



Concurrent Session Descriptions

A. 9:15 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

A.1. *“Oh, Those Crazy Parents! Optimizing the Service Provider-Caregiver Relationship”*

Presenters: Shiona Watson and Helen Hoy (both of Guelph Downtown FASD Caregiver Support Group)

Summary: Parents/caregivers are often desperate by the time they seek help, and can easily feel blamed, under-valued, frustrated and unheard, and, as a result, may well present to the professionals as angry, belligerent, weepy, accusatory, and downright crazy at times. This makes it extremely difficult, if not sometimes impossible, for professionals involved to encourage beneficial changes in the home lives of their client with FASD, or for parents/caregivers to express safely the problems inherent in living with someone who has FASD. For service-providers, support for caregivers may also require moving away from standard models of child development (including delayed development) or parenting practices. Using examples from their own lives and those of other caregivers from their support group, along with research from the area of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, the presenters will illustrate how service providers and others can apply and model FASD strategies, in working with parents and caregivers.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

A.2. *The Transition to Interdependence - FASD and the Life Stage Transition to Adulthood*

Presenter: Brenda Bennett (FASD Life’s Journey)

Summary: This session will focus on the risks and protective factors related to the life stage transition marked by coming of age in Canada. Adulthood cannot be framed by typical trajectories, therefore the session will examine when adulthood emerges for those impacted by FASD, the individual lifespan trajectories based on subtypes, and strategies to influence optimal outcomes.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge recommended

A.3. *FASD Genetics – A New Approach to “Secondary Disabilities”*

Presenter: Rod Densmore (Kamloops Urban Aboriginal Clinic)

Summary: How heritable are “Secondary Disabilities?” Are personality traits heritable? Even more importantly, what can be done to help avoid harm from such conditions in those who have genetic predisposition? Whether a person carries family predisposition for alcoholism or high cholesterol much can be done to help them avoid expression of these harmful genes. GENES ARE NOT DESTINY! In this session we review genes known to influence alcohol intake/dependence and some mental health issues, plus touch briefly on “Epigenetics” with the plan of using such information to reduce the severity of “Secondary Disabilities.” I am an Adoptive Dad....this is no “austere theory!” How this information offers practical help for my family and patients is the focus.

Category: Innovative Practices

Level: Intermediate to Advanced – some previous FASD knowledge required

A.4. *Social Skill Stoppers*

Presenter: Danna Ormstrup (Foothills Fetal Society)

Summary: On the playground, in a living room, on a job site or at a birthday party, social skills play an important role in enjoying life. Social Skill Stoppers is a workshop designed to help those working or living with those who have FASD understand the complex world of social skills. Through stories, humour and real life examples, participants in this workshop will have the opportunity to explore the intricacies of social life and strategize about some effective methods to deal with them.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory to Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge encouraged

A.5. Considerations in Screening Maternal Alcohol Use

Presenter: Liz Lawryk (OBD Triage Institute)

Summary: This session will review existing research and the ten-year practice model (approximately 650 direct interviews) in order to discuss the ethical, professional and legal ramifications to professionals in the areas of Children's Services, Psychology, Justice, Education, Health and others regarding screening maternal alcohol use as it pertains to a medical diagnosis compounded by the social issue of alcoholism. The goal of the lecture is to identify and acknowledge these concerns in order to enhance diagnostic and clinical services to women and families in our communities.

Category: Assessment and Diagnosis

Level: Advanced – some previous FASD knowledge required

A. 6. Tsuu T'ina Gathering Together – Working with Men for FASD Prevention

Presenters: Richard Amaral, Richard Leblanc (both of Tsuu T'ina Dr. Thomas Murray Health Centre)

Summary: The presentation will focus on an innovative practice in FASD prevention and intervention: providing mentorship and advocacy services to men. Tsuu T'ina Gathering Together has a male mentor/advocate working with fathers suspected of having a child with an FASD. The advocate also works with men struggling with addiction. The presentation will then explore the following topics: (a) the rationale for working with men as a part of FASD prevention efforts, (b) the psychological theories influencing male advocacy, and (c) the tools and instruments used in service delivery and program evaluation. We will close with a discussion on the challenges and successes of mentoring and advocacy in First Nations communities.

Category: Innovative Practices/Awareness and Prevention

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

A.7. Enhancing the Assessment Process and Implications for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)-diagnosed students: Perspectives of Classroom Teachers and Caregivers

Presenters: Jacqueline Pei, Cheryl Poth, and Jenelle Job (all of University of Alberta)

Summary: The present study addresses the call for increasing the voice of teachers and caregivers in the research. In particular, our findings report on the strengths and challenges in the working relationships among key stakeholders involved in the learning and assessment of adolescents with FASD. Focus group interviews with classroom teachers and caregivers were guided by the following objectives: (a) capturing the experiences of caregivers and teachers within the school system; (b) identifying successful strategies for effective communication; and (c) contributing to the FASD literature ways in which the communicative process can lead to positive impacts for students, their class, and teacher. This study builds on the conversation that began at last year's conference presentation entitled, "Effective Strategies for Bridging the Communication Gap in Service Delivery for FASD Individuals." Understandings that emerged led to the next steps in the research and it is these findings that will be presented and discussed.

Category: Research and Evaluation/Community Capacity and Collaboration

Level: Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge recommended

B. 10:45 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

B.1. Caregiver – Caretaker

Presenter: Brenda Robinson (The Robcan Group)

Summary: People who respond to emergencies and disasters, people who work in the field of caring for people with special needs, victims of violence, disabilities and long term support are themselves "special" people. Over and over again, these people put themselves "at risk" for others. They give their time, energy, knowledge, skills and compassion in an ongoing way. Sometimes caregivers fail to recognize the cost of giving. Most caregivers are required to deal with ongoing, short term and long term situations. The shell or bubble goes round and round again. For some, putting up the shell and tearing it down again becomes cumbersome and some people just choose to leave it up. How long can people continue to give without taking something back? What happens when we run out of giving? What do we have to do to restore our resources? Caregivers need to respond to their own needs as well as those of others. This presentation will look at what steps caregivers can take to ensure them their own ongoing strength and wellness.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

B.2. Counseling Approaches for Individuals with FASD

Presenter: Susan Opie

Summary: This presentation will explore adaptations to providing counseling or therapy to older children, youth and adults with FASD or suspected FASD. Individuals with FASD may have difficulties with day to day life events, problem solving, or have had exposure to traumatic life events including multiple placements, attachment difficulties, abuse or neglect, or exposure to violence. In addition, they may develop negative coping mechanisms or significant mental health symptoms secondary to the primary effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol. It will explore building therapeutic relationships with individuals with FASD with significant trust issues, creating visual and tactile modifications to treatment, modifying talk therapy to accommodate neurodevelopmental differences for individual clients, and utilizing client strengths to provide therapeutic responses to the issues individuals with FASD may have.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge recommended

B.3. Attachment and FASD: Understanding and Nurturing a Relationship

Presenters: Wanda Polzin (CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health)

Summary: This presentation focuses on disorders of attachment in relation to FASD in hopes of bringing understanding to involved caregivers, including parents, extended family members, as well as community professionals. The goals of this workshop are to empower caregivers with specific strategies to enhance and promote relationships with individuals diagnosed with co-morbid FASD and RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder) and/or PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). We will explore issues and expand knowledge relating to parenting, teaching, supporting, and clinically treating an individual with FASD and attachment issues.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

B.4. Brain Imaging and Neurocognitive Functioning in Children and Twins with FASD

Presenters: Anna Matejko, Catherine Lebel, Carmen Rasmussen, and Christian Beaulieu (all of University of Alberta)

Summary: Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI) is an advanced imaging technique useful for assessing brain structure. We used DTI to measure differences in brain structure between children with FASD and typically developing children. Children with FASD tend to perform poorly on select cognitive tasks such as mathematical problems and executive functioning tasks. Cognitive tests were also administered to see if there was a relationship between cognitive performance and brain abnormalities. We will discuss two studies: (1) A study that compared children with FASD to typically developing children on structural differences in the brain in both grey matter and white matter. Mathematical competency was also measured and correlated with diffusion parameters in brain white matter; (2) A study that assessed differences in twins with prenatal alcohol exposure on a wide variety of cognitive measures. Microstructural differences between twins were also measured.

Category: Research and Evaluation

Level: Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge recommended

B.5. Brain Box Therapy and Other Great Shapes

Presenter: Karmen Krahn Schulties (Cognitive Disability Strategy of Saskatchewan)

Summary: Brain Box Therapy is a program that teaches kids how their brain works. It is "therapeutic" in that amazing things happen when behavior strategies are strength-based, not deficit-based. Brain Box Therapy believes that even in the harshest birth conditions, the brain is resilient and strong in countless ways. Self-regulation happens when kids learn to use the strong parts of their brain at the right time. Growth happens when we teach to the strong parts. Satisfaction happens when kids discover who they are and can advocate on their own behalf. As much as we've come to understand brain-based behavior, it's time to start sharing this wisdom with the owners. The brain, although fixable, is not a computer. The brain, although the source of all behavior, is not a top secret mission. In art, drama and play we explore this great secret.

Category: Innovative Practices

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

B.6. How to Start and Sustain a FASD Parent Peer Support Group

Presenter: Sharon Iversen (Parent Support Association of Calgary)

Summary: Caring for a child with FASD can be a very rewarding experience. But it is also a unique parenting challenge that requires patience, creativity and lots of love. There may be days when a parent or caregiver may feel very alone or isolated

because of their family's unique situation. Even though they may feel alone there are hundred of parents, foster parents and caregivers who are facing similar challenges. This presentation will cover peer group fundamentals that promote success when starting a peer support group, such as roles and responsibilities, appropriate group support boundaries, structures and frameworks that encourage group formation and sustained attendance, and marketing and retention tips.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

B.7. Adult Guardian Trusteeship Act (AGTA)

Presenters: Graham Badry and Tobi-Dawn McRae (Office of the Public Guardian)

Summary: This presentation will cover the new Adult Guardian Trusteeship Act, proclaimed in the fall of 2009, which replaces the 30 year old Dependant Adults Act. The AGTA provides enhanced decision making options for Albertans who need assistance or require a surrogate decision maker for personal and financial decisions. The spirit of the act is one that focuses on autonomy and offers a continuum of decision making options that may be more applicable than the previous act for individuals with FASD. An overview of the guiding principles on which the Act is based will be provided. The new process on applying for Guardianship will be shared and how this affects current Guardians and Trustees. Abuse of vulnerable people is a significant concern and the AGTA makes considerable improvements in the area of protection. Information in regards to this will be discussed. The AGTA includes trusteeship and this will be touched on briefly. Time for questions will be incorporated throughout the presentation.

Category: Education and Training

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

C. 1:00 P.M. – 2:15 P.M.

C.1. Oppression, Stigma and Power: Burden Experienced by Caregivers of Youth with FASD

Presenter: Roxanne L. Pereira

Summary: This session will give an overview of the primary and secondary disabilities of FASD and examine what the term "caregiver burden" refers to. It will cover the demographic characteristics of caregivers related to burden, how the caregiver perceives available social support, and what makes caregivers of youth with FASD a unique and highly oppressed population. Descriptive data on the caregiver experience will be shared as well as strategies on how to help alleviate caregiver burden through recognition, de-stigmatization and support.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

C.2 Equine Facilitated Bonding

Presenter: Marie Sherwood (Shalom Ranch)

Summary: Using current research, the amazing curly horse and a fun atmosphere, Marie Sherwood has created Equine Facilitated Bonding. Her methods are based on the work of Dr. Bruce Perry, Dr. Bessel A. van der Kolk, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Bowlby and Nancy Thomas. Her methods help encourage children to reach out and depend on their parent. At the same time the child is strengthening neural pathways, releasing somatic memory and having fun. Come and listen to a lively and informative presentation that will change your view on working with horses in therapy.

Category: Innovative Practices/Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

C.3. A Day in the Life of a Mentor

Presenter: Courtney Scott-Donaldson (REDI Enterprises), Denise Davis (Coaching Families), Laura Elliott (McMan Southwest), Sandra Williamson (PCAP, McMan Calgary), Richard Leblanc (Tsuu T'ina Dr. Thomas Murray Health Centre)

Summary: This facilitated panel presentation will cover a common day in the life of an advocate/mentor and will include perspectives from different types of mentors in the community (PCAP, family, male, etc). It will focus on the different kinds of supports that are needed to support individuals with FASD and their caregivers and other supports around them. The facilitator will interview the panel of mentors on areas such as: supporting the caregivers, advocating for your client within the legal system, mentoring the client in life skill areas, supporting the individual in every area from budgeting, to housing, relationships, and addictions. This presentation will also focus on how the redefining of success and developing a highly skilled and resilient advocate/mentor is the key to achieving that success.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory to Intermediate – some previous FASD knowledge recommended

C.4. Children with FASD and the Youth Justice System

Presenters: Pat Yuzwenko and Cathy Lane Goodfellow (both of the Youth Criminal Defence Office)

Summary: This presentation will address the practical realities of representing FASD affected youth in the criminal justice system, including a discussion of the impact of the diagnosis on each major step in the justice process - from investigation and arrest through to trial and sentencing. Discussion of how the diagnosis of FASD can intersect with the legal definition of "fitness". We will discuss the principles of the YCJA and how they are supposed to guide every stage of the process. We will highlight the role of counsel and the parent/caregiver, how the diagnosis can be conveyed to participants in the system (i.e. arresting officers), where the issue of fitness arises, and what processes are available under the YCJA that offer an ability to do some case conferencing.

Category: Community Capacity and Collaboration

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

C.5. Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) Demonstration

Presenters: Janet Christie (Consultant) and Elizabeth Miles (ARTEC)

Summary: PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) is a visual, creative planning tool created in 1994 specifically for people with disabilities. Since that time PATH has proven to be effective for individuals affected by FASD. A PATH is concrete and visual. The PATH process is facilitated by two trained PATH facilitators; one facilitates the process and the other visibly records the results on paper posted on the wall. The facilitated process creates vision and hope, and assists the individual to identify goals which are positive, possible and realistic. A PATH builds on the individual's strengths, and identifies support people who will assist with follow through and encourage independence. A completed PATH includes words, graphics, goals, steps, dates, support people and resources needed, and becomes a living document for the person with FASD. Our presentation will include a demonstration of a facilitated PATH for a young adult with FASD and his/her support people.

Category: Supports for Individuals and Caregivers

Level: Introductory - no previous FASD knowledge required

C.6. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: The Dilemma of Diagnosis in the Early Years

Presenters: Gail Andrew (Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital) and Jacqueline Pei (University of Alberta)

Summary: Early diagnosis and access to supports for child and caregiver can reduce secondary disabilities. There is often not sufficient evidence of organic brain damage in children under age 5 with a history of prenatal alcohol exposure for diagnosis. Impact of genetic factors and adverse postnatal life experience need to be considered. If prenatal alcohol exposure is confirmed, the child is at risk but not definitely diagnosed. Evidence based approach to diagnosis by a trained multidisciplinary team is required. This presentation is informed by the extensive experience of the Glenrose FASD Clinical Services. Research has identified areas of difficulty that are correlated with prenatal alcohol exposure. This has implications for policy and best practice guidelines for assessment in the early years, based on identifying functional needs and not on medical diagnosis. Planful follow-up to determine if executive function deficits emerge with age, to provide anticipatory interventions and education is essential.

Category: Assessment and Diagnosis

Level: Intermediate to Advanced - some previous FASD knowledge required

C.7. FASD and Sexuality

Presenter: Pam Van Vugt (McMan Youth, Family and Community Services)

Summary: We are asked to provide information on sexuality in our work with FASD affected clients and with women who are addicted, pregnant and using substances on a regular basis. Many professionals have information that may be dated. One of the goals of P-CAP is to prevent the births of further affected children, so having current information on birth control and STI's is imperative. This workshop will focus on knowing the most current information on birth control, STI's and Women and Men's Sexual Health Issues. We will also address how we can share that information with our FASD clients in a way that they can understand. Participants will have an opportunity to view all the new birth control methods and discuss the information our clients need to know in order to stay healthy sexually.

Category: Education and Training/Awareness and Prevention

Level: Introductory – no previous FASD knowledge required

