

TEACHERS AND FETAL ALCOHOL

Teachers are much like the Police. The Police are the receptionists of the criminal legal system, they do the grunt work. They are the sharp end of the stick. Lawyers and Judges continuing this comparison are a bit like School Board officials and the Minister of Education. The expectations taxpayers have of the Police and teachers are eerily similar.

How does this connect to Fetal Alcohol?

Because they are the sharp end of the stick, every Police or Probation Officer must deal with what is in front of them. Teachers have classrooms, the Police have a beat to cover. The Police have realized they need to learn about fetal alcohol for many reasons, but mostly because like prison wardens, they see what they are doing is not working.

There is a two day course for Police on Fetal Alcohol. We have 90 minutes..... in a pinch we can do this in 60 minutes because unlike Police you are in the learning business.

In the two day course offered by the RCMP there is a moment about halfway through day two where I see glimmers, flickers, and experienced Police Officers mentally reviewing old or present cases...they start to “get it”. It usually happens when I show the video of Julianne Conry, PhD....now retired after 35 years of teaching Educational Psychology at the University of British Columbia. Because you are teachers, I will tell you what she says in a sentence: ***Standard methods do not work.*** THERE IT IS IN A SENTENCE. ***Standard methods do not work.***

There is an obvious collary - there is no magic pill, no instant fix, and no, one size fits all method and, as teachers, you know that. Much of what I have to say will not be “big news” to you, and I hope to give you some concrete things to take back to work.

To prepare, I asked some parents of FASD children what they experienced as the biggest problems. You will not be surprised to hear this: standard methods do not work.

I propose to cover some Fetal Alcohol basics, leave you with some materials you can review later, and to cement our learning. We will re-write some Probation Orders.

Materials:

1. Lawyer's Brief
2. Articles, websites, curricula names of people to contact
3. Brief
4. Diane Malbin
5. Julie Conry/Asante/Valbourg/Debevenson
6. Probation Orders

Questions:

1. What is Fetal Alcohol ?
2. What do teachers need to know?
3. An exercise
4. Some materials/contacts