

Policing and corrections tip sheet – 10 ways to move toward FASD-informed practices

- 1. Slow down.** Speak less quickly and allow the person time to process and answer.
- 2. Take a step-by-step approach.** When offering instructions or delivering commands, do so step-by-step.
- 3. Speak clearly.** Use plain and concise language.
- 4. Avoid abstract language and metaphors.** People with FASD are concrete thinkers. Explain things as clearly and as literally as possible.
- 5. Test for understanding.** Check in with the individual – ask them to explain in their own words *their* understanding of what is happening.
- 6. Minimize distractions.** Modify the setting if the individual appears to be distracted.
- 7. Try different approaches to communicating.** Individuals with FASD are often visual thinkers and learners. If you are having problems communicating with words, try using pictures.
- 8. Avoid jargon.** Translate complex ideas or documents into understandable terms. For example, explain a bail condition in plain language rather than relying on template documents that can be confusing.
- 9. Explain rights in plain language.** Individuals with FASD may not understand their *Charter* rights or other rights when notified in language that is complex for them. Explain these rights in plain language while upholding these same rights and freedoms.
- 10. Consider obtaining social service or mental health supports.** Discretion is a key resource in an officer's toolbox. Use it strategically. Individuals with FASD are often experiencing multiple challenges that are more effectively addressed outside the justice system.