

## **The Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Effects of FASD**

### **Four General Effects of FASD**

**Brain Damage from prenatal alcohol exposure** - causes behavioural dysfunction. (Primary Effect)

**Learning Disabilities**- due to the brain damage which ALWAYS exists (Primary Effect)

**Physical Effects**- Alcohol Related Birth Defects (Primary Effect)

**Mental Health Problems** (Secondary Effects and Tertiary Effects)

**Primary** FASD behaviours are those that are caused by underlying damage to brain structure and function (Diane Malbin, 2004) – **The Primary Effects of FASD**

**Secondary** FASD behaviours are defensive and develop over time in response to a non-supportive environment, the individual suffers from a chronic inability to “fit in”(Diane Malbin, 2004) –**The Secondary Effects of FASD**

**The Primary Effects of FASD** caused by the brain damage are not repairable at this time. However, the person can be well supported and learn to live effectively thus preventing the emergence of the more serious **Secondary** and **Tertiary** Effects of FASD. This is our best hope for FASD.

**The Secondary Effects of FASD**: Secondary effects are behaviours that are normal protective reactions to frustration and an inability to ‘fit in’ an environment, in this case, little or no school success or happiness at school. MANY STUDENTS WITHOUT FASD ALSO DISPLAY THESE EFFECTS. These effects are very common in unsupported FASD but are preventable when a student’s environment is adjusted so it works and the student is supported. If a pupil has a large number of these secondary behaviours (which can be caused by problems other than FASD) he or she should definitely be assessed for a possible FASD diagnosis.

### **What are the Common Secondary Effects of FASD?**

Irritability, Resistance  
Argumentative  
Isolated, has few friends  
Pseudo-sophisticated  
Silly humour, “class clown”  
Fatigue  
Anxious, Fearful

Fighting, Outbursts  
School Failure, Expulsion, Drop-out  
Running Away, Avoidance  
Sexually Inappropriate to a dangerous level  
Addictions to Alcohol and Drugs  
Trouble with the Law  
Poor Self Esteem

Overwhelmed  
Bullied, Teased, Picked on  
Unrealistic Goals

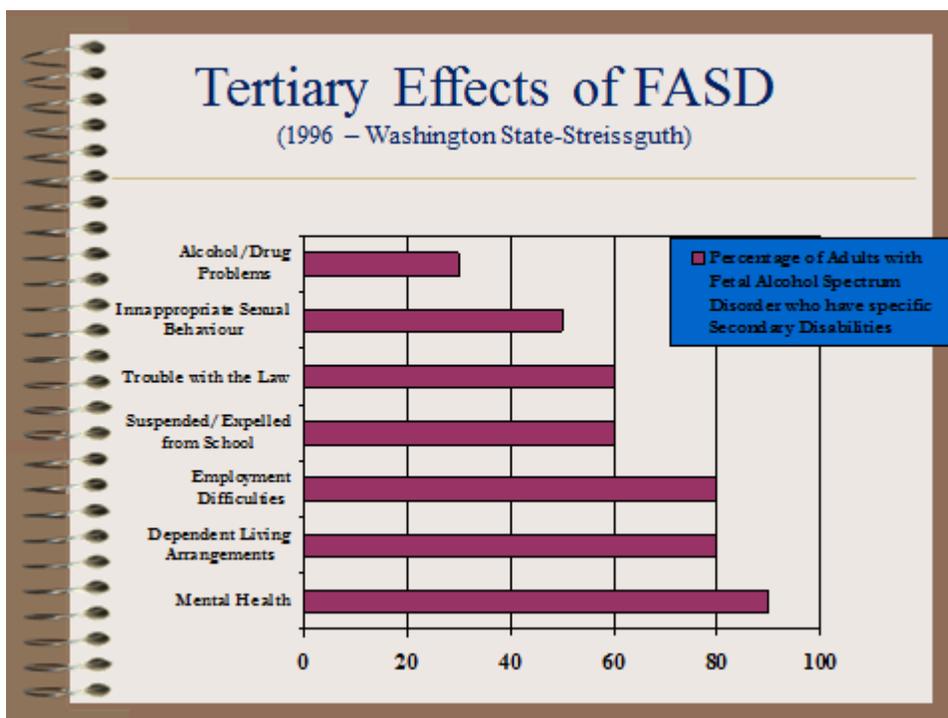
Depressed, Suicidal  
Other Mental Health Issues  
Co-occurring Mental Illnesses

It is possible to work on, support and reverse The Secondary Effects of FASD. When we fail the results are tragic. When we are not successful dealing with either the Primary or Secondary Effects the result is **The Tertiary Effects of FASD**.

### The Tertiary Effects of FASD

When we are unsuccessful at supporting the primary effects of FASD, secondary effects regularly develop. When we are unsuccessful at reversing the secondary effects the tertiary

or more or less permanent effects of FASD develop and the person more often than not sinks into a marginalized adulthood. Substance abuse, criminal behaviours, relationship failure and inability to hold a job are common. Tertiary effects are one of the reasons FASD ONE estimates that we are spending \$5.3 billion annually in Canada to support people with FASD who need extensive social supports. (FASD ONE September 9, 2010 Press Release) (FASD Ontario Network of Expertise)



## Example of the Development of Tertiary Effects of FASD

### The Triple Threat of FASD

- One thing leads to another with FASD

People with FASD (Diagnosed + Undiagnosed )

People with FASD + Mental Health Problems

People with FASD + Mental Health Problems + Drug/Alcohol Addictions

- Dr. Kieran O'Malley – Belfast, NI