



Could it be FASD?

What Police need to know

WHAT WE SEE

NON-COMPLIANCE

(eg: not obeying rules, trying to make me mad)

WHAT WE THINK

- Resistant and controlling
- Attention seeking
- Stubborn
- Manipulative

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

- Difficulty translating verbal directions into actions
- Doesn't understand
- Slow cognitive pace
- Unable to remember, over-stimulated
- Anxiety and fear

REPEATEDLY MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES

(eg: repeat offender)

- Doing it on purpose
- Manipulative
- Impulsive

- Cannot link cause to effect
- Cannot see similarities
- Difficulty generalising from one event to another
- Has difficulty remembering

OFTEN LATE

- Lazy or slow
- Poor parenting
- Doing it on purpose

- Cannot understand the abstract concept of time
- Tries hard, exhausted or can't start, needs assistance getting organised and remembering

NOT SITTING STILL

- Seeking attention
- Bothering others or resisting
- Doing it on purpose

- Neurologically based need to move while learning
- Sensory overload
- Doesn't understand, has difficulty in paying attention

POOR SOCIAL JUDGEMENT

- Takes the blame
- Poor parenting
- Abused child
- Doing it on purpose
- Uncaring
- Untruthful

- Easily lead by others
- Not able to interpret social cues or know what to do in social settings
- Impulsive - unable to perceive consequences of their actions
- Fills in the blanks - confabulation : an adult with FASD may be articulate but not have age appropriate functional capacities

OVERLY PHYSICAL

- Uncomfortable body language
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour

- Does not understand social cues regarding boundaries
- Hyper - or hypo-sensitive to touch (feels things too much or not enough)

Acknowledgement: Alcohol Health Watch and the Police Service, Edmonton, for earlier version.



WHAT IS FASD?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a medical term used to describe a neuro-disability caused by alcohol exposure before birth.

FASD is a spectrum disorder meaning **every person affected with FASD is unique**. A few may have physical signs but **all** will have severe, pervasive and lifelong functional and communication disabilities.

NO AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY IS SAFE.

FASD results in permanent injury to multiple areas of the brain but there may be no obvious physical signs. They need help and understanding from others.

YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO DIAGNOSE FASD BUT YOU CAN RAISE THE QUESTION "COULD THIS PERSON BE AFFECTED?" AND APPROACH THE SITUATION DIFFERENTLY

Diagnosis needs to be done by a team of medical professionals.

Working with FASD requires inter-agency support.

FASD: POLICE INFORMATION

There are no published studies on the overall prevalence of FASD affected individuals within the criminal justice system in New Zealand.

It is strongly suspected that individuals with FASD are over-represented.

FACT: The Banksia Hill Detention Centre in Australia 2018 assessed and diagnosed young people in this youth custodial setting for FASD - **36%** met the diagnosis criteria for FASD.

Have you ever apprehended a person for shoplifting or burglary because they were nearby consuming or selling what they had just stolen?

Did they appear unaware of the consequences of their actions or not thinking their action was a serious problem?

Have they done similar things again and again?

Have you ever taken a statement from a victim or a witness that was agreeing to everything no matter what the implications?

Could one of these **offenders, victims or witnesses be affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?**

Had you known about, or suspected FASD, would your investigation have gone differently?

For more information go to www.FASD-CAN.org.nz

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

If you are dealing with an individual who you suspect may be affected by FASD, treat them the same as you would when dealing with someone much younger or brain-injured.

- Ask if they have an **Advocate or a Guardian** before questioning them. Those with FASD may have trouble understanding their rights or the concept of waving their rights.
- Do not ask leading questions or coach the person. People affected by FASD are usually eager to please and may agree to anything, appropriate or not.
- If possible, **videotape** interviews and statements.
- Indicate in the 'RECOMMENDATIONS' to the crown that you have reason to suspect the individual (accused, witness or victim) **may be affected by FASD**.
- If possible, enlist help when preparing an interview or if you would like additional information for your investigation email admin@fasd-can.org.nz
- For caregiver support go to www.fasd-can.org.nz



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