

Community Healing and Intervention Program Newsletter: Wanuyitnamu (Winter) 2003

Ki'su'k Kyukyit! Welcome to the Wanuyitnamu (Winter) 2003 Community Healing and Intervention Program (CHIP) newsletter.

This edition of the CHIP newsletter is full of interesting information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Awareness continues to grow regarding FASD, not only here in the East Kootenay region, but also across British Columbia and Canada. When we are dealing with the challenges and triumphs of FASD, sometimes it helps to remember that we are part of a larger community working to support individuals, families and communities who are affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol.



Did you know?

- Did you know that Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) has been eliminated as a diagnostic term?
- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** is the new "umbrella" term. FASD is a non-diagnostic term that covers the whole spectrum of effects caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol, from the mildest to the most severe.
- **Under the "umbrella" of FASD** are several diagnostic terms such as **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)**, **partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)**, **Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disability (ARND)**, and **Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)**. These diagnostic terms should **only** be used when a person has a **formal diagnosis** from a **qualified, multi-disciplinary assessment team**

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NEW FASD Video!

- ❖ Students Like Me: Teaching Children with FAS
- ❖ An excellent video re: strategies to support elementary-age students affected by FASD
- ❖ Also applicable to older students as well as ideas for parents/caregivers
- ❖ Available at the College of the Rockies Library: www.cotr.bc.ca
- ❖ All of the FASD resources as the College of the Rockies can be accessed for **free** using a **community user library card**
- ❖ Resources can also be shipped for free to any of the College's campuses throughout the East Kootenay region

Cranbrook has an FASD Warning Sign Bylaw!

- In October, 2002 the members of Cranbrook City Council passed **Bylaw No. 3446, "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Warning Sign Bylaw"**
- Each warning sign will read: "Pregnancy and alcohol do not mix. Protect your baby. Do not drink wine, beer or other alcoholic beverages during pregnancy."
- The signs are currently on order and will be distributed free of charge to the approximately 71 licensed establishments.
- The successful passing of this bylaw was the result of months of collaboration between the City of Cranbrook (council members and staff), the Community Healing and Intervention Program, and the many community partners who expressed their support.
- Invermere is currently considering the implementation of a similar bylaw. Fernie has had an FAS warning sign bylaw (No. 1588) since 1992.

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Activities for Daily Living: An Important Focus for Children and Youth with FASD

- Activities of Daily Living are the things that people need to do in order to be as independent as possible
- Here are some examples of Activities of Daily Living
 - Personal hygiene
 - Personal grooming
 - Doing light housework
 - Getting around the community
 - Handling money properly
 - Work skills (i.e. paid work and/or volunteer work)
 - Shopping and preparing meals
 - Using the telephone
 - Social skills such as making friends, understanding social boundaries, and sexuality
- According to Conry & Fast (2000), impaired development in the Activities of Daily Living is "the most devastating long-term disability" (p. 17) associated with FASD
- Children and youth affected by FASD often benefit from having one or more "External Brains" (i.e. reliable support people) who provide specific assistance for one or more of the Activities of Daily Living
- For some individuals affected by FASD, **interdependence** is a more realistic goal, rather than total independence

Using Social Stories to Develop Social Skills

"Social stories are used to help students with disabilities develop social skills. The concept of social stories was first developed by Carol Gray...in Jenison, Michigan. Social stories can be used to teach new social skills, routines, behaviours, and transitions."

"Social stories present appropriate social behaviours in the form of a story. The stories are designed to include the answers to questions about acting appropriately in social situations (usually who, what, when, where, and why). Some social stories include visuals to help students understand social situations."

"Social stories are often read to or with a student prior to a specific social situation (e.g., the lunchroom, recess, or bus ride). They can also be used to teach routines (e.g., asking for help, responding to anger, completing a task). Social stories appear to be a promising method for teaching social behaviours."

- Source: Towards Inclusion: Tapping Hidden Strengths: Planning for Students Who Are Alcohol-Affected (2001). Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. (pp. 5.9-5.10).
www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/fas/

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A Resource List re: FASD & Sexuality

- ❖ The following resources will need to be adapted for specific use with individuals affected by FASD
- ❖ Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children: 1-800-331-1533 or www.cw.bc.ca/sunnyhill/sexhealth
- ❖ Book: Sexuality: Our Sons and Daughters with Intellectual Disabilities (2000). By Schwier et. al., Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- ❖ Curriculum: Circles: Intimacy and Relationships (1993). Santa Barbara, CA: James Stanfield Company, Inc.
- ❖ Curriculum: Life Horizons I & II. Santa Barbara, CA: James Stanfield Company Inc.
- ❖ Video: I Am a Beautiful Person- Sexuality and Me: A Video for Parents of Teens with Disabilities (1996). By Goldberg et. al., Minneapolis, MN: Pacer Center Inc.

B.C. Vital Statistics--Gathering Data re: Diagnosis of FASD

Based on information shared at the November, 2002 meeting of the Provincial FASD Consultation Group, B.C. Vital Statistics is now gathering data re: individuals who have a **formal diagnosis** re: FASD. A formal diagnosis re: FASD should be conducted by a qualified, multi-disciplinary assessment team, for example, at Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children in Vancouver or Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary. (For more information about assessment resources or the assessment process, contact CHIP for a copy of CHIP's assessment and diagnosis pamphlet.)

At this point, it appears that this **voluntary process** is quite open in terms of who can call B.C. Vital Statistic to identify an individual who has a formal diagnosis re: FASD (e.g. parent/caregiver, public health nurse, social worker etc.). Of course, it is essential that any necessary consent

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forms be filled out prior to contacting B.C. Vital Statistics. If several people contact B.C. Vital statistics re: the same individual who has a diagnosis re: FASD, B.C. Vital Statistics will only count the person once.

There are a number of possible benefits to B.C. Vital Statistics collecting information about individuals with formal FASD diagnoses:

- Provide data to advocate for increased FASD assessment services
- Provide data to advocate for funding and services to support individuals with FASD
- Increase awareness of FASD in B.C.

For more information about this initiative, feel free to contact the Community Healing and Intervention Program (CHIP) or Dr. Ian Rongve (Economist) with the B.C. Vital Statistics Agency (Ph. 250-952-2592).



Fast Facts About CHIP

Mandate: To provide holistic, culturally sensitive support services to Aboriginal children and Aboriginal youth who are affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol and who live in the East Kootenay region

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CHIP would like to thank the following organizations for their on-going support:

- ❖ The Interior Health Authority of British Columbia for funding CHIP
- ❖ The College of the Rockies for housing and maintaining CHIP's collection of FASD resources

THANK YOU!