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline will provide a listing of events to be held on International FASD Day. People throughout Canada can hear a specially recorded voice message listing events by calling the toll free number: **1-877-327-4636**. To have your event included please call Susan Santiago (416) 813-8084.

Cognitive Disability Strategy is Growing

Throughout Saskatchewan we have Cognitive Disability Consultants working with individuals and families to access much needed services. This strategy has helped families affected by FASD in each region and could possibly help your family. Call us at the Network office for more information.

Ehrlo Community Services is Hosting Training Sessions with Diane Malbin

Oct. 31, 2006 Understanding FASD as a Brain-based Physical Disability
Nov. 1-3, 2006 Intensive Training- FASD: From Misunderstanding, Barriers & Stigma to Strategies, Accommodations & Acceptance.

*This is an advance notice; registration for these events will begin in August.

For more information, contact:

Dave Wiebe, Ehrlo Community Services (306) 751-2730 or
(306) 751- 2467 Email: d.wiebe@ehrlomail.com



FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan Inc.

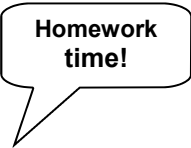
510 Cynthia Street
Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7
975-0884 Toll free number 1-866-673-FASN (3276)
fasdnetwork@sasktel.net
www.skfasnetwork.ca

Hints for Communicating Clearly with Persons with FASD

by Beverly Palibroda

When we interact with others we continuously send and receive messages. The words and actions we use to send messages are powerful and can either help or hinder communication. For people affected by FASD, communication can be difficult due to the many chances for miscommunication and misunderstandings of words and actions. There are a number of things that parents, caregivers and service providers can do to help improve communication with persons affected by FASD. Here are just a few ideas for you to try.

Use clear concrete words and short sentences. If you say exactly what you mean with fewer words you will find your messages are better understood. This is sometimes referred to as using plain language. Plain language does not mean that you talk down to someone; you simply speak in a way that is clear and brief. The individual with FASD can grasp the meaning of the message and she or he does not need to sort out the meanings of large or unfamiliar words or try to understand complex sentences. Try to keep sentences to 10 words or less.



Be specific. General terms and abstract concepts are difficult to understand. Be precise and specific especially with times, locations, and tasks. When giving directions, or teaching a skill, tell the person step by step exactly what to do, in the order that the tasks need to be done. Write the steps down and have the list posted in a convenient spot.

Use repetition in your words and language. Key phrases used in the same way for the same activities are helpful. Regular use of key phrases helps to ensure understanding, builds routines and creates predictability in a world that is often chaotic and unpredictable.

Avoid puns, metaphors and words or phrases with double meanings. The use of figures of speech, phrases where the literal meaning is very different than the intended meaning, causes confusion and frustration. Equally confusing are idioms. Idioms are phrases with a meaning that seems unrelated to the actual words that are used. Some examples of commonly used idioms: It's raining cats and dogs out there! This is as easy as pie. Let's ditch class. I feel antsy. (Source: <http://www.eslcafe.com/idioms/id-mngs.html> ESL Idiom page). Persons with FASD may feel lost in a conversation that includes



figures of speech because they can not decipher the subtle meanings of these phrases. They may respond in ways that do not make sense. They may stay quiet because they do not want to feel they are not part of the group or seem like they are not paying attention to what is going on.

Avoid jargon and acronyms. Terms and acronyms that are known only to groups with specialized knowledge exclude others from the conversation. This is an especially important reminder for those who are having meetings with teens or adults with FASD. The service providers might know exactly what they mean when they use jargon specific to their area of knowledge, but the rest of us usually don't understand!

Sarcasm, exaggeration and jokes can be puzzling. What is intended as light humour or a joke may leave a person with FASD feeling hurt or angry when this was not the intention. It is very uncomfortable when others are laughing and you do not understand what is funny. An offhand comment may be taken as an insult or a joking comment might be understood as the truth.

Keep questions short and clear; calmly prompt for answers. Questions, by their very nature, require thought in order to give an answer. If a person with FASD needs to think hard to figure out what is being asked or if they forget the question, they will not be able to come up with an answer. This is not because they do not know the answer, but because they could not figure out the meaning of the question.

Use a calm and clear voice.

Messages can be lost when given in a highly emotional or excited tone. Simple gestures along with clear and direct phrases may be helpful.



Use varied nonverbal language. Figure out the nonverbal language works such as eye contact, touch, gestures and facial expressions. This will differ with each individual. Nonverbal skills can ensure that you are both paying careful attention to the conversation.

Listen carefully. You can pick up on lack of understanding, miscommunication or confusion more quickly and address the problem rather than letting things escalate.



Grab and Go Resources

If you are looking around for information on the internet this summer, take some time to visit the FASD Center of Excellence website. You will find a section of Grab and Go Resources. The fact sheets in this section are in the public domain and are available for copying and sharing with others. Fact sheets are available on the topics of: housing, diagnosis, language, tips for teachers, mental illness, and the justice system. The following is an excerpt from the fact sheet on mental illness and FASD. Visit this site to read the entire article or get more information.

fasdcenter.samhsa.gov.

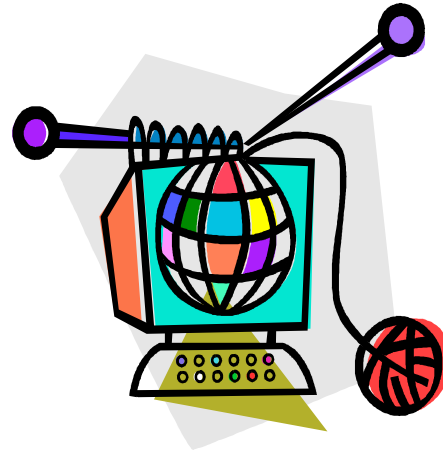
HOW FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS CO-OCCUR WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Often, a person with a co-occurring FASD and mental illness is not diagnosed with an FASD. This can cause pain, anger, and frustration. Failure to recognize co-occurring disorders can increase the risk of:

- Misdiagnosis and inappropriate or ineffective treatment
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Low self-esteem
- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Problems in school
- Family and relationship problems
- Homelessness
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Legal problems
- Premature death (suicide, accident, murder, untreated physical illness)

Recognizing an FASD as a co-occurring disorder can help decrease anger and frustration among individuals, families, providers, and community members. Individuals may feel relieved to have an explanation for their difficulties. Families and communities can understand the nature of the problems and provide support. Service providers can focus on ways to make treatment programs more effective.

We've updated our
Website!!



If you haven't visited the FASD Support Network website lately you will want to check it out. Many changes and improvements have been made. There are links to Network resources as well as information about FASD news and events. We will be updating our site regularly, so check back often.

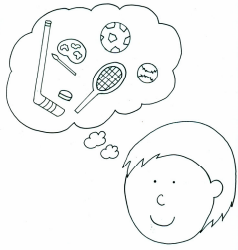
What is on the site??

- Current and past issues of Network News
- Text versions of all 16 of our FASD Tips for Parents and Caregivers
- Articles about diagnosis and the Cognitive Disability Strategy
- Upcoming training opportunities and events

Our website address is:
www.skfasnetwork.ca



Pictorial FASD Tips Order Form



Have you heard of the Pictorial FASD Tips available from the Network office? We currently have a set of 10 FASD Tips available. The Tips are in a brochure format with eye catching graphics and great ideas presented in plain and simple language.

Use the form below to order your Pictorial FASD Tips. We will send them out to you for a minimal cost to cover shipping and handling. The pictorial FASD Tips are excellent for daily use at home or in school, to share with friends and family, for use in support groups, FASD workshops, and classroom settings.

Name of Pictorial Brochure

**Number of Copies
requested**

Tip #1 How You can Help Children with FASD Make Decisions

Tip #2 How You can Help your Child with FASD Make and Keep Friends

Tip #3 How You can Help Teens with FASD Manage Money

Tip #4 How You can Help Adults with FASD Manage Money

Tip #5 How You can Help Teens and Adults with FASD Make Decisions

Tip #6 How You can Help your Child with FASD Figure out Reality and Fantasy

Tip #7 How You can Help your Child with FASD Learn to Cope with their Senses

Tip #8 How You can Help Children and Teens with FASD Learn about Ownership

Tip #9 Making Changes with Children and Youth with FASD

Tip #10 Tips to Help your Child or Teen with FASD take part in Sports and Activities

Please provide the following information:

Name:

Organization if applicable:

Mailing Address:

Who shall we bill shipping and handling costs to?



Mail completed order form to:
FASD Support Network of SK
510 Cynthia Street
Saskatoon, SK
S7L 7K7
Or FAX to:
242-8007