



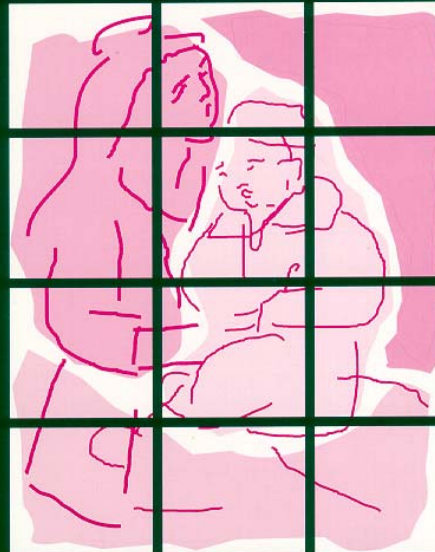
Fetal Alcohol Exposure

NIAAA Social Work Education Module 10K

(revised 06/05)

Acknowledgement

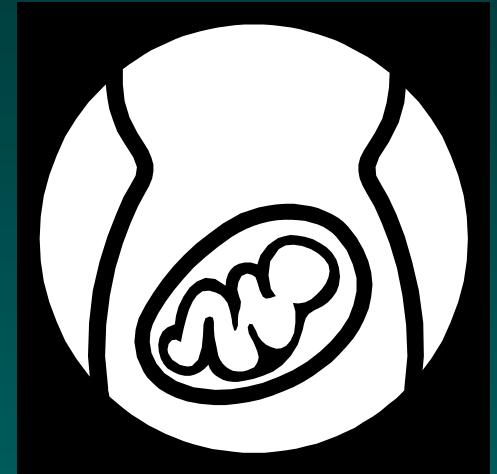
**Identification of At-Risk Drinking
and Intervention with
Women of Childbearing Age**
A Guide for Primary-Care Providers



National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
and
Office of Research on Minority Health
National Institutes of Health

Objectives

- Understand FAS, ARBD, ARND
- Understand teratogenic effects of alcohol on developing fetus
- Learn to identify effects
- Understand how to intervene & refer





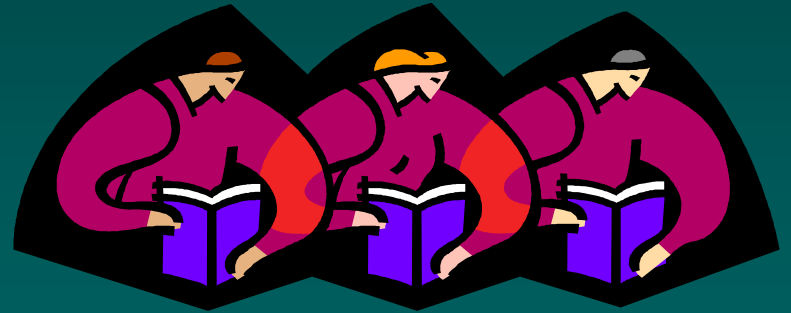
Outline

- Background
- Recognizing FAS, FASD traits
- Social Work Skills
- FASD Intervention
- Adoption/Foster Care
- Conclusions

Why Learn about FAS?

Though FAS is a lesser-known
Childhood disorder:

- Many clients experience alcohol problems, may be unaware/underestimating effects
- Colleagues may be under-trained in subject
- Potential for significant impact on lives



Background

- Teratogens/Teratogenic Agents:
known to be damaging to developing fetus
- Examples:
 - Radiation
 - Infectious agents (e.g., virus)
 - Chemical agents
 - Drugs/Medications/Alcohol



Background (cont.)

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
 - Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
 - Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)
 - Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ARND)



Alcohol Use During Pregnancy

- No known safe level of use
- Affects the fetus during all 3 trimesters
- Nearly 13% of pregnant women drink alcohol
- About 3% of all pregnant women drink 2+ /day or 5+ per occasion
- Organic effects are not reversible
- FAS: 0.5 - 2 per 1000 live births

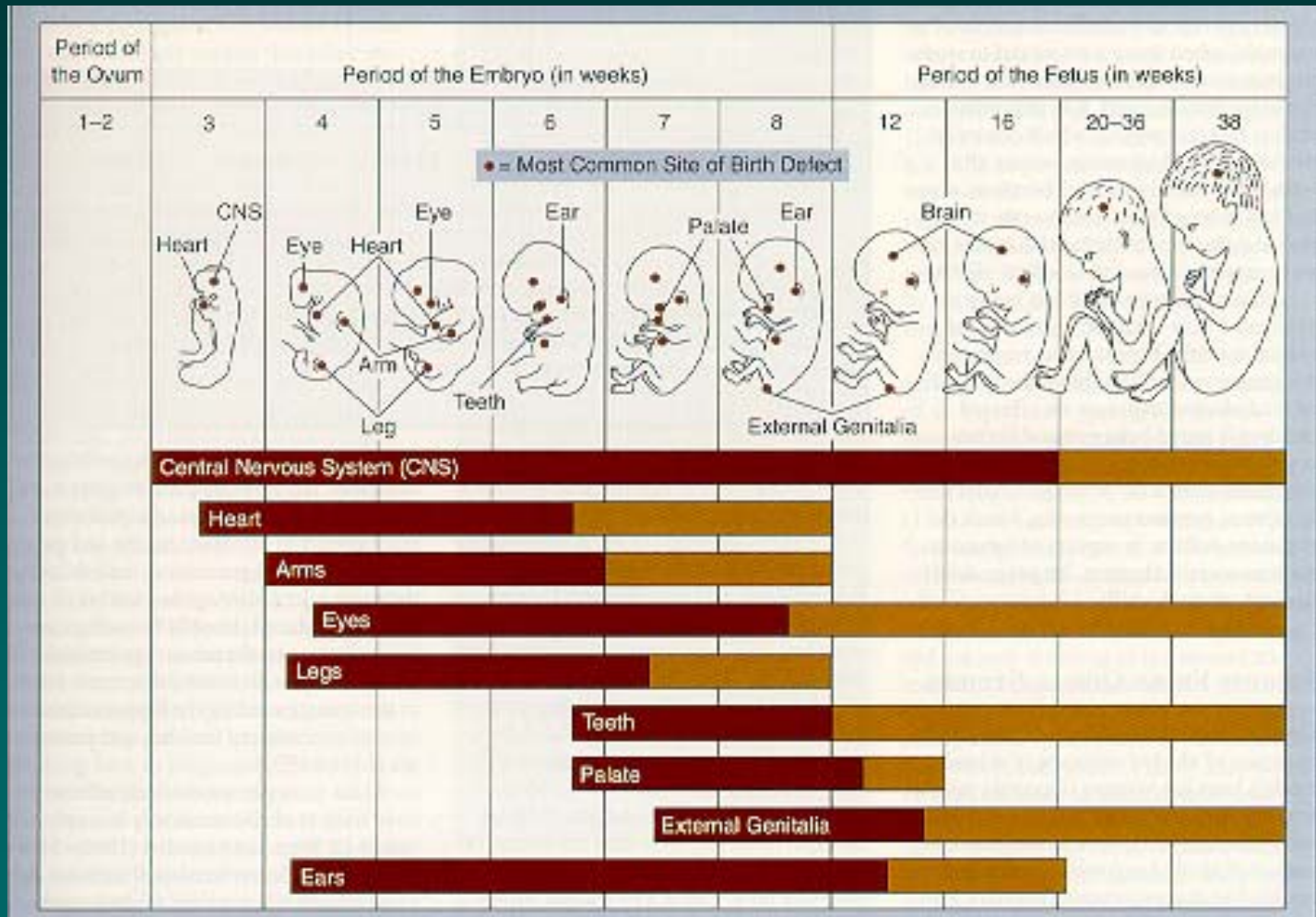


Alcohol in Combination With Other Factors

- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy is often combined with other risks, such as:
 - Domestic violence
 - Poor nutrition
 - Lack of prenatal care
 - Smoking
 - Use of illicit drugs



Alcohol Exposure and Phases of Embryo/Fetal Development



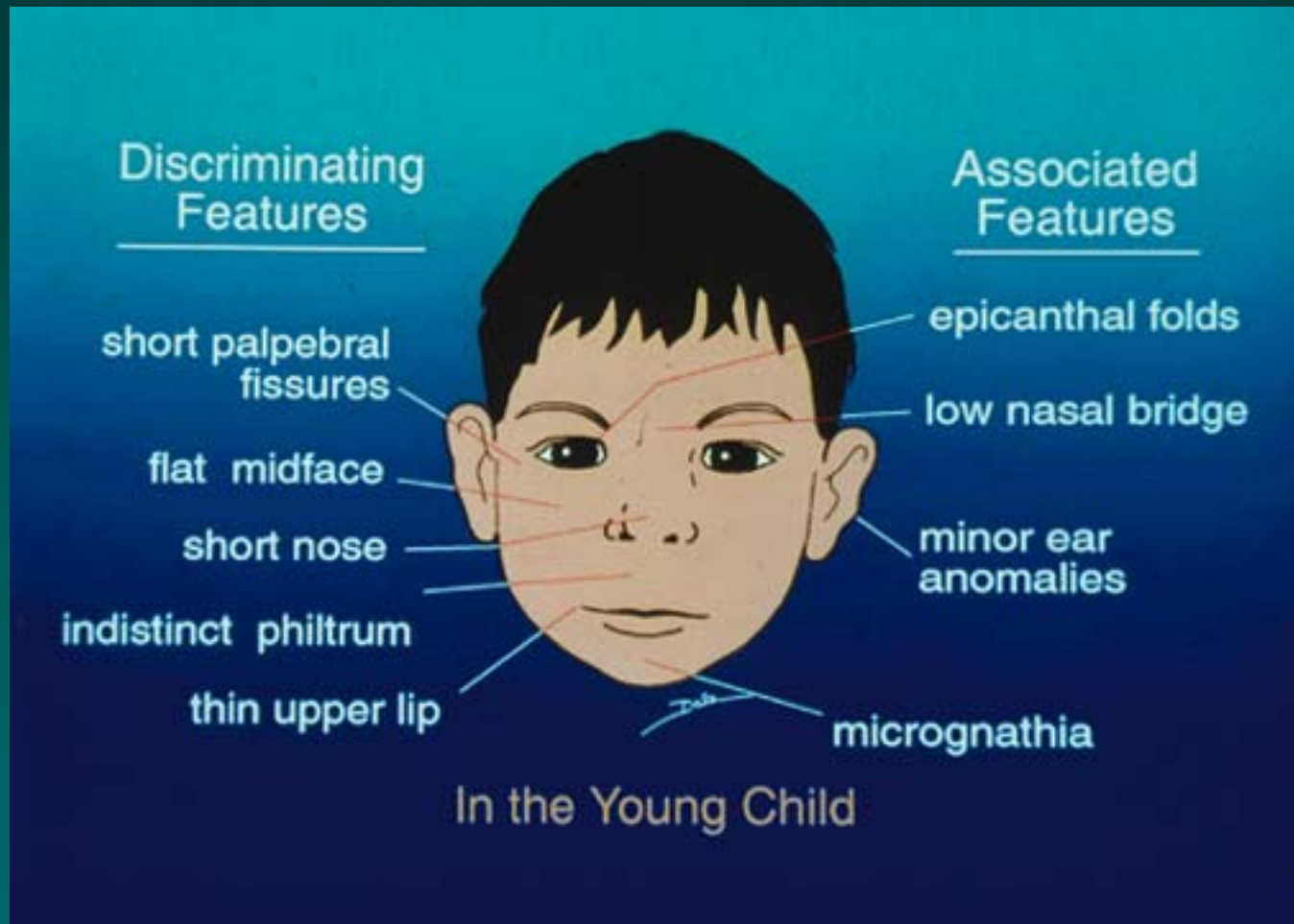
Recognizing FAS

Physical Growth Patterns:

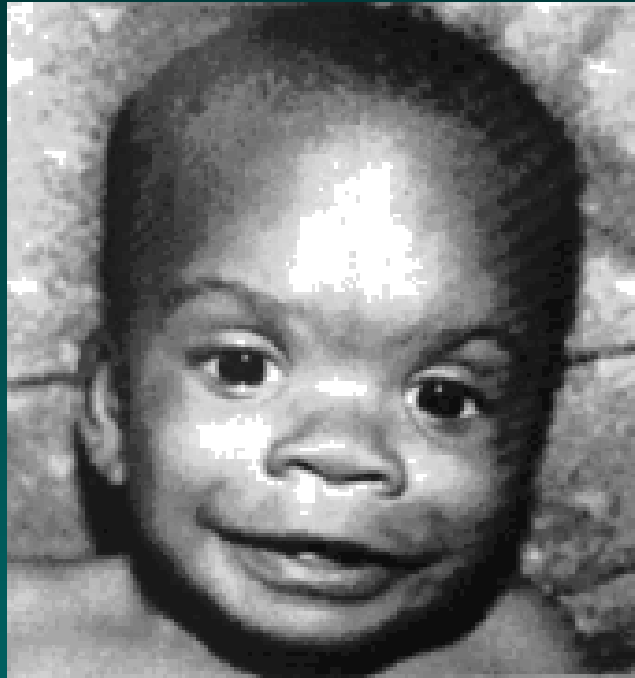
- Head circumference below 10th percentile
- Underweight
- Height/length shortened



FAS Facial Features



Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; Facial feature characteristics



(www.taconic.net/seminars/fas-b.htm.)



A



Fig. A:
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Diagnosis, Epidemiology, Prevention, and Treatment.
(Institute of Medicine, 1996).



C



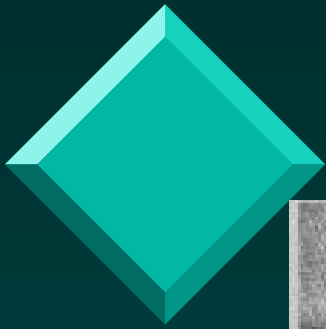
B

Fig. B:
Reprinted with permission from Clarren & Smith, (1978). Copyright 1978 by the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Massachusetts Medical Society.



D

Figs. C and D:
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Streissguth, et al., 1994

FASD: Brain Regions Affected



- The corpus callosum
- The cerebral cortex
- The hippocampus and cerebellum

Mattson, et al., 1994

Recognizing ARND

For Newborns & Infants:

- Sleep disturbances
- Feeding difficulties
- Reduced attention
- Decreased visual focus
- Hyper arousal response to noise/stimulation



Recognizing ARND (cont.)

For children 18-24 Months (Toddlers):

- Short attention span
- Increased activity
- Altered motor skills
- Increased stress reactivity



Recognizing ARND (cont.)

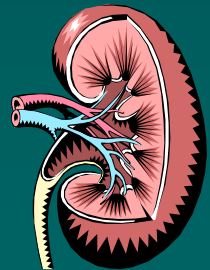
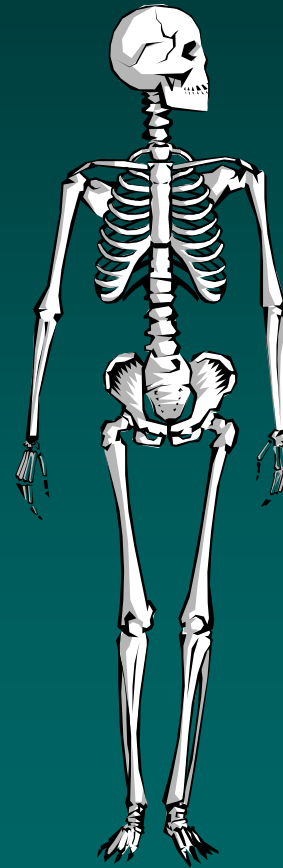
For Children 4-5 Years Old:

- Delayed speech development
- Altered motor skills
- Attention deficits
- Learning deficits
- Caregiver concerns



Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD) Diagnosis

- Birth defect(s):
 - Cardiac
 - Auditory
 - Ocular
 - Renal
 - Skeletal
 - Other
- Alcohol use confirmed
- Trained diagnostician



Secondary Disabilities Associated with FASD

Social work clients with FASD:

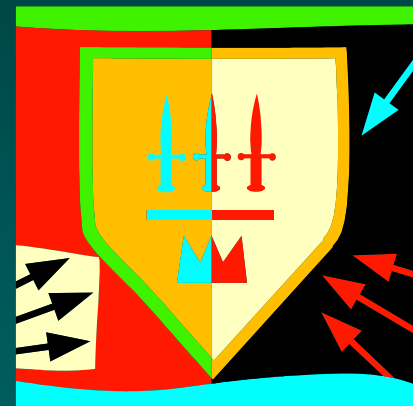
- *May respond to treatment differently from other clients*
- *May experience some secondary challenges:*
 - *Mental health problems*
 - *Disrupted school experience*
 - *Trouble with the law*
 - *Confinement*
 - *Inappropriate sexual behavior*
 - *Alcohol/drug problems*
 - *Dependent living*
 - *Employment problems*



(Streissguth, et al., 1996)

Protective Factors Against Disabilities Secondary to FASD

- Stable, nurturant home environment with basic needs met
- Diagnosed before 6 years old
- No abuse/maltreatment
- Receiving needed services
- FAS (not other) diagnosis



Prevent Fetal Alcohol Exposure

- Recognize the extent of the problem (including recognizing impact of FASD on adult clients)
- Consider screening all women of childbearing age
- Use appropriate interventions
- Education is necessary, not sufficient





Steps for Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention for Women of Childbearing Age

Step I - Ask about alcohol use

- Frequency
- Binge use
- Tolerance
- Family concern



Step II - Assess for alcohol-related problems

- Medical
- Behavioral
- Withdrawal
- Employment



continued on the next slide

Brief Advice and Referral

Step III - Advise Appropriate Action

Alcohol dependence

- Advise to abstain
- Refer to specialist
- Offer resources

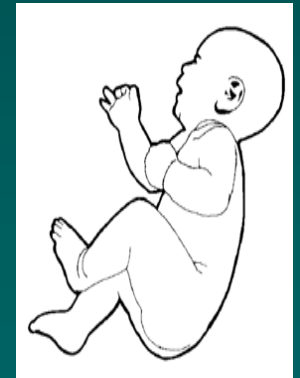
At-risk/problem drinking

- Advise to cut down, pregnant women to abstain
- Set a drinking goal

Step IV- Follow Patient Progress

Early Intervention

- Early intervention programs in all states
- Criteria may or may not include particular child's FASD
- Requires full range of assessment, and ongoing assessment over time
- Nature of FASD creates different challenges and responses in these individuals



Early Intervention

- Interdisciplinary teams work with families
- Family members as “therapeutic allies”
- Address “toxic shame” and guilt
- Orient and teach to negotiate service systems, support networks
- Address ongoing alcohol problems in family





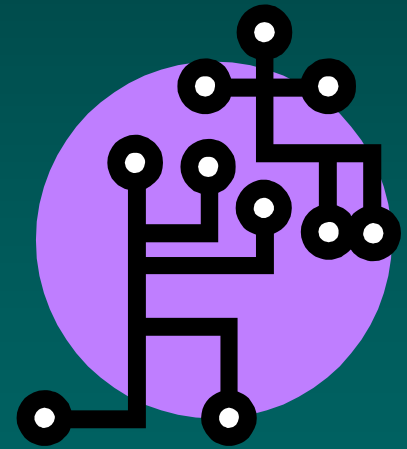
Mental Health

Comorbid & secondary mental health risks include:

- Depression & affect disorders
- Attention deficit disorders and ADHD
- Schizophrenia/ psychotic symptoms
- Alcohol/drug problems

Adoption & Foster Care

- Many children with FAS have out-of-home placement (possibly 73-80-%)
- Many require “special needs” placement
- Stability predicts greater success (vs instability of placement or remaining with parent who continues to abuse substances)
- Adoptive parents want to know about fetal alcohol exposure and how to address the effects





Conclusion

- Alcohol is a teratogen
- Fetal alcohol exposure associated with array called
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
- Social workers have key roles to play in prevention, intervention, and avoiding secondary disabilities
- Recognizing FASD helps social workers adapt their interventions to clients of all ages
- Social workers can help support the families