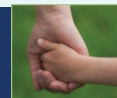


The Gift of FASD

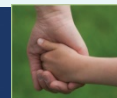
Impacts of FASD
at the Community
Level

Mary Berube
MSW, RSW

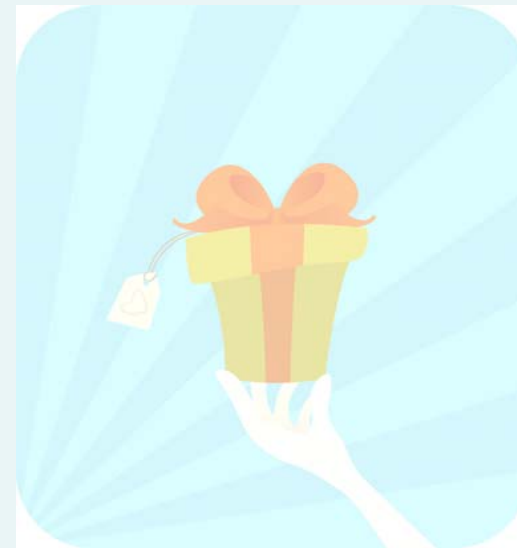


Looking back ...

- FASD identified; generated compassion for infants with prenatal substance exposure histories
- Early prevention messaging often encouraged anger at their birth mothers



- Gradual understanding of the life-long impacts/costs for affected persons and their caregivers; FASD seen as a disability



We are moving towards...

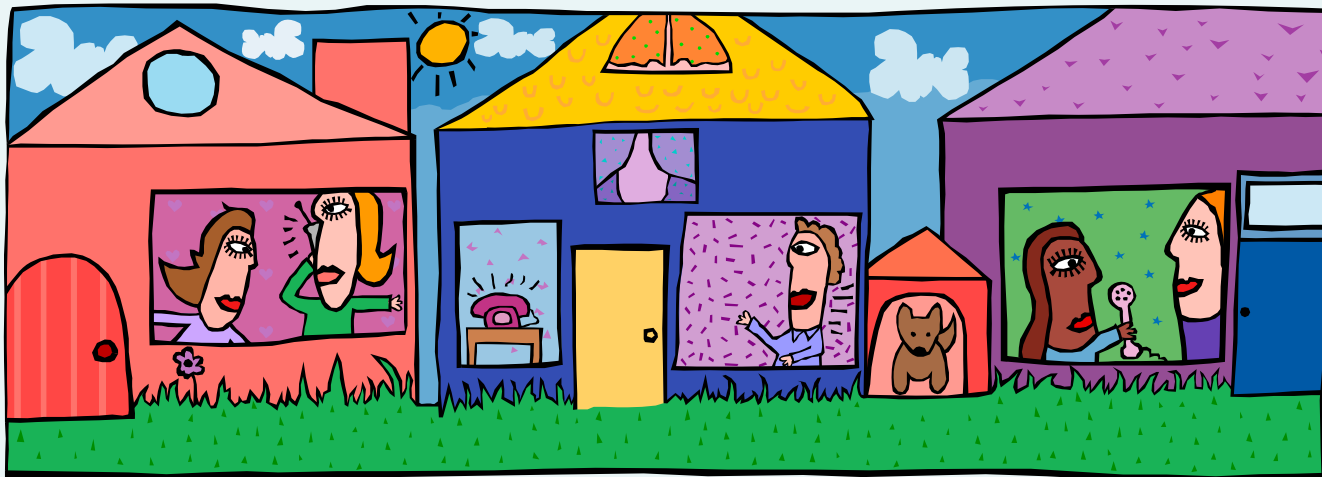
- Understanding the community responses that FASD and its attendant sequelae* require
- Understanding and rethinking our responsibility/attitudes towards those who are pregnant and substance using
“mothering under duress” (Poole)



**Societal recognition of FASD
inevitably demands a
community response:**

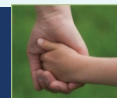


**?What will it take to mitigate the harm caused by the impacts of prenatal substance use?
?Who will take this on?
?What will it cost?**



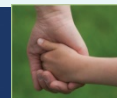
Things To Consider

- Prevention of secondary disabilities
- Community responsibilities towards persons with FASD and their families/caregivers
- Community safety
- Inclusion
- Public messaging



Secondary Disabilities

- Education and employment challenges
- Mental health and/or substance use problems
- Problems with the law
- Victimization, homelessness
- Health/reproductive issues related to lifestyle, impulsivity, impaired judgment
- Isolation from family, community

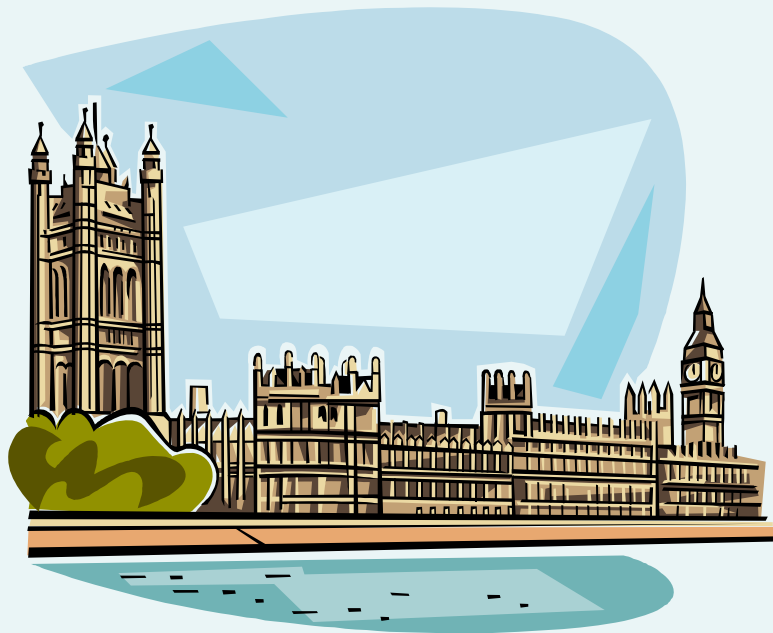


Community Responsibilities

- Public health, diagnosis, prevention initiatives
- Social assistance for person's with disabilities
- Child welfare/child protection
- Education, employment
- Housing, health institutions, accessibility
- Substance use/mental health programming
- Justice system responses



Safe communities need...



- Infrastructure (capital and bureaucratic)
- Governance
- Policy design and implementation



- Justice system responses to illegal activities, and victims of crimes

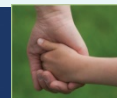


- Policing,
protection of
the public
and/or
property



Community Inclusion

- Equal or appropriate opportunities for all citizens
- Accessibility to public buildings, events, opportunities
- Shared burden of caring for persons with FASD



Public Messages

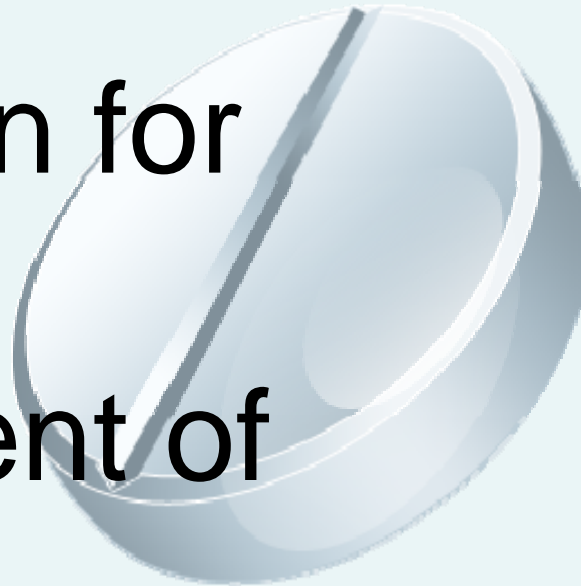
- Policy and practice that models non-discrimination and inclusion
- Valuing diversity
- Celebrating the accomplishments of persons living with disabilities



- Non-blaming public awareness campaigns; unbiased language in publications



Prescription for community management of FASD:



IHE Consensus Development Conference on
**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
(FASD) – Across the Lifespan**

October 7 to 9, 2009, The Westin Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta

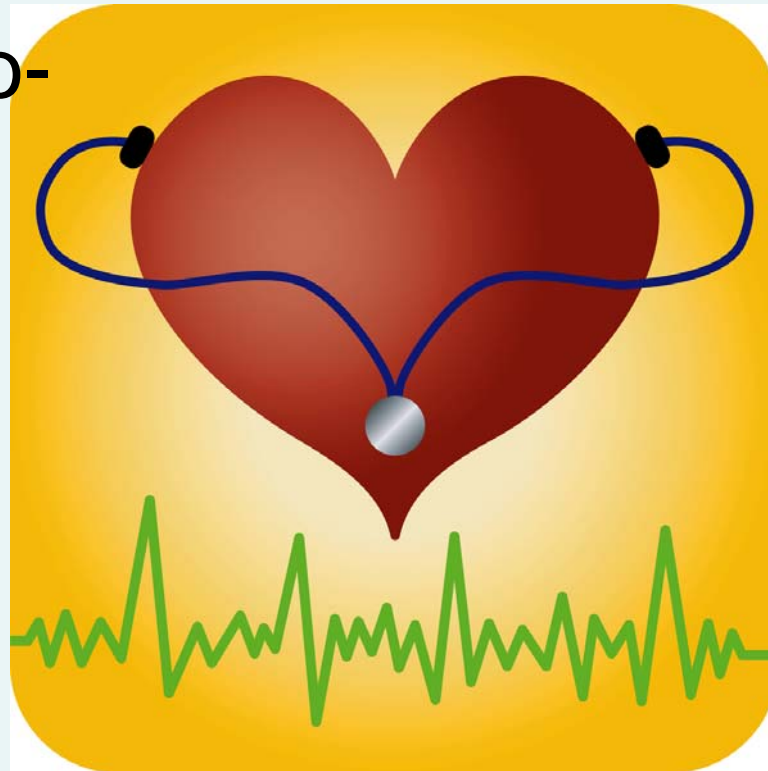


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Diagnosis -for two-
preferably in
gestation or early
infancy/childhood
Woman centered
substance use
interventions



Harm reduction...



- Professional, multi-disciplinary teams that attend to medical issues related to FASD
- Periodic screening for hearing, vision speech/language problems, development



Harm reduction cont...

- Family centered care and advocacy to address needs of child(ren) and parents, caregivers
- Support (including grief and loss counseling, respite) for caregivers to prevent placement breakdown

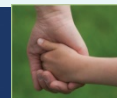


(Researched)
early intervention
to maximize
cognitive, social,
emotional
development

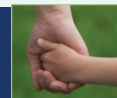


Harm reduction cont...

- Allowances at every developmental stage for dis-maturity; anticipating and preparing for the corresponding challenges
- Recurring developmental assessments at every stage to inform case planning

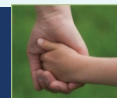


Educational placement and supports to sustain both students and teachers

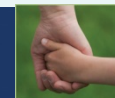


Harm reduction cont...

- Life long, continuous advocacy and case-management for affected individual
- Parent/caregiver training for every stage of development



- Planning/preparing early for future capacity for meaningful work and community engagement



- Supported employment (from search through structured day/work duties)



Harm reduction cont...

- Increased supervision/one-on-one supports to navigate the years from 12-21 (prevent disruption from school/home placements, trouble with law etc.)
- Pre-planned transitions (handoffs) from children's to adult services



Harm reduction cont...

- Provision of ongoing and explicit training re socialization, employment, sexual activity, life skills, accepting help
- Recognize and plan for various degrees of life-long dependency/daily living supports



Harm reduction cont...

- Regular screening for substance use, mental health problems, reproductive health issues, and provision of assistance to cope with relationships, parenting, family life
- Specialized intake and interventions for substance use/mental health/justice system



- Provision of a range of living/housing options not contingent on their life-management skills



Enactment of harm reduction strategies is subject to the tides of public opinion, government ideology, bureaucratic will and available monies.

However, once interventions are entrenched in policy they are less likely to be subject to whimsical change...





It takes a whole community to manage FASD!

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Credits

Nanson, Jo; Roberts, Gary (2000) **Best Practices: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects and the Effects of Other Substance Use During Pregnancy.**
Health Canada

Poole, Nancy & Greaves, Lorraine (2007) **Highs & Lows, Canadian Perspectives on Women and Substance Use.**
CAMH

Streissguth, Ann (1997) **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Guide for Families and Communities.**
Brookes

