

FASD: How it Happens

Effects of Alcohol in Pregnancy

- If alcohol is in a pregnant woman's body, it freely gets into fetus' blood stream – it's not stopped by the placenta
- The fetus is not able to “metabolize” or get rid of alcohol from its system – so alcohol stays longer in the fetus' blood and in the “amniotic” fluid around the fetus
- Increased risk for low birth weight, birth defects, brain and central nervous system damage – which can lead to health problems
- Harm can be caused before a woman knows she is pregnant

Drinking Levels

- Where there's alcohol, there's FASD
- No safe time to drink during pregnancy
- No known safe limit
- All alcohol is harmful
- Safest approach is to not drink at all
- Binge drinking and heavy drinking are particularly harmful

Five Factors Involved in Alcohol-Related Developmental Disorders

- The stage in the pregnancy at which alcohol is consumed.
- The amount of alcohol consumed during the pregnancy
- The pattern of alcohol consumption – binge drinking is particularly harmful
- Individual susceptibility to alcohol.
- Other factors such as lack of nutrition, smoking, and the use of other drugs

Who Drinks During Pregnancy?

- Light/moderate/heavy drinkers
- Higher income, higher education, over age 30, successful
- Poor and isolated women
- Young women
- Multiple drug users and alcoholics
- Victims of violence (childhood, domestic)

Partners' Role: Social Effects

- Women most often drink with their partners
- Partners who drink heavily have trouble giving their pregnant partners the support they need
- A partner's drinking after the baby is born could hurt the child's care

Possibility of Misdiagnosis

- Alcohol Related Neuro-developmental Disorders (ARND) can look like many other mental health diagnoses or developmental disabilities
- Individuals may be diagnosed with a mental health disorder or a developmental disability
- ARND might not be considered or recognized – it's not an official “mental health diagnosis”
- Even when ARND is recognized, another diagnosis is often used in order to get reimbursement for treatment

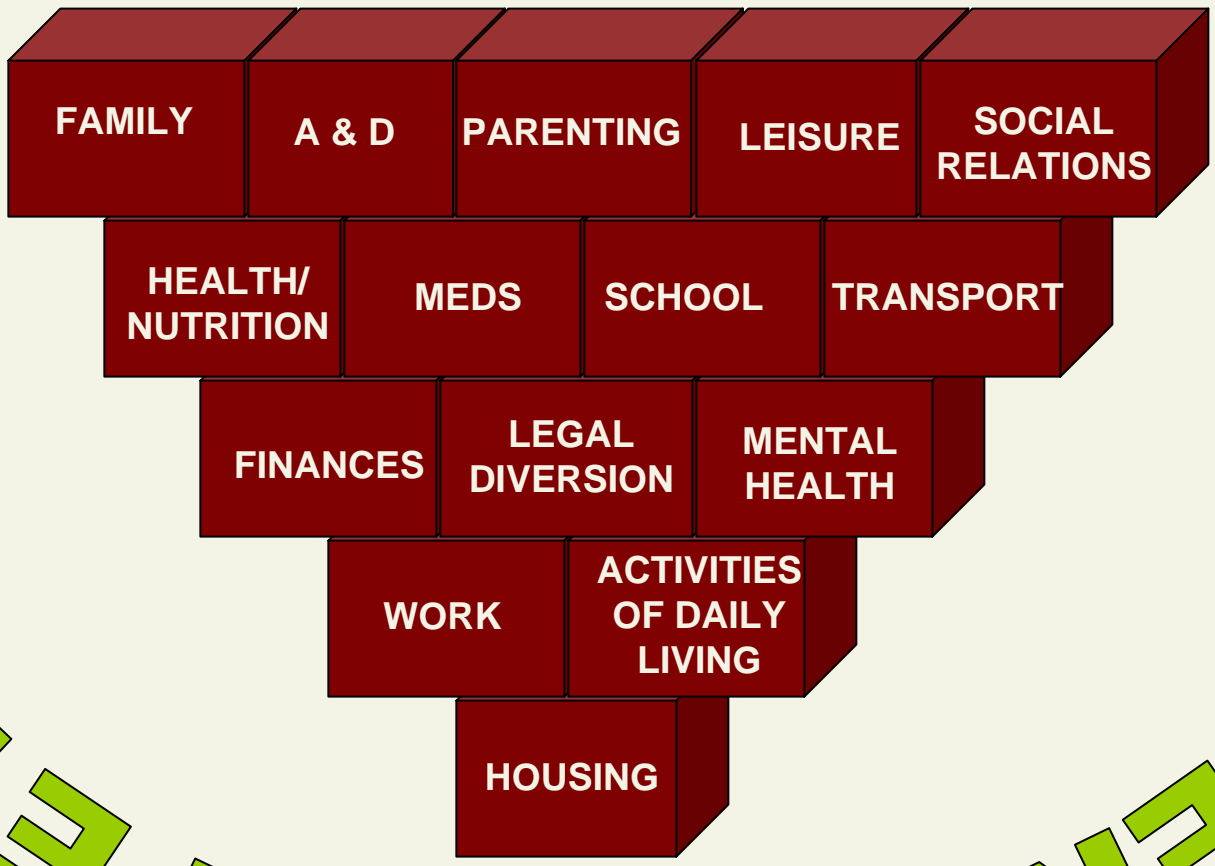
(Dubovsky, 2002)

How are Homelessness and FASD related?

- The behaviours shown by someone affected by FASD can lead to
 - failure at school
 - stress within the family
 - difficulty keeping a job without support
 - difficulty with activities of daily living (ADL)
 - difficulty finding and keeping housing
 - Trouble with the law and difficulty adjusting to living outside of a correctional institution
- Repeated failure
 - loss of hope and self-esteem
 - substance use
 - loss of friends and family support
- All lead to higher risk of homelessness
- **Eighty percent of adults affected by FASD are unable to live independently**

(Streisguth et. al 1996).

THE ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER



weCARES workshop, anewright and associates inc
Source: Tina Antrobus

Absence of Housing =
Inability to Function.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER



WeCA... workshop, ... right and associ...

Source: Tina Antrobus

FASD and Homelessness

The homeless use 33% more government services than those with permanent shelter, and are such heavy users of services that it would be more cost effective to provide them with decent stable housing.

Government of British Columbia (2001) *Homelessness-- Causes and Effects, Vol III: The Cost of Homelessness in British Columbia*, www.hvl.ihpr.ubc.ca/pdf/EberleCosts2001.pdf (link provided by Tina Antrobus)

weCARES workshop, annwright and associates inc.

The 7 S's of Supportive Housing

SELECTION
STRUCTURE
SUPPORT
STABILITY
SAFETY
SECURITY
SUPERVISION

The Economics of FASD and Homelessness

(source: Ottawa's Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness 2002 – 2005)

Options for the Homeless

- Emergency Shelter
 - with most supports: \$60-\$85/day
 - With some support: \$30 - \$43/day
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - Detox Centre \$80 - \$185/day
 - Recovery \$40 - \$65/day
- Prison/Detention Centre \$90 - \$250/day; avg: \$124
- Psychiatric Hospital \$200 - \$600/day (avg: \$380)

VS

Permanent Housing Options

- Mental health residential facility \$140 – 191/day
- Enhanced apartments (self contained with support on site and collective meal options) \$67 – 88/day
- Boarding House (housekeeping with daytime or 24 hour staffing) \$32 - \$38/day
- Public housing apartment \$14 – 20/day
- Group/shared home \$13+/day
- Non profit rooming house \$12 – 15/day

Summary

- It's a Spectrum
- A Diagnosis is Not always available, but it Helps Everyone adjust Expectations
- Get Curious
- Be Prepared to Try Differently
 - Specifically, you can try differently by using
 - cues
 - attitude
 - repetition
 - environment
 - structure and supervision
- help others try differently by
 - explaining what you know to colleagues
 - accompanying the client
 - educating policy makers