

WELCOMING EMPLOYEES WITH FASD INTO YOUR WORKPLACE



2010

Helping Adults with FASD

Canada



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
WHO WE ARE: THE REGINA COMMUNITY CLINIC-FASD CENTRE.....	2
ABOUT FASD: WHAT IS FASD?.....	4
ABOUT FASD: ADULTS WITH FASD	6
ABOUT FASD: STATISTICS.....	7
ABOUT FASD: MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT FASD.....	9
WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION: THE NEED FOR PLAIN LANGUAGE.....	11
WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION: PROCESSING INFORMATION DISABILITIES.....	13
IN THE WORKPLACE: THE INTERVIEW	14
IN THE WORKPLACE: “HANDS-ON” SUPPORT & TRAINING	18
IN THE WORKPLACE: ABOUT “DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE”	25
IN THE WORKPLACE: DISCLOSING A DISABILITY	26
CONCLUSION	28
APPENDIX: CASE STUDY 1 (BOB BUCKLEY).....	29
APPENDIX: CASE STUDY 2 (CALVIN POTTS)	32
APPENDIX: CASE STUDY 3 (NORA ROBINSON).....	35
APPENDIX: SIMPLE APPLICATION FORM.....	38
APPENDIX: 20 SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	39
APPENDIX: FASD – ITS BACKGROUND	40
APPENDIX: FURTHER READING & REFERENCES.....	46

WELCOMING EMPLOYEES WITH FASD INTO YOUR WORKPLACE

HELPING ADULTS WITH FASD

INTRODUCTION

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is one of the most common and misunderstood disabilities in today's world. Adults with FASD who are looking for work remain at a disadvantage because of the lack of understanding in so many communities. The information in this guide will:

- help employers begin to understand FASD,
- help to reduce the stigma of FASD,
- suggest practical strategies to help adults with FASD succeed in the workplace.

This guide is created thanks to a literacy grant from the federal Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) in collaboration with the professionals at the Regina Community Clinic, FASD Centre.

- Please note that photos are generic while quotes are from some of our clients. All client names have been changed to protect their privacy. Examples used within the document are a fusion of our experiences.

WHO WE ARE: REGINA COMMUNITY CLINIC FASD CENTRE

The FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders) Centre is an integral program at the Regina Community Clinic. Since 2004, the Centre has worked with more than 100 people, of all ages, with FASD.

It is important that all communities start understanding FASD generally and how it impacts affected individuals specifically. We do this by offering free educational workshops, one-on-one coaching, and specialized programs for people with FASD. One program was the Supported Employment Program. The program ran for a number of years and helped adults with FASD find workplace opportunities in Regina.

Currently, we are completing a workplace literacy program for adults with FASD. This employer guide is one component.

It is from our first hand experience that we have created this guide.

Our success is based upon five simple core practices:

- Our understanding of FASD.
- Our understanding of the person with FASD.
- Our ability to be realistic in recognizing strengths and weaknesses of each person.
- Our ability to take the time to match abilities of the person to the employer needs.
- Our ability to offer practical solutions and support for the person with FASD and the employer.

These straightforward practices form the foundation needed for a successful workplace experience for both the adult with FASD and the employer.

This guide is divided into three sections. The first addresses general information about FASD, the second addresses the strategies for the workplace, and the third is the appendix containing sample case histories, an application and interview questions, and for the curious there is more detailed information about FASD and its challenges. Finally, there is a CD with three PowerPoint presentations:

- FASD: Building Diversity,
- FASD: Plain Language,
- FASD: Understanding Processing Disabilities.

Whenever possible we have included comments from our participants. The most important understanding begins with the realization that each person is an individual first, and a person with FASD second.

We're sharing our information and experience with you so you can be successful helping a person with FASD. You can be reassured that we are professionals. This guide can help you build your foundation and employ the best practices for your workplace as you choose to help people with FASD discover the workplace.

What is FASD?

FASD is an umbrella term used to describe a number of diagnoses. A diagnosis results when the fetus is both exposed and affected by alcohol that the mother consumes. The diagnoses are:

- FAS – fetal alcohol syndrome
- pFAS – partial fetal alcohol syndrome
- ARND – alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorders
- ARBD – alcohol related birth defects.

There are four main areas of disability that can result from a fetus being exposed to alcohol:

- **Cognitive** – which is the various IQ's and the ability to understand and learn.
- **Physical** – people with FASD sometimes have physical disabilities.
- **Developmental:** People with FASD develop slowly. This impacts their emotions and social lives. Many people with FASD will always act and think younger than they are.
- **Social:** Many people with FASD struggle with social cues. Often, they misunderstand social cues, body language, or gestures and tend to cross personal boundaries when interacting with others.

People with an FASD live with disabilities that develop before they are born. But, many of the disabilities are not clear until the child begins school or the teen struggles, or the adult cannot manage his or her life. They are not at fault for their disability. All people with FASD want a happier and successful life.

In the right working environment people with FASD can flourish becoming a valuable part of the workplace. Many people with FASD

The consumption of any kind of alcohol by a pregnant woman places the developing fetus at risk of being born with an FASD.

whom we know are raising a family while living on assistance because they have not had the benefit of appropriate support from social workers, employers, or others in their lives. Because of the lack of support, many adults with FASD have had very little success. This can change.

Everyone lives with stress and can have bad days. Amazingly, the people we have known are more resilient than many others. They live in the present moment and want to succeed.

ADULTS WITH FASD

The majority of adults with FASD do not have any visible signs of their disability. But, all people with FASD have some kind of permanent injury to their brain. Understandably, that injury impacts their daily life in different ways.

We know that each person with FASD is an individual; however there are some common tendencies:

- Many people with FASD also have ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)
- They may trust the 'wrong' individual
- They may believe something that isn't true
- They might be overly impulsive
- They may not remember everything we think they should
- Many are very concrete in their thinking (black & white thinking)
- They may struggle in understanding the passage of time
- They hear you, but not fully understand you

Like all of us, adults with FASD want to 'look good' so they will not necessarily admit that they don't understand or ask for help unless they feel very comfortable. Instead, like many of us, they will try to figure something out on their own, or pretend, or avoid a task, or retreat/leave, or go do something else. When this happens, the person may be seen as being non-compliant or resistant.

However, when an employer is observant and curious, he or she may become a reliable resource to help the person with FASD better understand the workplace and co-workers. The person with FASD will usually respond to help when it's offered with respect and patience.

How common is FASD in Canada?

In 2006, Health Canada identified that an estimated 12/1000 babies in every thousand are born with an FASD.

- 2/1000 are born with FAS,
- 10/1000 are born with ARND

Emerging research in 2009 suggests that the incidence of FASD is under-identified. FASD affects people of all nationalities, ages, cultures, religions, and economic backgrounds.

What are the costs of FASD?

The estimated cost for each individual with FASD is between 1.5 to 2 million dollars in his or her lifetime.

“These costs will be a result of the need for increased services in the areas of special education, counseling, welfare, involvement of the criminal justice system as well as a myriad of other factors.” (Anon. 2006. “About Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.” FASWorld. p. 1-4).

It is possible that these costs drop when people with FASD are able to access the help and support they need within our communities.

Who is the biggest risk group?

For many years, the biggest risk group was women who were middle-aged, well-educated and lived with middle – upper class incomes. These women were often social drinkers not planning on becoming pregnant given their age, and also not understanding the risk of FASD.

More recent research shows the biggest risk group is the 20-something university student who binge drinks on the weekends or during spring break. She may not be planning to become pregnant yet it may happen. Without realizing she is pregnant, she continues her social lifestyle placing the fetus at risk.

A woman does not have to be an active alcoholic to have a baby with FASD. Not every woman (or girl) who drinks will have a baby with FASD, just as not every woman who used the morning sickness drug, thalidomide, had affected babies.

Simply put, alcohol presents a risk to the developing fetus. We cannot predict which woman and baby will be impacted.

To be cautious, women of childbearing years are encouraged to abstain from alcohol if there is the possibility of being pregnant.

This isn't about judging women; it's simply about biology and the need to have the healthiest pregnancy possible.



Myths and Facts About FASD

There are many myths about FASD. Here are a few of the common ones:

- **Myth:** People with FASD are lazy and careless.
Fact: We all have days when we feel lazy or were careless because we were too tired or didn't understand. People with FASD are the same. However, when they become overwhelmed or too confused because of their brain injury, they need encouragement to keep trying.
- **Myth:** FASD doesn't exist in high income or well-educated families.
Fact: FASD does not discriminate. When alcohol is a part of pregnancy, then the risk for FASD is present. FASD is not restricted to any one culture or income bracket.
- **Myth:** People with an FASD will grow out of it.
Fact: No, they will not. This is a life-long permanent disability. People need supports and understanding for their entire life.
- **Myth:** FASD equals 'mental retardation.'
Fact: Mental retardation is a medical term used to identify IQ's below 70. It is not an insult. At our Clinic people we have diagnosed have IQ's ranging from 42-120 or higher.

- **Myth:** Science is not conclusive in its findings regarding FASD.
Fact: This is untrue. During the 1960's, a physician in France began documenting abnormalities in babies that were born to women who drank during pregnancy. In 1973, two American researchers identified 'fetal alcohol syndrome' in the Midwestern United States.

For centuries it was believed that the placenta could protect the fetus from harmful substances. We have learned that alcohol, like a few other substances, crosses through the placenta and goes directly into the fetus's bloodstream. If we consider social history, FASD has been around since alcohol has been around.

- **Myth:** There is no hope for people with an FASD.
Fact: This is untrue. FASD cannot be cured, but people with FASD can be more successful if we understand the disability. While we've known about FASD for years, it is still the early days in both accepting the disability and in developing needed support s in all communities.

We continue to learn more about the risk of alcohol during pregnancy and the complexity of this disability each year.

Workplace Communication: The Need for Plain Language

We know that communication is the foundation to your business's success. Good communication between employees, management, and customers, result in better outcomes. And, we know that good communication results in a happier and less stressful workplace.

Communication skills are often challenging for people with FASD. One helpful strategy is to use 'plain language.' Plain language is very simple. It is knowing how to write and speak so that a person with a disability (such as FASD) can easily understand what they read or hear.

Plain language is simple, clear, and practical.

Some years ago, the United States government embraced a policy of plain language for a variety of industries. Here are two examples of how organizations adapted their written documents to meet the need for plain language.

First, from the Department of Health:

Before: "The dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activities on most days, preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, callisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sport exercise, and dancing."

And after applying plain language to the same paragraph: "Do at least 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking, most days of the week."

And, one more example. This one is from the insurance industry

“Make sure that the account holder’s name on the account is the same as the name of the customer to whose account transaction should be attributed” became “Make sure that this is the account for the right customer.”

Using plain language lessens workplace stress, and for people with FASD they feel more productive as they can better understand what you are asking of them. The person can only do what they understand and can only do what her or she remembers. The goal of plain language is simple. It’s about communicating with a person so that he or she understands what you want them to do.

Here are some strategies you can use:

- Give information in one or two sentences.
- Use clear, simple, and concrete words.
- Check with the person for understanding.
- If necessary, repeat the information using the same words.
- Skip the use of acronyms.
- Speak calmly and slowly in a clear voice.
- Avoid the use of negatives (say ‘do this’ instead of ‘don’t’)
- Use their words as much as possible.
- Pay attention to your body language (try to be relaxed).
- Be patient and use encouraging words.

WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

PROCESSING INFORMATION DISABILITIES

Did you realize that we process information with all of our senses and do this in milliseconds? People with FASD often have trouble processing information quickly because of the injured brain. Information can get scrambled and not be processed as quickly or easily. Many times they benefit from having more time to process and understand information before responding.



My first job was with a florist who knows about disabilities. I was hired through my high school special education class, or what they called the 'slow learner' class back then.

To help people with FASD process information there are several strategies to try:

- Find a place to talk with few distractions
- Ask the person how her or she learns or remembers best
- Say only one or two sentences at a time and wait.
- Be straightforward.
- Allow the person time to process (you can try counting to 30 in your head) before repeating the information.
- Ask the person to explain what you said, or what they have read, so you can check for understanding.



THE WORKPLACE THE INTERVIEW

Whether you've advertised for help in the local paper or are routinely contacted by job seekers, you interview people. You may conduct formal or informal interviews. If you know that you will be interviewing someone with an FASD, there are some simple things you can do to allow for the best interview possible.

We've mentioned that people with FASD have a range of abilities and talents. There is a range of IQ's. Sometimes, some people with FASD have trouble reading, writing, and understanding. This doesn't mean that they cannot understand IF they receive the information in a way that allows them to understand.

Some people with FASD can understand what is said to them, but not what they have to read. Some people might only hear a few of the words you say even though they are listening to you. As an employer it is important for you to remember that no two people with an FASD are exactly the same.

There are several things you can easily do when preparing to interview someone with FASD. Ideally, there is a supported employment worker involved with the person. The worker may bring the person in for a quick 'hello' and a quick look at the workplace a day or two before the interview.

This very brief intervention can help the person with FASD feel more comfortable when it's time for the interview because you will not be a complete stranger and the workplace will have some familiarity. Doing these two small things beforehand eases the person's anxiety about being somewhere new or meeting someone new. These simple actions can result in a better interview.

During an interview people with FASD will do better when they are in a 'conversation' rather than a series of questions. If you can, simply have a few key questions to guide the conversation, and then listen closely. Try the following:

- Use language that allows the person to feel respected.
- Allow longer time for a response.
- Allow for a shorter interview in a quiet space with few distractions.
- Be open to the idea that the individual may need a support person in the interview with them.

Interview Questions:

When you are interviewing anyone, there are several answers that you are looking for: does the person understand the job, can he or she do the job, can he or she work as a team, how much help will they need, will he or she "fit in," and so forth. You usually have a few minutes to figure out if the person can do the job. Given that need, most workplaces have a series of standardized interview questions that are often similar to the following example.

Let's imagine a house cleaning company, 123Cleaners, and that these are their usual interview questions:

- Why would you like to work here?
- Have you ever worked as a _____ before?
- What duties do you think this job entails?
- Would you be able to do shift work?
- Tell me about yourself?
- Are you bondable?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- How do you handle stress?
- What kind of worker are you?
- How many hours a week do you prefer to work?

Now, while these questions seem straight forward, for someone with FASD they may be more confusing than we realize. How could these questions be asked using plain language?

Remember, plain language is simple. Concrete language is very clear and direct without using slang or acronyms so be specific in your questions.

Here are some suggestions:

- Why do you want to work at 123 Cleaners?
- When did you work as a house cleaner?
- Can you tell me some things you, as a house cleaner, would have to do?
- You need to be 'bondable.' Can you tell me what that is?
- Sometimes, 123Cleaners needs to work at night. Can you work at night? (or be specific, can you work from 7:00PM-1:00AM?)
- What do you like to do when you are not working?
 - Do you sometimes feel worried or nervous about something?
- When you work, are you always on time?

A Word About Application Forms:

People with FASD can have some problems reading for a variety of reasons: lack of education, reading disability, visual processing problems and so forth. Job application forms can appear confusing to some people. Here are some ideas to overcome some of these challenges:

- Whenever possible try to have application forms that are simple and easy to read. This is also good best practices for any workplace.
- Allow the individual to take the application home, or to have a couple of copies in case he or she makes a mistake filling it out.
- If you have time, go over the application with them...slowly.

In the Workplace

'Hand's On' Support and Training

There are a number of ways to help someone (with or without a disability) learn about a new job. The cost to these methods is minimal or non-existent to you, the employer. The benefit of using these strategies is many. There is no right or wrong way to do this.

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing requires a person to follow (shadow) a designated employee through his or her workday. This offers the person the opportunity to learn about the daily duties and routines of a specific job.

The benefits of job shadowing can include:

- Allowing the person an opportunity to examine a particular job.
- Enhancing social interaction.
- Providing the employer a snap-shot of the person's interest and abilities.
- Providing the person a snap-shot of the responsibilities related to the job.
- Providing the person information about the company.

Job shadowing is usually very short term (a few hours) giving a person some low key experience of what the job is like. It usually happens early during the application process. Ideally, after a job shadowing experience

the person would be better able to understand if he or she would enjoy the job, and whether or not he or she has the required skills. After job shadowing, the person may or may not decide to continue the application process. This can be a valuable saving of time. In the long run, this is a practical use of the employer's resources.

Job Coaching

Generally, job coaching is provided by a person who offers support and training in the workplace. The goal is help develop needed skills for the person who is being coached. In most cities supported employment agencies may have job coaches that they 'lend out' to employers who are working with someone with a disability.

Usually, a job coach will meet with you, the employer, beforehand to learn about the job. Ideally, the job coach will have some experience in a similar work environment. It may be practical for the job coach to have copies of any materials the person would be expected to use. The job coach will identify the best way to help the person. For example, the job coach may take pictures of the workplace and tasks creating a visual guide for the person if the person learns best with visual prompts.

The job coach works directly with the person. For the person the job coach can:

- Provide on-the-job support
- Teach the job in small steps
- Provide feedback
- Monitor progress
- Develop action plans
- Identify possible accommodations

The job coach helps the employer by:

- Meeting regularly with the employer
- Problem solving
- Developing goals and plans
- Identifying barriers and strategies
- Supporting the employer
- Offering information about FASD

Mentoring

Within the workplace mentoring is a best practice. A mentor is a person who has years of experience in a specific area within an organization. He or she is assigned to a new employee to help the new employee make a smoother transition into the new job. For people with disabilities who benefit from one-on-one support, a mentor can provide that leadership and support.

Some of the benefits of mentoring include:

- Providing the person an opportunity to learn about the organization with an employee who has intrinsic and practical knowledge about the job and the company.
- Building stronger working relationships because a relationship is deliberately created between two people.
- Providing support and guidance to the person thereby reducing errors.
- Allowing experienced employees an opportunity to be leaders and enhance their skills.
- Helping with the transition into the workplace and daily routines which increases productivity.
-

- The possibility of reducing employee turnover and increasing retention.

For adults with FASD, the mentoring relationship can be important to their success because it provides consistency, predictability, and routine.

Job Carving

Job carving is a process of analyzing one or two or possibly three jobs, of taking certain duties from the jobs and combining those duties to create a new position. You may use job carving to create a job for a person with FASD, or you may use it used after a person is hired and you notice that the person may not be able to do everything the job requires. You can create a job for the person by carving out the duties that they perform well.

The benefits of job carving can include:

- Creating jobs.
- Building team work.
- Allowing the participant to be successful.
 - Reducing employee turnover.
- Building awareness about persons with disabilities.
- Increasing productivity for a number of employees.
- Promoting diversity.
- Providing flexibility in hours.

Here's an example of what job carving can look like.

Bill is a young man with FASD. He struggles to read and enjoys repetitive tasks. He was very interested in finding a job and being successful. A couple of years ago, Bill was presented with an opportunity to work in a large financial company sorting mail and shredding non-sensitive information. The company decided to implement a computerized mail system. Bill became afraid that he would lose his job because he didn't know how to use a computer.

His job coach assisted the employer in analyzing the responsibilities of a mail clerk. With the job coach the employer explored options and realized the benefits of restructuring Bill's job. By creating a specific mail clerk job for Bill, the employer freed up other staff for other duties (which included more staff to use the new system rather than doing the routine tasks that Bill could do).

The job coach encouraged Bill to take the new opportunity. Bill's work schedule was structured to four days per week at three hours per day. This reflects both labour law requirements and Bill's needs for part-time employment. Bill happily remained employed at the company and other staff enjoyed Bill's contributions to the workplace.

The process of job carving a position within the company had positive effects for both the employer and Bill. These included:

- Allowing administrative support staff to focus on more relevant tasks related to their position.
- Providing employment for Bill who was reliable and hard-working
- Presenting opportunities for Bill to enhance his social skills.

- Assisting Bill in the development of his work skills.
- Identifying best practice and creating an inclusive work environment.



Here's another example combining several of the strategies discussed:

Stan Winston is a proud 25-year-old man that lives with his aunt and uncle. He has had some difficulty at home and wants to find a job so that he feels he is contributing to the home.

He feels his family is hard on him and they constantly refer to him as lazy. He has extreme difficulty interacting socially and is very excited in his demeanor. He has a strong work ethic and feels that if he could find a job he likes he would be very successful.

He has been working with Susan, a job coach, who has been very helpful in assisting Stan to identify his areas of strength and in areas he needs support. Stan has previous work experience placements that were not successful. One job involved sorting of various telephone components and the other provided him with an opportunity to learn

basic sewing skills. Stan was uncomfortable in one place because his co-workers 'made fun' of him when the manager was away, and the sewing job was unappealing generally.

Stan decided to look for different work. One day, he submitted his application at a large chain box store. To his surprise and delight he received a call asking him to come in for an interview. He promptly called Susan and informed her of his success.

Before the interview, Susan met with Stan to discuss what steps needed to occur in order for him to be successful at the interview, and then at the job (if he got the job). With Stan's permission, Susan contacted the store manager to set up a meeting so she could learn more about the job Stan had applied for. Susan learned what level of responsibility Stan would need to be able to handle. She gathered together information to help Stan understand what he would be doing. Then, she helped Stan practice his interview skills.

Stan successfully completed a simplified interview and attended staff training which Susan attended with him. There were ongoing meetings with Stan to help him transition into the workplace.

With the Stan's supervisor, Susan reviewed the job description and carved out other duties Stan might do. These duties included sweeping and mopping the front entrance, retrieving shopping carts and putting them in the proper locations, and returning items to the customer service area as needed.

Stan did some job shadowing with more senior employees in his area for half a day so he had a better sense of what was expected of him.

This particular combination of job supports helped both the employer and Stan be successful.

In the Workplace: The Duty to Accommodate

In Canada the duty to accommodate is regulated by a variety of laws and legislation. There are federal laws with each province and territory having their own laws. These laws and regulations are created to support the employer as well the employee. The intention of the duty to accommodate includes what is fair and equal based on individual need.

The goal of accommodation is simply to overcome obstacles that prevent the individual from working effectively.

Accommodating a person with an FASD is often not that costly. Many times people with FASD would benefit from minor adaptations in the work place. It may mean that they use halogen lights instead of fluorescent, that they use noise reducing headsets, or they have a 'workplace buddy' who reminds them of time.

What can you, as an employer, do to work well with a person who has an FASD? Below are a few examples of ways in which you could assist a person with FASD:

- Ask the person what would help.
- Provide a structured schedule.
- Consider modifying job duties.
- Explore job carving.
- Allow extra time for training.
- Explore part-time work.
- Be flexible and curious so you can try something 'new.'
- Be aware of the disability and communication challenges.
- Identify a mentor or bring in a job coach.

In the Workplace

Disclosing a Disability

When someone has a disability, he or she may not be comfortable in sharing information about the disability for a number of reasons. It is up to each person to decide whether or not to tell his or her employer about a disability.

Sometimes, a person with a disability is afraid to tell an employer about the disability. They may be afraid of some form of discrimination, of being treated differently by co-workers, of being stigmatized and judged. They may be afraid of losing their job, or of other people finding out. If they do want to tell, they may not know whom to talk to.

While the *Canadian Human Rights Code* outlines when a person with a disability can disclose the disability, the person with a disability may not understand that right.

The Code allows a person to talk about his or her disability during the interview, on the job application form, or after being hired.

However, if the person with a disability wants accommodation it is important that the person talk to the employer about his or her needs.

I will not read out loud – most of my friends don't know I can't read – even at Bible Study I don't try to read – I am too embarrassed...often if I am asked to read something I say [is] "I forgot my glasses."

In a supportive working environment, a person with a disability who discloses would benefit from a number of supports that would help him or her do the job effectively, be accepted as a valuable part of the workplace, and be protected by legislation (if needed).

The employer could benefit by keeping staff who want to be employed and building a positive reputation within the community.

Conclusion

Welcoming adults with FASD into the workforce is a choice that each employer or company can make. Like hiring anyone, there is the risk that it may not work out or you may discover that you have hired the best person for the job. The ability of an employer to be willing to learn about FASD and help people with FASD become successful requires vision, optimism, and commitment.

As communities begin to better understand FASD more opportunities will emerge. There is the opportunity to actively do something to improve the outcomes for people with this particular disability.

All they need is you.

Case Study 1

Bob Buckley - Biography

Bob Buckley is looking for his first full time job. Bob is 19 years old and lives with his Grandma. He has done some work over the years for neighbors and relatives - mainly yard work and some house cleaning. Bob really enjoys the company of others and he loves to learn new facts about various topics. He reads many books to try to learn more facts but he can not remember what he reads. Bob gets really frustrated when he does not remember what he has read.

He learns best from listening over and over to auditory books. If his Grandma is away for the day she will make sure to wake Bob up and tell him what chores she wants done and she will also leave a note for Bob. His Grandma says that he usually gets all the chores done before she gets home. Bob's brother bought him a big calendar which they keep on the kitchen wall to remind Bob of his appointments and any errands that he needs to get done.

Bob's grandma checks with Bob everyday to make sure that he has done his personal hygiene. If he has forgotten he will go and do it after his Grandma reminds him. Bob has always wanted a job in the produce section of a grocery store.

- What can we do to help Bob succeed?

Bob Buckley - Resume

Bob Buckley
Regina, Sk
777-0989

I am looking for a full time or part time job. I enjoy working outside and I know how to work a lawn mower.

Skills

- Planting flowers
- Cleaning yards and houses
- Good with animals
- Building with wood

Work History

Helper, William Kuff, Regina Sk, 2009

- Mowing grass, helping in the garden, planting flowers, helping to build deck

Cleaner, Charlise King, Regina SK, March 2010

- Cleaning the house, washing floors, washing walls.

Education

Campbell Collegiate, Grade 11, 2007

Workplace Issues

Bob has memory problems but he can read. He works in a small produce section of a local grocery store. His memory problems are creating difficulty for him when it comes to sorting his produce items. What can we do to help him?

- Write down how to do the task step by step in Bob's own words.
- Break the tasks down allowing him to complete one thing before moving onto the next task.
- Provide both words and pictures of the produce he will be working with.
- Show him what to do. Hands on experience.
- Have him job shadow a person until he has an understanding of the work sequence.
- Use simple and concrete communication when giving instruction.
- Ask him to repeat instructions.
- Review job expectations with him frequently.
- Allow him to work at his own pace if possible.

If they know about FASD and knew what to look for and just had me learn one thing at a time it would be better....

Case Study 2

Calvin Potts - Biography

Calvin Potts is a middle aged man living in a men's hostel. He has had some problems at the hostel; he's been in a couple fights there with other residence and argues with some of the staff. Calvin does not understand why the other residents do not like him. He says he tries to make friends but they are mean to him. Calvin is eager to work and considers himself to be a hard worker.

He grew up in numerous foster families says that he was always put to work. He remembers living on a farm. He stayed home from school and worked on the farm everyday. He said he really enjoyed it and he misses the farm work. Calvin said that dogs do not like him but he did fine working with cows. He remembers working with tractors and other farm machinery. Calvin also used to do a lot of work with cars and trucks, he considers himself to be a "mechanic".

The staff at Calvin's hostel says that they often have to break up yelling and fighting between Calvin and other residents. They say that Calvin speaks very loudly and the other residents often think Calvin is yelling at them. He also tends to stand very close and get into people's personal space. Calvin does not seem to be aware of his behavior; he does not understand why others do not like him. Calvin said that he does not like fighting but he gets confused and angry when people are mean to him.

- What can we do to help Calvin succeed in the work place?

Calvin Potts

Regina, Sk

777-1111 (leave message for Calvin)

Objective

I am looking for full time work. I am a hard worker and I like to do physical work.

Skills

- Farming
- Working on cars
- Working on trucks
- Hard worker
- Friendly

Work Experience

Farm Help, Bethune Sk, 1999-2002

Driving truck, feeding cattle, cleaning barn.

Farm Help, Grenfell Sk, 2006-2008

Butchering chickens, working with cattle.

Mechanic, Regina Sk, 2008

Working on cars and trucks.

Education

Grenfell School, 1996, grade 9

Calvin is very impulsive at work, a large feed and grain outlet, and he stands too close to others and speaks far too loud. This is alarming to customers and other staff members. What can we do?

- Clearly and simply explain to Calvin what is expected.
- Have Calvin work with a 'buddy system' so that he sees proper role modeling.
- Provide positive feedback to Calvin when he has shown appropriate social interaction.
- Involve supports so these people can review proper social skills in the work place.
- Allow extra time for processing situations.
- Always acknowledge when something is done right. Use praise and encouraging statements.

Case Study 3

Nora Robinson - Biography

Nora is a very pleasant a 26 year old woman. She lives on her own in an apartment and has scheduled weekly visits from a service provider. This is Nora's third apartment in the last year. She had trouble in her last apartment because she found the neighbors to be to noisy and this affected Nora's daily living. She is now settled in her new apartment and does not find the noise level there to be an issue.

When Nora's service worker visits she usually takes Nora out to get her weekly groceries. Nora writes up her own grocery list and grocery budget, but she has a hard time in the grocery store because of all the noise and distractions. If she goes to the store by herself she tends to get very moody and forgets to get the items on her list. This bad experience in the grocery store can ruin Nora's day and sometimes her week, so her service worker takes Nora and helps her stay calm and focused while grocery shopping.

Nora enjoys being around people but she does best one-on-one, she is very gentle, and is a great listener. Nora is a hard worker and she does really want to keep a full time job but she has been fired in the past.

Employers have complained about her being too slow or distracted. These jobs have been in fast food restaurants where Nora was at the front taking orders. Nora also held a job as an office cleaner; she enjoyed the work but did not like using the vacuum and the floor polisher so she quit this job. Nora has agreed that she gets distracted in a noisy environment and therefore is slower at her job.

Nora Robinson

Phone # 777-0111

Nora@hotmail.com

Objective

I am looking for a full time job in Regina. I would prefer a job with benefits. I have my own vehicle and I am able to work shift work.

Skills

- Very responsible
- Able to take direction
- Good with handling money
- Punctual
- Physically fit

Work History

Fast Food Worker, Wendy's, Regina SK, February 10- April 22/08

- Taking customer's orders, handling cash, using computer system, working in a fast paced environment, working as a team.

Fast Food Worker, Burger King, Regina SK, May 15 – August 11/08

- Taking customers orders at drive thru, handling cash, helping prepare orders.

Office Cleaner, We Clean, Regina Sk, November 23 2008 – April 9 2009

- Cleaning office buildings, emptying garbages, dusting, washing dishes, vacuuming.

Education

Riverside High school, Disley SK, 2002 - Grade 11

Nora is struggling in her new work place and is finding the noise levels very distracting. She has a summer job helping out (cleaning tables, washing the floors, cleaning trays, some light yard work around the picnic tables) at a family-owned seasonal restaurant.

She cannot concentrate and this is bringing her level of productivity down. Nora has auditory perception problems.

What can we do to accommodate her?

- Examine peak times when noise levels are high in the work place and adjust the area in which she works. If 11 am to noon is typically a peak time regarding noise, you could send Nora on lunch during that time.
- Provide headphones to block out the noise level.
- Provide written instructions using in her words rather than yours.
- Show her what needs to be done and have her repeat it over and over.

Simple Application Form

Application for Employment

Job You Are Applying for? _____
When You Can Start Working? _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____
Address: _____ City _____ Prov: _____
Postal Code: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

EDUCATION

What is the name of your most recent school? _____
What city was your school in? _____
How many years did you go to this school? _____
What was the last grade you completed? _____

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Who was your last employer? _____
When did you work there? _____
What did you do there? _____
What is the employer's address? _____ City: _____

REFERENCES

1. _____ Phone Number: _____
2. _____ Phone Number: _____
3. _____ Phone Number: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and AUTHORIZATION

I know that if I don't tell the truth on this form, that I may not be interviewed for a job. I also know that if I don't tell the truth and get hired, that I might lose my job for not telling the truth on this Form.

I believe that I have told you the truth.

Signature of Applicant (you) _____

Today's Date: _____

20 Sample Interview Questions:

- Why do you want to work at (name the workplace)?
- Do you like to work with other people?
- Can you get your work finished each day, by yourself?
- Can you help other people finish their work?
- Do you want to work on weekends – Saturday and Sunday?
- Can you work during the evenings (list the hours)?
- Can you work full time? That is 8 hours a day (list the hours)? Do you come to work on time, or are you sometimes late?
- Do you know how to get to work (find out if they would walk, take the bus, ride a bike, or drive).
- Do you often have to miss work? If yes, why did you miss work?
- To work here you need to wear a uniform (clothes that are for work only, show a picture of the uniform or describe it). Can you wear a uniform?
- Can you work in the mornings (list the hours)?
- Do you get tired easily?
- Have you ever worked as a _____ before?
- Do you know how to use a _____?
- What would you like the most about working here?
- What would you be good at doing at this job?
- Would you be able to work outside?
- Do you like working inside?
- Can you lift and carry heavy boxes?

FASD - Its Background

In 1973, Smith and Jones, two American doctors, identified something unusual in some children in the mid-west United States. That 'something' slowly evolved into being fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). What Smith and Jones noticed in 1973 matched what was noticed in Nantes, France, but not identified, during the 1960's.

As social and medical research continued, we learned that warnings about alcohol and pregnancy have been around for thousands of years. Aristotle wrote "foolish drunken and hare-brained women most often bring forth children like unto themselves, more and languid." The Bible says 'don't drink when pregnant' (Judges 13:7).

For hundreds of years the impact of alcohol upon the developing fetus was not really understood. For a while, it was thought that injury to the fetus could only occur if the woman was drunk at the moment of conception. Or it was believed that these babies and children inherited their behaviours from the mother if she was a drunken woman. More recently, it was believed that the placenta protected the fetus from the effects of alcohol.

We have learned otherwise. Alcohol is a "teratogen." A teratogen is a substance that crosses the placenta and enters the fetus's bloodstream directly. Other examples are certain prescription medications (i.e. Accutane, thalidomide) and chemicals (i.e. solvents).

Today, FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder) is an umbrella term for a variety of diagnoses that can result when a fetus is injured by alcohol. Until the late 1990's terminology was FAS or FAE. Let's explain these terms:

- **FAS – fetal alcohol syndrome.** This is very specific and the least common diagnosis. However, it is the stereotypical image of FASD. These individuals are very small, frail, with particular facial features and significant brain injuries.
- **PFAS – partial fetal alcohol syndrome.** This diagnosis is more common. People with pFAS will not have all the physical signs and will have the brain injury. They may be very tall, or of normal height. They may or may not have visible facial differences.
- **ARND: alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorders.** This is the most common and the most unrecognized. People with ARND have none of the physical features yet have the brain injury. These people are often completely misunderstood because we do not recognize that they have a severe disability.
- **FAE: Fetal Alcohol Effects.** This is the older term that was replaced with ARND.
- **ARBD: Alcohol related birth defects.** These are injuries to the body and may include organic damage (i.e. kidneys may be damaged), skeletal disabilities (i.e. spina bifida or club foot), or systemic damage (i.e. digestive problems), problems with eyes/ears (i.e. ocular or auditory processing problems).

Diagnosis

FASD is under diagnosed for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons are social. Many doctors continue to shy away from addressing alcohol use during pregnancy while many women hesitate in answering the questions honestly. One reason for this may be the social stigma

associated with this disability. FASD may appear to be more apparent in families of colour or families of poverty because that is where many research dollars are often directed. This does not accurately reflect society as a whole.

Research cannot determine how much alcohol is needed to cause damage to the fetus. This is contradictory to old wives' tales and other medical advice. Sometimes, doctors encouraged pregnant patients have a beer, a glass of wine, or a shot of brandy, once a day to allow the patient to relax, sleep, or treat morning sickness.

Medical science cannot predict which fetus will develop FASD. Some women drink during pregnancy and have healthy babies. Some women drink during pregnancy and have babies with FASD. Science suggests that other factors may impact the risk alcohol presents. Those factors can include the mother's overall health and safety, her pre-natal care, and the fetus's resilience to alcohol. But, determining which fetus will be injured is unpredictable.

FASD is a complex disability caused by the unpredictable impact of alcohol upon the developing brain and central nervous system of the fetus. To understand how complex FASD is, it is practical to review two other disabilities that FASD is frequently compared to.

Sometimes people may confuse aspects of Downs Syndrome with aspects found in FASD. However, the two are extremely different. Downs Syndrome results from a difference in the chromosomal makeup. Individuals with Downs Syndrome have visible signs of the disability including facial differences and smaller statures. Many individuals have

IQ's that range from 50 – 80 (sometimes a little higher) and many will have other health concerns related to the disability. Those concerns can be serious and can include heart conditions or developing thyroid issues. Diagnosis of this disability is relatively straightforward. Most individuals with Downs Syndrome require life long support to live a healthy and safe life.

Often, ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) are compared to FASD. For example, individuals with ASD struggle with language and processing of information. They struggle with social behaviours and may have profound sensory issues. Again, IQ's can range from the 50's to normal (sometimes higher). ASD is a spectrum disorder indicating there is a wide range of abilities and disabilities and there are frequent co-morbidities like depression or anxiety. The cause of autism is remains unknown. Children are often identified in their early years as having ASD. Life long support is vital.

FASD is also spectrum disorder. Its degree of complexity is reflected in the number of diagnostic codes under this umbrella term, FASD. There are 256 possible diagnoses under FASD.

Individuals with FASD have combinations of cognitive, physical, developmental, social, and emotional disabilities. Mental health issues are common and may stem from chemical differences in the brain during that develop during gestation when alcohol is consumed by the mother. Simply put, individuals with FASD will continually have a variety of disabilities affecting their daily living abilities. This situation does not improve **unless** life long supports are identified and maintained.

The exposure of alcohol to a developing fetus can be catastrophic, sometimes fatal, as it affects the complete development of the brain, central nervous system, skeletal, and organic systems. However, people with FASD can also have a variety of other disorders that occur randomly in our general population (including ASD, Downs Syndrome, learning disabilities, and non-related physical disabilities). Chronic and acute illnesses are more confounding for individuals with FASD given the impact of the brain injury.

People with FASD may or may not receive a diagnosis in childhood. Until recently, diagnosis was not common. Physicians need special training to diagnose FASD. As we develop awareness of FASD diagnosis for children is growing. For people over the age of 25 years, they were likely misidentified in childhood and now struggle to keep jobs, finish school, or remain safe.

Prevalence

A quick search in the internet for “FASD” will pull up thousands of hits, and a search of medical literature will show the controversy surrounding FASD research. This is an evolving body of knowledge. FASD has does not recognize social status, culture, religion, or income levels. FASD can only exist when a pregnant woman consumes alcohol during a pregnancy.

It is estimated in September 2008, that 5 million people in Europe and Britain live with an FASD. In Canada and the United States it is estimated up to 20/1000 individuals have some form of FASD. Research in Australia and Africa is continuing with prevalence being as high as 30% in some parts of South Africa.

It needs remembering that FASD is a lifelong disability. People of all ages – infants, children, teens, young adults, adults, and seniors - can have an FASD. FASD is a spectrum disorder. That means that there is a wide range of severity and abilities. That wide range is also why it is hard to understand FASD. Consider the following as some examples:

- IQ's can range from the low 40's to 120 or higher (an average IQ is 100),
- People with FASD might be good at doing something one day and not the next,
- People with FASD are often very creative and may struggle with math and reading – but not always,
- Some people with FASD may have excellent long term memory, but very poor short term memory,
- And the list can go on.

This disability does not fit neatly into a box. Because it is a complex brain injury and the development of the central nervous system was altered, each person with FASD will be a little different from another with FASD. For people who work with people with FASD, general knowledge of the disability is important. However, recognizing the person with FASD as a unique individual is as important.

Further Reading and References:

General Information:

Armstrong, E. Conceiving Risk: Bearing Responsibility: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and the Diagnosis of Moral Disorder. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Canadian Medical Association. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: Canadian guidelines for diagnosis. CMAJ 2005;172(5 suppl): S1-S21.

Charron, C. *The Narrative Baroque*. Master of Arts Integrated Studies Project, University of Athabasca. Athabasca, 2009

FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan. "Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). "

Fasworld. A reasonably current website about FASD. www.fasworld.com

Golden, J. Message in a Bottle: the Making of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Mader, B. "Best Practices in Employability/Employment and Life Management for Adults/Adolescents with FASD." FASD Connections. 2005.

Regina Community Clinic. *FASD in the Workplace: What Employers Need to Know* (n.d.)

Regina Community Clinic. *The FASD Brain and Behaviour: Making the Connection* (n.d.)

Trudeau, D. (ed.) Trying Differently: A Guide for Daily Living and Working with FAS and other Brain differences. 2nd Edition. Yukon: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society, 2002.

Legislation

Search here Canada's consolidated statues at the Department of Justice website:

www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/H-6/index.html