# Presenter notes: About FASD

This module examines how Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) impacts learning. School leadership teams and staff engage in activities to build their knowledge and understanding and explore effective strategies that support students with FASD.

The module is divided into four sessions. Suggested times for each session are:

* Session 1: Understanding FASD (Allocate 40 minutes for slides 3-18)
* Session 2: Accessing the curriculum (Allocate 45 minutes for slides 19-39)
* Session 3: Supportive learning environments (Allocate 35 minutes for slides 40-48)
* Session 4: Personal and Social Capability (Allocate 50 minutes for slides 49-69)

It is recommended that school leaders prepare to present this workshop to the whole staff by firstly working collaboratively through the documents with their leadership team to ensure:

* a familiarity with the presenter’s notes which contain all the key understanding
* that knowledge and roles are shared between the leadership team before they are presented to staff
* activities are modified, where required, to meet the needs of staff
* slide 2 has been customised to include the name of the traditional custodians and the country on which you are presenting.

### Slide 2

#### **Acknowledgement of country**

“I respectfully acknowledge the past and present traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting, the <traditional name(s)> people. It is a privilege to be standing on <traditional name> country. I also acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all children and people in this country in which we all live and share together – Australia.”

Note: Please customise slide 2 to include the name of the traditional custodians and the country on which you are presenting.

### Slide 3

# Session 1 - Understanding FASD

This session engages school leaders and educators in activities that build knowledge and understanding about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

#### **Session outcomes**

During this session, participants will learn about:

* understand what is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
* gain knowledge about the impact of FASD on the way the brain functions
* a range of strategies that support all students with diverse learning needs.

Trigger warning: Please be aware that some information in this workshop may be distressing for some participants. If this workshop raises any concerns, please feel free to leave or to take some time away and return when you are ready. Department of Education staff are entitled to six sessions of counselling per year through PeopleSense. Phone to make an appointment on 9388 9000 or 1300 307 912 or [reception@peoplesense.com.au](mailto:reception@peoplesense.com.au)

### Slide 4

#### **Principal Performance Improvement Tool**

The Principal Performance Improvement Tool describes the work and practices of increasingly effective principals based on lived school leadership experiences in our own system.

In practice, highly effective principals lead this agenda by:

* articulating and achieving widespread commitment to the school’s moral purpose
* creating a cohesive school culture built on strong, purposeful relationships
* applying the school’s available resources in ways that maximise outcomes for students
* building teachers’ commitment and capacity to make improvements in teaching practices
* ensuring that decisions are informed by, and evaluated in terms of, quality data
* leading the collaborative implementation and systematic study of strategic change.

### Slide 5

### Slide 6

#### **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**

The standards:

* set out what teachers are expected to know, understand and do, to achieve in their work
* are designed to provide a continuum of capabilities and expectations for teachers at four career stages.

**Activity: What is FASD?**

In small groups:

* consider what you already know about FASD
* prepare to share your ideas.

Conduct a call out.

Allocate five minutes.

**Participant answers may include:**

* it is caused by drinking alcohol while pregnant
* it causes permanent brain injury
* it exists in all areas of society and all countries where alcohol is consumed
* each child can be affected differently
* FASD can have an influence on student behaviour
* it can make it hard for students to build friendships
* a child with FASD will grow into an adult with FASD.

Allocate five minutes for answers to be shared across the group.

### Slide 7

#### What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term for the range of physical, cognitive, behavioural and neurodevelopmental abnormalities which can result from maternal drinking during pregnancy. (National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028, Commonwealth of Australia 2018, p.8). FASD is a lifelong condition.

Alcohol is a teratogenic substance. A teratogen is a substance that can cross the placental barrier and can cause abnormal foetal development. Alcohol exposure before birth can cause brain injury and neurodevelopmental impairments that include cognitive and executive functioning, communication, sensory processing, spatial awareness and social adaptive challenges. FASD can also result in a range of health issues such as heart conditions, hearing impairment, vision impairment, digestion complications and spinal malformations.

The impact of alcohol depends on various factors including the timing of alcohol exposure, in relation to the stage of development of the foetus, and the amount of alcohol exposure. The exact amounts of alcohol exposure needed to impact the developing brain are unknown, and the Australian Drinking Guidelines state that ‘no level of alcohol is considered safe during pregnancy.’

‘FASD affects many communities – it is not isolated to a specific country, region or population group.’ (National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028, Commonwealth of Australia 2018, p.10).

‘The evidence demonstrates that FASD is present in Australia, in all places in which alcohol is consumed.’ (Liotta, M. 2018).

**In summary:**

* FASD is a group of conditions caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy.
* FASD is a lifelong condition.
* Alcohol exposure before birth can cause brain injury and can also cause a range of   
  health issues.
* No level of alcohol is considered safe during pregnancy.
* FASD is present in Australia, in all places in which alcohol is consumed.

### Slide 8

#### Diagnosing FASD

In Australia, FASD is under recognised and often goes undiagnosed or may be misdiagnosed. This may be due to:

* the stigma and blame associated with being required to admit to drinking while pregnant
* family access to appropriate heath care professionals
* the emotional and cognitive behaviours observed in students with FASD that appear similar to the behaviours in students with other disorders.

Assessments are made by a multi-disciplinary team that may include a developmental paediatrician, a geneticist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist, a neuropsychologist and, in some regions a nurse may form part of the team, who should all have knowledge about FASD.

Diagnosis occurs using evidence such as:

* prenatal alcohol exposure
* facial irregularities (which primarily affect the midline of the face, altering the eyes, nose   
  and/or lips)
* neurodevelopmental impairment.

While some students with FASD will have facial irregularities, most will not. This is because facial irregularities occur when alcohol is consumed while facial features are forming. This occurs between three and six weeks after conception.

National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028 states, ‘all health professionals, including child health nurses and GPs, as well as teachers and parents who have concerns about neurodevelopmental delay on screening, should be able to seek a referral from a GP to a developmental or general paediatrician, or to a specialised FASD assessment clinic if alcohol is considered as a possible cause for the delays experienced.’ (2018, p.22)

The school psychologist may conduct an individual assessment when a student is referred to them for engagement, behavioural, and/or learning support. In the absence of a diagnosis, the school psychologist should explore the possibility of a FASD diagnosis, and consult with the teacher and parents or carers, to assist in the student being referred for formal assessment.

**In summary:**

* FASD is under recognised and often goes undiagnosed or may be misdiagnosed.
* While some students with FASD will have facial irregularities, most will not.
* Assessments are made by a multi-disciplinary team.

### Slide 9

**The impact of alcohol on the developing brain**

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to play the video: The impact of alcohol on the developing brain. Length of video: 1:58

### Slide 10

#### FASD and the 10 neurodevelopmental domains

The impairments experienced by individuals with FASD will vary depending on the parts of the brain that have been damaged by alcohol. A FASD diagnosis requires comprehensive assessment of severe impairment of brain function in at least three of the 10 specified neurodevelopmental domains that are:

1. Brain structure/neurology
2. Motor skills
3. Cognition
4. Language
5. Academic achievement
6. Memory
7. Attention
8. Executive function, including impulse control and hyperactivity
9. Affect regulation, including emotional regulation and sensory processing
10. Adaptive behaviour, including daily living skills, social skills and social communication.

**In summary:**

* The impairments experienced by individuals with FASD will vary depending on the 10 neurodevelopmental domains of the brain that have been damaged by alcohol.

### Slide 11

**National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028**

In Western Australia, FASD is a shared priority across Government agencies that work together to achieve the most efficient and effective outcomes, taking into account the National FASD Plan Priorities Areas.

Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Health has created the National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028 (the Plan) ‘to provide a clear pathway of priorities and opportunities to improve the prevention, diagnosis, support and management of FASD in Australia’ (2018, p.3).

‘The three key aims of the Plan are to:

* reduce prevalence of FASD
* reduce the associated impact of FASD
* improve the quality of life for people living with FASD.

National priorities:

* Prevention
* Screening and diagnosis
* Support and management
* Priority groups and populations at increased risk

Enablers:

* Appropriate recognition of FASD as a disability
* Eliminate stigma
* Education and training
* Policy coordination
* Research and evaluation.’ (2018, p.4).

**In summary:**

* In Western Australia, FASD is a shared priority across Government agencies.
* The National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028 outlines priorities for the prevention, diagnosis, support and management of FASD in Australia.

### Slide 12

#### A strength based approach

Associate Professor Mutch states, ‘children and young people engaged in juvenile justice services have most often experienced early school failure and disengagement,’ (Liotta, M. 2018).

*Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and youth justice: a prevalence study among young people sentenced to detention in Western Australia* states, ‘Australia has the highest known prevalence rate of FASD in a juvenile detention environment in the world. A recent study on the prevalence of FASD within the juvenile justice system found that 36% of 10-18 year olds in Banksia Hill Detention Centre (WA) were diagnosed with FASD.’ (Bower, C. et al, 2018).

These quotes demonstrate the importance of providing opportunities for students to attend to, and access the curriculum through a supportive, strength based approach. Knowing your students’ strengths and areas requiring improvement is essential in providing quality education.

‘It is important to recognise that the effects of FASD vary in range and severity of each individual. As a result, no two children with FASD learn and function in the same way. The teacher’s knowledge and experience, guidance and encouragement are vital to the child’s learning.’ (*What Educators Need to Know about FASD, Working Together to Educate Children in Manitoba with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* (2018 p.1) Healthy Child Manitoba).

**In summary:**

* Knowing your students’ strengths and areas requiring improvement is essential in providing quality, engaging education.
* We must provide opportunities for students to access the curriculum and experience success   
  at school.

### Slide 13

**Activity: The impact of FASD**

Write a list of the tasks you have completed today. In small groups, discuss the skills you used to complete these tasks.

Allocate five minutes.

Consider how difficult it would have been to complete these tasks if you were:

* intoxicated
* suffering from Alzheimer’s
* severely sleep deprived.

Now imagine that you were operating in this impaired state for the rest of your life.

### Slide 14

**The impact of FASD on learning**

The challenges faced by students with FASD are a result of injury to the brain. Effective educators take care not to misinterpret these challenges, as the student being wilful, egocentric or lacking in empathy.

When we understand this we ensure students do not experience negative consequences as a result of the behaviours caused by their impairments.

Knowing this makes educators more capable of meeting student needs by focusing on supporting students to develop knowledge, skills and understandings required for:

* learning
* communication
* personal and social capability including self-regulation.

**In summary:**

* The challenges faced by students are a result of injury to the brain not the student being wilful, egocentric or lacking in empathy.
* We ensure students do not experience negative consequences as a result of the behaviours caused by their brain injury.

### Slide 15

**The impact of FASD on learning**

Educators observe that students with FASD are bright and communicative but may repeatedly make the same mistakes. Students with FASD may not have the higher order thinking skills of deduction and inference in order to verify connections. This can impact on a student’s ability to:

* understand cause and effect
* understand actions and consequences
* generalise information from one context to another. Generalising requires the brain to identify the parts within a specific situation and understand the common characteristics shared by these parts in order to transfer this information into a new context.

While a student with FASD may not have the cognitive ability to understand why something is inappropriate, they can learn what is appropriate through regular repetition of the desired behaviour.

Modelling, practice and repetition of the appropriate behaviour begins as soon as the inappropriate behaviour arises and continues until the student consistently demonstrates the newly learnt behaviours.

Effective educators use positive behaviour supports and targeted strategies that focus on changing the environment and using restorative practices.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD are bright and communicative but may repeatedly make the   
  same mistakes.
* Students with FASD may not have the higher order thinking skills of cause and effect or deduction and inference in order to verify connections.
* Students with FASD can learn what is appropriate through regular repetition of the   
  desired behaviour.

### Slide 16

**Prenatal alcohol exposure and the developing brain**

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to play the video: Prenatal alcohol exposure and the developing brain. Length of video: 3:09

### Slide 17

**How do effective educators support students with FASD?**

Effective educators value the individuality of their students and know a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable as every student with FASD will be different. They incorporate the insights and strategies that families and students identify as working well at home and at school.

Maximising the learning experiences for students with FASD requires us to provide opportunities for students to use their strengths such as:

* strong visual memory
* high energy levels
* verbal fluency
* unique creative skills such as drama, visual art and music.

A strength-based approach is informed by formal and informal assessments, observations and discussions. Educators know their students:

* achievements and identify areas for improvement
* strengths and interests, likes and dislikes and uses this information to provide a personalised connection to the curriculum
* academic, personal and social successes which are celebrated.

Strong relationships and quality learning environments support positive outcomes for students.

**In summary:**

* A one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable for students with FASD.
* Insights and strategies that families and students identify as working well at home are incorporated at school.
* Strong relationships and quality learning environments support positive outcomes   
  for students.

### Slide 18

**Activity: Minimising the impact of FASD**

In small groups, discuss what would enable students to use their:

* strong visual memory
* high energy levels
* verbal fluency
* unique creative skills.

Consider how to incorporate these opportunities into lessons.

Allocate 10 minutes.

### Slide 19

# Session 2: Accessing the curriculum

This workshop engages school leaders and educators in activities that build knowledge and understanding about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

#### **Session outcomes**

During this session, participants will learn about:

* the challenges faced by students with FASD in accessing the curriculum
* effective approaches that support students to access the curriculum
* a range of strategies suitable for all students with diverse learning needs.

### Slide 20

**Accessing the curriculum: Student Diversity**

As stated in the Guiding Principles of the Western Australian Curriculum – Student Diversity, ‘all students from Kindergarten to their final year of secondary schooling in Western Australia have a right to an education that is equitable and embraces diversity. This right is enshrined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child … education must be inclusive of students’ individual strengths and needs.

Differences in terms of characteristics such as ethnicity, language (linguistic background), culture, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or geographic location should not be allowed to detract from a student’s access to the high-quality education that is their right ...’

Effective educators consider students’ impairments when planning by incorporating adjustments to teaching and learning plans and make changes to the environment that meet the diverse learning needs of students, reducing barriers to academic and personal success.

**In summary:**

* All students have a right to an education that is equitable and embraces diversity.
* Adjustments are made to teaching, learning and the environment to meet the needs   
  of students.

### Slide 21

**Accessing the curriculum: Academic achievement**

Students with FASD face barriers to academic success due to their impairments. Some aspects of the developmental age of students with FASD are unlikely to match their chronological age.

Academic achievement occurs when students can access the curriculum and apply their knowledge, skills and understandings across learning areas and contexts. A deeper understanding of FASD assists educators and stakeholders to make appropriate adjustments that meet the needs of their students.

Educators use flexible, thoughtful approaches when providing students with access to a   
high-quality education.

Effective educators personalise the learning for their students by selecting strategies that support individuals to develop knowledge, skills and understandings they need. Students are encouraged, where appropriate, to contribute information about how they learn best in order to have their individual learning needs met.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD face barriers to success due to their brain injury.
* Understanding FASD assists educators to make adjustments that meet students’ needs.

### Slide 22

**Accessing the curriculum: Adjustments**

Teaching and learning may include adjustments to pedagogy, instructions, activities and tasks.

Effective educators:

* clarify the learning intentions and co-develop success criteria
* break tasks into smaller components and pitch the learning at a level appropriate for the students’ developmental stage. This includes the use of low level-high interest texts.
* provide explicit teaching of new content and multiple opportunities to consolidate learning
* provide repetition of instructions and rules, both verbally and through visual support materials
* use concrete materials and practical hands-on experiences to engage students and build the skills and knowledge required for abstract thinking (for example, time and money)
* incorporate co-operative learning strategies and opportunities for peer mentoring.

Students with FASD may require opportunities to demonstrate what they know through assessment methods targeted to suit their needs, such as:

* spoken question and answer
* written responses
* the use of assistive technology
* demonstrations using concrete materials
* acting and/or role play
* additional time
* a combination of the above.

**In summary:**

* Adjustments are made to pedagogy, instructions, activities and tasks.
* Students with FASD are provided with a variety of assessment methods to demonstrate what they know.

### Slide 23

**Accessing the curriculum: Cognition**

Cognition is responsible for thinking, reasoning and comprehension, remembering, problem solving and includes higher order functions such as language, imagination, perception   
and planning.

Students with FASD require explicit teaching to counteract cognitive impairments that   
may impact:

* processing speed that could be defined as the time it takes a person to complete a mental task. It is related to the speed in which a person can understand and react to the information they receive. Attention may also have an impact on processing speed
* abstract thinking required to identify similarities between objects and concepts, and understand mathematics such as money and time
* language skills and comprehension of inference, metaphor, codes and double meanings.

Students with FASD are likely to have differences in the two hemispheres of their brains. Students may appear highly capable in one area of development and severely impaired in another. For example, they may have a large vocabulary but be unable to find their way around the school grounds, or they may be talented artists but lack the language skills to describe their work.

Teaching and learning focuses on students’ strengths. Effective educators provide scaffolds that connect new information to students’ current knowledge and skills to support cognition and the storing of new information into long term memory. Students are given multiple opportunities to consolidate learning.

**In summary:**

* Cognition is responsible for thinking, reasoning and comprehension, remembering, problem solving and includes higher order functions such as language, imagination, perception   
  and planning.
* Students with FASD require explicit teaching to counteract cognitive impairments.

### Slide 24

**Accessing the curriculum: Language**

FASD can impact on a student’s ability to receive, interpret and respond accurately to information.

Students use receptive language skills to:

* follow instructions
* listen to and relate to stories and experiences of others
* understand what is being said.

Expressive language skills can be spoken, written or gestural. Expressive language skills are used by students to:

* make meaningful statements
* communicate information, ideas, stories and experiences
* respond to questions and comments.

The expressive communication skills of students with FASD are likely to be more developed than their receptive language skills. Students may be observed to be more talkative, however this may mask other language difficulties such as an inability to understand verbal instructions or explain what they have seen or heard in a logical, sequential and coherent manner.

Students with FASD continually require:

* explicit teaching of vocabulary, syntax, semantics and pragmatics especially when the curriculum increases in complexity
* support turning their thoughts into oral and written language
* simple, precise and literal instructions to minimise misinterpretations.

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to develop their expressive communication skills through modelling, practising in real life situations and role playing across different contexts.

Effective educators scaffold oral and written activities to develop receptive communication   
skills by:

* providing sentence starters
* a sequence of steps to be completed
* story boards
* graphic organisers
* visual support materials.

**In summary:**

* FASD can impact on a student’s ability to receive, interpret and respond accurately   
  to information.
* Students require modelling and practise to develop their expressive communication skills and scaffolding to develop receptive communication skills.

### Slide 25

**Accessing the curriculum: Language acquisition - Standard Australian English**

Western Australia has a diverse cohort of English as an additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners. Students with FASD who are also EAL/D learners will require targeted support to develop competency in Standard Australian English (SAE).

In order to develop appropriate, culturally responsive teaching and learning programs, educators incorporate strategies that meet the neurodevelopmental needs of their students as well as strategies that meet their language acquisition needs.

*Note:* If required, visit Connect for further professional learning on teaching EAL/D learners and classroom resources:

* EAL/D progress map
* Improving Literacy and Numeracy: Support for English as an Additional Language or Dialect
* Story books in Aboriginal English
* Phonics toolkit
* Spelling knowledge.

Links to these resources exist in the *Support for students with diverse learning needs hub* alongside this professional learning.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD who are also EAL/D learners require support to develop competency in Standard Australian English (SAE).
* Many teaching and learning resources for teachers and students are available in Connect resources online. Find Connect listed under Quicklinks on the IKON homepage.

### Slide 26

**Accessing the curriculum: Memory**

Memory is one of the neurodevelopmental domains most likely to be impaired in students with FASD. The challenge with memory for students with FASD is related to the brain’s ability to encode, store, correctly sequence events, manipulate and retrieve information as well as make associations and generalise.

FASD impacts on how well students can process information, strategies and new knowledge.

Memory comprises a number of components:

* Short-term memory holds a limited amount of information. It is used to store information that has been heard, seen or felt and usually lasts for a matter of seconds. When students are relying on their short term memory, they may forget what they are doing part way through a task.
* Long-term memory retains information over a longer duration such as hours, months or a lifetime. It is used to remember curriculum, daily routines, rules and social norms. When students are not storing information in their long term memory, it can result in understanding instructions one day but forgetting it the next.
* Long-term memory processes require students to focus on input, in order to encode, select and retrieve information. Encoding is the process of storing information in long term memory. Encoding requires linking new information to existing knowledge in order to make new knowledge meaningful. Information that is not encoded will be forgotten.
* Working memory allows us to retain and process information at the same time but, like short-term memory, it has limited capacity. Scaffolding is required to link prior knowledge to new learning and to stay focused throughout complex tasks.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD are most likely to have memory impairments.
* FASD can impact short-term, long-term and working memory.
* FASD impacts the brain’s ability to encode, store, correctly sequence events, manipulate and retrieve information as well as make associations and generalise.

### Slide 27

**Accessing the curriculum: Memory**

As a result of memory impairments, students may require daily repetition of instructions and rules as well as support in managing their time and workload.

Teachers, Education Assistants (EA) and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO) model using ‘think alouds’ to support students to:

* understand how information is processed and organised
* recognise the steps in problem solving processes.

Effective educators provide scaffolding, concrete materials and visual prompts. Repetition, rehearsal and visual prompts will support students to process information into short and long term memory. All of these strategies support students with FASD to develop the skills required to comprehend abstractions, generalisations and to ‘fill in the blanks’ when processing instructions.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD may require daily repetition of instructions and rules as well as support in managing their time and workload.
* Effective educators provide scaffolding, concrete materials, visual prompts, repetition and ‘think alouds’ to support students with FASD.

### Slide 28

**Accessing the curriculum: Comparing ODD, ADHD and FASD**

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to play the video:   
Comparing ODD, ADHD and FASD

This video helps build knowledge and understanding through comparisons and explanations of ODD, ADHD and FASD. This video runs for 5:42 minutes.

### Slide 29

**Accessing the curriculum: Attention**

Attention is a process where a learner is fully engaged in a task. The central executive system controls the higher-order thinking and the planning functions of memory. This includes deciding where to focus attention; enables divided attention which is the ability to focus on more than one component at a time; and shifting attention from one task to another when necessary.

Students with FASD may experience cognitive overload when too much information is presented. This results in the central executive system (the system that coordinates brain processes) intervening to determine which information is the most important. This can cause students to lose focus as they are unable to distinguish between information that is relevant and important and filter out what is not important. Students may shift between activities before they are ready, leaving tasks incomplete.

Effective educators gain the attention of students with FASD by:

* linking the students’ strengths, interests and prior knowledge to lessons
* minimising classroom stimuli to reduce distractions and help students to focus their attention
* providing scaffolds that divide tasks into smaller components, communicated in clear, literal and simple ways so that students can systematically work through lessons.

**In summary:**

* The central executive system is the system that coordinates brain processes.
* Students with FASD may be unable to distinguish between information that is important and what is not important.
* Students may lose focus and shift between activities before they are ready, leaving   
  tasks incomplete.
* Effective educators leverage the strength and interest of students, provide scaffolds and reduce distractions in the classroom.

### Slide 30

**Accessing the curriculum: Motor skills**

Students with FASD may have gross and/or fine motor skills impairments. There are a range of motor skills that are used for:

* manual dexterity, precision (fine motor skills)
* balance, strength, co-ordination, ball skills and agility (gross motor skills)
* handwriting which requires the combination of motor skills, perception and cognitive processing (grapho-motor skills)
* hand-eye coordination required for drawing, writing, copying from the board and sports   
  (visual-motor integration)
* sensory processing of information from the muscles and joints (proprioception).

Students with fine motor skill impairments are likely to have reduced hand strength required to grasp and manipulate small objects such as pens and scissors. They may experience limited bilateral hand use which is required for simultaneous use of both hands in a controlled manner.   
A lack of fine motor skills can cause students with FASD to experience fatigue more quickly than other students.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD may have gross and/or fine motor skills impairments.
* Students with FASD may experience fatigue more quickly than other students.

### Slide 31

**Accessing the curriculum: Motor skills**

Effective educators:

* incorporate hand strengthening activities such as tug-of-war; using hole punches, spray bottles, modelling clay and squeezing squishy balls
* provide adjustments such as increasing time allocated to written tasks
* decreasing time spent copying from the board and replacing this activity with a hardcopy for students to highlight relevant information
* use of technology, where appropriate, to help minimise fatigue and increase keyboard and word processing skills
* use of predictive text apps.

In summary:

* Students with FASD require strengthening activities to improve motor skills.
* Effective educators provide adjustments to tasks, time allocated and use technology, where appropriate, to help minimise fatigue.

### Slide 32

**Accessing the curriculum: Posture and body awareness**

Students with FASD may have decreased muscle control, coordination and body awareness which may make it difficult for them to sit still.

As stated in, *What educators need to know about FASD, Working Together to Educate Children in Manitoba with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder:*

* ‘poor central or postural stability of the core body or trunk muscles can affect students’ balance and functioning in the classroom. Static or stationary balance is more affected than moving or dynamic balance… They will often depend on momentum to keep themselves upright. An analogy of this would be to try riding a bike very, very slowly. It is much easier to ride a bike fast to maintain balance or prevent falling over…’
* ‘As a result of poor body awareness, decreased muscle control and poor co-ordination, children often seem clumsy, careless or physically aggressive.’
* ‘They may bump into peers and furniture, trip over their own feet when crossing the room and play in an apparent rough or aggressive manner, often hurting peers or breaking toys. This is not intentional or defiant behavior, rather a result of impaired motor skills and poor body awareness caused by neurological impairment.’ (2009, p.9).
* ‘Students with FASD require strategies to be put in place that address ‘abnormal muscle tone (usually tightness in the arms and legs and low muscle tone in the trunk)’ (2009, p.9).’

In summary:

* Students with FASD may have decreased muscle control, coordination and body awareness.
* students may appear to be rough or aggressive but this is not intentional or defiant behaviour. It is the result of injury to the brain, caused by alcohol exposure before birth.

### Slide 33

**Accessing the curriculum: Posture and body awareness**

Effective educators:

* closely supervise students to ensure personal safety and the safety of others in the classroom or playgroup
* ensure students are given regular, short breaks away from their desks
* include physical activity such as obstacle courses, ball games and running races
* incorporate suggestions from health professionals such as chairs with arms and/or air filled cushions to help strengthen postural muscles
* use weight baring activities such as wall push-up or wheel barrow races to build upper body strength.

These activities will also support students to remain calm.

In summary:

* Students with FASD may require close supervision in the classroom or playground.
* Regular breaks and physical activity support students to remain calm.

### Slide 34

**Accessing the curriculum on the same basis as their peers**

Educators are required to implement legislation and Department of Education policies in   
their classrooms.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA):

* provides a broad definition of what constitutes a disability as ‘a disorder or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction.’
* states it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities.

As stated in the DDA, ‘disability, in relation to a person, means:

(a) total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or

(b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or

(c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or

(d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or

(e) the malfunction, malformation or disﬁgurement of a part of the person’s body; or

(f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or

(g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:

(h) presently exists; or

(i) previously existed but no longer exists; or

(j) may exist in the future; or

(k) is imputed to a person.’

A student does not require a diagnosis to be protected under the DDA.

In summary:

* It is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities.
* A student does not require a diagnosis to be protected under the Disability Discrimination Act.

### Slide 35

**Accessing the curriculum on the same basis as their peers**

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) clarify the obligations of education and training providers, and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers.

Teaching, learning and assessment adjustments are provided for students who are working below expected achievement in order to support them to access the curriculum.

As stated in Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline (the Outline), ‘if there is a legitimate reason for a student to be following a modified curriculum (for example, gifted and talented students, students with disability and additional learning needs, and students for whom English is an additional language/dialect), schools negotiate any variation to the Western Australian curriculum with the student and her/his parents/carers, and document the decisions made (for example, a documented individual education plan and documented learning plan).’

In summary:

* Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers.
* Schools negotiate any variation to the curriculum with the student and her/his parents/carers.

### Slide 36

**Accessing the curriculum: NCCD levels of adjustments**

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) occurs annually with all schools participating. The data identifies the number of school students with disability, the broad category of disability and the level of reasonable educational adjustment provided for students with disability which enables them to access education on the same basis as their peers. Schools use the data about the levels of adjustments, to reflect on their practice.

School leaders and teachers use evidence to make professional judgements about the types of adjustments provided for students in meeting the educational needs. There are four levels of adjustment provided to students with disability: Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice, Supplementary, Substantial and Extensive. Students with FASD may appear across the four levels of adjustments depending on the type and severity of their impairments.

Adjustments are consistent with obligations outlined in the DDA, the Standards and effective practice. Decisions are made in consultation with the student, parents or carers and external agencies. Adjustments and strategies are included in documented plans.

Disability can be imputed. Effective educators adjust teaching and learning to suit the needs of every student irrespective of a student receiving a diagnosis.

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to visit NCCD illustrations of practice (optional extra, if time permits).

In summary:

* There are four levels of adjustment provided to students with disability: Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice, Supplementary, Substantial and Extensive.
* Students with FASD may appear across the four levels of adjustments depending on the type and severity of their impairments.
* Effective educators adjust teaching and learning to suit the needs of every student irrespective of a student receiving a diagnosis.

### Slide 37

**Accessing the curriculum: RTP for students with special educational needs**

Reporting to Parents (RTP) is an online system for the recording of student achievement for students in years K to 12. RTP allows for a student-centric view of reporting, which means that achievement data is available to schools even when students transfer between, or are enrolled at, multiple schools. RTP also accommodates teachers who are responsible for students at more than one school.

RTP has now been updated to include additional features for reporting progress of students with special educational needs (SEN).

RTP SEN now includes the:

* addition of a curriculum planner that enables the inclusion of content descriptors to a   
  student plan
* ability to add SMART goals to curriculum content descriptors
* ability to add strategies in the curriculum planner
* profiling of students with an NCCD level of adjustment
* identification of students with an NCCD level of adjustment or SEN plan
* school comparative data on the proportion of students with an NCCD level of adjustment
* ability to assign students to SEN Planning
* maintenance of student plans from mainstream reporting screens for students integrated in mainstream classes
* integration of reporting functions including comments and images in the curriculum planner
* a function to review and manage goals created at the school.

In summary:

* Reporting to Parents (RTP) is an online system for the recording of student achievement for students in years K to 12.
* RTP has now been updated to include additional features for reporting progress of students with special educational needs (SEN).

### Slide 38

**Accessing the curriculum: Keeping our workplace safe**

Students with FASD may appear to be defiant or oppositional and may be prone to aggressive behaviour. For these students, planning should include individual behaviour support plans. Understanding the needs of our students helps to prevent or manage the risk of incidents occurring.

Individual behaviour support plans include the:

* student’s strengths and interests
* behaviours that indicate the student is entering a conflict spiral or the stages of a crisis
* de-escalation strategies that work for the individual student
* preferred replacement behaviours.

Decisions are made in consultation with the student, parents or carers and external agencies. Adjustments and strategies are included in plans which are communicated with all stakeholders. Strategies are used both at home and school to provide students with consistent messages about appropriate behaviour and reinforcement.

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to visit Keeping our workplace safe hub (optional extra, if time permits).

In summary:

* Students with FASD may appear to be defiant or oppositional and may be prone to aggressive behaviour.
* Understanding the needs of our students helps to prevent or manage the risk of   
  incidents occurring.

### Slide 39

**Activity: Accessing the curriculum**

In small groups, consider what you now know about students with FASD and determine:

* the changes to teaching and learning that will enable students to better access   
  the curriculum
* a variety of assessment approaches that provide quality evidence about what students know and still need to learn.

Consider if other students in your class could benefit from any or all of these strategies.

Allocate 15 minutes.

### Slide 40

# Session 3: Supportive learning environments

This workshop engages school leaders and educators in activities that build knowledge and understanding about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

#### **Session outcomes**

During this session, participants will learn about:

* the importance of supportive learning environments
* effective approaches to provide supportive learning environments
* a range of strategies suitable for all students with diverse learning needs.

### Slide 41

**Supportive learning environments**

*Classroom First* informs schools about the Director General’s vision for Western Australian public schools and states ‘Effective teachers have high expectations of students in terms of both their standard of learning and their behaviour. They treat their students with respect and expect the same in return. They know that a safe and orderly environment is necessary for their students to progress well and so their discipline is firm but fair. Good schools provide a friendly, welcoming and cared for environment with clear expectations of the standards expected.’

*Classroom First* is supported by a series of action-oriented plans.

These are:

* *Strategic plan,* which outlines the Department’s commitment to every student in every school**.**
* *The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* sets expected standards for all staff when working with Aboriginal students, their families and communities.
* It supports staff to reflect on their behaviours, attitudes and practices and identify opportunities for improved action.
* Culturally responsive schools build an environment that is welcoming for Aboriginal students and reflect community aspirations for their children.
* Director General’s statements
* *School Improvement*
* *School Accountability*
* *Managing student behaviour.*

By focusing on the priorities and aspirations in these plans, educators make a real difference to the quality of our school environments, the lives of our students and the broader community.

**In summary:**

* All schools focus on the priorities and aspirations outline in key Department of Education documents.
* Educators make a real difference to the quality of our school environments, the lives of our students and the broader community.

### Slide 42

**Supportive learning environments: Quality relationships**

Supportive learning environments include quality relationships with families and students that are built on:

* students’ likes, interests, strengths and world views that motivate participation   
  in learning
* regular two-way communication that is clear and based on evidence of student achievement
* feedback for and from students about what is working well and areas for improvement
* a collaborative approach to preparing documented plans including case-management plans
* trust and mutual respect between all contributors.

A sense of belonging and inclusion is improved when the learning environment is shaped to:

* build on the unique competencies of individuals such as their strength of determination, physical, musical and artistic talents
* enable all students to contribute and have their voice heard
* communicate that all students are valued members of the classroom
* minimise challenges.

**In summary:**

* Supportive learning environments are built on quality relationships with students   
  and families.
* Supportive learning environments provide students with a sense of belonging and inclusion.

### Slide 43

**Supportive learning environments: Quality relationships**

Effective educators act with compassion and understanding because they know that student behaviours are symptomatic of the injury to the brain.

Students with FASD have a brain injury that:

* impacts their ability to cope with everyday tasks
* means they **can’t** rather than **won’t**
* requires support and redirection rather than punitive responses.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD have a brain injury that means they **can’t** rather than **won’t**.
* Quality relationships with families and students lead to appropriate support rather than punitive measures.

### Slide 44

**Structured and predictable learning environments**

Students with FASD do best in structured and predictable environments with few changes to schedules.

Unpredictable environments cause confusion and may increase stress and anxiety. Students with FASD may perseverate when there are unexpected changes in routines or when students find a situation stressful. Perseveration is the result of the brain injury and presents as repetitive, continuous behaviour or the repetitive use of a word, phrase or gesture.

Students may be unable to break out of the loop until support is provided. Support could include:

* the use of a visual prompt
* calmly talking to the students to help reduce their stress
* distraction techniques to help them switch their attention to a new activity.

Routines provide stability for students with FASD who are highly rigid thinkers. Students may be unable to generalise the routine, predict what will happen next and may see any changes as a completely new routine.

Communicating daily timetables and lesson structures provide students with clear direction and scaffold positive student engagement.

Effective educators prepare students by:

* explaining the routine and/or changes to the routine
* explaining the reasons for the routine,
* giving advanced notice of the change in activities (for example, use a timer and explain that in five minutes it will be time to pack up)
* provide opportunities for students to learn through demonstration, modelling and rehearsal.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD require structured and predictable environments.
* Effective educators make changes to the environment to reduce stress and anxiety   
  in students.

### Slide 45

**Supportive learning environments: Primary and secondary behaviours**

Environmental factors must be carefully considered in order to reduce the impact of primary behavioural characteristics, and reduce or eliminate secondary behavioural characteristics experienced by students with FASD.

Primary behavioural characteristics are caused by brain impairments. These may include:

* Impulsivity
* memory challenges
* slower processing pace
* difficulty with abstract thinking and predicting skills.

Secondary behavioural characteristics may develop when the primary characteristics are left unattended. These include:

* fatigue
* the appearance of a lack of motivation
* depression and frustration that may lead to aggression.

When secondary behavioural characteristics are left unattended and a ‘chronic mismatch between the young person and their environment’ occurs, the results may include:

* disrupted schooling (Streissguth et al., 2004)
* trouble with the law (Streissguth et al., 2004; Temple, in Wheeler, Kenney & Temple, 2013)
* legal confinement (e.g., detention, jail, psychiatric care) (Streissguth et al., 2004)
* inappropriate sexual behaviour (Streissguth et al., 2004)
* vulnerability to alcohol or drug abuse (Streissguth et al., 2004; Temple, in Wheeler, et al., 2013)
* comorbid (or co-occurring) mental health issues (O'Connor & Paley, 2009; Temple, in Wheeler, et al., 2013) as sited in Mclean, S. and McDougall, S. (2014, p.6).

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD experience primary behavioural characteristics caused by the injury to the brain.
* Secondary behavioural characteristics may develop when the primary characteristics are   
  left unattended.

### Slide 46

**Supportive learning environments: Environmental factors**

It is essential that students are provided with optimal, supportive learning environments.   
Effective educators understand and act on reducing the impact of secondary behavioural characteristics by adjusting elements of the learning environment to suit the needs of their students. They watch for triggers that indicate students are ready for a break and ensure they provide an engaging learning environment.

Effective educators make sure students develop a sense of belonging and tend to their students’ physical and emotional comfort. Students with FASD may require a safe, quiet place where they can regain their composure before returning to the lesson and learn to use this space as a strategy for managing their behaviour.

A range of classroom resources are available in this hub that support students to develop necessary skills such as:

* Positive behaviour support
* Protective behaviours
* Student Wellbeing Hub
* Be You programs for mental health
* School Drug Education and Road Awareness (SDERA).

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click each image on the slide to view the resources (optional extra, if time permits).

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD require elements of the learning environment to be adjusted.
* Adjustments may include a safe, quiet place where students can regain their composure and regular breaks away for their desks to reduce fatigue and frustration.

### Slide 47

**Supportive learning environments: Alex’s success story**

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to play the video: Alex’s success story

This video explores the importance of relationships and the implementation of classroom strategies that enable Alex to experience success. This video runs for 8:52 minutes.

### Slide 48

**Activity: Supportive learning environments**

In small groups, think about your classrooms and discuss how you will increase the effectiveness of the learning environment you provide. Consider:

* what you will improve
* what you will remove.

Allocate 15 minutes.

Presenter may choose to:

* conduct a call out; or
* use a graphic organiser with headings such as a keep/remove/improve.

**Participant answers may include:**

Keep

Increase the effectiveness of the learning environment by using:

* visual cue cards for steps in a process or activity
* visual timetable/schedule of daily routines
* verbal prompts and repetition
* positive language that celebrates students’ successes
* positive, timely feedback on student achievement
* open communications with parents and students to meet students’ needs

Remove

Increase the effectiveness of the learning environment by removing:

* resource materials and old projects on completion
* distractions from students’ desk
* overuse of colours – replace with calming colours
* actions and consequences as forms of punishment
* negative comments, sarcasm and jokes when talking to students with FASD
* reliance on memory
* random changes to routine
* barriers that prevent students from contributing to class and small groups

Improve

Increase the effectiveness of the learning environment by including:

* calm down zones or de-escalation zones instead of timeout as students’ are unlikely to remember why they have been placed in timeout
* using a calm, reassuring voice
* room layout that enables students to have a full view of the board
* student work displays at the back of the class to minimise distraction
* covers for bookshelves
* close supervision and redirection when signs and triggers of escalating behaviours are seen
* the use of emotional regulation indicators (could include green, amber, red coloured cards or signal changes in behaviour with thumbs up, middle or down)
* the use of ear muffs or ear phones to reduce sensory overload
* the use of corrals to minimise visual distractions.

Allocate five minutes for answers to be shared across the group.

# Slide 49

# Session 4: Personal and social capability

This session engages school leaders and educators in activities that build knowledge and understanding about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

#### **Session outcomes**

During this session, participants will learn about:

* the importance of personal and social capability
* effective approaches to teach personal and social capability
* a range of strategies for all students with diverse learning needs.

### Slide 50

**Personal and social capability**

*The Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008)* recognises that personal and social capability assists students to become successful learners, helping to improve their academic learning and enhances their motivation to reach their full potential. Personal and social capability supports students in becoming creative and confident individuals with 'a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing', with a sense of hope and 'optimism about their lives and the future'. On a social level, it helps students to 'form and maintain healthy relationships' and prepares them 'for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members' (MCEETYA, p. 9). This is captured in the Western Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities - Personal and Social Capability.

**In summary:**

* Western Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities - Personal and Social Capability assist students to become successful learners, manage themselves, relate to others, develop resilience and a sense of self-worth, resolve conflict, engage in teamwork and feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

### Slide 51

**Personal and social capability: Adaptive behaviours**

Adaptive behaviours enable people to interact successfully and meet the demands of everyday living. They are applied in social and practical ways and include:

* self-regulation, including naming, recognising and understanding emotions
* social judgement, including interpreting social cues and conventions
* effective communication
* daily living skills.

Educators provide students with opportunities to develop these skills across all learning areas. They explicitly teach students with FASD adaptive behaviours.

**In summary:**

* Effective educators explicitly teach adaptive behaviours such as:
* self-regulation, including naming, recognising and understanding emotions
* social judgement, including interpreting social cues and conventions
* effective communication
* daily living skills.
* Students are provided with opportunities to develop their personal and social capability across all learning areas.

### Slide 52

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation**

Self-regulation is a highly valuable life skill that comes naturally for some and requires explicit teaching and practice for others. As adults, we encounter challenging circumstances where we have to manage our anger and impulses. Self-regulation skills enable us to remain calm and change our level of alertness according to the demands of the situation. Building these skills in students will have a positive impact in every facet of their lives.

We teach self-regulation on a daily basis so that students with FASD develop insight into their own emotions, determine what needs to be done and learn the self-control required to respond in balanced ways. Self-regulation enables students to work at an optimal level, sit still and listen, behave in socially acceptable ways in a variety of environments, control impulses, take turns, and express emotions in appropriate ways using correct language.

The more we understand the strategies we use to change how we feel, the easier it is to support students to learn self-regulation. Consider the things you do to achieve the right level of alertness so you can function during the day.

**In summary:**

* Self-regulation enables students to work at an optimal level, sit still and listen, behave in socially acceptable ways in a variety of environments, control impulses, take turns, and express emotions in appropriate ways using correct language.
* Effective educators teach self-regulation on a daily basis.

### Slide 53

**Activity: Personal and social capability - Self-regulation**

In small groups:

* discuss how you achieve the required level of alertness throughout the day
* be prepared to share your ideas.

Allocate five minutes.

Conduct a call out.

**Participant answers may include:**

* eat sugary food and/or drink caffeine
* exercise before/after work
* have a hot shower to either wind down or wake up
* tap a pencil or click the end of the pen
* wriggle leg or tap foot
* tidy up personal space
* organise tools or materials for the day
* listen to music or watch television
* scribble, sketch or draw.

Allocate five minutes for answers to be shared across the group.

### Slide 54

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation**

There are three neurological domains required for self-regulation.

1. Sensory processing is the function that supports students to make sense of information, organise and apply it in a purposeful way.
2. Executive functioning coordinates the processes required to:

* start tasks or activities without help or being asked to begin
* hold information in the working memory in order to move through the steps in a task
* shift attention between components of tasks
* finish one task before starting another
* complete homework assignments on time
* manage their belongings and materials
* remember important information and know what to do and how to do it
* set goals, plan steps and make decisions about what to focus on to achieve goals
* notice and fix mistakes, or change a plan that is not working
* apply flexible thinking to understand different sets of rules and expectations and use knowledge in a variety of ways and contexts. It also includes the ability to accept different ways of doing things
* use inner speech to manage thoughts, solve problems and make decisions
* control impulses in order to think before acting and adjust behaviour when required.

1. Emotional regulation assists the functions involved in responding in proportionate ways to problems, understanding others’ perspectives and developing self-motivation.

**In summary:**

* There are three neurological processes required for self-regulation.

1. Sensory processing
2. Executive functioning
3. Emotional regulation.

### Slide 55

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation - Sensory processing**

Sensory processing skills are part of affect regulation, which is one of the 10 neurodevelopmental domains. These skills enable students to interpret and process information received from the senses and the central nervous system. There are two types of reactions to sensory information, active and passive. Sensory processing supports students to pay attention, manage activity levels and control behaviour in age appropriate ways.

Students with FASD are likely to have sensory processing difficulties. ‘Students may appear disorganised, confused, emotionally upset, scared, shut down or become out of control. Frequently caregivers and teachers interpret this behaviour as hyperactive, defiant, resistant, avoidant or aggressive’ (Manitoba p.13 2009).

Students with FASD who are over sensitive become overwhelmed by the environment. This makes learning difficult as they are unable to organise their feelings and control their behaviour. These students may require a safe, quiet place where they can regain their composure before returning to the lesson and learn to use this space as a strategy for managing their behaviour. Students with FASD may also be under sensitive and may experience feelings less intensely than others. They require a lot of stimulation in order to notice details around them and engage in the learning environment.

Effective educators provide encouragement and understanding when students are learning to focus their attention, manage their thinking, and control their emotions and behaviour. They explicitly teach students to identify and communicate their feelings, and then to choose the most suitable approach to self-regulate.

Teachers and students model, role play and practice the problem solving skills required to regulate thoughts, emotions and behaviours, make and keep friends, organise their school work and express their feelings in appropriate ways.

**In summary:**

* Sensory processing skills support students to pay attention, manage activity levels and control behaviour in age appropriate ways.
* Some students with FASD may be over sensitive and become overwhelmed by the environment.
* Some students with FASD may be under sensitive and may experience feelings less intensely than others.
* Teachers and students model, role play and practice the problem solving skills required to regulate thoughts, emotions and behaviours, make and keep friends, organise their school work and express their feelings in appropriate ways.

### Slide 56

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation - Executive functioning**

As stated in, *What Educators should know about FASD, (2018),* ‘executive functioning is a set of higher-order cognitive processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one’s resources in order to achieve a goal.’ Higher order cognitive processes include the ability to plan, organise and complete tasks.

Executive functioning is also responsible for attention. It controls the higher-order functions of memory systems such as deciding where to focus attention, enabling attention to be focused on more than one component of a task (divided attention) and shifting attention from one task to another when necessary.

When working memory is overloaded, the central executive system intervenes to decide which information is most important. This is particularly difficult for students with FASD who have impaired executive function, including hyperactivity, as the brain is unable to decipher which information is most important in order to complete tasks with maximum efficiency.

**In summary:**

* Executive functioning is a set of higher-order cognitive processes responsible for attention and controls memory systems.
* Executive functioning is used to plan, organise and complete tasks.

### Slide 57

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation - Executive functioning**

Teachers, Education Assistants (EA), Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO), and student peers work together to model, role play and practice higher order cognitive processes such as problem solving, planning and organisational skills, and emotional regulation.

They model personal and social capability using:

* the language of emotions
* body language and facial gestures that express their feelings in appropriate ways
* ‘think alouds’ to demonstrate how to regulate thoughts, emotions and behaviours
* conversation skills to make and keep friends such as describing expected behaviours and/or social rules
* organisation skills to complete school work such as colour coding for subject matter and/or learning areas.

Effective educators model positive self-talk to support students to set goals and plan to achieve these goals. They scaffold the steps in the process so that students with FASD can work their way through from beginning to end. This builds confidence, resilience and motivation.

**In summary:**

* Effective educators model, role play and practice higher order cognitive processes such as problem solving, planning and organisational skills, and emotional regulation.

### Slide 58

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation - Emotional regulation**

Emotional regulation involves responding in a proportionate way to problems, understanding the perspectives of others and developing self-motivation.

Students with FASD often react differently than their peers to the environment due to the way they perceive and process information. Students with FASD may be impulsive, imitate others or be unable to inhibit their behaviour. Impulsive behaviour and risk taking can lead students into unsafe situations. These behaviours are a result of impaired attention, executive functioning, information processing, memory and a lack of personal boundaries.

The use of logical consequences or abstract questioning is often ineffective because students with FASD may be unable to link cause and effect, actions and consequences or apply good judgement. They may be quick to respond with anger as logical consequences require them to consider the point of view and behaviour of others. Talking abstractly about other people’s feelings is unlikely to resolve issues.

Scaffolding the thinking required for appropriate social behaviour develops the skills   
required for:

* linking cause and effect
* understanding point of view
* decision making
* conflict resolution.

**In summary:**

* Emotional regulation involves responding in a proportionate way to problems, understanding the perspectives of others and developing self-motivation.
* Students with FASD often react differently than their peers to the environment due to the way they perceive and process information. They may be impulsive, imitate others or be unable to inhibit their behaviour.
* These behaviours are a result of impaired attention, executive functioning, information processing, memory and a lack of personal boundaries.

### Slide 59

**Personal and social capability: Self-regulation - Emotional regulation**

Effective educators provide daily opportunities for students to learn and practise rules, routines and social skills including protective behaviours. They encourage students to think before they act and use visual support materials that enable students to process information and self-regulate. Educators reduce distractions and provide time for students to think in order to support students to respond thoughtfully rather than impulsively.

Students can also learn self-regulation through mutual regulation. Mutual regulation includes teachers modelling for students how to seek the assistance of others in regulating their emotions.

Effective educators know that students require supervision and redirection to situations where students do have the skills to cope. This involves teachers talking in a calm voice and providing transition support, sensory breaks and modifying tasks.

**In summary:**

* Effective educators provide daily opportunities for students to learn and practise rules, routines and social skills including protective behaviours.
* Effective educators know that students require supervision and redirection to situations where students do have the skills to cope.

### Slide 60

**Personal and social capability: Social judgement**

Social judgement requires the skills to form impressions, think socially and perceive peoples’ intentions. These judgements are made by reading face and body language, words and tone, and require us to filter the information and infer meaning when considering decisions or actions. When filtering information, the brain determines what is most important in the context of the situation and ignores irrelevant details. Inferencing is used to make assumptions, complete the details of what has not been said or seen, or to decode tone and hidden meanings. This can also lead to errors in judgement.

Students with FASD may lack social judgement. Due to their impairments they are likely to:

* misinterpret social cues and language
* misread face, gestures and body language
* focus on the wrong information and ignore relevant details
* have underdeveloped inferencing skills
* be incapable of considered decisions based on sensible conclusions.

**In summary:**

* Social judgements are made by reading face and body language, words and tone, and require us to filter the information and infer meaning when considering decisions or actions.
* Students with FASD may lack social judgement due to their impairments.

### Slide 61

**Personal and social capability: Social judgement**

Students with FASD highly value friendships, want to please and immediately trust others. They are easily led by peers or strangers into situations which can have serious consequences.

Students may even use the right social cues but only process parts of information and may say anything they think will please the other person. When students do not comprehend questions and answers in social situations, they may give several responses until stumbling on the one that is expected. When being questioned about an incident, their impaired memory is likely to impact on the accuracy of recollection or the retelling of events. This can result in impulsive responses and confabulations that later appear to be lies.

Effective educators provide opportunities for students to learn and practice rules, routines, and decision making skills. Students use visual support materials that encourage them to think before they act, process information and self-regulate.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD highly value friendships, want to please and immediately trust others. They are easily led by peers or strangers into situations which can have serious consequences.
* Effective educators provide opportunities for students to learn and practice rules, routines, and decision making skills.

### Slide 62

### Slide 63

**Personal and social capability: Communication**

Communication is how people express emotion, initiate and develop social relationships and convey their needs. Communication includes verbal and non-verbal communication, such as tone, gestures, facial expressions, body movements and posture. Social communication is the ability to exchange information within a social context, consider the perspectives of others and use the information to guide responses.

Cultural conventions underpin the frameworks from which we make meaning of the world. Culture and language are interconnected. Culturally responsive communication acknowledges and values the diverse language backgrounds, experiences and world views that students bring to the classroom. The way English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners interpret, interact and communicate, in Standard Australian English (SAE), is largely influenced by the cultural, conceptual and linguistic understandings they bring to their learning. Language is used to perceive, interpret, process and express meaning. Different languages have different codes for interacting with others and express meanings in a range of ways.

Students with FASD rely heavily on reading body language and tone to interpret what is being said. They are often unable to process the language being used to communicate, so miscommunication occurs frequently. Effective teachers ensure students learn the vocabulary of emotional terms and skills for reading faces and body language in order to adjust their behaviour and communicate thoughts and feelings. This is particularly important for students with FASD who are also EAL/D learners.

Anxiety is reduced when students know what to expect. Effective educators support students with FASD to understand the conversational rules that apply to social situations such as taking turns as well as following and applying social rules required for collaborating and building effective relationships. Establishing and modelling group norms support all students to know the work requirements and expectations for the classroom. Effective educators use clear language, pause between sentences and check for understanding.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD rely heavily on reading body language and tone to interpret what is being said. They are often unable to process the language being used to communicate, so miscommunication occurs frequently.
* Students with FASD who are also EAL/D learners require explicit teaching of Standard Australian English (SAE) including the cultural codes required for interacting with others and express meanings in a range of ways.

**Living with FASD: Vanessa’s story**

Note: Launch the slideshow and then click the image on the slide to play the video: Vanessa’s story

In this video Dr Vanessa Spiller, a Clinical Psychologist, shares her experiences as a parent of a teenager living with FASD and is building understanding about changing the environment in order to change the behaviours. This video runs for 4:33 minutes.

### Slide 64

**Personal and social capability: Daily living skills**

Daily living skills are the life skills used to cope with everyday tasks and to live independently in a safe and socially responsible way.

They require the application of:

* conceptual skills such as language, reading, mathematics, reasoning and memory
* social skills such as social judgement, empathy and interpersonal skills required   
  for friendships
* practical self-management skills such as hygiene, work requirements, financial management, recreation, commitment and organisation.

Students with FASD may struggle with abstract concepts such as time and money which is likely to impact their ability to get to class or complete work on time, hold a part time job or understand vocational skills. Effective educators use concrete materials and practical, hands-on activities to support students to understand abstract concepts.

**In summary:**

* Daily living skills are the life skills used to cope with everyday tasks and to live independently in a safe and socially responsible way.
* Students with FASD may struggle with abstract concepts such as time and money.
* Effective educators use concrete materials and practical, hands-on activities to support students to understand abstract concepts.

### Slide 65

**Personal and social capability: Daily living skills**

Effective teachers explicitly teach, model and role play the skills required for organisation. They provide timelines, visual schedules and daily overviews and may use colour as a way of organising materials.

Students with FASD may have difficulties socially as they are overly friendly and form friendships based on their developmental level rather than their chronological age. This is likely to result in bullying or subject them to the predatory behaviour of strangers.

Effective educators provide a supportive learning environment for students to develop their social skills and build independence through cooperative learning, small group work and peer mentoring. Social skills are modelled and practised throughout the day and across learning areas. This supports students to generalise skills and knowledge into different contexts.

**In summary:**

* Students with FASD may have difficulties socially as they are overly friendly and form friendships based on their developmental level rather than their chronological age. This is likely to result in bullying or subject them to the predatory behaviour of strangers.
* Social skills are modelled and practised daily.
* Effective teachers provide timelines, visual schedules and daily overviews.

### Slide 66

**Activity: Personal and social capability**

In small groups, discuss:

* the strategies you could immediately use in your daily classroom practice
* how these strategies will help provide better support for students to develop their personal and social capability.

Allocate five minutes.

Conduct a call out.

**Participant answers may include:**

* explicitly teach rules, routines and use repetition
* a quiet, calm place for self-regulation
* a space with tactile activities
* whole-school approaches to modelling school community culture and positive behaviour
* model positive self-talk
* small group work and peer mentoring to build social skills such as taking turns
* role play to learn self-regulation skills and the language of emotions.

Allocate five minutes for answers to be shared across the group.

### Slide 67

#### Module outcomes

The four sessions in this module have developed your understanding about:

* Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
* knowledge about the impact of FASD on the functions of the brain and on student learning
* effective approaches to:
* support students to access to the curriculum
* provide supportive learning environments
* teach personal and social capability.
* a range of strategies that support all students with diverse learning needs.

### Slide 68

#### Call to action: Planning for improvement

Apply what you have learnt to your classroom. Join with a trusted colleague and in:

* one week, share the strategies you plan to implement
* five weeks, discuss what is working well with the strategies implemented
* 10 weeks, discuss what you have kept, removed or changed in order to meet the diverse learning needs of your students.

### Slide 69

**More support**

For complex cases, support is available through Statewide Services Centre and the

* Schools of Special Educational Needs.
  + SSEN: Behaviour and Engagement
  + SSEN: Disability
  + SSEN: Sensory
  + SSEN: Medical and Mental Health
* Disability Support Services
* School Psychology Service

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