

Words of Wisdom and Support from FASD Key Workers

- How valued the role [of FASD Key Worker/Parent Support Worker] is in the communities I serve. Parents and Professionals rely heavily on the position for support and guidance.
- I guess I wish I would have known/accepted that you can't rush this work; just because you are ready to help the family, does not mean the family is ready. Be sensitive and empathetic to the family's needs.
- Be patient with people and their degree of acceptance of the message you're delivering and to refer often to Malbin's hierarchy of "getting it" [Developmental stages of "getting it" handout]
- The kids are who they are...the work is with parents and caregivers
- They WILL, without question, push you to your breaking point. Never doubt this. Learn from the experience, and remember to take time for yourself.
- Diane Malbin's information on CAN'T versus WON'T (unable versus unwilling). This is the best tool and biggest game changer in how I deliver information to caregivers as well as professionals [Paradigm shifts and FA/NB handout]
- I wish I knew Myles' analogy of varying cup sizes, that everyone has a different size cup (capacity). Some people have very large cups and you can pour a lot into them; some have smaller cups and can only take a small amount of input at a time.
- Similarly, the file cabinet analogy is a strategy that most people easily understand and is effective for making people think differently about processing time and information retrieval (often inconsistent). When a file cabinet is nicely organized information is quickly and easily accessed taking minimal effort or energy. However, when a file cabinet is disorganized it is difficult to find any information, take a high level of energy and the amount time needed to find it varies every time you look for a new piece of information.
- The file cabinet analogy and activity has been a very effective teaching tool. Analogy: that an organized file cabinet = neurotypical brain, disorganized file cabinet = impacted brain. [File cabinet activity handout]
- Judgement will sometimes happen, even to us as Key Workers. Be aware of yours [when they happen] and have someone to talk them through with [so they don't get put out into the world].
- There is always something that is working well.
- I have learned to ask first about sleep in a family. If the family is not sleeping properly, little change is possible.

Handouts referenced [developmental stages of "getting it" and paradigm shifts and FA/NB] are from: Malbin, Diane V., [2011], FETAL ALCOHOL/NEUROBEHAVIOURAL CONDITIONS: Understanding and Application of a Brain-Based Approach, A Collection of Information for Parents and Professionals, FASCETS, Inc.