

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETECT IF AN INDIVIDUAL HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL EXPOSURE DURING PREGNANCY.

WE MAY SEE HIM/HER AS: WHEN REALLY HE/SHE IS EXPERIENCING:

**Won't cooperate** Doesn't get it, memory problems

**Repeat offender** Impulsivity (impulsive crimes)

**Takes the blame** Easily lead by others

**Lazy** Tries hard, exhausted or can't start, disorganized

**Lies** Fills in blanks. Willing and compliant. Slow auditory pace, may only understand every third word in a normally paced conversation. Highly verbal, ability to repeat instructions, but inability to put them into action.

**Doesn't care/shuts down** Defensive, hurt, abused, frustrated

**Uncomfortable body language** Can't show feelings

**Resisting** Doesn't understand, has difficulty in paying attention

**Trying to make others mad** Can't remember, over stimulated

**Immature, acting younger** An adult with FASD may have the same functional capacities as a normal eight year old

**Thief** Doesn't understand ownership, has poor judgment

**Mean** Inability to understand consequences of their actions

Adapted from D. Malbin, 1996

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# FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

A MESSAGE TO POLICE OFFICERS ABOUT FASD

with child  
without alcohol



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HAVE YOU EVER ARRESTED SOMEONE FOR BREAK & ENTER AND HE/SHE WAS STILL INSIDE THE HOUSE, WATCHING TV AND EATING POTATO CHIPS?

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN A STATEMENT FROM SOMEONE WHO SEEMED TO BE AGREEING TO EVERYTHING NO MATTER WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS?

DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE DEALT WITH A VICTIM, WITNESS OR OFFENDER AFFECTED BY FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME?

### What is FASD?

FASD refers to a group of physical and mental birth defects caused by alcohol use during pregnancy. Primary symptoms may include central nervous system and brain damage, growth and weight deficiencies, learning disabilities and abnormal facial characteristics.

Other alcohol related disorders are not a milder form of FASD; the organic brain damage may be as severe and debilitating.

**pFAS** – Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

**ARND** – Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders

**ARBBD** – Alcohol Related Birth Defects

**FAE** – Fetal Alcohol Effects

**FASD** – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

### Diagnosis needs to be done by a team of Medical Professionals.

*“Early recognition of FASD is important since these individuals need your help and understanding.”*

— Dr. Albert E. Chudley,  
M.D., FRCPC, FCCMG  
Medical Geneticist  
Health Sciences Centre &  
University of Manitoba  
Faculty of Medicine

*“At least 23.3% of those involved in the Criminal Justice System are affected by FAS.”*

— Julianne Conry, Ph.D.  
— Dianne Fast, Ph.D.  
Burnaby, BC, 1995/96

*“They may not understand the concept of ‘waiving their rights’.”*

— Julianne Conry, Ph.D.

### What Should You Do?

- Be cognizant of the limited capacities and special needs and make all necessary adjustments.
- Ensure that victims and witnesses are interviewed as soon as possible as there are often memory impairments with FASD clients. Enlist the assistance of caregivers, social or health workers wherever possible.
- Videotape and/or audiotape all statements and interviews.
- Ask open-ended questions. Say, “Where were you yesterday?”, as opposed to “Were you at the Fire Hall yesterday?”. FASD affected individuals are often very eager and willing to please and may answer your questions the way they believe you want them to.
- When releasing prisoners or when dealing with victims and witnesses of diminished capacity, endeavor to release them into the charge of a caregiver, custodian or parent for their own protection and understanding of the law.
- Ensure that the Crown Attorney is aware that you think your client has FASD.

### Did You Know?

FASD is theoretically 100% preventable, but there is no cure? You can help prevent FASD by linking to community supports.

### Working with FASD requires inter-agency support.

The links in your community to support systems that can help you deal with FASD clients may include your local Health Services, Social Service Systems, Addictions Foundations, Prenatal Health Organizations, Cultural and Employment and Housing Services.



**FASD IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!**

*“Children with FASD cost Manitoba an estimated \$1.4 million during their lifetime.”*

— Michelle Dubik, Healthy Child Manitoba