WRaP 2.0
FASD Coaching Partnership Project

Foundations in FASD

Education Presentation



What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

Learn More

CanFASD
CANADA FASD RESEARCH NETWORK

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Mom of two, dog mom of two, problem-solver by nature, and a firm believer that relationships come before strategies—and that coffee and humor make almost everything easier. 20+ years of Social Work experience working with children, youth and families and the professionals who support them.

Land Acknowledgement

I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am joining you today from Grande Prairie, on Treaty 8 territory. I recognize the traditional lands of the Cree, Beaver, and Dene peoples, including local First Nations such as Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, and Duncan's First Nation, as well as the homeland of the Métis. I honour the Indigenous peoples who have cared for this land for generations and recognize the importance of continued learning, respect, and reconciliation.

Definition

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol.

FASD is a lifelong disability. Individuals with FASD will experience some degree of challenges in their daily living, and need support with motor skills, physical health, learning, memory, attention, communication, emotional regulation, and social skills to reach their full potential.

Each individual with FASD is unique and has areas of both strengths and challenges.”







Alcohol Consumption

IN CANADA

10 to 15%

of pregnant women in Canada consume alcohol during pregnancy.

42-65%

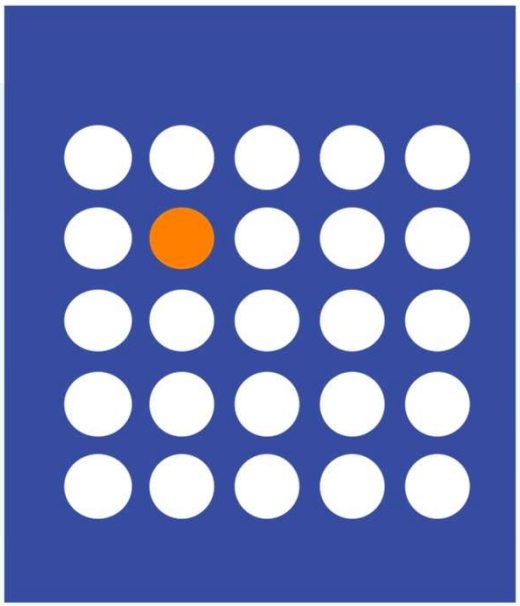
of pregnancies are *unplanned*.

30.5% of reproductive age women in Canada report weekly alcohol use.

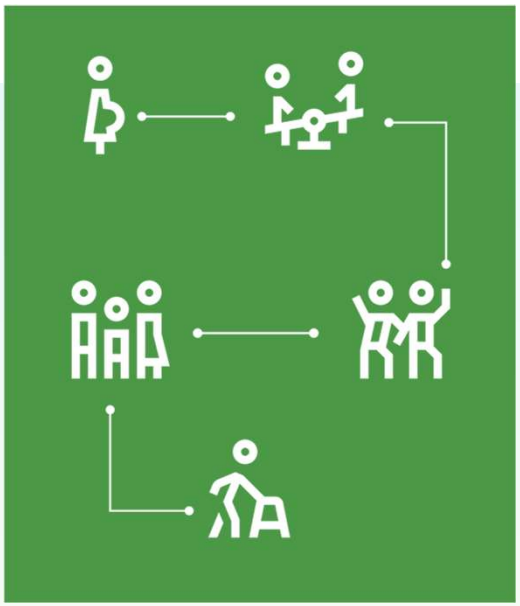
FASD is...



COMPLEX



COMMON



LIFELONG



Prevalence

1.6 million

people in Canada

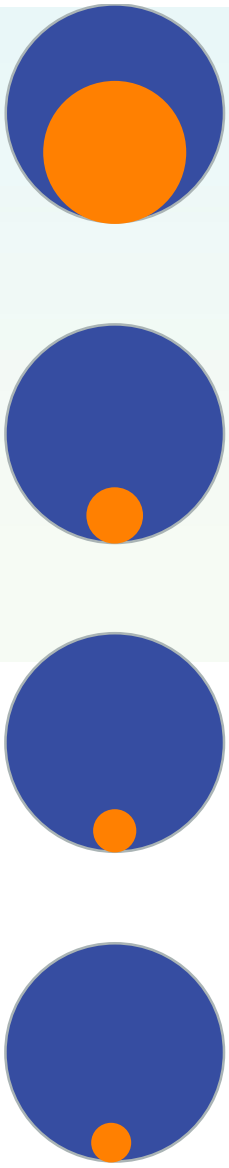
44 - 176, 000

people in Alberta

1 in 25

people in Canada

FASD is...



2 times more common than
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
(2%)

17 times
more common than
Cerebral Palsy
(0.23%)

29 times
more common than
Down Syndrome
(0.14%)

40 times
more common than
Tourette's Syndrome
(0.10%)

Zero Alcohol is Safest

Factors impacting how alcohol affects development:

Timing

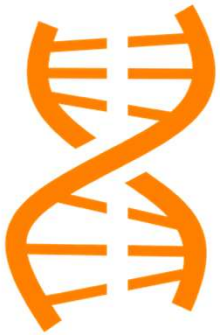


Genetic Makeup





Amount



Nutrition

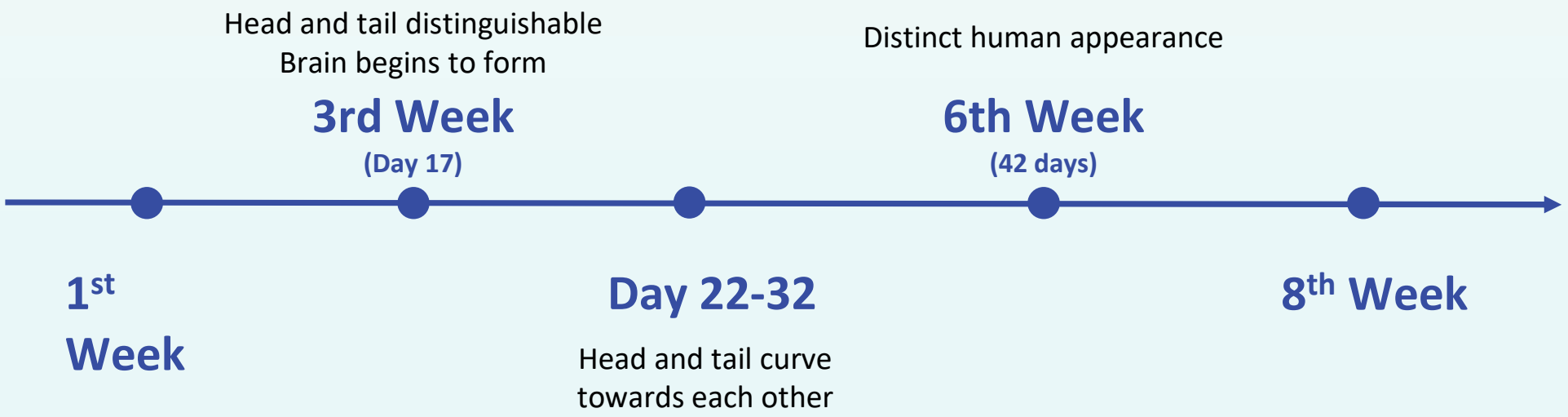
Alcohol Use and Pregnancy

- Alcohol is a **teratogen** that can affect fetal development.
- Nutrients and oxygen pass from the pregnant person to the fetus through the bloodstream.
- Alcohol crosses the placenta and enters the fetal system.



Understanding Fetal Development

Embryo Stage = First 8 weeks



Areas in Need of Support

Common challenges might include:



Learning and Remembering



Speech and Language



Attention and Behaviour



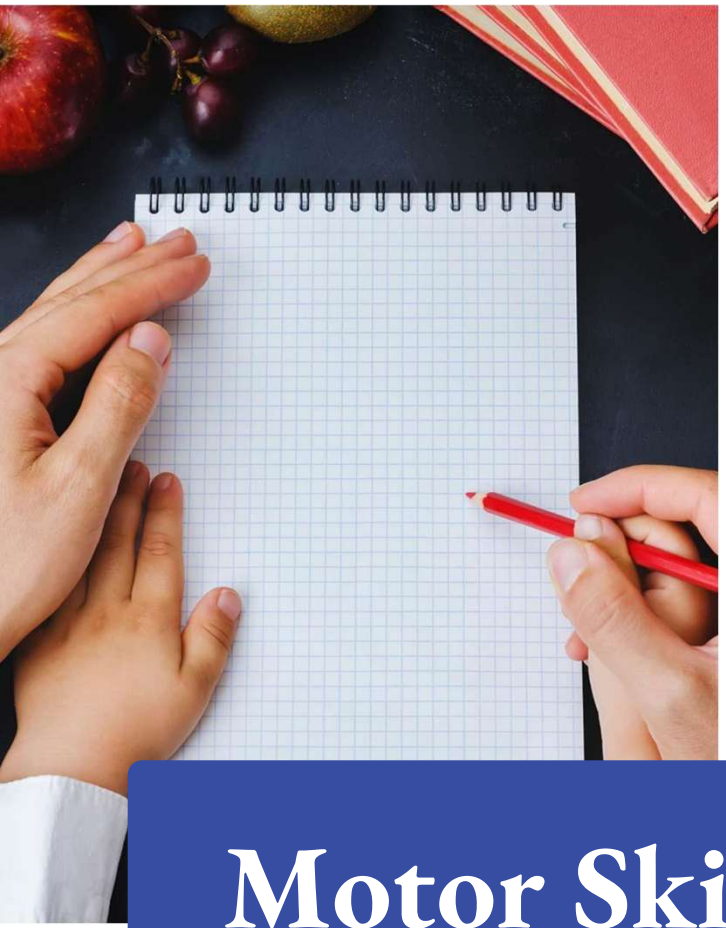
Social Skills



Sensory Difficulties



Physical Challenges



Motor Skills

- Appears clumsy, careless, or physically aggressive due to low body awareness.
- Appears to be constantly “on the move”.
- Leans against things to maintain an upright posture due to low postural stability.
- Has difficulty writing or awkwardly grasps pens or other objects.
- Is uncomfortable sitting or standing for long periods of time due to differences in muscle tone.



Cognitive

Language

Memory

- Takes longer than expected to answer questions.
- Difficulty applying or generalizing new information.
- Speaks well, but has difficulty understanding the meaning of what other people are saying.
- Takes speech literally.
- Has trouble remembering basic facts and may need things repeated daily.
- Confabulates: Recalls details or events that did not happen; appears to lie but is actually 'filling in' gaps in memory



Adaptive Behavior, Social Skills, and Communication

- Is often peer-pressured.
- Appears naïve, immature, or overly friendly or trusting.
- Brags about their negative behaviour or takes full responsibility if co-accused, even when it is self-sabotaging.
- Appears disrespectful during class.
- Does not understand social nuances or social cues.



Affect Regulation

- Behaviour may seem illogical or poorly planned.
- Doesn't learn from experience or generalize from situation to situation.
- Doesn't understand the consequences of behaviour, even after repeat explanations. Is unable to connect the consequences to their behaviour.

Executive Functioning

- Becomes easily frustrated or overwhelmed.
- Lashes out or reacts strongly and disproportionately to the situation or event.
- Appears to lack energy, motivation, or disinterest in school.

Anything look familiar?

Discussion…

Mental Health & Comorbidities

90%

of people
with FASD reported
mental health challenges

428

Possible comorbid
conditions co-occurring in
people with FASD

Protective Factors

Several factors can protect individuals with FASD and can lead to positive outcomes:



Stable and nurturing home environment



Basic needs met



No experience with violence or trauma



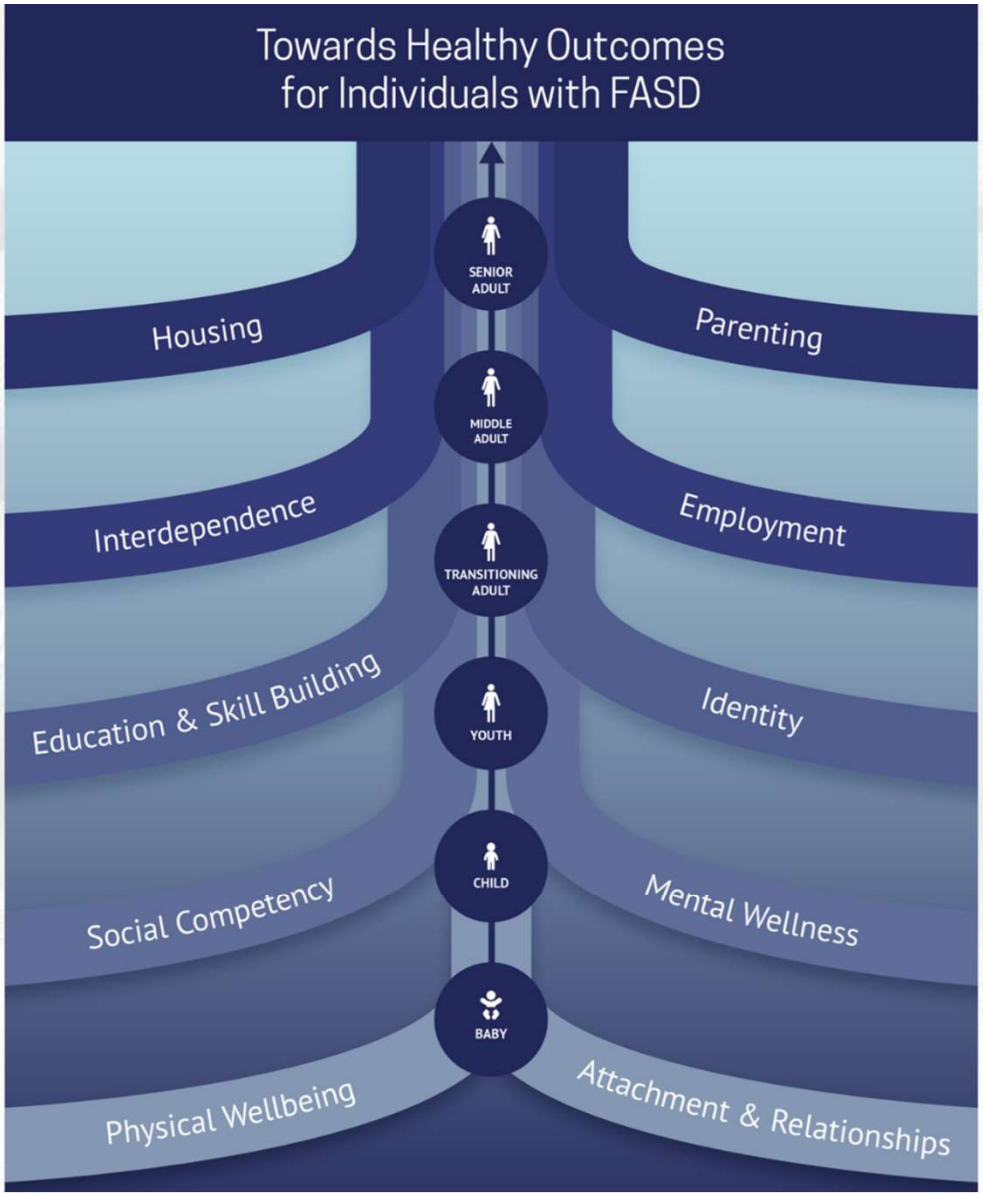
Early and effective supports and services



Developmental disabilities services



Diagnosed and flagged before the age of 6


Towards Healthy Outcomes
for Individuals with FASD
SENIOR ADULT
MIDDLE ADULT
TRANSITIONING ADULT
YOUTH
CHILD
BABY
Housing
Interdependence
Education & Skill Building
Social Competency
Physical Wellbeing
Parenting
Employment
Identity
Mental Wellness
Attachment & Relationships

Assessment and Diagnosis



Medical Practitioner



Psychologist



Social Worker

Occupational Therapist

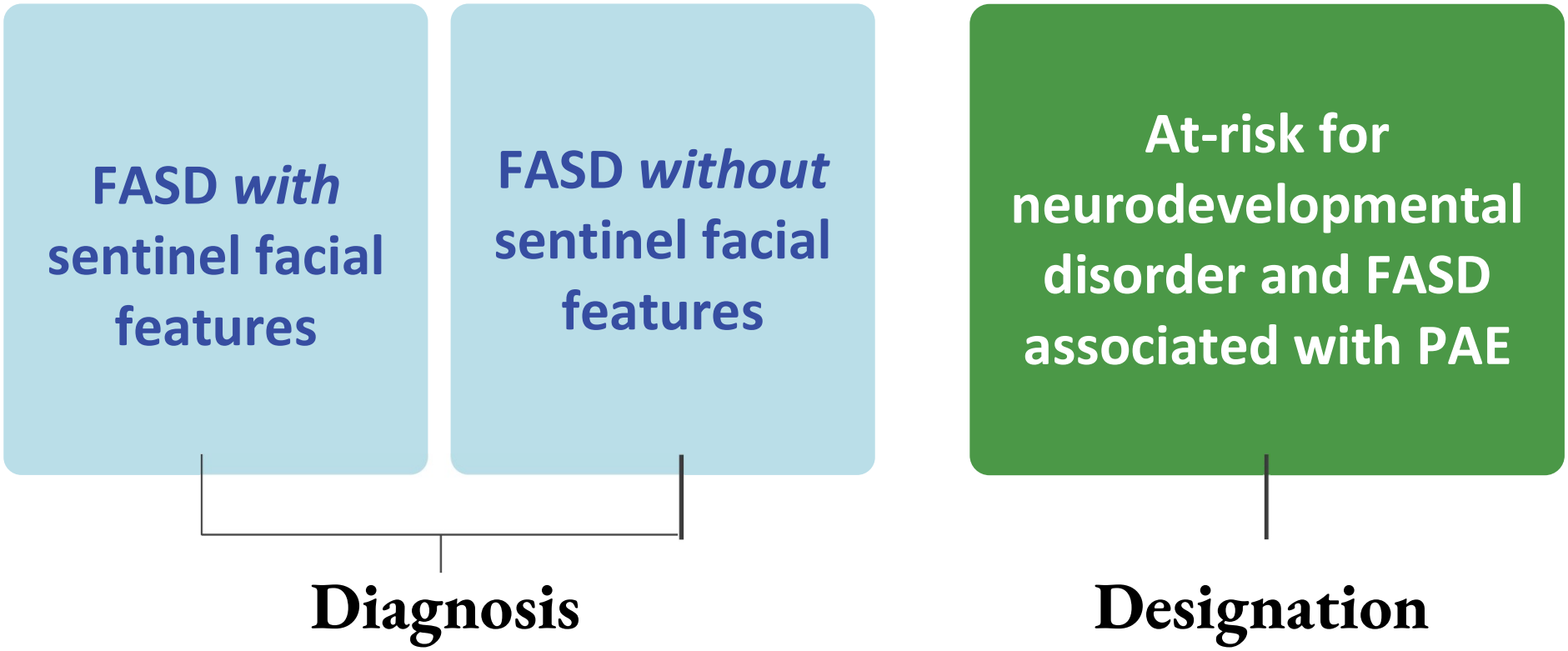


Speech-Language Pathologist

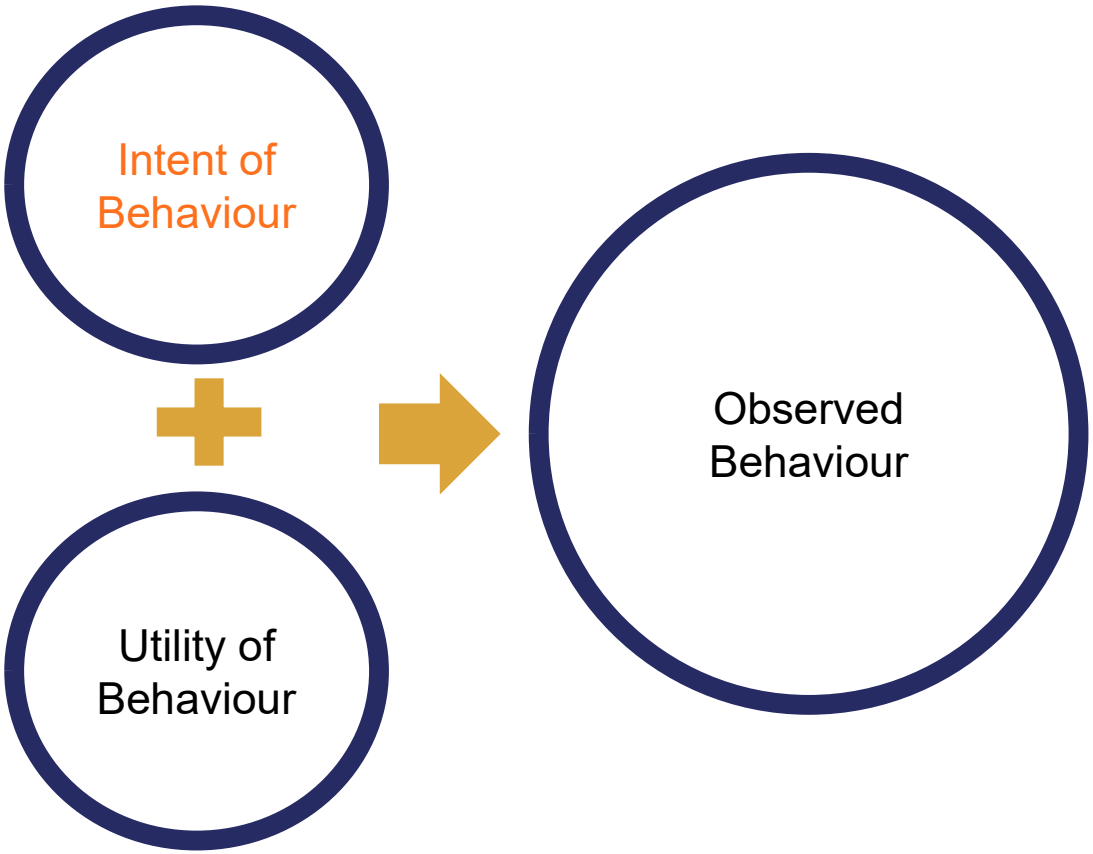


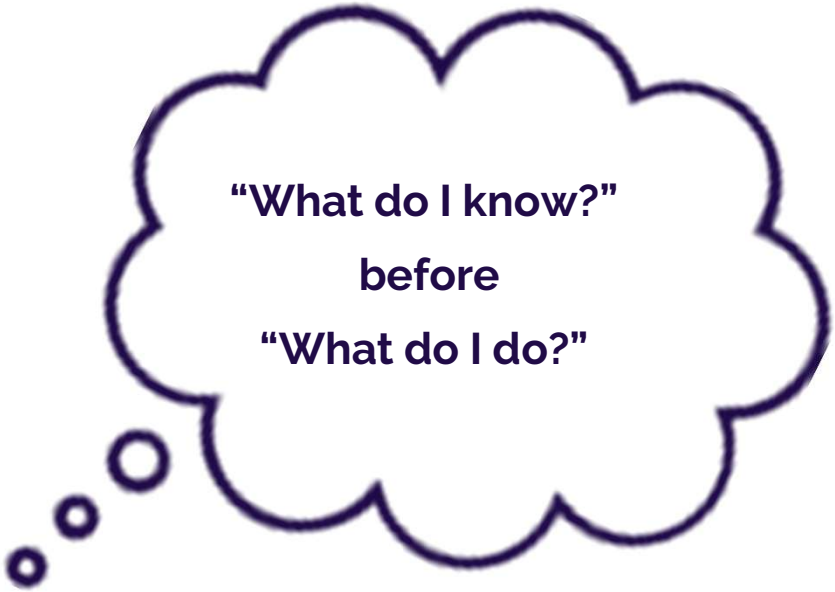
Clinic Coordinator

Possible Diagnoses



All Behaviour is Functional





Strengths-Based Approach

- Look at what students **can** do.
- Look at their **interests.**
- Identify their **talents.**
- Opportunities for community **engagement.**
- Encourage them to do positive activities that they are good at.



Principles of Practice



Consistency

within a school



Collaboration

Between schools and school staff



Responsiveness

Between school staff and an individual and their family



Proactivity

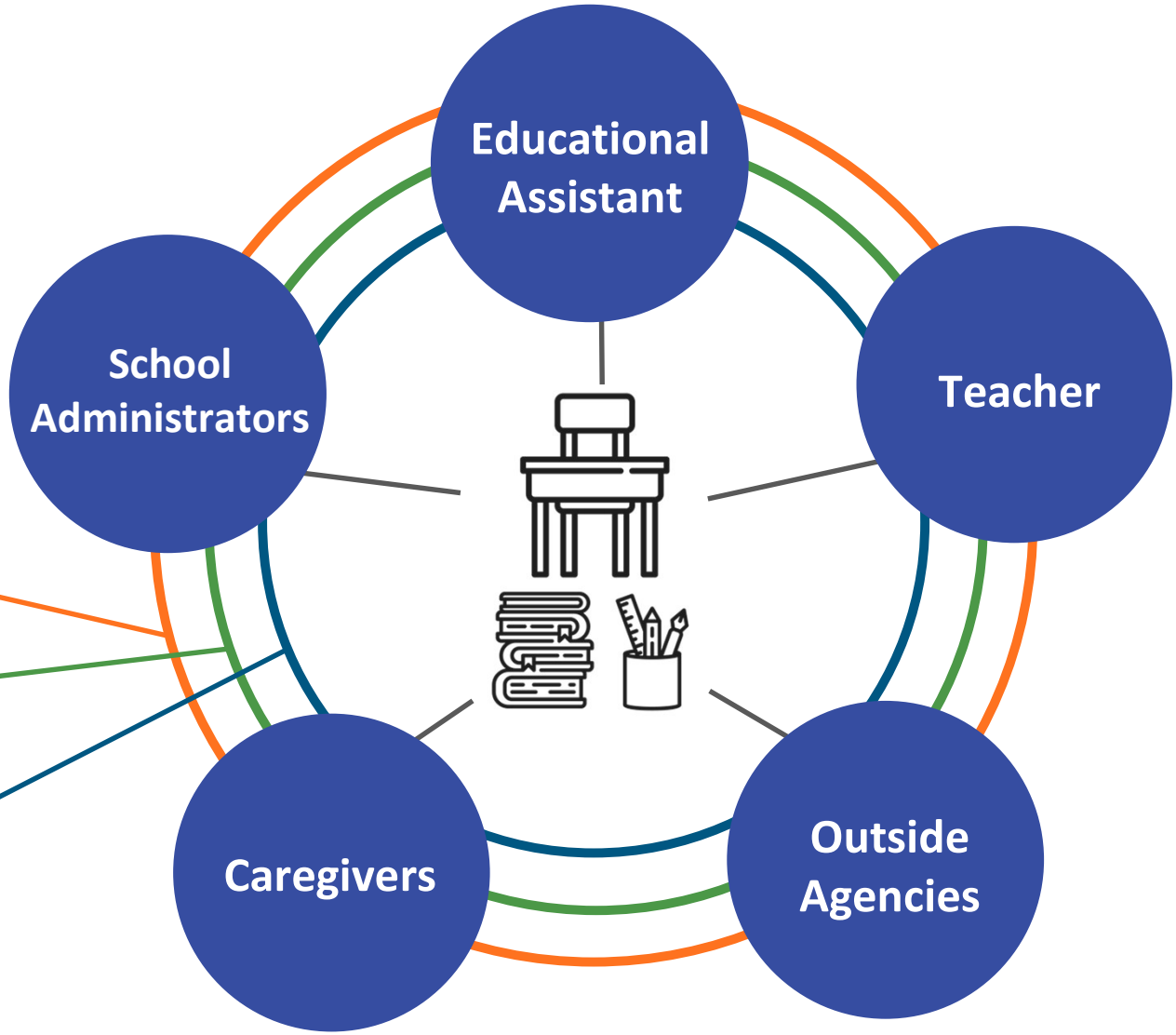
By school staff

Teams of Support

Communication & Collaboration

Consistent Strategies

Continuing Education









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